

THE HOMEWRECKERS

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FADE IN:

SCISSOR BLADES cut carefully between the happy faces of an average MAN and a not-so-average WOMAN - mid-thirties - tanned by vacation.

A WOMAN'S HANDS

sort SNAPSHOTS of a BOY gaining weight - at the beach, in the snow - cheeks and body slightly rounder in each PHOTO.

The scissors separate HEAD from BODY.

INT. A BEDROOM - NIGHT

A lean, muscular TEENAGE BOY does clap push ups on carpet.

JEFFREY
Forty-nine...! Fifty...!

He rolls over into quick crunches, squeezing head to his knees.

WARREN MILFORD - the formerly tan average man in the photograph - glances in, ear to a CELL PHONE.

At 48, the father appears depleted but tightly wound as he re-dials the phone.

WARREN
Where's your sister?

JEFFREY
Nine... Ten... Flaunting her independence at a hotel with her boyfriend. Twelve... Thirteen...

WARREN
You're kidding, right?

JEFFREY
Sadly, no, Dad. May I suggest a bold, heroic, and embarrassing intervention?!

Warren stares - re-dials his cell.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

BARBARA MILFORD - very pretty at forty-five - looks wistfully at the photo she's cut out. WARREN quickly descends the stairs.

WARREN
Katie? In a hotel room?! With--

BARBARA
--I know.

Barbara applies glue stick to the back of a cut-out.

WARREN
And we're not stopping it because...

BARBARA
It's better than a dangerously parked car?

WARREN
At least *that* would indicate we set boundaries. And boundaries--

BARBARA
--are a sign of parental love. I read that somewhere...

WARREN
Yes!

BARBARA
...a bad teen novel, I think.

WARREN
Like the kind that hold up this roof?

BARBARA
Not so well anymore.

They make pointed eye contact - an insult too far? Barbara glances at the phone in his hand.

BARBARA (CONT'D)
Harry and Eleanor still not answering?

WARREN
I might have to drive out there.

BARBARA
Bring a perfumed handkerchief.
(covering nose)
Just in case.

Warrens stares at her - notices the photo collage.

WARREN
You put Jeffrey's head on some other kid's body.

BARBARA
His friend Jason. It makes him look better.

WARREN
That's hateful.

BARBARA
It's more like he looks now.

WARREN
You're manipulating family history.
You're the Stalin of scrapbookers.

BARBARA
And that makes me "hateful"?

WARREN
It's nothing compared to letting your
daughter be pimped out to an entitled
brat at a cheap hotel.

She snaps the scissors. He steps back.

BARBARA
Katie is with a bunch of the band kids
at the Four Seasons, ordering room
service and having a big sleep-over.
Her boyfriend Colin will be there,
along with his father who created
"Who's the Cuckold?"

WARREN
That stupid reality show.

BARBARA
Stupid like the Four Seasons. He lives
there now. He's recently divorced.

WARREN
How tragic for him.

She snaps the scissors louder. Warren backs away.

STAY ON - SCISSOR BLADES

cutting around a seven year-old GIRL - wearing a BROWNIE
UNIFORM - standing erect with no attitude or irony - just a
salute and a smile.

Barbara looks wistfully at the picture of the sweet girl -
lays her down on an unfinished collage of other cut-out
family photos.

INT. A DARK ROOM - NIGHT

TWO TEENAGERS lie close on a small bed - KATIE and COLIN, 16
and 17 - kissing, each wearing EARBUDS connected to a single
iPhone.

COLIN
Katie?

KATIE
You don't have to stop.

COLIN
My arm is stuck.

KATIE
Why didn't you say anything? God.
You're so *reticent*.

COLIN
(pulls out his earbud,
music blaring from it)
I'm what?

KATIE
Sssshh. *Reticent*. Reluctant to speak.
It's an SAT word.

COLIN
Should I write it down?

KATIE
Colin. You gotta make 'em part of your
speaking vocabulary, especially if
we're going to get into the same
college--

He shuts her up by kissing her - and whatever else we can't see.

COLIN
How's that feel?

KATIE
Sublime...

A long pause.

COLIN
Is that a good thing?

She rolls on top of him, knocking over a WINE GLASS.

KATIE
Stop talking.

INT. BACK OF HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

We follow WARREN through the house until he switches on the lights of a rarely used EXERCISE ROOM. He looks up at CREAKING NOISE coming from the ceiling.

He lies back on a weight bench, his ear to the cell phone.

WARREN
 (into phone)
 Charlotte, Hi... I can't get my
 parents to answer. Can you peek in the
 back window, make sure they're not
 laid out in puddles of urine. Call me
 back. Please. Or text me. Anything.

He shuts off the phone, stares up at the WHITE CEILING - his
 eyes finding a WET, RED STAIN in the plaster.

He stares at it curiously. A DROP forms and falls hitting him
 directly between the eyes.

WARREN (CONT'D)
 Aaahh!

He jumps up, wipes his face with his hands. He hears movement
 above him.

WARREN (CONT'D)
 Barbara! I think another raccoon died
 in our attic!

BARBARA (O.S.)
 How tragic for him!

He looks at the widening RED STAIN.

CLOSE ON - A STEP LADDER

too short for the job. Warren climbs it, stepping on the top
 step WARNING: DO NOT STEP HERE - a TENNIS RACKET in his hand -
 a powerful REI Head Lamp shining from his forehead.

He quietly pushes up the opening to the ATTIC SPACE, rising
 on his tip-toes atop the step ladder.

INT. ATTIC SPACE - CONTINUOUS

The head lamp first illuminates BOXES of CHRISTMAS ORNAMENTS,
 HALLOWEEN DECORATIONS, a tipped-over RED WINE BOTTLE, then

A TOPLESS TEENAGE GIRL

KATIE (his daughter) with her eyes closed, headphones on -
 writhing atop COLIN on an air mattress.

WARREN
 Aaaaauuhhh!

Katie pulls off her ear buds in time to see:

Head-lamped Warren topple back through the opening.

KATIE
 Shit! Oh shit! Shit!

INT. BACK ROOM - CONTINUOUS

WARREN falls to the floor - his head just barely missing the weight bench.

Laid out on the floor, he looks straight up - sees his BARE-BREASTED DAUGHTER staring down at him.

KATIE
Daddy...?

WARREN
Aaauuughhh!

He covers his eyes. COLIN flips down and drops onto the floor - *his ERECTION over the head lamp casting a SHADOW ON THE CEILING.*

COLIN
Warren. Don't move. You might have a spinal injury.

WARREN
Cover it!

COLIN
What?

WARREN
That!

Colin sees PENIS SILHOUETTE on the ceiling.

COLIN
Cool. Shadow puppet.

Warren rips the lamp off his head.

Colin grabs a HAND TOWEL from the bathroom, drapes it over his erection just as Barbara comes in, switches on the room light.

BARBARA
What happened?

She looks up, sees Katie (covered now) lowering herself from the attic.

She drops the last few feet. Colin catches her.

The towel falls off his erection. Barbara can't help but stare.

WARREN
Call the paramedics.

Barbara grabs a LARGE TOWEL from the bathroom, hands it to Colin as she glances again at his exposed penis. He covers himself.

COLIN
Sorry, Barbara.

BARBARA
You're not hurt. You're pathetic, but not hurt.

WARREN
I need my eyes removed!

He struggles to get up.

WARREN (CONT'D)
I need high voltage paddles pressed against my brain to erase this picture!

BARBARA
If they erase self-pity I'll flip the switch.

COLIN
Ha. I get it. Funny, Barbara.

WARREN
That's it... You two... You're not to look at each other, touch each other, or talk to each other for--.

KATIE
For what?

WARREN
A week. No. A month!

COLIN
Me and Katie? Or me and Barbara?

KATIE
That's not fair!

WARREN
You lied about where you'd be tonight and what you'd be doing.

KATIE
I was at home. How can you punish me for being at home?

WARREN
You were having sex in our attic!

COLIN
It's all right, Katie. We committed a
foul, and now we have to do our time
in the penalty box.

KATIE
A whole month? How can we survive
that?

WARREN
Go!

Katie marches out. Barbara follows.

COLIN
Obstreperous, isn't she?

Warren glares at Colin.

COLIN (CONT'D)
I left my clothes up there. You mind
holding the ladder?

INT. JEFFREY'S ROOM - NIGHT

KATIE is livid, pacing like a caged animal while JEFFREY
brushes his teeth.

KATIE
He's ripping Colin and me apart.
Devouring us like a child-eating
monster.

JEFFREY
(through toothpaste)
Warren Milford? Mild-mannered author
of youth fiction?

KATIE
You've never heard of the "banality of
evil?"

JEFFREY
Banana what?

KATIE
Oh, God. I'm sure a state school will
be fine for you.

JEFFREY
The "banality of evil" is from an
essay by Hannah Arendt--

KATIE
--Every day he's becoming more
desperate and dictatorial.
(MORE)

KATIE (CONT'D)

He's in a cold, passionless, soul-sapping marriage that's ruining any hope he'll ever make decent money again.

JEFFREY

And you believe this because...

KATIE

Because I've lived around them for sixteen years. Because I just saw the way Mom stared at Colin's junk when his towel fell.

JEFFREY

I have no idea what you're talking about. Please preserve that.

KATIE

She gawked like a starving child.

JEFFREY

Ya-ya-ya-ya-ya!

She pulls his hands off his ears.

KATIE

Mom and Dad are prisoners in a failed marriage, and for what?

JEFFREY

For us.

KATIE

Yes! Us! So it's up to us to let them out. We need to sit them down and say: "Don't do this. We don't need it." You go with Dad. I go with Mom. We'll all visit each other on holidays - maybe.

JEFFREY

Who'd get to stay here?

KATIE

No one. We'd sell and split.

JEFFREY

And live in like rented apartments?

KATIE

Freedom isn't free.

JEFFREY

Way overpriced, I'd say.

KATIE

So is college.

JEFFREY

Not for me. I'm going to a state school, remember?

KATIE

You're selfish!

JEFFREY

I have one year left. I want it to be a good year. So I'm fine with Mom and Dad suffering through for my benefit.

KATIE

You don't care anything about love because you don't know what is.

JEFFREY

I do okay.

KATIE

Not at school.

JEFFREY

At work.

KATIE

You teach kids swimming!

JEFFREY

Kids have mothers.

KATIE

Yuck!

JEFFREY

Leave.

KATIE

All right. Not yuck. If you know what love is, can't you just give your own mother and father the same opportunity? To finally find the right person before they get older and uglier?

Jeffrey thinks it over.

JEFFREY

Fuck 'em. They chose each other. Let 'em suffer.

He pushes her out - shuts the door.

INT. WARREN'S PRIUS - NIGHT

WARREN drives the small car with singular determination. COLIN leans forward from the back seat.

COLIN
Mr. Milford.... I'm old enough to sit
in front.

WARREN
It's the most dangerous seat in the
car. I wouldn't want anything to
happen to you.

Warren presses "re-send" on his cell phone, adjusts the blue
tooth in his ear.

WARREN (CONT'D)
(on phone)
Charlotte, it's me again. Hi. Can you
call me as soon as you get this?

He switches off - drives.

COLIN
Is she hot?

WARREN
Who?

COLIN
Charlotte.

WARREN
I grew up with her. She was my next-
door neighbor.

COLIN
You shouldn't sound so desperate.
It's a real turn-off.

WARREN
I'm desperate to get my parents to
answer their phone.

COLIN
When I can't get my dad to answer, I
know he's getting busy.

Colin makes a twisting thrust with his fist.

COLIN (CONT'D)
What's this?
(leans over seat)
Why does it say "key" when you have a
bunch of keys on it?

Colin fiddles with the LANYARD KEY CHAIN hanging from the
ignition: "K-E-Y" BEADS woven into the plastic laces.

WARREN
Katie made it for me when I only had
one.

Warren removes the boy's hand from the key chain.

WARREN (CONT'D)

It was a simpler time.

COLIN

What are you working on now, Mr. Milford?

WARREN

Working?

COLIN

Writing. Mulling over. Thinking about.

WARREN

Besides murder-suicide?

COLIN

Ha. Very funny. You shoulda put more of that in your last novel. It was so heavy and dreary, and depressing.

WARREN

It was about the Black Death.

COLIN

It still didn't have to be such a downer. "A Tale of Two Trenches" had funny parts even though it was about all these guys murdering each other in mud. "No Picnic at Normandy" had a happy ending. "My Brother Nate is a Reb" made the Civil War seem like a romp. But in "A Pocketful of Posies" the girl just coughs up blood and dies in agony. The end.

WARREN

I was going for a more realistic tone.

COLIN

No shit. How's that workin' for you?

WARREN

I didn't know you read my books.

COLIN

Everyone read your books in middle school. They were good - and fun and funny. Whatever you were doing back then, do it again.

WARREN

My children were young and sweet, and my wife--

COLIN

--Oh yeah. Kinda hard to fake that.

Warren pulls the car into the Four Seasons hotel.

COLIN (CONT'D)

Uh oh. My dad texted me: "Don't come up."

WARREN

What the hell? Isn't it your home too?

COLIN

Not while he's getting freaky.

WARREN

How long will that take?

COLIN

He usually doesn't let 'em hang around long. I'll just get a drink at the bar.

WARREN

You're seventeen.

COLIN

But my I.D. says twenty-three. See ya.

WARREN

Wait. Listen, Colin - why don't come with me out to Montbridge? It's a half hour each way. By the time we get back, he should be done.

Colin looks conflicted - seems like he might do it.

COLIN

Nah. If you find old people dead on the floor, it'll put me on therapy-track. I'm better off getting shit-faced in the bar.

Colin slams the door with a thumbs-up, runs into the hotel.

INT. SENIOR MILFORD HOUSE - NIGHT

WARREN opens the door with a key, sticks his head into a quiet, "mid-century modern" house with fine pottery and sculpture on the shelves and abstract paintings on the walls.

WARREN

Mom?! Dad?!

No answer. He walks in, tentatively.

WARREN (CONT'D)
Are you home? It's me!

Still no answer. He lifts his shirt over his nose and mouth.

HARRISON
Why are you smelling yourself?

WARREN
Dad?

HARRISON
Is it *pleasing*?

WARREN
You saw me?

HARRISON
I still have peripheral vision, fool!

HARRISON, nearly eighty, is kneeling on the floor. Though nearly blind, he pieces together a broken WOOD and METAL SCULPTURE.

WARREN
What are you doing?

HARRISON
Assessing the damage.

WARREN
My God. Your bird sculpture.

HARRISON
"Seagull and Nymph!" "*Seagull and Nymph!*" Fifty thousand dollars!

WARREN
What happened to it?

HARRISON
It was run over by a truck-driving vandal. God damn philistine!

A WOMAN'S VOICE(ELEANOR)calls from a distant room.

ELEANOR (O.S.)
Harry!!! Get me off the toilet! Right now!

HARRISON
Two hours down, *two hundred and forty-eight left to go!*

WARREN
Dad. You can't leave mom on the toilet for a week.

HARRISON

Ten days! A week would be too lenient.

WARREN

I've been calling here all night.

HARRISON

She was ringing the house phone with her cell phone, so I flung both in the yard.

ELEANOR (O.S.)

Get me off the toilet!!!!

HARRISON

You're not going to die in there!
I'll push a feeding tube under the door!

Warren heads through the single-level house and into

A BATHROOM

where mid-seventies ELEANOR sits with elegant poise on her porcelain throne. Warren averts his eyes.

WARREN

I'm here, Mom.

ELEANOR

Oh, Warren. My angel. Lift me into my power chair. I need to ram that bastard in the knees.

WARREN

(covering eyes)
Can you just... pull up your pants first?

ELEANOR

My bottom is stuck to the seat because of his vindictive cruelty. I didn't mean to bump into his worthless sculpture. Fifty thousand dollars--
(shouting out)
--In 1975! They're scrap bronze now!
(to Warren)
I allowed that he could rip up one of my books, but he had other means of revenge.

WARREN

It's not the same, Mom. Your books are still in print.

ELEANOR

That they are. How are you, Warren?

WARREN
Can you just wriggle a little bit.

ELEANOR
Are you writing?

WARREN
Without enthusiasm. I wanted to ask
your advice--

ELEANOR
--How's Barbara? We never see her or
the children.

WARREN
I wish I could say the same.

ELEANOR
Can I give you some marital advice?

WARREN
You really think you're qualified?

ELEANOR
Be selfish. Get what you want. Lie.
Keep secrets. Never pass up an
opportunity to cheat. Devotion and
fidelity lead to only one thing:
getting stuck on the toilet!

WARREN
(lifting)
You really are stuck, Mom.

ELEANOR
There's some K-Y Jelly in the cabinet.

WARREN
K-Y? No, don't tell me.

ELEANOR
Just rub it between the rim and my
bottom.

WARREN
I can't do this. I'm just going to
bring Dad back.

ELEANOR
Don't leave me!!! You bastard! You
mistake! You workaday hack!

A PHONE rings, muffled. Eleanor searches from her perch,
finds a CELL PHONE buried in a LAUNDRY BASKET.

ELEANOR (CONT'D)
Hello? Oh... Yes. Harrison, my
husband. An interview...? I'm afraid
he's... dead. Yes, very recently...
(MORE)

ELEANOR (CONT'D)

How? I forget how they phrased it...
"Auto-Erotic Asphyxiation?"

(listening)

I agree, it's shocking. I didn't know he could still achieve an erection, but there it was pointing out at me from the bedroom closet. Yes, please, relay the sad news. I'm too devastated to call anyone.

INT. LIVING ROOM

WARREN comes back to see HARRISON running his hands over the broken sculpture.

WARREN

Dad! You have to help her!
(noticing)
You're feeling up the nymph.

HARRISON

There was a knot in the wood, right here under her left breast. It took me three days to get it smooth.

WARREN

Can you put it down for a minute and get Mom off the toilet?

HARRISON

You know I modeled her after Eleanor.

WARREN

The nymph. The naked nymph I used to... *look at*... is my mother?

HARRISON

(feeling sculpture)
Her contours were precise, yet soft and supple, and right around here began a thick tangle of dark foliage - mysterious and alluring--

WARREN

Stop talking. *Now*.

HARRISON

--Not like the over-mowed lawns you see on the internet.

WARREN

Dad! Can you go back to keeping secrets from the children?

The DOORBELLS RINGS.

HARRISON

Get the door, son. I have an erection.

ELEANOR (O.S.)
Get me off the toilet!!!

Warren opens the door to reveal CHARLOTTE RHOADES, a very pretty woman his age wearing an AIRLINE PILOT'S uniform.

WARREN
Charlotte. Finally.

She comes in tentatively, gives Warren a kiss on the cheek.

CHARLOTTE
(whispers)
I don't see any puddles of urine.

HARRISON
Charlotte Rhoades. Dressed for the cockpit.

CHARLOTTE
It's good to see you, Harry.

HARRISON
Seem just the other day you were a teenager mounting horses while my son peered through the fence with his pants around his knees.

WARREN
I never--!

HARRISON
Metaphorically.

CHARLOTTE
I'm glad to see everything is okay. You mind if I cut through your back yard? My keys are in my carry-on.

ELEANOR (O.S.)
Get me off the toilet!

WARREN
Dad. Help her. Now!

HARRISON
All right... Where did I put that chloroform?

Warren motions Charlotte through the back yard, shuts the sliding glass door.

EXT. BACK YARD - NIGHT

They step out onto the dark lawn.

CHARLOTTE
You okay? You sounded anxious on the phone.

WARREN
Scared my darkest wish was granted.

CHARLOTTE
No... You were more like "nervous teenage-boy" anxious.

WARREN
I'm forty-eight.

CHARLOTTE
Not when you called.

Charlotte backs away toward the TETHER BALL pole.

CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)
Watch out for the snails!

She punches the ancient tether ball which stops short just before his face.

WARREN
Ha!

CHARLOTTE
They usually fall off with the first whack.

The ball whips around in front of Warren until he SMASHES it the other way.

WARREN
What did you mean by "nervous teenage boy anxious?"

CHARLOTTE
Like the time you called to ask me to the Christmas dance.

WARREN
You said your father canceled Christmas and you couldn't go.

CHARLOTTE
I went anyway.

WARREN
I saw the pictures.

CHARLOTTE
You're still pissed off.

WARREN
I'm getting over it.

CHARLOTTE
Please don't.

He stops the ball - looks at her.

WARREN
Really.

CHARLOTTE
(hitting the ball from his
hands)
How's the writing?

WARREN
Like pulling splinters out of my
eyeballs. I've become my least
favorite author just when I need to
sell something or lose everything.
I'm too old to write the way I need
to.

CHARLOTTE
It's not age.

WARREN
I know. It's passion - or the lack
thereof.

She hits the ball hard.

CHARLOTTE
Have you thought of having a fling?

He misses the ball.

WARREN
A what?

CHARLOTTE
An affair. A dalliance. A sweet fuck
off the books.

She whacks it. He misses again.

CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)
It might shake you out of your comfort
zone and help your writing
(hitting ball)
which would help your family
(hitting ball)
which might save your marriage.

WARREN
The rationalization of a lonely
artist.

CHARLOTTE
You *have* thought about it, you sneaky
prick.

She punches the ball to win the game.

WARREN

Then I think what happens next, and then what happens after that, and it always ends horribly, often with a shooting I don't survive.

CHARLOTTE

How would it end with me?

He grabs the ball, looks at her.

WARREN

Maybe it wouldn't.

She hits the ball hard out of his hands. It twists into the poll.

CHARLOTTE

I'm a jealous bitch, Warren. You have no idea.

WARREN

Maybe I like the idea.

CHARLOTTE

You don't want to die that way. It's too cliché. I like to think you're a more discriminating writer.

She kisses him on the lips, quickly, then backs away - hops over the fence to her house.

WARREN

I'm not. Really.

She hops over the back fence to her house. Warren stands in the dark alone - see through the back window, his PARENTS:

HARRISON carrying ELEANOR out of the bathroom and onto a rolling chair.

The scene is loving, dignified. Warren moves back toward the house - steps on something --

--falls facedown on the lawn.

WARREN (CONT'D)

Fuck!!!

CHARLOTTE (O.S.)

(distant)

What happened?

WARREN

I found the phone!

Warren struggles to his feet. He limps toward the house.

INT. PARENTS HOUSE - NIGHT

HARRISON finishes putting ELEANOR in her wheelchair while she sees WARREN limping in from the dark back yard.

Harrison tries to look with his peripheral vision.

HARRISON
What the hell is he doing out there?

ELEANOR
He appears to be hopping.

HARRISON
Sad fool.

ELEANOR
He's lost, Harry. He's lonely and frustrated and we're doing nothing to help him.

HARRISON
When can we stop worrying about our God damn children? In Heaven?

ELEANOR
We don't believe in Heaven.

HARRISON
Why the hell not?

ELEANOR
We're not those kind of people.

He wheels her into the kitchen.

HARRISON
What do you want for supper?

ELEANOR
Soup is fine.

HARRISON
The last thing I can still do.

He takes a can from the cupboard, tries to read the label with his peripheral vision.

ELEANOR
Poor Warren. I failed him, Harry. I published my first monograph in his first year and had to wean him too soon.

HARRISON
He didn't starve.

ELEANOR
I was gone for three months on a book tour; he's been longing for the breast ever since.

HARRISON
Unique among men.

ELEANOR
Look at the women he's dated: Sarah, Caroline, Frieda, Pamela, and Barbara - all big breasted. He's trying to compensate for the injury I've done him.

HARRISON
God dammit, Eleanor. Could you mind your own business and take up knitting?

ELEANOR
His marriage is a brittle branch laden with the fruit of disappointment. When it breaks--

HARRISON
--I can't see and you can't walk. What the hell can we do for him?

ELEANOR
We can throw a dinner party here and have them all come out. Maybe Robert could fly in from New York with Mary and Thomas.

Harrison struggles to open a can.

HARRISON
And you think that'll shake the disappointment fruit off the marriage tree?

ELEANOR
It'll bring her out here so I can make things clear. Oh, she was a bad choice. Too pretty. Too self-absorbed. A fair-weather wife, Harry. I warned you back then.

Warren comes in holding the phone. He puts it back on the receiver.

HARRISON
You found the phone. Damn you.

WARREN
You're welcome, Dad.

HARRISON
How long have you been married?

WARREN
Nineteen years. Why?

HARRISON
Your loving mother wanted me to tell you nineteen years ago that you're too boyish and needy for big-breasted Barbara--

ELEANOR
Oh, Christ, Harry. This is uncalled for.

HARRISON
--but I didn't tell you because I didn't want to ruin a good party. Will you ever forgive me?

WARREN
No.

HARRISON
It was a rhetorical question.

ELEANOR
It was a mean and stupid question.

Harrison reaches for the saucepan, but can't find it.

WARREN
Do you want help with that, Dad?

HARRISON
Do I look like an invalid?!

Warren stares at him.

WARREN
More like a cartoon invalid - a poorly traced rendering of your former self. Your blindness is proof of a merciful God, sparing you from seeing what the rest of us have to.

HARRISON
I can't believe you said that to me.

ELEANOR
Me neither. It was very well phrased.

HARRISON

And deliciously angry! Warren, I think
I felt the breeze of your swinging
balls!

WARREN

Here. Let me.

Warren takes over making the soup. He moves slowly, hurt and
overwhelmed.

ELEANOR

Warren, your father and I want to have
a dinner here. A celebration.

HARRISON

Of what, for God's sake?

ELEANOR

Of Warren and Barbara, Jeffrey and
Katie coming to visit us.

WARREN

I'm having a hard time picturing it,
Mom.

ELEANOR

Please. We would cater it for whenever
you could come out.

Eleanor watches Warren stir the soup - her eyes filling with
frustration and sympathy.

WARREN

I can't even remember the last time we
were all in a car together.

INT. GARAGE - NIGHT

WARREN - worn out, exasperated - pulls into the garage, hits
the button. But as the door squeaks closed, he leaves the
engine running.

He sits there for a moment, closes his eyes - takes a deep
breath through his nostrils - but then switches off the
engine.

INT. MILFORD HOUSE - NIGHT

WARREN turns on the light in the back room.

RED WINE still drips from the ceiling onto the carpet which
now has a HUGE STAIN.

INT. WARREN AND BARBARA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Warren climbs into bed, looks at the clock, 3:00 am. BARBARA rolls over.

WARREN

The carpet in the back room is ruined.

Nothing. She rolls again, sleeping but restless.

WARREN (CONT'D)

Unless we re-color the whole thing with a few more bottles.

She rolls over again, adjusts her pillow, agitated.

WARREN (CONT'D)

Or I blow my brains out with a shot gun. But then you've got the problem of pellets in the wood. And the skull fragments might jam the vacuum cleaner.... And life insurance won't pay out on such an obvious suicide.

She rolls on top of him - shuts him up with a long, passionate kiss.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

The bright summer sun fills the modern kitchen. BARBARA - busily prepares breakfast with nervous energy.

JEFFREY, shirtless in swim trunks now, saunters in.

BARBARA

Clothes?

JEFFREY

Work clothes.
(looks in oven)
Cinnamon buns?

BARBARA

You can have one.

JEFFREY

Spare me your charity. I don't eat that shit anymore.

He bites into an apple - grins while looking at her.

BARBARA

What?

JEFFREY

Nothing. I just figured you'd sleep in after all your whining.

BARBARA
 "Whining?" There was no *whining*.

KATIE comes in - looking disgusted.

KATIE
 It was more like *whinnying*.

JEFFREY
 (quiet, to Katie)
 Kinda blows your case, home wrecker.

She pushes his face away. WARREN comes in confused, happy.

WARREN
 I think I've got it. I think I see how
 I can make it work.

He puts an arm around Barbara's waist.

WARREN (CONT'D)
 Thank you.

BARBARA
 (turns out)
 Don't.

WARREN
 What?

KATIE
 (to Jeffrey)
 See? An outlier. A statistical
 aberration. A fleeting passion.
 (whispers)
 'Cause she saw Colin naked. My theory
 stands.

BARBARA
 What did you decide, Warren?

WARREN
 To make my next book a sequel to "A
 Pocketful of Posies." Colin said it
 ended too much on a downer, and I
 think he's right. But if the ending
 turned into a cliffhanger, it might
 boost sales for both books.

KATIE
 Wow, Dad. You really might owe him.

WARREN
Him, not you. The punishment stands.

KATIE
 Are you sure, Dad?

WARREN
Is it that complicated, Katie?

KATIE
Mom!

BARBARA
I'm right here.

KATIE
I've got a really major band
competition in Mission Viejo tonight.

BARBARA
I know. It's on the calendar.

KATIE
I want you to come.

BARBARA
Can't I just watch the video?

KATIE
I want you to volunteer. Get involved.
Meet people. Improve your life by
being a part of mine.

The DOOR BELL rings, repeatedly, desperately. Barbara slams
the fridge closed, rushes toward the door. Warren follows.

JEFFREY
Stay out of their business.

KATIE
Their business is my business. Their
marriage charade is costing me
college.

JEFFREY
I should've smothered you in your
crib.

KATIE
Box up your shit, brother. This thing
is happening.

INT. LIVING ROOM

BARBARA pulls open the door, revealing: HARRISON carrying his
disabled wife ELEANOR in his arms.

BARBARA
My God. How...?

HARRISON
Where do you want it?

ELEANOR
Choice, Harry. Real choice.

Eleanor grasps and hugs Barbara while being held by Harrison.

ELEANOR (CONT'D)
Oh, Barbara. It's been so long; and
you're still so beautiful. Your
Christmas collages don't do you
justice.

BARBARA
I've seen you since Christmas.

ELEANOR
Really? Which year?

BARBARA
(looking out the door)
How did you get here?

HARRISON
Cut the chit chat. What's in front of
me?

ELEANOR
(under breath)
A rather drab living room.

HARRISON
Steps! Count 'em out.

ELEANOR
Five until you reach the couch
(under her breath)
in desperate need of reupholstering.

Harrison walks.

ELEANOR (CONT'D)
Then right.
(he turns)
Do you still have the castor chair in
the kitchen?

Shirtless Jeffrey wheels out a home office chair.

JEFFREY
Here, Grandma.

ELEANOR
Thank you, Jeffrey. Look at you. Thin
and fit, and half-naked. Your stretch
marks have completely faded under your
tan.
(re: chair)
Oh, look. Amazing what you can get at
Costco these days.

WARREN
Mom. Dad. How did you get here?!

ELEANOR
Your father insisted on driving.

HARRISON
No. I insisted on staying home. I
lost.

WARREN
You...? *Drove...?*

HARRISON
You have a problem with that?

WARREN
You're blind!

HARRISON
I still have my peripheral vision.

WARREN
But the road is *in front of you!*

ELEANOR
If you'd listened to me, Harry,
nothing would have happened. When I
say "turn now," I mean "turn now."
And when I say "exit here"--

HARRISON
You never gave me enough warning!

WARREN
You *drove on the freeway?*

ELEANOR
Oh, there's hardly anyone on it this
early.
(takes a TRAFFIC TICKET
from her purse)
Could you read this for me? My glasses
are in my suitcase.

BARBARA
You brought a suitcase...

WARREN
This is a moving violation, Dad. You
got pulled over!

ELEANOR
"Unsafe lane change," of all the
ridiculous things.

HARRISON
We were profiled! A few gray hairs -
it's all lights and sirens.

WARREN

A cop, a policeman... an officer of the law, pulled you over, then let you go?

HARRISON

The son of a bitch thought I was drunk. I showed him!

FLASHBACK - EXT. FREEWAY - DAY

A CHP OFFICER watches HARRISON (wearing sunglasses) walk a straight line while ELEANOR looks on nervously from the passenger seat of a red 1964 CORVAIR CONVERTIBLE.

The blind old man turns with flourish, stands on one leg, faces the sky, touches his nose with each finger.

CHP OFFICER

That'll do, sir.

He writes the ticket.

HARRISON

Look. Look at that! A '52 Buick Super Estate! Did you see it?

CHP OFFICER

No, sir.

HARRISON

I could spot my old wheels a mile away. Gold trim around mahogany panels? I tell ya, I used to get a lot of "trim" between my panels.

The Officer finishes writing the ticket.

CHP OFFICER

Sir, your wife?

HARRISON

I don't care. Best thing about being old. You just don't give a fuck about anything. You can flip off the whole world!

He does, in every direction.

CHP OFFICER

Kind of like being a police officer. You remind me of my dad.

The officer holds up the ticket. Harrison reaches for it and misses - his hand finally finding it.

HARRISON

I promise perfect lane changes for the rest of my life - because if I listen to her again, it will be my death.

Harrison gets in his car, speeds into a near miss. The officer watches the car correct and over-correct, then drive straight down the lane.

BACK TO SCENE

Warren and Barbara look horrified - Jeffrey enthralled.

JEFFREY

Grandpa. You're my hero.

BARBARA

Warren will drive you home.

ELEANOR

When the time comes.

JEFFREY

You look disability in the eye and said "suck on this!"

BARBARA

When will "the time" be coming?

ELEANOR

I need to see an orthopaedic specialist at UCLA. For my crushed disc.

HARRISON

"Dr. Wakefield," the Jesus of Westwood, will make her walk again.

WARREN

I thought you gave up on that, Mom.

ELEANOR

Gave up? On something that might free me of this cruel bondsman?

She's pointing at Harrison. He gives her the finger.

BARBARA

You have an appointment with this "Dr. Wakefield?"

ELEANOR

Oh no. He's booked up for months.

BARBARA

Months.

ELEANOR

He's bound to have a cancellation; I need to be nearby and prepared.

KATIE

(aside to Barbara)

Mom, be kind to yourself - leave this mess and drive me to my competition.

ELEANOR

In the meantime, I can visit my grandchildren in their prime. Before they wither under life's cruelty.

EXT. MILFORD HOUSE - DAY

With wide, happy eyes, KATIE watches from her mother's car WARREN and BARBARA argue.

BARBARA

Do what's necessary. Drive them home safely, then drive their car off a cliff.

WARREN

Would you prefer I get out first?

BARBARA

Your choice.

She gets in the car and drives off.

INT. BARBARA'S CAR - DAY

BARBARA drives the freeway with fingers clenched to steering wheel.

BARBARA

I should've just gone out to visit them. Put up with her intellectualized abuse one hour once a month.

KATIE rifles through her mother's PURSE - grabs a CELL PHONE.

KATIE

"Pissed off" is a good look on you, Mom.

Barbara throws her a cross glance. Katie takes a picture with the cell phone.

BARBARA

Why did you do that?

KATIE

For your profile picture.

BARBARA
I don't need a profile picture.

KATIE
Oh, you so need one.

BARBARA
Don't play with my phone.

KATIE
I'm e-mailing you the picture. It means a lot to me you're volunteering, Mom. I think it'll mean a lot to you, too.

She finishes with the phone, puts it in her mother's purse.

EXT. CONDO POOL - DAY

JEFFREY crouches low in the pool water, his eyes peering over the surface fixed on a

COLLEGE-AGED GIRL

beautiful and laying out a bright towel over a faded lounge chair.

BOY'S VOICE
Every second you look at her I'm going to deduct from what my mom pays you.

JEFFREY
Worth every penny, don't you think?

The boy is ETHAN, seven years old, sitting cross-legged at the pool's edge, STAPLED PAPERS on his lap.

ETHAN
What if I drown while you're distracted?

JEFFREY
Have to be in water to drown.

ETHAN
You have to teach me to swim before I can be in water. You haven't even looked at the articles. There are two schools on head position for the Australian Crawl.

Jeffrey cups water in his hands, drains it over Ethan's head.

JEFFREY
"Wet" is the only school for head position.

ETHAN
God! Jeffrey, the papers!

Jeffrey dunks all the papers in the pool, rips them up.

JEFFREY
Get in.

ETHAN
No!

JEFFREY
Get in and trust me. I won't let a drop of water smear your make-up.

ETHAN
I'm not wearing make-up.

JEFFREY
Then you shouldn't care.

Jeffrey grabs the boy around the waist, pulls him into the water. He climbs up Jeffrey's head as if pulled into an acid bath.

ETHAN
Stop! You're killing me!!! HELP!!!

JEFFREY
No one's coming. See? The world is bored with your extreme carefulness. It wants a bold, new Ethan.

Ethan calms while Jeffrey takes him to the pool's center.

JEFFREY (CONT'D)
The only thing you can do is to finally lean your head back and relax your body.

Jeffrey holds the boy's head tight, but lets go his body.

JEFFREY (CONT'D)
Chin up. There. Trust the water. Let it hold you.
(the boy tightens)
Relax. I'm not letting you go. I promise.

Ethan slowly relaxes - spreads his arms and legs, and floats.

JEFFREY (CONT'D)
(whispers)
I'm not letting you go.

Jeffrey notices the College Girl has sat up to look at him. Their eyes meet, she doesn't look away.

There's magic in the moment until:

TWO SMALL BOYS run into the condo's pool area--

BOYS
Captain Jeffrey!!!

--followed by their mother PATTI, a stylish, red-haired thirtyish woman who dresses up for her boys' lesson--

--and now notices the College Girl looking at Jeffrey.

The boys *leap into the water* - making waves - scaring Ethan who claws his way up Jeffrey.

JEFFREY
Aaaugh!!

PATTI
Jeffrey! Help them!

The SMALL BOYS are flailing, gasping, drowning (they can't swim yet). Jeffrey grabs both of them while Ethan still clings to his face.

A tree of child flesh - he carries the small boys to where they can stand in the shallow end--

--then slowly loosens Ethan's death grip, whispers:

JEFFREY
Did I break my promise?

Ethan is too scared to answer. The College Girl approaches with a towel, wraps it round Ethan.

COLLEGE GIRL
That was amazing, Ethan. Mom is going to be so thrilled.

Ethan runs off, wrapped in his towel. The College Girl stays looking at Jeffrey, dizzy under her gaze.

JEFFREY
Hi.

COLLEGE GIRL
You were kinda great with him.

JEFFREY
His fifth lesson and the first time in the water.

COLLEGE GIRL
He's been talking about you nonstop. Hey... Are you at all related to the artist "Harrison Milford?"

JEFFREY

Yeah, he's my father's father. My grandfather, I mean.

COLLEGE GIRL

He was a big name in California art.

JEFFREY

Was?

COLLEGE GIRL

Tragic what happened to him. I mean, there's a kind of Rothkoesque romance to it. But I'm sorry for you.

(seems nervous)

I'm Maggie, by the way, Ethan's sister. I'm majoring in Art History at Berkeley. I'd love to talk to you about Harrison Milford's work.

JEFFREY

I would love to talk to you, too. About his work.

Patti - who has been watching from her lounge under the umbrella - steps between them with a SEALED ENVELOPE.

PATTI

For your *birthday picnic*. List, coupons, and cash.

JEFFREY

Oh... Thanks.

PATTI

I'll slip it under your towel.

College Girl MAGGIE looks between Patti and Jeffrey, grins.

PATTI (CONT'D)

The lesson, Jeffrey! Don't dilly dally.

Jeffrey grabs a KICKBOARD slams it on the water.

JEFFREY

All right, pirates. Time to walk the plank!

BOYS

We wanna find the booty! Where's the booty?

MAGGIE

Try under the umbrella.

Maggie winks at Jeffrey as she walks past Patti who sits under the umbrella.

CLOSE ON - A MAN PRUNING TREES

muscle-bound and tattooed, staring hatefully at Jeffrey while shaping hedges in the common area with giant SNAPPING SHEERS.

He catches Jeffrey's eye, shares a moment of understanding.

INT. MILFORD KITCHEN - DAY

ELEANOR sits with her work spread out on the kitchen table.

She stares at the LAPTOP SCREEN:

Southern California Arts Newsletter
"Harrison Milford
Dead at 78."

ELEANOR

Uh oh...

CLOSE ON "*apparent suicide*" and "*found hanging*"

ELEANOR (CONT'D)

Oh dear.

She looks across the living room at

HARRISON

touching ART WORK on the bookcase.

He holds a SMALL SCULPTURE of monkeys on a branch. It is beautiful and simple and he feels its every contour while stands alone by a shelf full of other artworks.

HARRISON

Not bad... A bit pretentious - a whiff of art school.

He touches a small BRONZE OWL.

HARRISON (CONT'D)

Ah, 1971. Fuck me sideways, it was so easy to get 'em right then.

ELEANOR (O.S.)

Warren?! Did you get me an appointment?! Warren!

HARRISON

(looking skyward)

Dear God. Why didn't you let my ears fail first?

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

ELEANOR pushes herself around on the castor chair, grabbing counters and doorknobs, pulling and pushing her way along down the hall to a back room.

ELEANOR
Warren?!

INT. HOME OFFICE - DAY

WARREN stares at ELEANOR through the WEB OF FINGERS on his face.

WARREN
I'm working on it.

ELEANOR
You don't look like you're working on it. You looked stymied and stifled.

He stares at her - unmoved.

ELEANOR (CONT'D)
I'll remind you later.

She pulls on the door knob to wheel herself out.

Warren calmly grabs the throw pillow from the back of the chair. He takes a deep breath and screams into the pillow.

EXT. COMMUNITY COLLEGE FIELD - DAY (DUSK)

The MUFFLED SCREAM becomes a HIGH SCHOOL MARCHING BAND taking the field with a percussion intro from the pit.

COLIN plays Marimba while KATIE marches past with upright clarinet in the shuffling formation.

ANNOUNCER
Bay City High School presents "A
*Tribute to Shostakovich - The Early
Years!*"

BARBARA stands at the top of the bleachers, looking down at the field show - a slight glow of pride in her face. She seems impressed and pleased to be here.

She glances over, see a MAN staring at her from the next aisle. This is KARSON VAN METER - very handsome in a polished way, with a strong chin, a perfect nose, and wavy blond hair.

His smile reveals straight, white teeth. Two OTHER WOMEN in the stands also look at Karson; and now look at Barbara.

EXT. COMPETITION STAGING AREA - DAY

The dark parking lot is filled with BUSES and BAND TRAILERS - the air buzzing with light from noisy gas generators - the MUSICIANS putting away instruments, hats, and uniforms.

A FOOD line has formed for the teenage musicians.

BAND MOTHER

We have a hundred and thirty hats and a hundred and thirty feathers that need to be separated from the hundred and thirty hats before they're put into the hundred and thirty boxes.

BARBARA watches all this from the edge of a scene she seems reluctant to penetrate.

BARBARA

Where do the feathers go?

BAND MOTHER

In the feather bag! Quills together in bunches of fifteen. Barbara, this is Karson Van Meter.

KARSON extends his hand with suave over-confidence.

BARBARA

Oh, hi. I suppose it's time we met.

KARSON

I'm happy it's time.

BARBARA

I meant, because of our kids.
(on his confused look)
Katie and Colin.

KARSON

Of course. Katie and Colin. I got your text message.

BARBARA

My what?

KARSON

Don't tell me you forgot. You'll break my heart.

BAND MOTHER

If we're not moving, we're not working! Chop-chop, people!

KARSON

What do you say we go back and try to find that feather bag?

EXT. BAND COMPETITION STAGING AREA - NIGHT

BARBARA follows KARSON into the dark between the busses. She notices as

A BAND BOY lifts a BAND GIRL into an open BACK WINDOW of a BUS, jump ups, and rolls himself inside.

BARBARA
I watched your show: "Who's the Cuckold?"

KARSON
And you're still talking to me?

BARBARA
I thought I should. Because of our kids.

KARSON
Them again.

BARBARA
They seem pretty serious. At least Katie is.

KARSON
You know I pitched the idea as a joke, but the network bought it anyway.

BARBARA
I'm glad to hear you say that. You said I sent you a text message?

He looks at his phone.

KARSON
You're 310-555-8793?

BARBARA
Yeah...?

KARSON
You don't remember what you said?

BARBARA
Remind me.

KARSON
All right.

He motions her back behind the bus.

INT. SCHOOL BUS - NIGHT

The trespassing BAND GIRL is laid back on a seat in the bus, playing with her phone, frustrated.

BAND GIRL
Did you even look at the diagram I
sent you?

BAND BOY (O.S.)
(muffled, from below)
Hell-yeah. A lot.

BAND GIRL
Upside down?

BAND BOY
Does it matter?

BAND GIRL
Yes! It's bull's-eye or bullshit! How
would you like it if I sucked your
knee?

The BAND BOY lifts his head up from under her skirt.

TEENAGE BOY
Would you?

She hears someone outside the bus.

TEENAGE GIRL
Sssshhhh!

TEENAGE BOY
What?

She pushes his head back down, glances out the window, sees
the shadows of TWO ADULTS.

EXT. BETWEEN BUSES - NIGHT

BARBARA follows KARSON in the darkness between the busses.

BARBARA
All right. What did I say?

Karson looks at her, then grabs and kisses her passionately.
She doesn't push him away, but lets her arms hang -

- until she grabs hold of him and returns the kiss.

INT. BUS - CONTINUOUS

BAND GIRL
Whoa... They're going at it.

The TEENAGE GIRL holds her iPhone up so that she can see the
two adults making out on the video screen.

BAND GIRL (CONT'D)
That's good. Right there...

She hits the "record" button, never taking her eyes off the grown-up make-out session outside.

EXT. BUS - CONTINUOUS

Karson separates to look at BARBARA in the dark.

KARSON
Your text said: *"I've wanted you to kiss me since I first saw you. Please don't make me wait another day."*

BARBARA
I didn't say that. I never would've said that.

KARSON
Why not?

BARBARA
I'm sorry. I never would have written a message like that.

KARSON
Who did? Why didn't you stop me?

Barbara steps away, flustered, thinking, angry.

BARBARA
Let me see it.

He shows her the phone. Her eyes burn, reading it.

BARBARA (CONT'D)
Let's just pretend it didn't happen, okay?

KARSON
Barbara, I'll lie to anyone and everyone for you, but not to myself.

He kisses her again.

INT. CVS DRUGSTORE - NIGHT

A HAND BASKET

carries a disposable CHECKERED TABLE CLOTH, plastic MARGARITA CUPS, MARGARITA MIXER, and PLASTIC PICNIC UTENSILS.

JEFFREY looks at a handwritten LIST - then looks nervously at the CONDOMS and LUBES on the display in front of him.

AT THE COUNTER

Jeffrey lays down coupons for the pretty, young CHECKER GIRL.

CHECKER GIRL
A picnic without food?

JEFFREY
She's bringing it.

He empties Patti's envelope full of SMALL BILLS and CHANGE.
The Checker Girl counts it.

CHECKER GIRL
Wow. Perfect to the penny.

JEFFREY
She's very... anal.

The Checker Girl drops Astroglide and Condoms into the bag.

CHECKER GIRL
I see.

INT. BARBARA'S CAR - NIGHT

BARBARA drives the dark road home with fierce intensity.

KATIE
Are you sure you didn't write it?
What did the text say?

BARBARA
You know what it said.

KATIE
How would I know? What does it say on
your phone?

BARBARA
It was erased from my phone after it
was sent!

KATIE
And you're blaming me. Mom, I swear I
didn't do anything.

BARBARA
You swear.

KATIE
On my mother's life.

BARBARA
I can't fathom how easy it is for you
to say that.

KATIE
It's the truth.

BARBARA
I can check the cell phone records
online. It will show exactly when
texts were sent from my phone.

KATIE
Oh.

BARBARA
Oh?

KATIE
All right, it's a lie. Mom, I was just
trying to help you.

BARBARA
Help me?

KATIE
You're stuck in a bad marriage with a
man for whom you have no passion.

BARBARA
"For whom?"

KATIE
Yes. Object after a preposition.

BARBARA
And that "object" is your father.

KATIE
Mom, I want you to be free, happy, and
fulfilled.

BARBARA
What business is that of yours?

KATIE
You're pissed off all the time.
You're mean to Daddy. Daddy's mean to
me. Colin's father is such a great guy
and he has so many women going after
him. I thought you could beat 'em all,
and we all might, me and Colin might--

BARBARA
--Might what?! Live together in an
expensive hotel?

KATIE
Why not? They've got a great pool!

She slams on the brakes.

EXT. BARBARA'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

BARBARA gets out, opens KATIE'S DOOR on the highway.

BARBARA
Out.

KATIE
(steps out)
Are you making me walk home?

BARBARA
Turn around.

KATIE
Why?

BARBARA
Turn the fuck around!

Katie turns around tentatively - watches her mother raise her hand and spanks her as hard as she can.

KATIE
Ouuuwww! God! Mom. That's child abuse.

BARBARA
Report it. *Please*. Get yourself taken away.

She spanks her again, and then again.

BARBARA (CONT'D)
That'll do for now.

KATIE
(rubbing her butt)
I know why you're so mad. You kissed him, didn't you? You kissed him and you liked it.

Barbara turns her around, and spanks her again.

KATIE (CONT'D)
Oh, yeah. You definitely liked it.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

WARREN (in running shorts and shirt) grills STEAKS on an indoor grill in the kitchen while he speaks on a BLUE TOOTH.

WARREN
Just have your friend get me an appointment. I'll do anything - I'll even read his novel.

His phone beeps - he looks, sees it's "Charlotte."

WARREN (CONT'D)
 Listen, I gotta take this. I think you
 appreciate my desperation.
 (clicks over)
 Charlotte.

CHARLOTTE (O.S.)
 Bad news, Mr. Milford. The old folks
 have disappeared.

ELEANOR
 Warren! The delivery truck is here!

CHARLOTTE (O.S.)
 Is that your mom? How did they get
 themselves out there?

WARREN
 A blessed miracle.

CHARLOTTE (O.S.)
 I have a layover in L.A. tomorrow
 night. You want to get away from this
 miracle and give yourself a boost of
 inspiration?

Warren doesn't answer, just breathes.

CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)
 Moan once for "yes."

WARREN
 Yes.

CHARLOTTE (O.S.)
 I'll text you the hotel address.
 Bring a toothbrush and an alibi.

CLICK. Warren stands there, not noticing the GRILL SMOKE.

ELEANOR (O.S.)
 Warren! Your meat is smoking!

EXT. HOUSE - NIGHT

JEFFREY locks his car as BARBARA pulls into the driveway.
 KATIE jump out and walks into the house with stiff legs.

BARBARA
 I spanked your sister.

JEFFREY
 Better late than never.

BARBARA
 I have to warn you: I enjoyed it.

JEFFREY
Better still.

BARBARA
Shit... Shit.

Jeffrey follows his mother's eyes to a DELIVERY TRUCK emblazoned with the ad: "*Stay-At-Home*" *Medical Supplies and Furniture*.

The DELIVERY MAN drives an expensive-looking MOTORIZED WHEEL CHAIR down the back ramp of the truck.

JEFFREY
Wow. This is looking permanent.

Barbara marches into the house-

INT. HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

-past HARRISON holding ELEANOR in the front entry.

ELEANOR
Step left, Harry.

Harrison does. Barbara marches into the kitchen where WARREN puts down his cell phone, turns the steaks over with a spatula.

WARREN
Calm down. I'm on it.

BARBARA
Warren. You have an erection. While *cooking*.

Warren looks down.

WARREN
Well. Look at that. Mind taking care of it, honey?

BARBARA
You're driving them home tomorrow.

WARREN
I am?

BARBARA
Yes.

WARREN
Or *what*? You'll withhold your affections? Act cold and bitchy? Complain all the time? You're running out of triggers to pull, sweetheart.

She grabs inside his shorts and pulls hard.

WARREN (CONT'D)

Fuck...!

She heads back into the living room where the DELIVERY MAN has finished bringing in the booty.

DELIVERY MAN

We got an Invacare M91 power chair.
We have three sets of toilet grab bars,
two sets of shower grab bars.

(to Harrison)

Make sure you drill into the stud, not the drywall, otherwise it's shebang!
Bye-bye, grandma.

In Harrison's arms, Eleanor hands the man a QUARTER.

ELEANOR

From "grandma." Bye-bye!

She slams the door on the man. Harrison puts Eleanor in the new power chair. She moves it backwards and forwards.

ELEANOR (CONT'D)

Oh, this is a good one.

HARRISON

Put away the valuables! Pad the walls!

Eleanor moves the chair around. She comes alongside Barbara marching through.

ELEANOR

Aren't you eating with us, Barbara?

BARBARA

It's ten o'clock.

ELEANOR

A fashionable suppertime in better circles.

Barbara starts up the stairs. Eleanor grabs her wrist.

BARBARA

Hey! Let go of me!

ELEANOR

Darling, I need your help in the bathroom.

Eleanor pulls Barbara (struggling to free her wrist) into the small bathroom, shuts the door by reversing the power chair.

Barbara raises her free hand to strike her.

ELEANOR (CONT'D)
Honestly, Barbara. What will that solve?

BARBARA
Everything.

ELEANOR
I'm going to tell you something I'm certain is true: You don't appreciate my son.

BARBARA
Is that why you're here? To save our marriage.

ELEANOR
Barbara, my dear. Only you can save your marriage. Do it for yourself. Warren is the kind of dependable man you want when you get sick; and you will get sick, or disabled. You're not as young as you think.

BARBARA
All right. Can I go now without hurting you?

ELEANOR
You remind me of King Lear's eldest daughter.

BARBARA
Does she get sick and depend on her loving husband?

ELEANOR
She stabs herself out of despair because she didn't respect her loving husband, but instead lusted after a self-promoting bastard.

BARBARA
I'm a person, Eleanor. Not a character in one of your essays.

ELEANOR
Art is instructive, Barbara. Learn the lesson. Don't stab yourself.

Eleanor lets go her wrist. Barbara reaches behind the power chair, pulls the plug.

ELEANOR (CONT'D)
Oh, Barbara. That's petty.

BARBARA
And effective. Good night.

Barbara kisses Eleanor on the head, turns off the lights.

EXT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

BARBARA shuts the bathroom door, breezes past HARRISON and JEFFREY standing by the stairs.

ELEANOR (O.S.)
Harry! She unplugged me!

JEFFREY
Do you want to help her?

HARRISON
Help who? Keep talking.

JEFFREY
Well, this girl, Maggie, gave me
condolences for your passing.

HARRISON
Passing what?

JEFFREY
Life. She thought you were dead.

ELEANOR (O.S.)
Harry! I'm stuck and I can't see!

HARRISON
Welcome to *my* life!

JEFFREY
I just thought I should tell you.

HARRISON
Is this girl a looker?

JEFFREY
Oh yeah. College. Berkeley. Outta my
league.

HARRISON
Then expand your league. Act forlorn
over my death. Seek her comfort, then
find out what the hell she's talking
about.

ELEANOR (O.S.)
Harry! I can hear you! You're not dead
yet!

JEFFREY
Thanks. For the advice. I'll let you
know what I find out.

HARRISON
 Every detail. This death thing could
 be good for me.

He pats Jeffrey on the back, gropes for the bathroom door.

HARRISON (CONT'D)
 Eleanor, my love. I'm so sorry. I had
 no idea you were trapped.

INT. JEFFREY'S ROOM - NIGHT

On his computer, JEFFREY looks at a Facebook Profile for
 "Maggie Peterson."

CLOSE ON - PHOTOGRAPHS OF MAGGIE

They start out being staid photos of campus life, then become
 more party-like, seductive, risqué - almost pornographic.

A VIDEO opens: MAGGIE looking seductively into a web cam.

MAGGIE
 Jeffrey. Come to *my* picnic instead.
 I'll let you sample whatever's on the
 blanket.

JEFFREY

sleeps at his desk - his hand still on the mouse

INT. JEFFREY'S ROOM - DAY

JEFFREY wakes to SAWING and the SNAPPING of CLIPPING SHEERS
 outside his bedroom window.

He jumps to his feet awake. He looks out the window - sees
 the same WHITE TRUCK drive away fast.

INT. HOME OFFICE - DAY

WARREN struggles to write. He types a sentence. Reads it.
 Types a sentence. Reads it.

His PHONE buzzes with a text message: **9402 CENTURY WEST, ROOM
 234 ;-)**

KATIE (O.S.)
 Jeffrey! Wait! I need a ride!

WARREN types in the address into GOOGLE MAPS moves along
 "Street View," turns a corner to the entrance of the "REGENT
 HOTEL" - then turns into the hotel LOBBY--

--where the Street View LINE continues past HOTEL GUESTS frozen in time while checking in.

With the mouse he turns toward ROOM 234. It opens to a FOUR-POST BED turned down, a bottle of wine on the night stand.

He turns toward the bathroom where CHARLOTTE'S NAKED FORM is frustratingly opaque in the steamed-up mirror.

KATIE (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Oh my God! It looks like a dick!

EXT. THE HOUSE

KATIE and JEFFREY look at the FICUS TREE where a SINGLE BRANCH has been trimmed of all its foliage.

BARBARA
What happened? Do we have another diseased tree?

Barbara leans her head out of a WINDOW on the second floor.

KATIE
There's a note hanging from the end of it.

Jeffrey leaps up to grab it. He misses. He jumps again.

BARBARA
What are you doing?

He grabs hold the BARE BRANCH, but it breaks off and falls hard to the ground - Jeffrey jumping back to avoid getting hit.

KATIE
Wow. That was intentional.

JEFFREY
No shit.

KATIE
They sawed it clear though except the last bit.

Jeffrey unfolds the PIECE OF PAPER.

JEFFREY
(reading)
"Get the picture?"

KATIE
I get the picture. An angry arborist wants to break off your dick.

JEFFREY

Why?

KATIE

Fuck if I know. I'm sure the thing
couldn't be more harmless.

Barbara comes running out the front door - wraps her arms
around Jeffrey

BARBARA

Oh my God.

KATIE

Yuck. Mom.

Warren comes out - looks aghast at the broken branch.

JEFFREY

It's nothing. It was a stupid prank.
Probably some friends from the team.
I'll clean it up when I get back from
work.

WARREN

Your friends are good with a saw.

Jeffrey stares at it, scared.

INT. JEFFREY'S CAR - DAY

JEFFREY drives with KATIE through the twists and turns of
residential Sunset Blvd.

KATIE

Oh my God, are you kidding? Now you
really gotta fuck her. Like today.

JEFFREY

She won't before my 18th birthday.

KATIE

Oh, please. Get her alone somewhere,
in the laundry room, the minivan, and
kiss her. She'll forget staying legal.

JEFFREY

Why bother? I mean, what's the hurry?

KATIE

He's thrown down the gauntlet.
Requested an interview on the field of
honor. Turn left here.

He does - into winding, expensive streets.

JEFFREY
Where is this hotel?

KATIE
Hidden. Colin's dad has women he barely knows trying to know him barely. He's hot, loaded, and available.

JEFFREY
Nice.

KATIE
You have to respond, Jeffrey. Mark your territory. Be aggressive.

JEFFREY
Against a saw-wielding barbarian?

KATIE
Yes! Stand up for civilization.

Jeffrey stops at a stop sign, looks at Katie.

JEFFREY
You're trying to get me killed.

KATIE
I'm trying to get you to live, brother.

JEFFREY
So I'll be dead and you'll get my college money.

KATIE
What college money? Dad's broke.

JEFFREY
So Mom and Dad will divorce because parents who lose a child--

KATIE
--have a 70% chance of splitting within a year, 90% if the child is murdered.

JEFFREY
You little bitch.

KATIE
I'm just trying to protect your honor. Someone has to.

JEFFREY
Get out.

KATIE
I was anyway. We're here.

Katie points to an ivy-covered sign that discreetly announces "The Hilgard Hotel." She sticks out her tongue.

JEFFREY

Out!

KATIE

Do it, Jeffrey. Even if he kills you,
you'll feel better about yourself.

She runs off with a grin. Jeffrey peels out an angry U-turn.

EXT. HILGARD HOTEL GROUNDS - DAY

With a spring in her step, KATIE makes her way through labyrinth of paths through the gardened grounds of the hotel. She knocks on Bungalow #49.

KARSON VAN METER opens the door - smiles looking at her.

KATIE

Hi.

KARSON

You look good.

KATIE

Um... Thanks.

She comes in, looks round.

KATIE (CONT'D)

Oh, this is much better.

KARSON

Better than what?

KATIE

The last place.

KARSON

You saw the last place?

KATIE

Yes. God. Don't you remember?

KARSON

(closing the door)
Regrettably, no.

He stands there looking at her from head to toe.

KATIE

What?

KARSON

Can I get you a drink?

KATIE
Yeah. Sure. Whatever you got.

KARSON
There's fresh orange juice from
breakfast.

KATIE
Cool.

KARSON
You mind if I make it more
interesting?

KATIE
Sure. Whatever. It's just orange
juice.

KARSON
Exactly.

Karson pours the drinks in a little kitchenette.

KATIE
(looking around)
Where's Colin?

KARSON
My son? In this place he has his own
place, across the walkway.

KATIE
Oh, good news. I like that a lot.

KARSON
I'm glad you like that.

He hands her an ORANGE JUICE. They clink glasses, drink.
She spits it out.

KATIE
Shit! What's in this?!

KARSON
Grey Goose, for God's sake.

KATIE
Shit-shit-shit! What were you
thinking?

KARSON
I was thinking you deserved the best.

COLIN comes in from outside?

COLIN
Katie, what are you doing *here*?

A beautiful CALL GIRL walks up behind Colin, looks in curiously.

CALL GIRL
Is this Mr. Karson's place?

KATIE
Yes. I think this was meant for you.

Katie puts the drink in the woman's hand, walks out.

Colin glares at his father, follows his girlfriend. Karson takes her drink.

KARSON
Let me clean that for you.

CALL GIRL
Please. And maybe yourself, too?

INT. COLIN'S BUNGALOW - DAY

KATIE paces the luxurious but teen-sloppy hotel bungalow.

KATIE
How could he think I was her? Doesn't he remember me?

COLIN
He's old, you know. The brain gets confused.

KATIE
Why's he even doing it with her?

COLIN
Because he can. Let's stop talking about my dad. It's a real turn-off.

He tries to kiss her, but she worms away.

KATIE
How far would he have gone with me?

COLIN
As far as you let him, but you wouldn't have let him. C'mon. Look at where we are. It ain't no mattress in the attic.

KATIE
But we had dinner together. Didn't he recognize me?

COLIN
It was dark and he's old. Can you let it go?

(MORE)

COLIN (CONT'D)
 (wraps his arms around
 her)
 You're with me now.

He kisses her passionately, and she gives in till his phone chirps. He checks it.

COLIN (CONT'D)
 Text from my dad.

KATIE
 He's texting while she's riding him?
 What's it say? "I'm sorry?"

COLIN
 "Have K tell her mom I'm sending her a
 present."

KATIE
 Really...

Colin kisses her again, runs his hand up her sweater.

KATIE (CONT'D)
 Wow. Colin. You think he likes her?

Colin nods, unsnaps her bra.

KATIE (CONT'D)
 What do you think he sent her?

INT. MILFORD HOUSE - DAY

BARBARA cuts open a package revealing a CAR GPS and a POST-IT NOTE on which is handwritten: "*Turn Me On - Tonight 7:30 pm*"

She puts her finger on the GPS switch when the WHIR of an electric wheelchair interrupts.

ELEANOR
 What has arrived?

Barbara closes the box, puts it on the chair under the table where PHOTOGRAPHS are laid out for her collage.

ELEANOR (CONT'D)
 It was messengered?

BARBARA
 Apparently.

ELEANOR
 Apparently someone wanted you to have
 that right away.

ELEANOR wheels around toward the package on the chair.
 Barbara grabs it, wraps tape around it from the dispenser.

ELEANOR (CONT'D)
Well. It must be very private.

BARBARA
Private. I like that word.

ELEANOR
"A private life will lead thee to a private death."

BARBARA
Who said that one?

ELEANOR
I'll tell you if you show me what's in the box.

Barbara picks up the box and carries it upstairs.

ELEANOR (CONT'D)
(calling up)
Is it sex toys?

No answer. Eleanor motors back to the table.

ELEANOR (CONT'D)
Look at all these pictures. Why did you put a different body with Jeffrey's head?

Barbara comes rushing down.

BARBARA
That is none of your business!

ELEANOR
Do all these photographs remind you of your children when they needed you most?

Barbara grabs at the photo. Eleanor doesn't let go.

ELEANOR (CONT'D)
It's difficult giving up their dependance, isn't it? That warm feeling of being everything to them? It gets cold when they're not so cuddly anymore.

BARBARA
Let go, Eleanor. You're ripping my son.

ELEANOR
No. I'm holding the part that isn't him.

BARBARA
My God, you're a vandal.

ELEANOR
I'll let go if you tell me what was in
the box.

Barbara takes a pair of scissors and cut the picture in half.

ELEANOR (CONT'D)
Oh, Barbara. A telling choice, don't
you think?

Barbara picks up all the photos, scraps, scissors, and
envelope and puts them away in a plastic box.

EXT. CONDO POOL - DAY

JEFFREY stands in waist-deep water holding ETHAN by the head,
relaxed, floating on his back.

JEFFREY
You're safe. I'm not going to let you
go.

Ethan arches back, settles in to the water.

But Jeffrey now notices HANK staring down at him from the
balcony of Patti's apartment.

He SNAPS his SHEERS loudly.

ETHAN
Your hands are shaking.

JEFFREY
Sorry.

ETHAN
Let go.

JEFFREY
Really?

ETHAN
Yes.

Jeffrey does, leaving Ethan to float on his own.

JEFFREY
My God. You're doing it.

ETHAN
Move away.

Jeffrey steps aside. Ethan takes a deep breath, rolls onto
his face, puts his arms out in front, and kicks to the side.

JEFFREY
Shit... Where did you learn to do
that?

ETHAN
I don't know. I just saw myself doing
it and then did it.

JEFFREY
Can you see yourself doing it again?

Ethan pushes off from the wall toward Jeffrey, kicking with
his head down.

JEFFREY (CONT'D)
I can't believe this. Just last week
you were afraid to get your head wet.
Dude, you're my hero.

ETHAN
I want to show my mom.

JEFFREY
We will.

ETHAN
Right now.

Ethan leaps off Jeffrey and kicks face down to the side -
climbs out and make his way to his condo sopping wet.

Jeffrey stands in the water, happy, satisfied, when the
something hits him in the head.

It's a RED GRAPE. Another splashes near him. He looks up at a
HALF-BANANA coming at him like a missile.

He dodges it - sees MAGGIE come through the gate.

MAGGIE
My mom left already.

JEFFREY
That sucks.

MAGGIE
Yeah. He was excited to show her.

More grapes and banana halves fall on Jeffrey.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)
Shouldn't you come in out of the
fruit?

She extends her hand, helps Jeffrey climb out. They take
shelter under a patio umbrella. Grapes hit the umbrella.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

My mom just saw a viral video of her boyfriend kissing some woman behind a school bus. She ran out to win him back.

JEFFREY

Is he worth it?

MAGGIE

He's rich and good looking. Or he's good looking because he's rich. Everything about him is purchased.

A silent moment, they notice they're standing close, Jeffrey dripping wet - fruit still hitting the umbrella like rain.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

I don't think he likes your picnic plan.

JEFFREY

It's not my plan.

They stand close for an awkward moment.

JEFFREY (CONT'D)

You said something about my grandpa Harry. About how he died...?

MAGGIE

You don't know?

JEFFREY

My parents treat me like I'm five.

MAGGIE

Suicide. He hung himself from a Mulberry tree because he was despondent about being blind.

JEFFREY

They definitely never told me that.

MAGGIE

Very Hemingwayesque. His stuff has shot through the roof, not just 'cause he died, but the pathos of the story.

JEFFREY

He's definitely despondent. *Was*.

MAGGIE

I tried bidding on a few small sculptures, but lost as soon as I pressed "send."

JEFFREY

I'm sorry.

MAGGIE

Bad for me, good for his legacy.
Shame he's not alive to enjoy it.

INT. MILFORD HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

HARRISON turns his cheek close to an iPad JEFFREY holds so he can see it in his peripheral vision.

HARRISON

Ahhh. "Nude in Repose." I haven't seen that piece since your grandmother's thighs looked like that.

JEFFREY

It just sold for *eighty-seven thousand dollars*, grandpa.

Harrison teeters. Jeffrey catches him.

JEFFREY (CONT'D)

Apparently galleries are emptying out their closets looking for anything by Harrison Milford. Everyone wants in on the feeding frenzy.

HARRISON

I want in! I got a whole God damn studio full of this shit!

JEFFREY

We gotta get it outta there and on the market.

HARRISON

Wait... What's this?
(reading out of eye
corner)
"Recently deceased?"

JEFFREY

You can read that?

HARRISON

I still have my peripheral vision!

JEFFREY

Well, it turns out you hung yourself from a Mulberry tree.

HARRISON

I don't remember doing that.

JEFFREY

Apparently, you're dead.

ELEANOR (O.S.)

Harry! Where are you?!

Harrison grins.

HARRISON
I think I might like being dead.

The HOUSE PHONE RINGS. Harrison slams his hand on the table.

HARRISON (CONT'D)
Seagull and Nymph! I want to repair
it, sell it, and give it all to some
stupid charity.

JEFFREY
How about the "Jeffrey Milford College
Fund?"

HARRISON
Perfect. I'll show that bitch.

JEFFREY
If you weren't my grandpa, I'd punch
you in the nose for saying that.

HARRISON
Punch your heart out. Ha ha! I'm dead.

He grins. The PHONE continues RINGING.

ELEANOR
Is no one going to answer that?

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

BARBARA grabs the phone off the cradle.

BARBARA
Hello?

INT. WARREN'S OFFICE - DAY

WARREN sits staring at empty air when BARBARA comes in
holding PHONE.

BARBARA
Watching your ship come in? Or sink?

WARREN
Charlotte says I need to do something
bold and reckless to get back on
track.

BARBARA
Strange advice from an airline pilot.

WARREN
I'll be gone this afternoon.

BARBARA

Where?

WARREN

A hotel near the airport. To help my writing.

BARBARA

A motivational seminar?

WARREN

Yeah.

BARBARA

Whatever it takes.

She hands him the phone.

MAN'S VOICE

(over phone)

I hope "whatever it takes" can wait!

WARREN

(into phone)

Wait for what, Frank?

MAN'S VOICE

You may want to blow me for this, but all I'm asking is you read my manuscript by Friday.

INT. LIVING ROOM

WARREN rushes out from his office.

WARREN

How fast can you be ready to go?

ELEANOR

I can't be fast to go anywhere?

WARREN

Dr. Wakefield has an opening in forty-five minutes.

ELEANOR

He very well may, but I can't be ready. Tomorrow would be more convenient.

WARREN

There is no tomorrow. You want to see him, or not?

ELEANOR

Okay... Where's Harry?

HARRISON comes down the stairs helped by JEFFREY. The old man has a RED SCARF over his head, large-eyed WOMEN'S SUNGLASSES, and a leather jacket.

ELEANOR (CONT'D)
Dear God, Harry. What are you trying to prove?

HARRISON
That you're wrong.

ELEANOR
Warren says I have an appointment with Dr. Wakefield - the spinal surgeon.

HARRISON
Are you hoping I'll drive you there?

WARREN
I'm driving and we're leaving right now.

HARRISON
Do you need me to hold your hand?

Eleanor looks at the stupidly disguised old man.

ELEANOR
I'd prefer to despair alone, thank you.

Harrison hesitates, but leaves with Jeffrey. Warren looks at his mother: she's scared - nervous.

WARREN
Mom... Are you sure you want to do this?

She sucks up her courage.

ELEANOR
Put me in the car.

INT. UCLA HOSPITAL - DAY

WARREN quickly pushes ELEANOR out of the elevator in a wheelchair down a long hallway.

ELEANOR
You have to keep an eye on her, Warren. She's restless and resentful.

WARREN
What are you thinking? A private detective?

ELEANOR
Do you know one?

WARREN
Why pay for miserable truths when you
can get them for free?

ELEANOR
All those endless photo collages.
She's like Penelope biding her time,
waiting for Odysseus to return and
claim what's his.

WARREN
I take it I'm not Odysseus.

ELEANOR
No, dear. You're dead on the floor
with an arrow through your neck.

He pushes her into--

INT. MEDICAL OFFICE - DAY

WARREN doesn't even get a chance to announce their arrival
when the inner door opens.

NURSE
Eleanor Milford?

ELEANOR
Yes. What gave me away?

Warren wheels ELEANOR towards the inner door.

NURSE
Do you want your son with you?

ELEANOR
I want him in a chair reading outdated
magazines.

The Nurse takes over pushing the wheelchair, sweeps her hand
to indicate the waiting room.

INT. MEDICAL OFFICE - DAY

WARREN sits alone in the waiting room reading a men's
MAGAZINE - flips through articles:

"Restore your Lost Competitive Edge with Mental Gymnastics."

"Is There Any Hope for the Aging Male?"

***"Keep your Wife/GF Home at Night With Performance Enhancing
Kegel Exercises."***

"Wallet and Penis: Size DOES Matter."

He tosses the magazine down, opens a WOMAN'S MAGAZINE.

"Are Men Still Necessary?"

Warren throws that down - looks up as a BEAUTIFUL WOMAN in leather enters the office carrying a MOTORCYCLE HELMET.

LEATHER WOMAN
Are you Warren Milford?

WARREN
Yes... *Hell* yes.

She rips open a large HEAVY ENVELOPE, hands him a 4-inch thick BOOK MANUSCRIPT.

WARREN (CONT'D)
Shit...

LEATHER WOMAN
I'm sure it is.

She leaves.

EXT. SENIOR MILFORD HOUSE - DAY

JEFFREY and the disguised HARRISON pull into the driveway of the mid-century modern WOOD AND GLASS HOUSE.

JEFFREY
Whoa, grandpa. I forgot what a great house this is.

HARRISON
Should be. I built it myself.

JEFFREY
I haven't been here in years.

HARRISON
Whose fault is that?

JEFFREY
Can I blame my mother?

HARRISON
Only if you're five.

INT. HARRISON'S STUDIO - DAY

HARRISON switches on the lights - reveals a workshop frozen in time. Shelves are filled with supplies, glazes, tools, ceramic pieces, etc.

Clay scraps still lay on the counter around an unfinished
CLAY MODEL of a BIRD IN FLIGHT.

HARRISON

All right. Let's put the entire
inventory on the bench so I can look
at it.

JEFFREY

What's this? You didn't finish.

Harrison feels the bird - his hands caressing every contour
as if the object had life.

HARRISON

Naw. I still can't figure out how to
complete it right.

JEFFREY

Can I have it?

HARRISON

You like it?

JEFFREY

Yeah.

HARRISON

What would you do with it?

JEFFREY

Put it in my room.

Harrison thinks about it.

HARRISON

Is that broom still there in the
corner?

JEFFREY

Yeah.

Harrison picks up the unfinished sculpture and hurls it into
the brick wall - it SHATTERS.

JEFFREY (CONT'D)

Shit! Fuck! Why'd you do that?!

HARRISON

Because I can't control my bowels! I
can't control my bladder! At least I
can control what happens to my work.

Jeffrey kneels down by the pieces.

HARRISON (CONT'D)

It's no good unfinished. I don't want
to leave behind anything that's no
good.

JEFFREY
You broke something else.

HARRISON
Splendid.

JEFFREY
It's a painting on glass.

Jeffrey removes from cardboard a CRACKED ANIMATION CELL. He holds it up to the light revealing a colorful CARTOON FOREST.

JEFFREY (CONT'D)
This looks like--

HARRISON
--a cartoon background?

JEFFREY
Yeah, but it looks like--

HARRISON
--Don't say his name!

JEFFREY
Why not?

HARRISON
I painted backgrounds for that man-child. His name burns my ears.

JEFFREY
It's like the most famous name in the world.

HARRISON
Don't say it!

JEFFREY
I never heard this. What was he like?

HARRISON
He played with trains.

JEFFREY
Is that it?

HARRISON
He demanded approval but we could never get it because he was home playing with trains - or out building his fucking amusement park.

JEFFREY
Shit. How many of his movies did you paint the backgrounds for?

HARRISON
Too many. Put it down and concentrate,
Warren.

JEFFREY
Jeffrey.

HARRISON
What's the difference?

JEFFREY
A lot for me. I don't want to be my
dad.

HARRISON
Are you ashamed?

JEFFREY
A little disappointed.

HARRISON
Only because you're young and stupid
enough to believe you can be who you
want to be - make a name for yourself -
stand on your own! If I could put in
your head what I know and what your
father is learning, you'd hang
yourself from a Mulberry tree.

JEFFREY
Then... Don't do that.

INT. MEDICAL OFFICE - WAITING ROOM

WARREN texts over the NOVEL MANUSCRIPT open to page 100.

"Charlotte. Sorry. Still waiting for mother to come out."

She replies: **"Tied to the apron strings :-)"**

He types: **"Hanging from them. By then neck."**

She replies: **"Oedipal-Erotic Asphyxiation."**

Warren smiles at that as a NURSE wheels ELEANOR out along
with a grey-bearded DOCTOR.

She's laughing, seems in a good mood.

WARREN
(reading name tag)
"Dr. Grossman." What happened to Dr.
Wakefield?

DR. GROSSMAN
What's your relationship?

ELEANOR
He's my driver.

DR. GROSSMAN
Oh.

WARREN
We're double-parked, Miss Daisy. We
need to hurry on.

Dr. Grossman grasps both Eleanor's hands and looks at her in
warm support for something difficult.

DR. GROSSMAN
I'll see you in a week.

Dr. Grossman glances at Warren very sympathetically.

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

WARREN wheels his mother back through the hallways.

WARREN
Mom. He's a neurologist.

ELEANOR
The best, I'm told.

WARREN
You never said anything about a
neurologist. What did he tell you?

ELEANOR
To come back in a week.

The ELEVATOR dings open. Warren pushes her in.

INT. MILFORD HOUSE - DAY

WARREN closes the guest room door on ELEANOR lying alone on
the bed. BARBARA is there in the kitchen.

BARBARA
Don't you have a "hotel seminar"?

WARREN
I'm not sure I should leave her.

BARBARA
I'm here.

They look at each other - a mutual understanding.

BARBARA (CONT'D)
 She'll be fine. I'll be fine. The
 kids'll be fine. Go on. Take care of
 yourself.

EXT./INT. REGENT HOTEL - DAY

WARREN surrenders his car to the valet, bounds into the lobby
 where

CHARLOTTE is already standing there, looking pretty and
 statuesque in her pilot's uniform.

WARREN
 I couldn't get here...

CHARLOTTE
 You look so disappointed.

WARREN
 I am.

He leans to embrace her, but she kisses him passionately.

CHARLOTTE
 I'll be back tomorrow. Then I'll be
 flying out to Bali for a week. I want
 you to come with me.
 (she kisses him again)
 It won't cost you anything. We can
 pretend I said "yes" way back when.

She leaves quickly with her suitcase rolling behind her.

INT. MILFORD HOUSE - NIGHT

WARREN comes in side door from the garage, his head in the
 kissing clouds. He follows VOICES and VACUUM CLEANER in the

BACK ROOM now full of SCULPTURES - bronze, clay, wood - naked
 nymphs, birds on branches, horses and monkeys.

HARRISON sits cross-legged on the floor, wiping and cleaning
 each one with meticulous care. JEFFREY carefully photographs.

WARREN
 What are you doing?

JEFFREY
 Paying for college.

HARRISON
 Undoing the damage your mother
 inflicted. Do you have an acetylene
 torch?

WARREN
I lent it out. How is Mom?

HARRISON
Just the way I like her: quiet.

JEFFREY
Grandpa, we don't have to hide the
fix. We can just list it as "repaired
by the artist" with a back-dated
certificate.

HARRISON
Brilliant!

WARREN
What did Barbara say when she saw
this?

HARRISON
"Good-bye."

WARREN
She left?

JEFFREY
Yeah, Dad.

HARRISON
Smelling nice.

WARREN
Did she say where?

HARRISON
"Out," was the extent of her
testimony.

Jeffrey sees distress in his father's face. He puts down the
camera, follow Warren into:

THE KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

JEFFREY
Do you have a bigger memory card?

WARREN
I'll buy you one. The least I can do
for your college education.

JEFFREY
Thanks...

As they turn into the living room, Jeffrey sees:

PATTI WILSON

the mother from the pool, dressed to seduce as she boldly reaches to hold Jeffrey's face.

PATTI
Oh, Jeffrey. I'm so sorry.

WARREN
Who are you?

KATIE closes the front door, grins, heads up the stairs.

PATTI
Your sister came over to tell me what Hank did to your tree outside.

WARREN
Hank...?

PATTI
My husband. He has problems with impulse control.

WARREN
He shaped the branch like a penis, then broke it off.

JEFFREY
Dad. I can take care of this.

WARREN
Which broke off leaving a note that said: "get the picture?"

PATTI
Did it permanently damage the tree?

WARREN
I don't care about the tree! I care about what it means!

PATTI
It means he's crazy. I'd have him committed if people still did that.

WARREN
Can you at least take away his sharp tools?

PATTI
Oh-my-God, no. That's how he makes his living.

WARREN
Nice meeting you, Mrs. Wilson.

Warren heads upstairs. Patti makes a mocking face at him like a teenager.

JEFFREY
 Sorry about that. Let me walk you
 out.

EXT. MILFORD HOUSE - NIGHT

PATTI grasps JEFFREY's hand as they walk to her MINIVAN.

PATTI
 Your sister is really concerned about
 you, Jeffrey.

JEFFREY
 My sister is concerned about my
 sister.

PATTI
 She said you were in desperate need of
 affection and the love of a real
 woman, not the rubber parts you keep
 under your bed.

JEFFREY
 She's a liar and a manipulator.

PATTI
 (whispers)
 I want to move our "picnic" sooner, to
 before your birthday.

JEFFREY
 Shouldn't you consult with a lawyer
 first?

PATTI
 See? You are too cautious, just like
 she said. Hank is taking the boys to
 Disneyland all day tomorrow and
 overnight. Come to my place with the
 picnic supplies and let me take care
 of you.

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

WARREN watches through the window PATTI kiss JEFFREY long on
 the lips, then get in the minivan and drive off.

INT. BARBARA'S RANGE ROVER - NIGHT

Headlights reveal the dark twists and turns of Mulholland
 Drive - A GPS VOICE guiding a nervous BARBARA.

GPS VOICE
 Arrive at Magic Palace in point eight
 miles.

EXT. MAGIC PALACE - NIGHT

BARBARA pulls up to this private haven for overpaid nerds.

The VALET opens her door. KARSON VAN METER is there to help her out and kiss her.

INT. MAGIC PALACE PRIVATE ROOM - NIGHT

At the CLOSE-UP TABLE, BARBARA and KARSON are the only audience for a CLOSE-UP MAGICIAN manipulating a chain of 4 SMALL RINGS.

CLOSE-UP MAGICIAN
Steel rings locked together,
inseparable. See for yourself,
Barbara.

He hands Barbara the solid 2-INCH RINGS chained in a circle.

BARBARA
Inseparable.

CLOSE-UP MAGICIAN
You sure? Or not so sure?

The magician cups his free hand over the rings in the other. The rings drop individually onto the table. Karson claps. Barbara smiles tentatively.

INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT

KARSON and BARBARA sit close in a candle-lit, secluded booth.

KARSON
If you could have anything you want,
what would it be?

BARBARA
Anything?

KARSON
Anything actually possible. Though
more is possible than you might think.

BARBARA
I'd like to have another baby.

KARSON
That didn't take long.

BARBARA
While I still can, now that I know
what I'm doing.

KARSON
You didn't before?

BARBARA
I thought I did.

KARSON
I think you did. And I think you
should grant your own wish.

BARBARA
No. It doesn't make sense now.

KARSON
It doesn't make sense because you're
thinking inside the box.

BARBARA
Is that box my home?

Karson raises his glass, drinks with a wink.

INT. MAIN MAGIC STAGE - NIGHT

Two COMIC MAGICIANS cut a BEAUTIFUL WOMAN in half with a
giant PAIR OF SCISSORS.

BARBARA seems distracted as she watches, her mind elsewhere.

KARSON puts his hand on hers - grasps it tight.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

WARREN turns on the lights - looks at the CLOCK: 1:31 am.

WARREN
Fuck it.

He rolls out of bed, pulls his PASSPORT from a dresser drawer
- takes down a ROLLING SUITCASE.

INT. RANGE ROVER - NIGHT

BARBARA drives into the GARAGE, shuts it behind her, turns
off the engine.

She opens her door, but closes it, sits. The garage-opener
light times off. She sits in complete darkness.

INT. RANGE ROVER - DAY

BARBARA wakes from the reclined seat as the door to the house
opens and WARREN switches on the light.

He betrays some relief seeing her in the car, but doesn't look at her - just grabs a large bottle of LAUNDRY DETERGENT - goes back into the house - turns off the light.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - DAY

WARREN rolls clothes to put into a suitcase, looks up to see BARBARA standing there in her nice clothes from her night out.

They exchange a long look from which something meaningful might be said - but isn't.

BARBARA
You'd do better to pack them flat
inside one of those sealed bags, then
roll out the air.

Warren continues rolling his pants. The DRYER BUZZES. He passes KATIE standing in the doorway.

KATIE
Where's Dad going?

BARBARA
Somewhere for work.

KATIE
What work?

Barbara gives her daughter a withering look.

KATIE (CONT'D)
He looks so glum.

BARBARA
He's fine

KATIE
Tell me, Mom. I'm not a child.

BARBARA
You have no idea how much you're a
child.

KATIE
You just got home?

BARBARA
Yes.

KATIE
Really?

BARBARA
You should be happy. You're getting
what you want.

Katie convinces herself to smile.

KATIE
I'm glad. It'll hurt for a while, but
it'll be better. For all of us.

Barbara shakes her head, walks out.

INT. MILFORD HOUSE - DOWNSTAIRS

JEFFREY knocks on the guest room door.

JEFFREY
Grandpa. We were gonna go out and get
the sculpture fixed.

Harrison opens the door, looks gravely at Jeffrey.

JEFFREY (CONT'D)
Something wrong with grandma?

HARRISON
She's not talking.

JEFFREY
Why not?

HARRISON
She didn't say.

INT. JEFFREY'S CAR - DAY

HARRISON wears sunglasses and bandana, leans his head back
against the window.

JEFFREY drives, looks over at his grandfather now and then.

INT. FINE ART FOUNDRY - DAY

MOLTEN METAL pours from a superheated bucket into a life-
sized upside-down MOLD of a HORSE.

JEFFREY watches fascinated while a FOUNDRY CLERK fits
together the PIECES for the broken sculpture.

JEFFREY
I want to recast it in bronze.

Harrison whispers in Jeffrey's ear.

JEFFREY (CONT'D)
Seventy-eight percent copper.

CLERK
How many you want?

JEFFREY

Just one. How soon can we get it done?

CLERK

Clifton! Can you take a look at this?

A tall and lean ELDERLY MAN gets up from a stool. His WHITE CANE indicates he is blind, but he doesn't actually use the cane as he makes his way through the foundry, coming dangerously close to kiln fires and molten metal.

The clerk hands CLIFTON the broken pieces. He feels them separately, then together.

CLIFTON

"Seagull and Nymph."

JEFFREY

Shit. Wow...

Jeffrey glances at Harrison whose lips purse with anger.

CLIFTON

I know a Harry Milford when I get my hands on it. You trying to cash in on his suicide, young man?

JEFFREY

Abso-fucking-lutely. My family's had this for decades and we'd like to get top dollar for it while people still give a shit.

CLIFTON

My condolences.

JEFFREY

Why? I didn't actually *know* the son of a bitch.

CLIFTON

Condolences for being the owner of this trite, sentimental trash. Hopefully your condition will pass and you'll use the ephemeral profits to invest in something more aesthetically honest.

Harrison trembles. Jeffrey holds him.

JEFFREY

(shouting)

Grandpa! It's okay. When I'm done here we'll get you an In 'n' Out burger!

(to clerk)

He's a little deaf.

HARRISON

I'm not deaf!

CLERK

I think he heard you.

HARRISON

And I'm not hungry!

JEFFREY

Grandpa picks up random things that don't really *help his situation*. Probably be better for all of us if he didn't hear at all.

CLIFTON

That man's voice. Have him speak again.

JEFFREY

Please, sir. How soon can you do this job?

CLIFTON

Ha. Can't blame you for hurrying. Don't want to miss the sucker train before it passes.

HARRISON

Closer...

CLIFTON

What did he say? I know that voice.

HARRISON

Closer...

CLIFTON

I can't hear you. Speak up.

The blind, elderly Clifton follows Harrison's voice.

JEFFREY

Grandpa? Can we just take care of this and get out of here?

Harrison LUNGES - grabs Clifton by the ears.

CLIFTON

Augh!

CLERK

Hey. Hey! Let go of him!

HARRISON

I should have done this years ago!

CLIFTON

You're not dead, you fraud!

The two blind men tear at each other.

HARRISON
 September 19th, 1952. Studio
 International. "His simpering forms
 bear more resemblance to stuffed
 animals than honest figures."

CLIFTON
 The truth rings through the ages!

The Clerk and Jeffrey use all their strength to pull the
 fighting blind men apart.

CLIFTON (CONT'D)
 My cane. Where's my cane.

JEFFREY
 C'mon, Grandpa.

White cane in hand, Clifton swings it at Harrison's profile.
 Harrison knocks it away, knocks Clifton to the floor.

HARRISON
 Ha-HA! I still have my peripheral
 vision!

INT. JEFFREY'S CAR - DAY

JEFFREY is stuck in traffic with an undisguised HARRISON.

JEFFREY
 Maybe they won't tell anyone. Why
 would they? What business is it of
 theirs to tell anyone?

EXT. MILFORD HOUSE - DAY

JEFFREY pulls up to see MAGGIE waiting outside. She stands up
 from the step as Jeffrey helps HARRISON out of the car.

JEFFREY
 Hi... Maggie. This is my grandfather,
 Harrison Milford.

MAGGIE
 Mr. Milford.

HARRISON
 You smell...pretty. You here for
 Jeffrey?

MAGGIE
 I'm here for you.

JEFFREY

Maggie is an Art History major at Berkeley. She wants to interview you.

HARRISON

Why? I don't know shit about Art History.

MAGGIE

You are the Art History.

Harrison heads into the house. Maggie slaps Jeffrey hard upside the head.

JEFFREY

Ouww!

MAGGIE

Liar. Your jig is up.

JEFFREY

I'm sorry...

INT. MILFORD HOUSE - DINING ROOM

A CELL PHONE VIDEO

plays on an iPad in MAGGIE's hand - HARRISON fighting with blind CLIFTON at the foundry.

HARRISON

Jeffrey. I screwed up.

JEFFREY

Nah. You saved me from doing the same to the old fucker.

HARRISON

He was an old fucker.

MAGGIE puts away the phone. The three of them are sitting at the dining-room table.

MAGGIE

But you used to be roommates.

HARRISON

Closer than that, until the bastard succumbed to envy. How did you know?

MAGGIE

In my Modern Art seminar we did a unit on So-Cal mid-century. You and Clifton Stewart, and Robert Diaz, Rory Kuntzman, Charles McIntyre. Claire Berry at Dominican Dinnerware.

(MORE)

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

There was an incredible flow of talent coming out of Montbridge Graduate School.

HARRISON

Not anymore.

Harrison thinks about it a moment.

HARRISON (CONT'D)

Young people are actually studying this?

MAGGIE

Yeah. I mean, we did.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

ELEANOR has her work in front of her and her fingers on the keyboard, but she is listening to HARRISON in the next room.

HARRISON (O.S.)

You'd work on a design project for more than a year, make every change they asked you to make, then they wondered why it looked like shit.

MAGGIE (O.S.)

You quit Dominican Dinnerware rather dramatically in 1970?

HARRISON (O.S.)

After the English took over, I threw every plate I made against the wall of their tea room.

Eleanor smiles hearing that.

INT. WARREN'S OFFICE - DAY

WARREN straightens his office while PAGES of a MANUSCRIPT emerge quickly from a LASER PRINTER.

INT. MILFORD HOUSE - DAY

WARREN passes through the kitchen where Eleanor's papers and computer now lay abandoned.

HARRISON

After the tea room tantrum, I got a reputation as an iconoclast. A rebel. But all it was just stupid anger. As hateful as it was, I missed being there.

She is at the dining room table, her power chair wedged next to HARRISON still fielding questions from MAGGIE, JEFFREY seated at her shoulder.

HARRISON (CONT'D)

There's something satisfying about doing good work in a room full of people doing the same, even if the work goes nowhere. It's just the *doing* it that's good. I made my best designs there, even if they ended up in shards all over a tea room.

Eleanor looks at Warren as he passes. Her gaze is sad and apologetic - as if she failed him in some fundamental way.

INT. MASTER BATHROOM - DAY

WARREN comes in to see BARBARA applying make-up in the bathroom mirror - radiant and beautiful. Warren looks at her with a resigned longing.

WARREN

Where tonight?

BARBARA

I didn't ask you that.

WARREN

You didn't.

They look at each other for a long moment.

BARBARA

They're grown up. They don't need us to be what we aren't.

Warren nods. The DOORBELL RINGS with rapid desperation.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

WARREN opens the door to see COLIN standing sheepishly with his hand thrust into his pockets.

COLIN

Hi. Uh. I know I'm not supposed to be here, but can I hang out for a while? My dad kicked me out for the night.

WARREN

Shocking.

COLIN

I promise no funny stuff with - you know, while we're on restriction.

Warren sees KATIE behind him.

WARREN

No. Bring on the funny stuff. Go at it anywhere and any way you want. Be my guest. She's yours.

Warren pulls KATIE'S HAND into Colin's.

Katie withdraws her hand as she watches her father leave out the back door - and BARBARA come down the stairs - made-up, dressed-up, and beautiful.

KATIE

Mom. God.

BARBARA

You'll be okay on your own tonight?

COLIN

We're always okay on our own. Oh shit. Are you going to my...? Oh yeah, I get it...

So does Katie, but doesn't look so pleased anymore.

KATIE

Oh...

Barbara sees her daughter's reaction - smiles at it.

BARBARA

Have a good night. Don't break anything else.

EXT. MILFORD HOUSE - DAY (DUSK)

Last light of evening - MAGGIE stares at JEFFREY.

JEFFREY

I'm sorry. I didn't mean to lie to you. I just didn't want it getting out that he was still alive if it meant his price would go down. Like it did.

MAGGIE

Then make it up to me. Come by tonight and show my mother what Ethan can do in the pool. He's so excited and she needs cheering up.

JEFFREY

Tonight?

He looks at his watch.

MAGGIE

What's the problem? You have something else going on? A picnic?

Maggie smiles knowingly, backs away to her car.

INT. GUEST ROOM - NIGHT

HARRISON lifts ELEANOR out of her power chair to lay her on the bed.

HARRISON

This bed is too damn low. It's going to snap my back in half.

ELEANOR

No.

HARRISON

No, what?

ELEANOR

I want to go home.

HARRISON

What about saving our son's marriage?

ELEANOR

I failed.

HARRISON

What about your next appointment?

ELEANOR

It doesn't matter.

HARRISON

Why not?

ELEANOR

I just want to go home.

HARRISON

Well, dammit, will you just tell me why? What did that quack say?

ELEANOR

Can you just take me home, Harry? It's the last thing I'll ever ask you to do for me.

Harrison stands there holding her in his arms.

HARRISON

Well... If you put it that way.

Harrison puts her back in her power chair.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

COLIN and KATIE are on the bed making out and pulling off each other's clothes.

COLIN
Why are you stopping?

KATIE
It feels wrong.

COLIN
It's the last room we haven't done it in.

KATIE
There mighta been a reason for that.

Katie sits up.

COLIN
The bow is bent and drawn, Katie.
Don't make from the shaft.

KATIE
What? Are you quoting Shakespeare?
You?

The DOORBELL RINGS.

KATIE (CONT'D)
Shit.

Katie grabs her shirt, bounds over to the window, looks down to the front walkway.

An attractive well-dressed thirtyish WOMAN waits under the porch light with BRIEFCASE.

KATIE (CONT'D)
Hi, who are you looking for?

THIRTYISH WOMAN
Colin Van Meter has an interview for Princeton University. His father said he'd be here.

Katie whips around to Colin quickly pulling up his pants.

KATIE
Princeton?! You don't have the scores for Princeton!

THIRTYISH WOMAN
Actually his scores are perfect.
Twenty-four hundred SAT and 36 ACT.
Don't get many of these.

Katie fumes at Colin combing his hair with his fingers.

COLIN
How do I look?

She punches him in the stomach.

EXT. CONDO - NIGHT

JEFFREY wends his way along the pathways of the condominium complex. He passes one door carefully. PATTI emerges suddenly.

PATTI
Where do you think you're going?

JEFFREY
I have to teach a swim lesson.

PATTI
Now? *Why?*

JEFFREY
Then I'll come over.

PATTI
(whispers)
With the picnic bag.

JEFFREY
It's in my trunk. But I'll bring it up.

PATTI
Bring it up and keep it up.
(whispers)
Don't be afraid. He's gone. I promise.

Jeffrey looks over, sees MAGGIE waiting for him from the front door of her family's unit.

JEFFREY
I gotta go... to work.

INT. ETHAN'S TOWNHOUSE - DAY

MAGGIE closes the door behind JEFFREY.

MAGGIE
My mother's in a funk. Her so-called boyfriend just told her he's found someone else. He's "in love for the first time."

JEFFREY
Should I come back?

MAGGIE

No. She needs something good to cheer her up.

Ethan comes bounding down the stairs holding internet printouts.

ETHAN

Jeffrey! You are so wrong. Head position DOES matter!

JEFFREY

It matters when you're in the water. Not when you're reading about it on a screen.

ETHAN

You pooh-poohed me when I told you.

JEFFREY

"Pooh-poohed?" How old are you?

ETHAN

You pooh-poohed me!

JEFFREY

I'd never do that in a swimming pool.

ETHAN

Oh, you're gross! When are we going to show Mom?

MAGGIE

She'll come down when she's ready
(quiet)
And stops crying.

ETHAN

All right. Don't bother me. I'm going to practice.

Ethan holds his breath and practices his strokes.

MAGGIE

You're really good with him.

JEFFREY

No. He's just good.

Jeffrey looks at his watch.

MAGGIE

Don't go there.

JEFFREY

Where?

She stares at him: "get real." She motions to Patti's unit.

MAGGIE

Promise me right now you won't go.

He smiles nervously, nods. She smiles back.

INT. AIRPORT CLUB LOUNGE - NIGHT

WARREN smiles to CHARLOTTE in the First Class lounge, a drink in his hand - his ROLLING SUITCASE by his leather chair.

WARREN

It was surprisingly easy.

CHARLOTTE

Was it?

WARREN

She gave me suitcase packing tips.

CHARLOTTE

The gift of complete indifference.

WARREN

It was a group gift. They all chipped in.

CHARLOTTE

But your writing's going well.

WARREN

How can you tell?

CHARLOTTE

You look different.

WARREN

Life is hell, but writing is finally good. It's the only thing I regret leaving.

CHARLOTTE

Then don't.

WARREN

Don't?

CHARLOTTE

Isn't that what this was all about? Finding your passion? Getting your mojo back? Why take the medicine when you're already cured?

WARREN

Because I like the medicine.

CHARLOTTE

Then you're an addict.

WARREN

Happily.

CHARLOTTE

Addicts end up face down in their own vomit.

WARREN

Don't you want me?

CHARLOTTE

Terribly. The problem is, having known you all my life, I care what happens to you.

WARREN

Then don't send me home.

He leans over to kiss her. She smiles as their lips remain close. His PHONE BUZZES.

CHARLOTTE

Why did you leave it on?

It BUZZES again. He looks, answers it.

WARREN

What is it, Katie?

KATIE (O.S.)

Where are you?

WARREN

On a business trip.

KATIE (O.S.)

You don't have any business.

CHARLOTTE

Nice girl. Glad I didn't surrender to motherhood.

WARREN

(to Katie)

It's business you don't need to know about.

KATIE (O.S.)

Daddy. It's all falling apart. Colin isn't who I thought he was. I mean *whom* I thought he was.

WARREN

That could only be a good thing.

KATIE (O.S.)

It changes everything. It's all wrong.

WARREN

Katie. Put Grandma on the line. Or my father.

KATIE (O.S.)

They're not here.

WARREN

They have to be there, Katie. There's nowhere else they can be.

KATIE (O.S.)

They left somewhere. They took the red car and left.

Warren looks at Charlotte with horror - disappointment. *This can't be happening.* She waves "bye" with her fingers.

EXT. CORVAIR CONVERTIBLE - NIGHT

HORNS HONK as the RED CORVAIR CONVERTIBLE makes its way down the busy boulevard at half the speed limit.

HARRISON drives blind, literally, while ELEANOR corrects his course with her left hand.

ELEANOR

You're going too slow.

HARRISON

I can't see at night.

ELEANOR

You don't need to see. Just go.

HARRISON

What happened with the doctor? What did he say?

ELEANOR

Stop.

He slams on the brakes. Horns honks and tires screech as cars swerve to miss them.

ELEANOR (CONT'D)

Not the car, you idiot. Stop asking questions.

HARRISON

We need a new word.

ELEANOR

Home.

HARRISON

For driving!

ELEANOR
I have too much to do. I can't...

HARRISON
What?

ELEANOR
Stop!

HARRISON
Talking or driving?

ELEANOR
Brake! Now, you fool!

Harrison brakes just before he hits the car in front of him.

ELEANOR (CONT'D)
Now... Look to your left. Smile. And wave.

HARRISON
Why?

ELEANOR
Trust me.

Harrison looks to his left, smiles, then waves. The POLICE OFFICERS in the car next to theirs wave back.

ELEANOR (CONT'D)
All right. Give it a little gas and keep it straight - all the way home.

As Harrison goes forward, Eleanor puts her hand low on the wheel to guide him.

EXT. CONDO POOL - NIGHT

Ethan's mother SUZANNE, a pretty, early forties dark-haired woman whose eyes remain red from crying sits poolside in the early evening while

SUZANNE
All right, Ethan. Wow me.

ETHAN - wades into the water.

JEFFREY glances from waste-deep water to PATTI looking down from the balcony. She make a "hurry up" motion with her hand.

MAGGIE - her bare feet dangling in the water - sees this and sees Jeffrey shaking his head "no."

ETHAN
All right. Here it goes.

JEFFREY

Put your face in the water, and glide
out to me.

ETHAN

No.

JEFFREY

No?

ETHAN

Get out of my way.

Jeffrey glances to Maggie.

JEFFREY

All right.

Ethan pushes off the wall, glides with his face down, then
takes a stroke, then another stroke, then another.

MAGGIE

My God...

He reaches the other side and raises his fist triumphantly.

Jeffrey and Maggie applaud and cheer.

ETHAN

I told you! I told you! Lower head
position keeps the legs level and
reduces drag.

JEFFREY

You're right, Ethan. And I'm wrong.

Ethan looks excitedly to his mother.

SUZANNE

Is that it? Just once across the pool?

MAGGIE

Mom. He wouldn't even put his head in
the water before Jeffrey came.

SUZANNE

Why the hell not? It's just water.

Jeffrey sees Ethan's spirits sink with his mother's
dissatisfaction.

SUZANNE (CONT'D)

I know my own boy. He could do better
than that. How long have you been
teaching him?

JEFFREY

Five weeks.

MAGGIE
Mom, please.

SUZANNE
Five weeks and he can barely get
across the pool - and not even the
long side of the pool.

JEFFREY
All right. I'll pay you back every
penny.

SUZANNE
What do you mean "pay me back?"
You've taken money for this? I thought
this was volunteer work. Community
service for college.

JEFFREY
You put money in an envelope for me
every week.

MAGGIE
You did, Mom.

SUZANNE
I did not.

JEFFREY
Who...?

Jeffrey looks at Ethan shivering, trying hard to hold back
from crying.

MAGGIE
Oh, God.

SUZANNE
You took money from my son?

JEFFREY
It should have been from you.

Jeffrey wades toward Suzanne.

JEFFREY (CONT'D)
You should have paid me. And you
should have come to every lesson. You
should have been a *mother* and not a--

MAGGIE
--Jeffrey. Stop. Please.

JEFFREY
If you want to chase after some guy
who doesn't want you, wait till no one
needs you.

SUZANNE

That's it. I don't want to hear
another word from you.

She stands, but Jeffrey hops out of the pool to get in her
face. She doubles back.

JEFFREY

Ethan did something big tonight, and
you weren't even here. You were
sitting here, but you weren't here.

SUZANNE

Get away from me!

JEFFREY

No! I'm staying here until you see
what's in front of you!

MAGGIE

Jeffrey. Stop now.

JEFFREY

Tell him you saw what he did. Look at
him and say it.

SUZANNE

Leave! Get out!

JEFFREY

I work here. I'm not your guest. This
is my job.

HANK (O.S.)

What the hell? Suzanne?

SUZANNE

Oh, Hank. Thank God.

HANK comes in through the gate, his TWO BOYS running past in
PIRATE GEAR and pulling MOUSE EAR BALLOONS through the air.

CLOSE ON - PATTY

from the balcony, her gaze zeroing in on HANK'S HAND touching
the small of Suzanne'S BACK while her boys run up the stairs.

PATTI

What the hell...?

BOY #1

Mom! Dad made us come back early!

Hank reaches to grab Jeffrey.

HANK

Get out, punk.

Jeffrey pulls away but stands his ground - glares Hank straight in the eye.

HANK (CONT'D)
I said, "get out."

JEFFREY
Fuck yourself.

Hank takes a massive swing at Jeffrey, but the young man is too fast - dodges the death blow to land three punches in quick succession right into Hank's face.

Hank lunges for his neck, but Jeffrey throws up his arms to break his hold (a lifeguard release) then pushes the bigger man back into the pool--

--his BLEEDING NOSE reddening the water.

Patti bounds down the stairs, jumps in to save Hank.

Jeffrey stands there with bloodied knuckles unable to believe what he's done. He looks at Maggie across the pool - she's holding Ethan who's crying.

SUZANNE
I'm calling the police.

Jeffrey grabs his towel-shirt-keys, runs out like a fugitive.

EXT. MILFORD HOUSE - NIGHT

WARREN pulls up to find a Bay City POLICE CAR in front of the house. TWO OFFICERS - a MAN and a WOMAN step out.

MALE OFFICER
Warren Milford? You reported your parents missing?

WARREN
My father's driving a 1964 Corvair Convertible. Cherry Red.

MALE OFFICER
Nice. License?

WARREN
F-U NADER.

MALE OFFICER
Even nicer. Is he of diminished mental capacity?

WARREN
Not at all.

MALE OFFICER
Then what's the problem?

WARREN
He's blind.

FEMALE OFFICER
Completely?

WARREN
Enough for driving purposes. They're probably headed to Montbridge, just north of Pomona.

MALE OFFICER
That's sixty miles away. They'll never get there if he's blind.

WARREN
I'm not worried about them *getting there*.

FEMALE OFFICER
I understand, sir. Once we alert Highway Patrol, they'll be picked up immediately.

KATIE runs out of the house.

KATIE
Daddy! You have to stop Mom. Right now!

WARREN
Why?

MALE OFFICER
Is she blind too?

INT. JEFFREY'S CAR - NIGHT

JEFFREY creeps around the corner, looks up his street to see WARREN gesturing to the TWO POLICE OFFICERS.

JEFFREY
Shit! Shit!

He flips a U and speeds off, dials his phone in a panic.

JEFFREY (CONT'D)
(into phone)
Mom? Mom! It's me. I did something awful tonight. I don't know what to do.

EXT. CORVAIR CONVERTIBLE - NIGHT

HORNS HONK as CARS whip around the slower moving CONVERTIBLE turning carefully onto a new freeway, ELEANOR's hand on the wheel.

ELEANOR
Harry, it's a hill. Keep up the gas.

HARRISON
Where are we?

ELEANOR
The 210 freeway.

HARRISON
That's the long way!

ELEANOR
Less traffic. Fewer trucks.

HARRISON
I have to pee.

ELEANOR
We're not stopping.

HARRISON
Why not?

ELEANOR
Because it's too complicated to stop.
I just want to get home. More gas.
There... Hold it there.

Harrison stretches out his arms.

ELEANOR (CONT'D)
Harry! Can you at least pretend to
steer?

Harry holds the wheel. They drive silently.

ELEANOR (CONT'D)
It has no name.

HARRISON
What has no name?

ELEANOR
My disease.

HARRISON
What disease? You have a pinched nerve
in your spine.

ELEANOR

I have that too. And a neurological disease with no name. They were very honest with me. Cruelly honest.

HARRISON

Who was?

ELEANOR

The neurologists. They don't know anything; and they're practically excited they don't know. *Harry, you're pulling the wheel. Relax your hands.* I'm a puzzle to them. A very difficult crossword. The only thing they know is it will get worse and more painful.

HARRISON

Until when?

ELEANOR

Until I die, God dammit.

HARRISON

Did they say how long that will be?

ELEANOR

When I die, you call them up, then they'll know. Maybe by then the disease will have a name. Maybe *my* name. *Eleanor Milford* disease.

(mimics doctor)

"We believe, Mrs. Milford, that your hands will shake, your legs will shake, your head will convulse while every nerve in your body will throb in excruciating pain." *Harry! Don't pull the wheel.*

HARRISON

I'm sorry.

ELEANOR

I just want to go home.

RED and BLUE flashing lights bathe the car. Eleanor looks back to see a HIGHWAY PATROL CAR behind them.

HARRISON

Something's flashing. What is it?

ELEANOR

Nothing. Keep driving.

INT. MILFORD HOUSE - NIGHT

WARREN checks doors, windows - locking up to leave with KATIE.

WARREN

It's what you wanted, Katie.

KATIE

I didn't think it through enough.

WARREN

Well, next time you try to break up your parents' marriage, you'll consider all the consequences.

KATIE

Daddy! You have to go stop her!

WARREN

And if I don't want to?

KATIE

You *have* to *want* to.

WARREN

What do you consider a suitable punishment for destroying your family?

KATIE

Can we go?!

WARREN

My parents are missing, Katie. I can't leave.

KATIE

There's nothing you can do about them. You *can* do something about this. She wants you to stop her! She wants you to fight for her.

WARREN

I'll bet your entire college education you're wrong.

KATIE

Deal. Let's go.

Warren moves toward the door.

KATIE (CONT'D)

Um. Colin's in the back getting interviewed by a lady from Princeton.

WARREN

Princeton?

KATIE

Can you believe it? He lied to me about how stupid he was.

We follow Warren into the back of the house where he opens the playroom door--

INT. PLAYROOM - CONTINUOUS

--sees the PRINCETON INTERVIEWER, blouse open, straddled over COLIN on the weight bench, making out with him.

WARREN
Colin, can you lock the door when you leave?

COLIN
Yeah... Sure.

WARREN
Good luck. Don't be modest about your talents.

COLIN
Ha! Top form, Warren. If you need pages read, you know where to find me.

WARREN
Not here, ever again.

Warren closes the door.

EXT. MILFORD HOUSE - NIGHT

WARREN and KATIE open the doors to his car.

KATIE
They've been in there a long time. You think he could actually get in?

WARREN
From what I saw, I'm sure he's in.

KATIE
To Princeton?! That jerk! That lying douchebag. Cocksucker. Buttlicker.

WARREN
Keep going. You'll hit it.

KATIE
Ass-sucking-motherfucking... I think he only wanted me for sex. Easy, reliable, excellent sex!

Warren winces hearing it as he gets in the car.

WARREN
I'm afraid, Katie, it's a powerful motivator.

KATIE
 (getting out)
 I'm going to go back and tell him.
 Make a scene, ruin his interview.

WARREN
 No! Don't!

KATIE
 Why?

WARREN
 Because you're better than he is in
 every way.

Katie looks at her father, nods, smiles.

KATIE
 Damn right I am. I'm going to tell
 him.

WARREN
 (grabbing her)
 Leave gracefully and I guarantee he'll
 want you back. It'll feel good to tell
 him to "go to hell."

KATIE
 I'll tell him to fuck himself.

WARREN
 Even better; but not now. Let's go
 talk to your mother.

KATIE
 No. NO! Not "talk." Anger! Action!
 Kick ass and claim what's yours.

Warren nods, shrugs. They get in the car.

EXT. HILGARD HOTEL - NIGHT

JEFFREY stands near his car in t-shirt and wet bathing suit.
 He looks at BARBARA glowing with beauty.

JEFFREY
 I've never seen you like this, Mom.

BARBARA
 I suppose it's been awhile.

JEFFREY
 Maybe if it hadn't been awhile, you
 wouldn't be here.

Barbara looks away.

BARBARA
What's happened, Jeffrey?

JEFFREY
Colin's dad lives here.

BARBARA
Jeffrey.

JEFFREY
I got into a fight with a swim lesson
mother.

She takes hold of his bruised hand.

BARBARA
You hit her?

JEFFREY
No. One of the fathers - the guy who
cut up our tree.

BARBARA
That man was someone you worked for?
How come I didn't know about this?

JEFFREY
Because I didn't tell you.

BARBARA
You were just in a fight.

JEFFREY
She's ruining him! He's a really good
kid, and she's ruining him. I can see
what's going to happen like a car
heading over a cliff. I want to stop
it before... But I can't--

Jeffrey has teared up and Barbara hugs him - holds him.

BARBARA
I'm glad you're upset about this.

JEFFREY
What?

BARBARA
You have a good heart. But you can't
stop cars from going off cliffs.
You're not Superman. You can only do
what you can do.

Jeffrey separates to look at his mother - but she resists.

JEFFREY
You have to go.

BARBARA
I don't. Not really.

JEFFREY
Do what you were going to do. Maybe something good will come of it.

BARBARA
I'm not so sure.

JEFFREY
This could be your last chance at something good. Katie was right. You and Dad were a bad match and had a shitty marriage. And now it's over; and it's okay.

Whatever solace Barbara has received evaporates.

JEFFREY (CONT'D)
See you tomorrow.

BARBARA
Tomorrow.

Jeffrey gets in his car and drives away.

EXT. HILGARD HOTEL - NIGHT

BARBARA wends her way through the pathways between lighted bungalows in this fairyland of lodging.

She checks the number, then knocks on the one where a LOUD TELEVISION is suddenly turned down.

Karson opens the door like he's opening a present - and getting what he asked.

KARSON
Stunning.

BARBARA
Thank you.

KARSON pecks her on the lips as he walks in.

INT. KARSON'S BUNGALOW - CONTINUOUS

BARBARA puts her purse down uneasily. KARSON rushes back to the kitchen where he is cutting limes for two drinks.

BARBARA
What time are our reservations?

KARSON
I canceled them.

She notices he's looking every so often at a flatscreen TV.
In the kitchen.

KARSON (CONT'D)
Thought I'd bring the restaurant to
us.

BARBARA
Room service.

KARSON
It's the same menu, but better
company.

BARBARA
It would be the same company wherever
we are.

Karson sees something on TV that shocks him.

KARSON
Christ! They're old people!

BARBARA
Pardon me?

KARSON
Nothing.

BARBARA
You're watching TV.

KARSON
I had it on, then this thing happened.
It's a police chase on the freeway.

BARBARA
How can I compete with that?

KARSON
I'm sorry. TV's my business. This is
good TV.
(suddenly excited)
Holy shit. She's steering for him!

Karson looks up. Barbara is gone. He looks back at the TV -
the camera hovering over HARRISON and ELEANOR driving the
Corvaire Convertible with HIGHWAY PATROL CARS all around them.

EXT. CORVAIRE CONVERTIBLE - NIGHT

HARRISON and ELEANOR drive the freeway bathed in the
helicopter SPOTLIGHT, PATROL CARS on all sides.

PATROL CAR P.A.
*Reduce your speed and pull the vehicle
to the side of the freeway.*

ELEANOR
Don't you dare.

HARRISON
What am I supposed to do?

ELEANOR
Drive! You're slowing down.

Eleanor pushes his accelerator leg.

ELEANOR (CONT'D)
I'm not going to jail.

HARRISON
Where are you going?

ELEANOR
Home. I want to go home.

HARRISON
I'm no expert in the law, Eleanor,
dear; but I don't think that's going
to happen tonight.

ELEANOR
Don't stop.

HARRISON
I have to stop! I'm being pulled over.

ELEANOR
If you slow down again, I'll jump out.

HARRISON
Jump? With whose legs?

ELEANOR
Then I'll *roll* out. Don't stop.

HARRISON
All right, then. If I'm going nowhere,
I might as well get there faster.

Harrison floors it. The car lurches forward.

HARRISON (CONT'D)
What do you think of that?

ELEANOR
Faster...

HARRISON
What?

ELEANOR
Faster!

HARRISON

My God. You are one crazy bitch.

EXT. CONDO POOL - NIGHT

JEFFREY walks through with courage from a new determination. The pool is empty. No blood. No sign of violence.

He climbs the stairs - passes Patti and Hank's Condo. The door is open. He glances in--

--sees HANK with bandaged face tying METAL WASHERS to the strings on two MOUSE-EAR BALLOONS. His hands shake, making the task difficult. He glances up at Jeffrey looking in.

A long stare, then back to the task as though it were the most important thing in the world. Jeffrey continues to Maggie and Ethan's condo unit.

EXT. CONDO UNIT - NIGHT

MAGGIE stares at JEFFREY upon opening the door.

JEFFREY

I want to talk to your mother.

She nods sadly, smiles slightly.

MAGGIE

Good luck.

INT. CONDO - NIGHT

SUZANNE sits in a dark end of the living room watching TV with a drink in her hand.

JEFFREY stands there, nervous, looking at her. She doesn't look up, but watches a FREEWAY POLICE CHASE on TV.

JEFFREY

Mrs. Peterson.

(no answer)

I'm sorry for getting mad and being rude to you.

She still says nothing. The CORVAIR CONVERTIBLE on the freeway gains even more speed. Jeffrey doesn't notice it's his grandparents they're chasing.

JEFFREY (CONT'D)

I'll pay back everything Ethan gave me. I'll be happy to teach him for free. I think by the end of summer he'll be able to do everything you expected tonight.

Still she says nothing, staring at the TV but not watching it.

JEFFREY (CONT'D)
Mrs. Peterson?

MAGGIE
Mom!

Still nothing. Maggie takes Jeffrey in his arms and kisses him passionately.

SUZANNE
What?! What the hell is going on here?

JEFFREY
My God...

Maggie kisses him again. Suzanne jumps to her feet.

SUZANNE
What the *fucking hell*?

MAGGIE
Don't say a word, Mom! If you can carry on with some reality show creep, I can carry on with Ethan's swim teacher.

JEFFREY
Yeah, carry on. Please.
(in a daze)
Reality show creep?

MAGGIE
Karson something.

JEFFREY
Van Meter?

SUZANNE
You know him? How do you know him?

Jeffrey hesitates, unsure what to say - but is saved by seeing a closer view of the Corvair on the freeway:

JEFFREY
Grandpa Harry...

MAGGIE
Oh-my-God. You're right.

SUZANNE
The artist? You said he was blind!

Jeffrey stares at the high resolution helicopter image - HARRISON and ELEANOR bathed in the spot light. It's so clear, he can see his grandmother holding the steering wheel

JEFFREY

He *is*!

EXT. CONVERTIBLE - NIGHT

HARRISON and ELEANOR drive fast under the spotlight, shouting over police SIRENS and low-flying choppers.

HARRISON

I've got the pedal to the floor.

ELEANOR

Keep it there.

HARRISON

We'll run out of gas.

ELEANOR

I don't want to stop.

HARRISON

That doesn't leave us many options.

They drive.

HARRISON (CONT'D)

Are we near the 605 interchange?

ELEANOR

One point five miles.

HARRISON

On the high overpass over the gravel quarry, the railing ends before it should. I once imagined that a car driving off just before the yellow sign would fly a long way before it reached the bottom of the quarry.

ELEANOR

Harry?

HARRISON

Yeah?

ELEANOR

There's only one way to find out.

HARRISON

Then you're curious.

ELEANOR

This is the way the world ends.
This is the way the world ends.
Not with a whimper, but with a crash.

HARRISON
Are you sure?

ELEANOR
It would be the most wonderful thing
you've ever done for me.

HARRISON
Who says it's for you? I'm worth a
helluva lot more dead than alive.

ELEANOR
You think we'll go to Heaven?

HARRISON
We're not the kind of people who
believe in Heaven.

ELEANOR
Can we be?

HARRISON
For a minute.

ELEANOR
That's all I need.

They speed up the overpass ramp.

CLOSE ON - HARRISON'S HAND

interlocking fingers with Eleanor's on the steering wheel.

EXT. BEL-AIR HOTEL - NIGHT

BARBARA is just handing her ticket to the VALET when she sees
in the open box WARREN'S KEYS with BEADS that spell "K-E-Y"
woven into lanyard laces.

She stares at it and fills with emotion - regret and
appreciation.

She heads back into the hotel grounds - LOUD CHATTER from the
BAR spilling into the garden.

EXT. HILGARD HOTEL - NIGHT

KATIE drags a nervous and reluctant WARREN through and
between the hotel bungalows.

KATIE
Hurry!

WARREN
Katie - listen. Your mother is a grown
woman. She's made her own decision.

KATIE
That's bullshit, Dad. Passionless,
over-intellectualized bullshit.

Katie stops at a bungalow.

WARREN
Is this the place?

EXT. CONVERTIBLE - NIGHT

The CONVERTIBLE speeds towards the end of the railing on the overpass.

ELEANOR
This is it!

HARRISON
It's in your hands!

Harrison lifts his hands from the wheel.

ELEANOR
There are TWO yellow signs, Harry!

HARRISON
Really?

ELEANOR
Yes!!!

HARRISON
Well? *Choose one.*

Eleanor *steers off the overpass* before the 2nd YELLOW SIGN.

EXT. BEL-AIR HOTEL - NIGHT

BARBARA is already looking into the bar, hears SCREAMS of people seeing the CONVERTIBLE shoot over the edge.

She realizes - she recognizes:

BARBARA
Oh shit...

EXT. KARSON'S BUNGALOW - NIGHT

WARREN hears KARSON shouting inside:

KARSON (O.S.)
Oh, God! Oh, God! Christ almighty!

WARREN
FUCKER!!

Warren throws his weight against the door - with passion.
It's open. He falls to the floor.

KATIE

Dad!

But instead of sex, Warren sees HARRISON and ELEANOR flying
through the air on a large FLATSCREEN TV -

Harrison raising both hands, flipping off the sky.

Karson shoots up from the couch - spilling his drink.

KARSON

What the fuck?

INT. ETHAN'S CONDO - NIGHT

JEFFREY

Oh no. God, no.

SUZANNE hugs JEFFREY as the CONVERTIBLE flies through the air
- HIGHWAY PATROL CARS skidding at the edge of the overpass.

EXT. 605 FREEWAY OVERPASS - NIGHT

In the bright spotlight the of helicopter, the CONVERTIBLE
flies over a black abyss into which it falls - nose first -
almost vertical on its way to flipping over when-

--it hits SAND - the spotlight illuminating the top of the a
giant PILE OF FINE GRAVEL down which the convertible skids,
fishtailing, kicking up a thick CLOUD OF DUST as it slowly
loses momentum and comes to rest at the base of a pile.

EXT. CONVERTIBLE - NIGHT

HARRISON sits there with his arms still raised inside the
SAND CLOUD made ethereally bright by the helicopter
spotlights.

HARRISON

Are we in Heaven?

The sand dust settles to reveal a giant MILLER BREWING SIGN
high above the quarry.

ELEANOR

No, God damn it. We're in Irwindale!

INT. KARSON'S BUNGALOW - NIGHT

KARSON VAN METER grabs a KNIFE off the counter, comes after
WARREN and KATIE.

KATIE
Dad! Look! They're okay.

KARSON
I said, *get the fuck out.*

He lunges. With one arm, Warren pulls Katie behind him, and with the other arm reaches into the GOLF BAG by the door--
--pulls a DRIVER out by the head like a sword from a sheath
--swings the handle to knock the knife out of Karson's hand and across the hotel room.

KARSON (CONT'D)
Ouch! Fuck.

Warren throws the driver to the ground - puts his arm around Katie.

WARREN
We're leaving.

He turns around to see BARBARA standing in the doorway having just seen everything.

She smiles ever so slightly.

DISSOLVE TO:

A YOUTUBE VIDEO

playing in slow motion the CONVERTIBLE flying off the freeway overpass, HARRISON flipping off the sky.

The "VIEW COUNT" rises quickly past 5 million.

AN EBAY PAGE

for "*Seagull and Nymph*" rises above 100 bids while "the current bid" tops \$100,000.

ETHAN

swims the length of a long public swimming pool with JEFFREY walking along beside his lane. Suzanne applauds when Ethan reaches the wall. MAGGIE wraps a towel around her little brother.

KARSON

wraps his arms around SUZANNE as they dance in the living room of his bungalow near a room service dinner table.

KATIE

in hillbilly garb, gets mock-married to a NEW BOY at an autumn SADIE HAWKINS DANCE

WARREN

writes in his office as fast as his fingers can type.

SCISSORS

cut out the a NEWSPAPER ARTICLE "*Suspended Sentence for Freeway Flyers.*"

BARBARA inserts the HEADLINE and PHOTO of the Corvair-in-midair into a COLLAGE of cut-out figures.

INT. HARRISON AND ELEANOR'S HOUSE - NIGHT

At a large nicely-set dinner table, KATIE holds up an iPhone like Hamlet's skull and talks to the disembodied face of her new boyfriend BEN.

KATIE

Fewer, Ben. There are fewer people at Thanksgiving this year. Not "less people." If you want to get into college, you need to write and speak correctly.

In the KITCHEN

WARREN takes a TURKEY out of the oven near where ELEANOR circles around in her power chair to check his work.

ELEANOR

Warren, dear. I trust you're well into your next novel.

WARREN

I've been too busy promoting the last one.

ELEANOR

Don't use success as an excuse. This heat won't last and your father and I won't be driving off another freeway anytime soon.

BARBARA

It's possible Warren's success is due to people liking his work.

ELEANOR

Are you defending him?

BARBARA

Yes.

ELEANOR

How unusual.

HARRISON (O.S.)

Can we do less talking and more eating?!

ELEANOR

We're not all here, Harry!

The DOORBELL RINGS. Warren opens it to reveal CHARLOTTE looking as attractive as ever. Barbara notices Warren looking at her.

WARREN

Where's your boyfriend?

CHARLOTTE

Getting his books from the car.

WARREN

Homework?

CHARLOTTE

Hilarious. He's the best thing in a long time. Don't fuck it up for me.

WARREN

How could I?

A handsome YOUNG MAN emerges from the dark driveway holding a STACK OF BOOKS: "*A Pocketful of Posies*" Pts. 1 and 2. "*No Picnic at Normandy*," "*My Brother Nate is a Reb*," and "*A Tale of Two Trenches*."

YOUNG MAN

Warren Milford! I am such a big fan. I've read every one of your books at least three times.

Warren glances at Charlotte. She glares at Warren.

WARREN

Thank you.

Barbara hugs Charlotte.

BARBARA

Charlotte. It's been too long.

HARRISON (O.S.)

I have a knife and I'm going to use it!

INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT

At the end of a long table, HARRISON blindly carves the turkey by feel and memory while

JEFFREY and MAGGIE transfer ELEANOR from the power chair to a dining chair at the far end of the long table. Jeffrey opens a blanket over her lap.

ELEANOR

Thank you.

She holds her grandson's hand for a long moment, as if it embodied every sensation of being alive.

JEFFREY

Are you okay, grandma?

She lets go his hand while BARBARA speaks quietly to CHARLOTTE who glances across the table at WARREN engaged in conversation with her YOUNG MAN.

YOUNG MAN

Your themes became darker and richer when you took on the Black Death in "Pocketful of Posies." It's like your work rose suddenly to a higher level and was reaching for a more mature audience.

CLOSE ON - HARRISON

finishing the carving - blindly staring across the table at ELEANOR

who sits amidst the CHATTER of family in private pain.

She looks to the rest of the table full of life and laughter, no one noticing her discomfort except her blind husband who stares directly at her - feeling what he can't see.

ELEANOR'S HAND

SPASMS and TWITCHES in her lap. With her other hand, she struggles to pull the LAP BLANKET over it.

CUT TO BLACK

THE END