

UNCIVIL TREATMENT

INT. LAURA AND NIKI'S APARTMENT IN HOBOKEN, NEW JERSEY - DAY

Niki pushes Laura forward.

LAURA
Jesus, Niki!

NIKI
Well, hurry up! I don't have all day.

LAURA
I know, but you don't have to rush me!

NIKI
Look, this is your idea. I'm supposed to be at work right now.

LAURA
Ok, alright!
Is the video in focus?

NIKI
Yes! It's in focus!

Laura is seen through the lens of a tripod mounted iPhone.

NIKI (CONT'D)
(deep giggly voice)
Lose the robe, bitch!

Laura's robe hits the floor, she walks over to the couch.

NIKI (CONT'D)
Wow, that is one heck of a body!

Laura kneels onto the couch cushion, bends at the waist, and drives her head forward into the backrest.

NIKI (CONT'D)
I can only see your ass and the bottom of your feet. Is that what we're trying to capture here?

LAURA
(muffle voice)
Is it in focus?

NIKI
Yes, it's in focus!

LAURA
Is the angle ok?

NIKI
(embarrassed)
Oh my god... we're good... mission
accomplished.

Laura pushes away from the couch and back onto her feet.

NIKI (CONT'D)
I don't know about the whole
bending over thing, but you got an
amazing figure just standing there.

LAURA
I have zero boobs and a giant ass!

NIKI
Most women I know would kill for
that body. And you can buy bigger
boobs if it means that much to you.

Laura walks across the living room to retrieve her robe.

NIKI (CONT'D)
Laura, honestly, what's going on?

LAURA
What do you mean, what's going on?

NIKI
You and I share a lot of stuff, but
that was way more of you than I
needed to see.

LAURA
I just got a Brazilian wax, I'm
curious how it all looks back
there.

NIKI
No one should be looking that
closely!

LAURA
Didn't you say you dated a guy that
liked to have the lights on during
sex?

NIKI
Yeah, but...

LAURA
When a guy bangs you from behind
with the lights on... it's because
he wants to see your asshole!

NIKI
(defensive)
Oh really! Is that how Jeremy is?

LAURA
No, of course not!
(Giggling)
Lights off, shades pulled down, he
can't get the room dark enough.

NIKI
That's my whole point, why are you
doing this?

LAURA
I'm curious, what's the big deal?

NIKI
The big deal is that you're getting
married to Jeremy in two months. Is
there something I need to know?

LAURA
No! Why are you even saying that?

NIKI
Because I know you, that's why!

LAURA
Oh my god, everything is fine.

NIKI
If you're getting cold feet, now is
the time to say something!

LAURA
I'm not getting cold feet.

NIKI
(slower voice)
You got something else going on?

LAURA
What do you mean, something else?

NIKI
You know what I mean.

LAURA
Really? We're going there?
I ended that, it's done, I promise.

NIKI
When?

LAURA
 (slightly upset)
 I'm not getting into this with you
 right now. It's done! Leave it at
 that.

NIKI
 Listen to me. Jeremy is amazing...
 don't fuck this up!

Niki detaches the iPhone from the tripod and hands it to
 Laura.

NIKI (CONT'D)
 I would 100% delete this if I were
 you.

Niki grabs her jacket and starts heading for the front door.

NIKI (CONT'D)
 By the way, when are you starting
 that new job?

LAURA
 Monday.

NIKI
 Thank god, we could use another
 paycheck around here.

Niki runs back to Laura and gives her a hug.

NIKI (CONT'D)
 (sincere)
 You're gonna have a beautiful life
 with Jeremy... stay the course.

INT. HERITAGE DESIGN & MARKETING, 4TH FLOOR, NYC - MORNING

Laura's first day, new job, approaching the receptionist.

LAURA
 Good morning, my name is Laura
 Pensali. I'm a new hire.

LIZZY
 Oh-oh yes. Hi, I'm Elizabeth.
 You're on... Nancy's team. Let me
 see if your badge is ready.

Nancy enters the reception area from the main office.

NANCY

Laura, I'm Nancy Jahnke. It's a pleasure finally meeting you.

LAURA

Likewise!

NANCY

Sorry I wasn't available for your interview, it's been hectic around here.

LAURA

Oh... no, that's ok. Alex spoke very highly of you.

The receptionist hands Laura her official HDM work badge.

LIZZY

Here you go... welcome aboard.

NANCY

(showing Laura the way)
Follow me... give you a little tour of the place.

Nancy and Laura walk side by side into the main office and into a green-screen room filled with props and electronics.

LAURA

Wow!

NANCY

Crazy, right?

LAURA

Oh my God, I love it! It's like a real Hollywood movie set!

NANCY

We can design just about anything.

LAURA

(in awe)
You must have spent a fortune on that equipment.

NANCY

Which is exactly why we brought you onboard. You'll be managing the design scope and cost of resources.

LAURA

I can't wait to get started!

They exit the studio, walking down the hallway.

NANCY

Come on, let me show you the rest
of the office.
And then after lunch I'll take you
up to the 9th floor.

LAURA

9th floor?

Nancy's eyebrows rise up a little while getting a glimpse of
Laura's backside as they walk down the office corridor.

INT. 9TH FLOOR, HDM - NOON

Three executives sitting at a coffee table in the middle of
the office discussing business objectives.

JOHN

What about Delphini? Any chance we
can get them a Super Bowl spot
within their budget?

PETER

Probably not. They're already
asking net 90 on the last invoice.

TOM

We have room in the second half.

PETER

Tom, they can't pay their bills!
Even if we put them the cheapest
time-slot, they're gonna pay us
back.

TOM

I hear what you're saying, but you
were on the call. If we can't make
it happen, they'll find someone
else who can.

PETER

What are they going to do... go
across the street and negotiate a
deal.

JOHN

Who are you talking about... LaVon
Marketing?

TOM

Apparently, they've been talking Sean Green.

JOHN

Oh, that's right, he works for them now. I forgot.

(slight pause)

But they're not producing commercials in-house, are they?

TOM

No, but they have a co-op with New Art Studios.

JOHN

That place over on Suffolk Street?

TOM

I don't know, I've never been there.

PETER

That place is a circus act!

TOM

Pete, I'm not sure what you mean by that, but they're using the same technology we're using.

PETER

Did you know they got their start running ads for Ringling Brothers?

TOM

No, I didn't know that.

JOHN

Pete, I don't have time for this.

PETER

(ignoring John)

Tom, they have a scaled down Barnum & Bailey tent in their office.

TOM

Are you serious, or are you making this up?

PETER

John, tell him! You've been over there.

JOHN

Look, we're getting off topic here!
If LaVon and New Art are working
together, then we have to have a
strategy for that.

Peter stands up and excuses himself from the meeting.

PETER

I'm gonna get another coffee. Tom,
you want one?

TOM

No, I'm good.

John grabs his iPhone and calls the receptionist.

JOHN

Becky, can we get lunch catered
today?
(slight pause)
I don't care, just something good.

TOM

We have two Super Bowl spots left,
we have to fill them.

Yelling from the kitchen, Peter continues obsessing over
Ringling Brothers, shouting out names of known circus freaks.

PETER

Bearded Lady... lizard man...
That's our competition!

Peter exits the kitchen, sits back down at the coffee table.
And continues rattling off circus character names.

PETER (CONT'D)

Lobster boy... camel girl!
And I'm talking about the girl with
two humps on her back, not one!
(hand gestures)
Tom, look at my hands. Lobster boy
had these claw-like-hands. Like
pinchers. Before he joined the
circus, he had a job delivering the
newspaper. But then people started
complaining because the paper had a
big crease in it.

TOM

For the love of God, are we ever
gonna get through this meeting?

PETER
(unwavering)
Two-headed Nightingale, Pip & Flip,
General Tom Thumb.

For whatever reason, suddenly Peter has John's attention.

JOHN
You lost me on that last one.

PETER
General Tom Thumb? Grown man living
in a two-year old's body.

JOHN
I take it he wasn't a real general?

PETER
No, of course not, that was his
stage name. His real name is
Charles Stratton. Tom Thumb is a
fairy tale about a boy that was the
size of a thumb. The name General
came about because the only outfit
they could find for his size was a
Napoleon costume that was designed
for a small child who was in a
local school play.

TOM
You amaze me with all this
knowledge you have of things that
don't pertain to work.

JOHN
Alright... with respect to
Delphini, if we defer payment for
90 days, even against our 3% for
the airtime, we can still make it
up on the back end.

PETER
John, they're already 90 days in
the rear, so it's more like 3%,
plus the cost to front load their
spot, and then just assume 180 days
for payment.

JOHN
Tom, what do you think?

TOM

We have over a million dollars tied up in our studio downstairs, let's make Delphini our guinea pig.

John looks over at Peter for final thoughts.

PETER

No offense Tom, they're sitting on three quarters of a million-dollar purchase order. Up against what... two million worth of revenue stretched out over 6 months? And you're suggesting we go out of pocket another 4-mil for their commercial spot?

TOM

It's a long term investment, but the numbers are there.

John interrupts.

JOHN

Hold on a second... one of those slots is 30 seconds in the first quarter of the game.

PETER

We got that Venture Capitalist group in North Carolina. They might scoop it up.

JOHN

The video game company?

PETER

Yeah.
They're not technically our client yet, but they did inquire about purchasing a few sideline banners.

John looks at Tom for his opinion.

TOM

No objections here, but what are we going to do about Delphini.

JOHN

For now, lets just give them some additional branding.
If they're hell bent on being in the Super Bowl, give them a few of those digital sideline banners.

TOM

Ok, well, don't be surprised when you find out that Delphini has Sean Green in their pocket for next year.

Peter steers the conversation in an awkward direction.

PETER

John, do you remember that client dinner we went to a few years back? Sean, Joey, and those guys were there. You remember that crazy restaurant? Wild game, something or another.

John ignores Peter and reverts to looking at his phone.

PETER (CONT'D)

Tom, long story short, Sean was a consultant for us years ago. One night we all went out for dinner. This restaurant... I got to tell you... craziest menu you've ever seen. All of the proteins were wild game; John and I order the Bison, and a few other people ordered Elk. But Sean, get this, he ordered goat penis.

TOM

What!

PETER

I swear to god, you've never seen a dish like this. The waitress, sweet woman, brings out this plate... and I'm telling you, it was a tray full of boners!

TOM

(laughing)

Get out of here!

PETER

I kid you not.

TOM

There's no way they serve that in a restaurant.

PETER

John, back me up here!

John gets distracted when he sees two people entering the main office area. Peter keeps ranting.

PETER (CONT'D)

Tom, I'm telling you, he ate every penis on that plate... all of them!

Nancy and Laura enter the scene.

JOHN

Knock it off!

PETER

(now whispering to Tom)
Sean eats DICKS!

JOHN

Seriously, knock it off!

PETER

(ignoring John)
He's a dick eater, plain and simple.
He ate ALL the dicks!

Nancy and Laura step into the circle, clearly hearing what Peter was saying, to include Tom cracking up over it.

NANCY

Gentleman...

Tom hops to his feet, John and Peter remain seated.

NANCY (CONT'D)

I would like to introduce our newest project manager, Laura Pensali.

TOM

Nice to meet you, Laura. Glad to have you onboard.

Peter nods his head, John says nothing.

NANCY

Tom, I'll have you know that Laura will be managing the Heatherton account.

TOM

Great!
Heatherton was my first account when I joined the organization.

LAURA

Nice to meet you, Tom.

TOM

You'll see Dan Heatherton's name on the account file, but Maggie Streith will be your point of contact.

Nancy steps in as she can see that Tom is fumbling words.

NANCY

Don't worry Tom, I'll get her up to speed.

Peter seizes the opportunity to control the conversation.

PETER

Old man Heatherton, I heard he was quite the ladies man back in the day... isn't that right, John?

NANCY

Ohhh-kay, I think Laura and I will retreat back down stairs to our humble office.

John puts the death stare on Peter.

PETER

What?

As Nancy and Laura make their exit, our three executives lock eyes on on the lower half of Laura's body.

PETER (CONT'D)

Holy shit... you don't see that everyday!

John shakes his head. Tom looks like a deer in headlights.

PETER (CONT'D)

I'll be honest, I'm struggling to find the right words!
What do they call the back of the train? Is it called the caboose? Is that what I'm thinking of?

Head shaking, John stands up and walks away. Tom is frozen.

PETER (CONT'D)

Oh come on! Neither of you are gonna say anything?

INT. NANCY AND LAURA IN THE ELEVATOR - MOMENTS LATER

NANCY

I somehow thought that would go better than it did. Sorry about that.

LAURA

No-no-no, it's fine.

NANCY

If you couldn't tell, John is the CEO.

LAURA

Yeah-no, I picked up on that. What about Tom... is he an executive?

NANCY

Director of finance, so yes.

LAURA

He's young!

NANCY

I think he just turned 29.

LAURA

Really? Wow!

NANCY

Peter is the VP of Operations. He pretty much runs the show.

LAURA

He's quite outspoken.

The bell on the elevator rings as they reach the 4th floor.

NANCY

Believe me when I tell you... HE'S the one that eats all the dicks!

INT. TOM'S OFFICE, A FEW HOURS LATER - MID DAY.

PETER

How about the look on John's face when new girl walked in with Nancy.

(MORE)

PETER (CONT'D)

Do you think she's a power lifter or something like that? It's not genetics, right?

TOM

Quit obsessing!

PETER

Don't act like you're above it.

TOM

I'm still trying to understand why Nancy felt that it was necessary to bring a new hire up to our floor.

PETER

I'm telling you... she wanted to see the look on your and John's face.

TOM

While that might be amusing to you, we have security protocols in place for a reason.

PETER

If you feel that strongly about it, take it with Alex.

TOM

In light of the fact that you're everyone's boss, feel free to bypass the org chart when rules are being broken around here!

PETER

You got to admit, watching John get up and leave when new girl walked away... that was priceless!

TOM

(slight giggle)
I'll give you that one.

INT. DION'S PUB, A FEW HOURS LATER - SUNSET

Tom and Peter are at the far corner of the bar.

PETER

Clinton, let me get a Jameson, and whatever gay drink Tom's having.

TOM
Clinton, make sure Pete is on his
own tab today.

PETER
I'm envious of John.

TOM
Why do you say that?

PETER
Because when he goes home after
work, Linda doesn't say a word to
him. In fact, she's not permitted
to speak until he initiates the
conversation.

TOM
What? What are you talking about?

PETER
No, seriously, she's not allowed to
say a word until he speaks first.

TOM
Get out of here, that's ridiculous.

PETER
You've been to his place, right?

TOM
No.

PETER
He's your uncle! You've never been
to his condo?

TOM
No, we're not close like that.

PETER
Wow, that's awkward.
Anyway, his home situation is like
the greatest thing ever!

TOM
Do tell.

PETER
First of all, his apartment is to
die for! I'm not kidding... it's like
5000 square feet.

(MORE)

PETER (CONT'D)

Anyway, He and I closed this deal last year, we're out on the balcony smoking a couple of stogies...

TOM

(cutting Peter off)
Since when did you start smoking cigars?

PETER

The guy's my boss. What am I going to do... not smoke a cigar?

TOM

Oh, oh, he offered you a cigar, and you accepted because it's the polite thing to do. Got it, got it.

PETER

I'm sitting here trying to tell you a story, and then you go and insult me like that.

TOM

I apologize, continue.

PETER

We're out on the balcony talking about this-that-and the other thing...

FLASHBACK BEGINS

John's home from the previous year.

JOHN

Do you hear that?

PETER

Hear what?

JOHN

That humming noise. You don't hear that?

FLASHBACK ENDS

TOM

What was it? What was the noise?

PETER

It was Linda in the kitchen humming
Christmas carols.

Peter waves down Clinton for another round of drinks.

PETER (CONT'D)

To be perfectly honest, I didn't
hear a thing with the sliding glass
door closed. But somehow it was
making John nuts!

FLASHBACK BEGINS

John opens the sliding glass door

JOHN

LINDA!

(looking at Peter)

She's been driving me crazy with
that all week!

PETER

(half laughing)

Come on John, it's the holidays.

John opens the sliding glass door and walks in.

JOHN

Let me go straighten her out!

FLASHBACK ENDS

TOM

Like, was he really upset?

PETER

Yes!

TOM

That is... so not like him.

PETER

That's what I'm saying... that's
what I've been trying to tell you!
He's a different person at home.

TOM

So what happened after that?

PETER

He flipped out, that's what happened! One minute she's humming Silent Night, the next minute it's dead quiet.

TOM

Silent Night? No wonder he flipped out! That's the creepiest of all Christmas songs.

PETER`

Yeah, but I'm telling you, it wasn't the song. She could have been humming anything, he would have reacted the same way.

FLASHBACK BEGINS

John walks back out onto the balcony.

JOHN

I bought her those wireless earbuds that everyone's been talking about... you know, the new ones.

PETER

Yeah, yeah.

JOHN

I figure that way she can listen to her music without bothering me. But then yesterday when I got home, I hear that same humming noise. I didn't even realize it was her. I hear that noise, I thought it was coming from the furnace.

PETER

(laughing)

She probably had the earbuds set on noise cancelling, she didn't realize how loud she was being.

JOHN

Yeah, meanwhile I'm on the phone with maintenance, asking them to come up here and check the air-ducts.

FLASHBACK ENDS

TOM
That's hilarious!

PETER
It's funny now, but at the time I
didn't know what to think.

Peter takes a sip of his Jameson and segues into a different conversation.

PETER (CONT'D)
With John being your uncle, that
would make Maria your cousin, no?

TOM
Yeah, why do you ask?

PETER
You two ever hook up?

TOM
What! No! What's wrong with you!

PETER
No, no, I mean... when you were
growing up and stuff.

TOM
She's my first cousin!

PETER
Ok, calm down, I was just asking.

TOM
(flummoxed)
That's John's daughter talking
about!
And she's Luis's wife... I might
add!

PETER
I said... when you two were
younger!

TOM
That still doesn't make it right!

PETER
I just figured, you know...
adolescence, learning about sex.

Tom takes another sip of his drink and shakes his head.

PETER (CONT'D)

I'm not saying sex, per se. But you know... over-the-pants kind of thing?

TOM

I'm done with this conversation!

PETER

(Laughing)

I'm kidding, come on... I'm joking with you!

TOM

You know, sometimes I don't think you are.

Peter orders another round of drinks

PETER

I still find it odd that you and John aren't close. In a sense, I'm closer to him than you are, and I'm not related.

TOM

You're financially more important to him than I am.

PETER

You think that's it?

TOM

Of course! The same way he's closer to Mackie than you.

PETER

Mackie signs our checks.

TOM

Exactly! That's what I'm saying. And you can add Sal and Benny to that list as well. They all go golfing every weekend... I don't see you out there with them.

PETER

I could go golfing with them if I wanted to!

TOM

Please! Membership fee is 250 grand! You're not paying that.

(MORE)

TOM (CONT'D)

Also... you got to know how to golf!

PETER

First of all... you've never seen me play golf... that's number one! And number two...

TOM

Would it be wrong to bring up that off-site work party we had at Top Golf?
I'm asking you a real question; is it ok for me to remind you of that incident?
And by incident, I mean the time when the golf club flew out of your hand and hit someone!

PETER

See, that's the difference between you and I, right there!`
I don't deliberately try to hurt your feelings.

TOM

You hurt my feelings almost every day!

PETER

Yeah, but not deliberately!

As Tom and Peter banter back and forth, in walks Nancy and Laura.

PETER (CONT'D)

Holy shit! Look!

TOM

You would think Nancy would have waited at least a week before introducing her to our habitual drinking establishment.

The girls grab a high-top table at the far side of the bar.

TOM (CONT'D)

I should go over there and say hi.

PETER

No, don't. Let Nancy have some time with the new girl. It's part of our process at HDM; ensure that everyone is an alcoholic, day one!

TOM

By the way, how is your relationship with Nancy nowadays?

PETER

I don't know. I guess better than it was before, but we don't talk outside of work or anything.

TOM

I'll never forget that time over at Alex's house.

PETER

You talking about the time I locked her in the trunk of the car?

TOM

Yes that, but more to the point where she was swinging a baseball bat at your head.

PETER

Yeah, she went nuts that night!

FLASHBACK BEGINS

Nancy flying out of the trunk of the car and chasing Peter around with a bat.

FLASHBACK ENDS

TOM

Where did she get the bat from?

PETER

It was in the trunk. It was her old man's bat. She was driving his car.

TOM

God only knows what he used it for.

PETER

Oh, I think we know what he used it for!

Clinton serves their third round of drinks.

TOM

She busted up half of the things in Alex's house trying to take your head off.

PETER

I do feel bad about that. He just bought that place and the appliances were brand new.

FLASHBACK BEGINS

Nancy swinging the bat, busted glass, red wine everywhere, massive dent in the refrigerator door.

PETER

(narrating)

As bad as it was, I don't think it warranted the entire police department showing up.

Multiple cop cars screeching into the driveway with blue lights flashing.

FLASHBACK ENDS

TOM

Aside from Alex and I, no one knew you two were having an affair. At least not up until that moment.

PETER

I had no choice but to tell the cops about the affair. It was the only way to make sense of the whole thing. Other wise, they were going to take me to jail.

TOM

I can't remember... was it her sister in-law that ratted you out?

PETER

Yep, she was at the party, saw everything.

Peter waves down Clinton and asks for the tab.

TOM

You rolling?

PETER

Unlike John, my old lady is not going to be quiet when I get home.

INT. MARASCHINO RESTAURANT THE FOLLOWING DAY - NOON

John, Peter, and Tom are sitting at a table having lunch.

TOM

Pete, have you seen the renovations going on at the Heatherton building?

PETER

No, but I heard about it.

TOM

Top two floors of the building.

JOHN

For them? Or are they leasing it out?

TOM

Not sure, but it's substantial. Their contract is coming up for renewal... maybe we should hit them up for a new commercial.

JOHN

I don't want to give Heatherton any reason to shop around. Let them auto-renew and leave it at that.

PETER

Hey, let's send new girl over there for a meet and greet. Old man Heatherton would love that.

TOM

With all due respect, Dan Heatherton is not engaged with day-to-day operations anymore. Maggie pretty much runs that outfit

John waves the waitress down for the check, and then turns his attention back to Peter.

JOHN

You got anything else you want to add, Mr. FunnyMan.

PETER

(half laughing)

No, I agree... let the contract auto-renew, it's the safest bet.

John signs the check, and hands it back to the waitress.

JOHN

I'll see you two back to the office.

There's a bit of a pause as John steps away from the table. Tom and Peter stay behind.

TOM

John never sees the bigger picture. It's almost as if he doesn't care.

PETER

I hear where you're coming from, but this is a bird-in-hand situation.

Discouraged, Tom takes the napkin from his lap, wipes his hands, and then throws the napkin on the table.

TOM

Another marketing firm is going to seize this opportunity, we're going to lose Heatherton, just like we're going to lose Delphini, and this is going to keep happening until there's nothing left to take from us.

PETER

You're putting too much thought into this. Let's just concentrate on landing new clients.

TOM

(hesitant to speak)

I have a meeting with Laura when we get back to the office.

PETER

(shocked)

WHAT?

TOM

Nancy's out today, she asked me to show Laura how to pull reports.

PETER

You mean like a meeting in our conference room on the 9th floor?

TOM

(hands in the air)

Where else would it be?

PETER
Boy O' boy, if this isn't pot
calling the kettle black.

Peter steps closer to Tom.

PETER (CONT'D)
(lowering his voice)
Make sure you leave the conference
room door open, so that I can see
her from my office.

TOM
First of all, you're creeping me
out! Secondly, everything you just
said is an HR violation... to the
nth degree.

PETER
You know what? You got to thing for
her, and now you're trying to make
me out to be the perv!

TOM
Perv doesn't even come close to
describing what you are.

INT. 9TH FLOOR OFFICE CONFERENCE ROOM - AFTERNOON

LAURA
Is it ok if I sit here?

TOM
Sure, that's fine.
Ok, so, pulling a financial report,
really not a whole lot to it.

Laura starts fiddling with her laptop.

LAURA
(under her breath)
Ugh, I just had Heatherton's
account pulled up... stupid laptop!

TOM
Here, let me take a look.
Just enter your password.

LAURA
That's the problem. It's not
accepting my password.

TOM
(a smidgeon perturbed)
Just enter the original password
that Nancy gave you.

LAURA
(defensive)
That's just it, my original
password expired, and it didn't
give me the option to generate a
new one.

TOM
You just said you had the account
pulled up!

LAURA
I did! Nancy gave me a temporary
log-in, and now that one isn't
working either!

Tom walks over to Laura's side of the conference table, and
pulls up a chair beside her.

TOM
Let's start over. Is it alright if
I open your Outlook and check your
email?

LAURA
(annoyed)
Sure.

Tom's eyes shift back and forth rather quickly, and then he
looks back up at Laura.

TOM
I'm not trying to put you on the
spot, and I totally understand how
overwhelming it is to start a new
job, but you've had this laptop for
a week and it looks like you
haven't logged into this project
space.

Laura crosses her arms and doesn't say anything.

TOM (CONT'D)
(confused)
How could you have had the
Heatherton account opened a few
minutes ago... if you've never
accessed the project portal?
(MORE)

TOM (CONT'D)

Nancy should have gone over all of
this with you.

Laura slams the laptop shut, and rises to her feet.

LAURA

I'm sorry I asked for your help!

Tom rises to his feet as well, but in doing so, he knocks
over the chair next to him.

TOM

What the hell!

Laura tries to navigate around Tom so that she can leave the
conference room, but her backside bumps into everything.

TOM (CONT'D)

Where are you going?

Laura pushes up onto the balls of her feet so that her ass
will clear Tom's chair and the conference table.

TOM (CONT'D)

Excuse me! Where do you think
you're going!

Laura exits the 9th floor office. Tom is left standing there
dusting off his slacks.

INT. DION'S, LATER THAT SAME AFTERNOON - SUNSET

PETER

(laughing)

What happened? I saw her walk in,
and then when I came out of my
office she was gone!

TOM

Wasn't the most productive meeting,
that's for sure.

PETER

Seriously, what happened?

TOM

I don't want to talk about it.

PETER

Oh! We're talking about it!

Clinton pours Tom a glass of Chablis.

TOM

I've told John numerous times that I need to be involved with every aspect of our hiring process. And yet people continue to get hired without my knowledge.

PETER

New girl isn't up to your standards... shocker!

TOM

It's not that...
We need seasoned, experienced professionals in order to take this company to the next level.
(stressing)
She graduated college a year ago; how did that not jump off the page when Alex interviewed her?

PETER

How do you know she graduated a year ago?
Let me guess... you went to her LinkedIn profile?

TOM

Of course I did! It's our responsibility to know the people working for us.

PETER

Are you sure that's it?
Are you sure there isn't a hint of attraction going on there?

TOM

No!

PETER

Let me give you some advice, if for no other reason than to save you the headache; stay on your side of the house, and Let Alex and Nancy do their job.

Tom shakes his head and orders another Chablis.

TOM

Speaking of our side of the house, where were you this afternoon?

PETER
I was at the DMV, why?

TOM
Karthik was looking for you.

PETER
For what?

TOM
He needed a signature or something.
I told him you were at a strip
joint.

PETER
Why would you tell him that?

TOM
Because anytime you leave the
office without telling anyone,
that's usually where you're at.

PETER
Yeah, well, that doesn't give you
the right to tell Karthik that!

TOM
(giggling)
Since we're on the subject, Danny
told me that you got banned from
that place over on 33rd.

PETER
That was a long time ago, I don't
want to talk about it.

TOM
Oh! We're talking about it!

Peter waves Clinton down for another Jameson.

TOM (CONT'D)
What happened, and how long ago?

PETER
I don't know, a few months ago.

TOM
Ok, that's not a long time ago, but
whatever, what did you do?

PETER

First of all, it was a Monday, and as you know, I'm always stressed out on Mondays. Can I say that?

TOM

Sure, you can say that.

PETER

Ok, so, I was on my way to the office when I noticed that my kid left a pack of Twizzlers in the back seat. I stuck the Twizzlers in my jacket because it was hot that day and I didn't want them to melt in the car.

TOM

What does this have to do with the strip joint?

PETER

I'm getting to that!
I was upstairs in the champagne room when I remembered that I had the Twizzlers in my pocket.

TOM

AND!

PETER

Look, I had a few drinks...
(hesitant)

TOM

No, no, no. What did you do?

PETER

I umm... you know... I was getting a lap dance...

TOM

And...

PETER

You keep cutting me off while I'm trying to explain what happened!

TOM

Yeah, because you're not being forthcoming!

PETER

(talking slower)

I took one of the Twizzlers out of the package, and I gave the stripper a little whack on the bum.

Peter holds his hand out; thumb and index finger clasped to mimic the look of holding a Twizzler. He starts out by waving his hand back and forth in a whipping motion, but then awkwardly changes to more of a jabbing movement; in and out type gesture.

TOM

For the love of God, please tell me you didn't!

PETER

It just sort of... slipped in there.

Peter continues showing Tom the motion of the Twizzler. And for reasons that have no explanation, he also begins whistling like a parakeet, and does so in sync with the in and out manipulation of his thumb and index finger.

TOM

(laughing and embarrassed)

You know what's really amazing? You are somehow very successful, amidst the horrible-horrible things you do.

(laughing, sip of Chablis)

Still, as bad as that is, I'm surprised Lenny banned you for that.

Nancy and Laura enter the bar with two men lingering behind them.

PETER

Fuck! Here we go again...

Nancy, Laura, and the two men take a 4-top table at the far side of the bar. Tom tries to figure out who's who.

TOM

Oh, I think that's Laura's fiancé.

PETER

Fiancé? You know... for a guy that claims to be not-so-interested in new girl, you seem to know a lot about her.

TOM

Nancy told me he works at a glass shop in Brooklyn.

PETER

Auto glass?

TOM

No, no. Windows and doors.

PETER

Murphy's?

TOM

I don't know, maybe.

Peter suddenly notices what Laura is wearing.

PETER

Holy mother of God! She wearing jeans.

Tom waves down Clinton for another round; Chablis number four and Jameson number three.

PETER (CONT'D)

I'm gonna find out who makes those jeans. And then I'm going to visit the factory where those jeans were made, and I'm going to demand that they show me the process.

TOM

(laughing)

What are you talking about?

PETER

I want to see how much denim material they have to pull off the shelves for her body type. And those aren't stretchy jeans. That's regular denim. I'm imagining some template laid out on a table and everyone standing around just staring at it. Like, scratching their heads. Also, If you're the Chinese woman working at that clothing factory and you get an order with those measurements... do you not question that?

TOM

You mean like... flag down a supervisor for a second opinion.

PETER

That, or... maybe your co-workers are playing a trick on you. And you're like, hey man, what the heck, that's not funny, I'll be here all day sewing those jeans.

TOM

(in hysterics)

I'm going to guess that shenanigans like that do not go on in a Chinese clothing factory, but I think I get your point.

What's crazy is... she's solid! I mean... she's really tone. That's not fat!

PETER

Oh, no doubt. She just has those genetics where the lower half is far more substantial than the upper half. But hey, it's works. It's got us looking.

PETER (CONT'D)

Could you imagine being with her, like... from behind?

It hurts my head just thinking about it.

Alright, I think I'm gonna call it a day.

I wonder if Clinton has anything good going on in that kitchen.

Clinton does a double take when he sees Peter meander around the bar and into the kitchen.

CLINTON

(pointing at Tom)

You need to control your boy!

TOM

(somewhat giggling)

Don't worry about him. He's fine.

CLINTON

If he steals anything out of my kitchen, that's on you!

TOM
Just put it on my check.

CLINTON
Do you need another drink?

TOM
No... let me go ahead a pay up.
(reluctant)
Actually... give me one more.

INT. HIGHTOP - NANCY, HER HUSBAND, LAURA, HER FIANCÉ - NIGHT

LAURA
I could have sworn I just saw Peter
run into the kitchen!

NANCY
Oh, I'm sure it was him.
Probably skipped out on his bill.
Cheapskate.
And I'm sure he'll steal something
to eat from the kitchen on his way
out.
(whispering)
Fucking asshole!

JEREMY
Wow! And that guy is your boss?

NANCY
If you want to call him that. He
basically hides in his office all
day, and then comes in here for an
hour or so, and then he mopes home
to his ugly-ass wife.

Nancy's husband, David, tries to steer the conversation in a
different direction.

DAVID
Didn't we meet his wife at the
Christmas party last year.

NANCY
Umm... no! That was not his wife!
That was a temp he hired during the
holidays, and then conveniently
fired her the first week of
January.
His wife is that big fatso you were
talking to at the charity
fundraiser.

DAVID
What... really?

NANCY
Yes, that's what he goes home to
every night!

LAURA
(giggling)
Love is a funny thing...

NANCY
Oh, it's funny alright!

LAURA
I still don't understand. Are you
saying that he ran through the
kitchen to avoid us, or to avoid
the bill?

NANCY
Both!
I'm sure Tom paid his tab, but I've
seen him walk out without paying
many times.

LAURA
And like... no one says anything?

JEREMY
I walked out on my tab at my
cousin's bar over in Bedford. I've
known the guy 25 years, and he
still threw a beating on me the
next day.

NANCY
First of all, Peter thinks someone
should pick up his tab everywhere
he goes. But with respect to this
particular bar, he honestly thinks
he's entitled to free drinks.

LAURA
And why is that?

NANCY
(a sip of her red wine)
It's actually a pretty interesting
story.
The black guy you see behind the
bar, that's Clinton Mayes.

(MORE)

NANCY (CONT'D)

A couple years ago, he was laid off when the restaurant was undergoing new ownership. This did not go over well with the guys on the 9th floor.

Instead of finding somewhere else to drink, they just kept coming in here every day, complaining about the service. Despite all of the pressure, the new owner, a guy named Gene Stegman wouldn't hire Clinton back. Instead, he just kept rotating in new bartenders, which only agitated the 9th floor guys even more.

This all comes to a head the night Big John comes into the bar. Keep in mind, he doesn't drink. But every once in a while, he pops in unexpectedly to make sure his guys are acting right. And of course, they weren't.

LAURA

So it's Peter, Tom, and who else? The sales team?

NANCY

Yeah... Mitch, Carl, Danny... and then Karthik and Anoop. Those guys aren't as loud, but they definitely drink!

JEREMY

What kind of name is Anoop?

NANCY

It's Hindu. He and Karthik are Indian.

JEREMY

My Grandfather was part Cherokee.

NANCY

Not that type of Indian.

LAURA

Nancy, don't listen to him, he's trying to be funny.

NANCY

Anyway... the 9th floor guys were hammered, acting like assholes, and eventually a glass was broken. The owner, Gene, lost his shit!

FLASHBACK BEGINS

John steps in and cuts off the 9th floor guys from ordering anymore drinks.

GENE

Oh, you're some kind of big shot!
You're gonna pay everyone's tab!

The 9th floor guys are chanting Clinton's name at the top of their lungs.

GENE (CONT'D)

I'm not hiring him back! Go fuck yourself!
(turning his attention to the Stand-in bartender)
Who fucking taught you how to bartend? You don't know when to cut people off? Tally up their drinks and give the check to Mr. Big-shot over there!

FLASHBACK ENDS

NANCY

Long story short, Big John pays the bill, and Gene tells the 9th floor guys that they're banned from the bar.

JEREMY

I'm curious, why do you call him big John?

NANCY

He's 6'6, and 275 pounds, even you look small next to him.

JEREMY

I'm 6'2, 245, that's not nothing!

LAURA

No one cares, Jeremy. Let Nancy talk!

NANCY

Now as far as the check is
concerned... 4 grand!
That's Right! \$4000 for alcohol
between 7 guys.

JEREMY

Whoa!

NANCY

I know, that's insane, but...
that's how they roll.
Anyway, big John pulls out his Visa
Black, and adds a \$1000 tip to the
balance.

LAURA

Nice!

NANCY

Yeah, but... it didn't actually
work out that way.

LAURA

What happened?

NANCY

The following day I find out that
Gene fired the stand-in bartender
and divided his tip amongst the
staff.

LAURA

No way!

NANCY

Yep!

JEREMY

You don't pay me my tips... I would
have flattened the guy right there
on the spot!

LAURA

Did you say something to John?

NANCY

No! I know it's fucked up, but you
can't approach someone like John
with that kind of thing. He runs a
billion-dollar business; he leaves
a \$1000 tip at everywhere he goes.
He doesn't know one bartender from
another.

LAURA

Wow, I guess you're right. But man, how shitty is that?

NANCY

Oh, I was literally in tears. And to be honest, I was fucking pissed at the guys upstairs. It was 100% their fault.

Nancy orders another red wine.

NANCY (CONT'D)

But then the strangest thing happened. About a month later, the board members were in town and they wanted to have lunch at Dion's. And of course, when they found out that half of the executives were banned, they weren't happy about it.

(giggling)

Uhh, let's just say, soon thereafter, the restaurant mysteriously shut down for health violations.

LAURA

No way!

NANCY

Look, those guys don't fuck around. They got the kind of money, power, and influence to do whatever they want.

JEREMY

On one hand, that ain't right. On the other hand, uhh... it still ain't right.

LAURA

Yeah, I'm kind of conflicted about it myself.

NANCY

I'm with you on that, but here's the thing... which in a sense answers the question as to why Peter thinks his drinks should be free. He essentially convinced John's son-in-law to reopen the restaurant, and recommended he hire Clinton back.

LAURA

Oh, wow!

JEREMY

Hold on... but what happened to the other bartender that got fired.

NANCY

(pointing to the manger)
That's him, right there!

LAURA

Ok, well, I guess I have to change my opinion now!

JEREMY

Yeah, that tips the scale, for sure.

Tom enters the scene, walking over from the far side of the bar. Though he's speaking to Nancy, he's looking at Laura.

TOM

(serious)
Nancy, when you get a chance, please schedule a meeting with me. I have a few things I need to discuss with you.

NANCY

Sure. I'll schedule it first thing Monday morning.

As Tom exits the scene, Jeremy points out his overly perfect attire.

JEREMY

That's some shirt he's wearing, no? Got the collar ironed up nice and pointy!
(giggling)
We got a guy in the neighborhood... wears his shirts just like that. We call him, Starchy Bunker!

LAURA

That's enough, Jeremy, we get it!

INT. TOM'S OFFICE ON THE 9TH FLOOR MONDAY - MORNING

Nancy walks in looking extremely busy.

NANCY

Hey, we're gonna have to make this short. I have a shit-ton of work to do.

TOM

I met with Laura last week to go over the Heatherton account. She was completely unprepared, and she lacks basic computer operating skills.

NANCY

Hold on, hold on, hold on! What meeting? What are you talking about?

TOM

You were out last week. Laura asked me if I would show her how to pull a financial report.

NANCY

I was out ONE day last week! Since when are you meeting with PMs?

TOM

(unwavering)

She couldn't even sign into the client portal!

NANCY

I am not EVEN going to have this conversation with you!

TOM

I'll be honest, I'm shocked you couldn't find a better candidate for that position.

NANCY

Really, Tom? I'm shocked that anyone applied for that position! What do you think you're gonna get for 90k a year?

(furious)

And by the way, was Alex in this meeting you had with MY employee?

TOM

Look, we're getting ready to roll out a major initiative for Heatherton in the coming weeks, can you please assign the account to someone else?

NANCY

(slightly calmer)

Tom, I appreciate your concern, I really do. But it's a solid NO! I run my department the way I run it.

TOM

There's no way she can shoulder the responsibility of that account.

NANCY

If it makes you feel any better, I'll provide additional supervision, but that's the best I can do for you.
Are we done here?

Nancy begins walking out of Tom's office.

TOM

(raised voice)

I'm the one responsible for the success of this company, not you!

Nancy looks around, as if to see if anyone else can hear how loud Tom is speaking.

NANCY

Tom, I respect what you do, and I'm fully aware of your authority. But you're up here on the finance side of the house, and I'm downstairs in the trenches.
If you don't like the way I manage my people, take it up with Alex.

INT. LAURA AND NIKI'S APARTMENT - DUSK

Niki mutes the TV, Laura talks to her with the refrigerator door open.

NIKI

How was your day?

LAURA

It was ok, I guess. I don't know.

NIKI

What do you mean, you guess? What's going on?

LAURA

Remember how I was telling you about that executive... the one I had a falling-out with last week?

NIKI

Yeah.

LAURA

Well, he and my manager had a meeting this morning, and I'm sure it had something to do with me.

NIKI

Did your manager say anything to you about it?

LAURA

No, but I could tell, she was kind of standoffish this afternoon.

Niki runs into the kitchen and returns with a bag of chips.

LAURA (CONT'D)

Oh, and then I had a conference call with our engineering team; bunch of Indian dudes. You ask them one simple question; they give you 9 million different answers. And they all have funky names; Bishaka, Naveeth, and one guy's name is actually Harikrishna.

NIKI

(laughing)

Welcome to my world.

LAURA

Really? You got to a lot of brown people in the textile business?

NIKI

Are you kidding me? You ever been inside an Indian person's home?

LAURA

No.

NIKI

They understand woven fabrics better than anyone. Their houses smell weird, but I guarantee they got some nice-ass curtains!

NIKI (CONT'D)

(changing the subject)

Oh my God, Laura. Do you know what day it is? Do you know!

LAURA

No, what day is it?

NIKI

It's exactly one month until your WEDDING! Is Jeremy freaking out yet, or what?

LAURA

No, he's actually way calmer than I am.

NIKI

What about your bouquet? Did you get that all figured out?

LAURA

Oh, I didn't show you that? Yeah, yeah, yeah, let me pull it up on my phone.

Laura lays across Niki's lap, handing her the iPhone and simultaneously grabbing the bag of chips out of her hand.

LAURA (CONT'D)

Look, look!

NIKI

Wow! Those are gorgeous!

Niki hands the iPhone back to Laura.

NIKI (CONT'D)

It still makes me sad that you won't be living here anymore.

LAURA

It's not like I'm moving to Alaska. It's like 2 miles from here.

NIKI
I know, I know. It's just going to
be different, that's all.
I'm gonna miss seeing this big rump
walking around the apartment.

Niki squeezes Laura's butt cheeks in a playful way.

NIKI (CONT'D)
It's like kneading dough.

LAURA
(giggling)
Oh my God, stop. I'm like... super
sensitive right now.

NIKI
What do you mean, sensitive?

LAURA
Like horny.

NIKI
(half laughing)
What! Eew!

LAURA
Just then when you squeezed my
right cheek, I could feel it around
the other side.

Niki pushes Laura off of her lap and onto the floor.

NIKI
You Freak!

Laura, still on the floor, rolls over onto her back and
starts laughing.

LAURA
I wish I had a ruler or something
to beat it out of me.

NIKI
(confused laugh)
What are you talking about?

LAURA
You've never paddled yourself
between the legs to make the
horniness go away?

NIKI
(just confused)
What? Ouch... no!
Jesus, Laura! I thought you and
Jeremy were having sex on the
regular.

LAURA
We are. I'm just... worked up. My
whole job thing, extra hours and
whatnot. It stresses me out...

NIKI
That doesn't exactly explain why
you're horny, but ok.

Laura rolls back onto her stomach laughing, and then finds
her way to her feet.

LAURA
I'm going to take a shower.

NIKI
A cold shower, I hope.

INT. TUCCI'S SANDWICH SHOP LATER THAT WEEK - DAY

Sitting at a high-top table, Tom conveys his thoughts to
Laura about working at HDM.

TOM
You're not the right person to
manage the Heatherton account.
There's no other way to say it.

LAURA
Tom, I just need a little guidance.
I'm on calls every day with Maggie.
She's saying one thing, and Nancy
is saying something completely
different.

TOM
That's where experience comes into
play, and you don't have that
experience.

LAURA
I can manage the ad campaign, but I
can't advise them how to spend
their money.

TOM

Why not?

LAURA

Because that's not the job of a project manager.

TOM

It's not the job of a project manager at your level. I agree with that.

LAURA

If that's the case, then why not hire a senior PM, and let me manage some of the smaller accounts.

TOM

Because why pay two people to do the work of one person.

LAURA

So what are you saying? I'm screwed! I should quit!

TOM

(obtuse)
I would.

Laura jumps to her feet

LAURA

(enraged yelling)
Then what the fuck are we doing here!

Everyone in the deli is watching.

TOM

I figured better here than the office if you were going to make a scene... which you are!

LAURA

Thanks for ruining my day.
Asshole!

Laura throws her napkin on the floor, stands up, and storms out of the deli. On her way out, her butt knocks into an occupied table.

INT. DION'S LATER THAT SAME DAY - DUSK

Peter is already at the bar when Tom walks in.

PETER

What the hell?

TOM

Unlike you, I have reports to run
at the end of the month.

PETER

Please! You could have done that
this morning. And by the way, where
were you this afternoon? I thought
we were gonna go over to Charlie's
to check out those new watches that
just came in.

Peter grabs hold of his Rolex and twists it back and forth.

PETER (CONT'D)

I'm tired of this piece of shit.

TOM

I met up with Laura at Tucci's.

PETER

What!

TOM

I needed her to know that I don't
approve of her managing the
Heatherton account.

PETER

And you took her out to lunch for
that?

TOM

I didn't want her to make a scene
at the office.

PETER

Wow, ok, so you told her that she
sucks at her job... then what did
she do?

TOM

As I predicted, She made a scene
and stormed out of the deli.
And she called me an asshole on the
way out.

Peter starts laughing and choking on his Jameson.

TOM (CONT'D)

You find that funny?

PETER

It's funny for two reasons,
starting with the fact that I've
never heard you use the word,
asshole!

TOM

Her words, not mine.

PETER

The other reason it's funny; you of
all people... fraternizing with
subordinates outside of the office.
(giggling)
Shame on you.

TOM

I was not fraternizing with her.

PETER

What did you do after she called
you an asshole?

TOM

What am I going to do; we're right
there in the middle of Tucci's!

PETER

At a minimum, you should have
clubbed her over the head with one
of those baguettes. You know the
ones I'm talking about? The ones in
the display case; they're like 3
feet long.

TOM

Really? That's what you'd have
done?

Tom finishes his Chablis and orders another.

PETER

I was gonna suggest firing her, but
then I remembered...
(chuckling)
she doesn't work for you!

TOM

Lord knows, you wouldn't have fired her.

PETER

Me? Hell no! Her big ass is the only thing worth looking at in the entire organization.

Peter orders another Jameson and sort of changes the subject.

PETER (CONT'D)

You could have brought me a sandwich from Tucci's... you know that, right?

Tom's headspace is still in a holding pattern over Laura.

TOM

I'm baffled by the fact that Alex and Nancy hired her.

PETER

(serious side)

I'm baffled by the fact that you're still talking about this. Most employees suck! Plain and simple. And the ones that are good, within a year quit, and go to work somewhere else for more money.

Peter finishes the last of his Jameson and then pushes his barstool back from the bar.

PETER (CONT'D)

Alright, I'm heading out. See you tomorrow.

INT. 4TH FLOOR, HDM - MORNING

Laura is at her desk when a direct message from Tom pops up in the corner of her monitor.

TOM

Let's start over.

LAURA

When and where?

TOM

Donatello's for lunch, 12:45.

INT. DONATELLO'S - NOONISH

Laura, a few minutes late, sits down with Tom at a table near the window; a cosmopolitan already in front of her.

LAURA

(undecided)

Is this how it works? I take a sip of this drink, and you fire me for being drunk on the job?

TOM

(Chablis in hand)

I'm going to go out on a limb and say that we're both responsible adults.

(slight pause)

I think we can work together towards a common goal.

LAURA

Yeah... and how do you figure that?

TOM

Let's start with the fact that the Heatherton pushed back on the renewal contract.

LAURA

When Nancy and I met with Maggie, she said she's still looking it over.

TOM

Why is she being apprehensive?

LAURA

The only logical explanation is that she doesn't want to be locked into a contract that would keep her from being able to entertain other offers.

TOM

Do you think she's consulting with other marketing firms?

Laura pulls a business card from her purse, and slides it over to Tom. The business card reads, Sean Green, LaVon Marketing.

LAURA

He literally introduced himself to me while going up in the elevator to Heatherton's floor.

TOM

Sean used to work for us as a consultant, but then jumped ship to manage LaVon's marketing division.

LAURA

You think he's trying to steal Heatherton away from us.

TOM

He's certainly stolen other clients away from us, but I don't see Maggie being swayed by him.

LAURA

(hesitant)

How well does Nancy know Sean?

TOM

Why do you ask?

LAURA

Well... when the 3 of us were in the elevator together, those two were like... I don't know... buddy-buddy... or something.

TOM

(laughing)

They used to work together, so I'm sure it was inside joke stuff.

LAURA

Oh, ok, I thought maybe they used to date, or something?

TOM

(laughing harder)

Bitter rivals, I assure you!

(slight pause)

You met the guy... does he look like Nancy's type to you?

LAURA

No...

(hesitant)

But Peter doesn't look like her type either.

Tom stops, mid sip of his Chablis.

TOM

Ok... wow!

(laughing)

I didn't realize you and Nancy were that close.

(asking for the check)

I have to get back to the office.

LAURA

I feel like we didn't accomplish much.

TOM

It's gonna take some more research to figure out what's going on with Heatherton. But the important thing is that you and I are on good terms.

Wouldn't you agree?

LAURA

It was a lot better than last time, I'll give you that.

INT. DOUB-THORN COFFEE SHOP, THE NEXT DAY - MORNING

Tom and Laura are sitting at a small table together. Tom is mimicking a well known commercial.

TOM

Have you've been injured in an accident... are your medical bills piling up? Well, then you need the law offices of Kelsey, Markham, and Adams! We'll sue the pants off of anyone and everyone.

LAURA

(laughing)

That was a good impression!

TOM

It's a fantastic ad. They get the knife right in there from the beginning, and then they twist it a few times at the end to make sure you see dollar signs wrapped around your pain and suffering. We need to come up with something like that for Heatherton.

Tom takes another sip of his coffee; Laura takes a bite of her croissant.

LAURA

Injury law really lends itself to catchy commercials. Heatherton is the polar opposite.

TOM

Corporate law is so boring! How in the world do you define that client base. You know what I mean?

LAURA

At my last job, we managed advertisements for the Cheesecake Factory restaurants. Are you familiar with that chain?

TOM

No.

LAURA

They're kind of like Applebees with the added layer of specializing in cheesecake.

The ads were quite effective.

Instead of showing you a bunch of cheesecakes, the commercial opens with a panoramic view of the bar. And then at the end, this super attractive waitress tells you that they have 250 items to choose from off their menu.

TOM

Whoa! Like, literally 250 items?

LAURA

Yep. And probably 30+ different types of cheesecakes.

TOM

Wow, Yeah, I can see how that would be effective.

LAURA

Yeah! And the allure is that the never actually show you the cheesecakes; those are in the background. Hence, you got to go to the restaurant to see for yourself.

TOM
That's a great zinger!

Tom finishes his coffee and checks the time on his phone.

TOM (CONT'D)
You think we can provide that same
principle to Heatherton?

LAURA
Sure... why not. We just have to
burn the Heatherton name into a
targeted audience and hope it
sticks the next time they break
some kind of contract law.
(giggling)

TOM
I'm gonna give that some serious
thought.

Tom and Laura stand up from the table and place their empty
coffee cups and paper plates into a nearby trash bin.

LAURA
You know... everyone keeps saying
that Heatherton is bringing on new
partners. What if we pitch our idea
to them, whoever they are.

TOM
Umm, begs the question, why is
Maggie keeping this so tight-
lipped?

On their way out, a Jewish woman and her husband at a nearby
table can't keep their opinions to themselves.

JEWISH WIFE
Oy Vey!

LAURA
Excuse me!

JEWISH HUSBAND
That's some tuchus!

LAURA
(walking away)
The nerve of some people!

TOM
They're just old and cranky. Don't
pay them any mind.
(MORE)

TOM (CONT'D)

Do you have time to meet up again tomorrow?

LAURA

Here?

TOM

Yeah.

LAURA

(hesitant)

I guess. I just... hope those two old crows aren't here.

INT. DOUB-THORN THE FOLLOWING DAY - MORNING

Tom and Laura are in line to get coffee. Further towards the back of the line are the older Jewish couple from the previous day.

JEWISH HUSBAND

Black coffee, half of a brand muffin, that's how you stay thin.

JEWISH WIFE

I bet she'll ask for whipped cream and sugar in her coffee.

JEWISH HUSBAND

And watch, she'll probably order the buttery croissant again.

Laura turns around in complete dismay and embarrassment.

LAURA

I CAN HEAR YOU!

Laura and Tom are now at the front of the line, placing their order.

LAURA (CONT'D)

Can I just get a plain coffee, and an old fashion doughnut.

JEWISH HUSBAND

Old fashion! Just as much sugar as a regular doughnut.

Tom orders the same doughnut. He pays, walks to the back of the line, and confronts the older Jewish couple.

TOM

Please keep your opinions to yourself.

Tom and Laura take the same table from the previous day.

TOM (CONT'D)

The more I think about this Heatherton situation, the more I feel like you and I need to figure out what's going on over there.

LAURA

What do you propose?

TOM

Much to your point from yesterday, Heatherton is likely bringing on partners. It's the only way to explain all of the renovations going on in their building. If we can get in front of those partners, especially if they are younger and appreciate technology, they would see the value in convincing Heatherton to update their commercial, and potentially signing a whole new contract.

LAURA

I actually asked Maggie about the renovations the other day... you know what said?

TOM

What?

LAURA

She said they just wanted to spruce the place up.

TOM

Spruce!

(laughing)

They're taking over the top two floors in the building!

LAURA

I was thinking the same thing, but I couldn't call her out like that over the conference call.

TOM

With all that construction going on in their building, you would think every lawyer in town would be talking about it.

LAURA

You would think.

TOM

Maybe that's the move... ask around town, see what people are saying.

LAURA

(smiling)

Are you thinking a little reconnaissance mission?

TOM

Well, I don't know of any attorney specifics bars around here, but there is that place, Palmetto's; known cop bar. I'm guessing there's a few lawyers that hang out there. Maybe we should go check it out.

LAURA

Alright... I'm down!

TOM

What are you doing tomorrow?

LAURA

Work, and then I have a palates class. It's only 30 minutes, I could meet you afterwards.

TOM

Deal!
One thing though...

LAURA

What?

TOM

Nancy can't know about this.

LAURA

Oh... Ok...

TOM

It's just that...

LAURA

No, I get it. I understand.

Laura and Tom stand up from the table and begin to exit the coffee shop. Laura's butt has to squeeze by a few patrons.

JEWISH HUSBAND

I'm surprised she didn't go back up for another doughnut.

JEWISH WIFE

I'm surprised her chair didn't give out from underneath of her.

INT. PALMETTO LOUNGE THE FOLLOWING DAY - DUSK

Tom is one layer of bodies back from the bar railing when Laura walks in. He waves for her attention, and at the same time waves for the bartender to make a few drinks.

BARTENDER

(yelling over the crowd)
What do you want?

TOM

(yelling back)
A Cosmo and a glass of Chablis.

BARTENDER

A Cosmo and what?

TOM

(yelling louder)
Chablis... Chardonnay!

Laura navigates through the thick crowd and reaches Tom.

LAURA

Holy shit! This place is packed!

TOM

I ordered you a Cosmo.

LAURA

What?

TOM

(talking in her ear)

A Cosmo!

LAURA

Oh. I wanted tequila!

TOM
Tequila?

LAURA
Just kidding... but not really.

The bartender reaches across the bar to hand them their drinks. Tom puts his hand on Laura's shoulder.

TOM
I want to introduce you to a friend
of mine. Follow me.

Tom and Laura make their way to the quieter side of the lounge – her butt nudges into another woman, nearly spilling her drink. They take a couch in front of a nice-looking man and his friends.

TOM (CONT'D)
Romain, I want you to meet Laura
Pensali. Laura, this is Romain
Desario.

Romain extends his cocktail glass. Laura touches her glass with his. Italian words are exchanged.

ROMAIN
Cuore è con la famiglia.

LAURA
Lealtà e fiducia interiore.

Romain and Laura stare at each other a few seconds.

TOM
Romain, we have an issue with one
of our clients...

ROMAIN
(concentrating on Laura)
Salendo in cima.

LAURA
Ancora imparo.

ROMAIN
(Responding to Tom, but
still looking at Laura)
Who's this a client you speak of?

TOM
Heatherton Law Office.

Romain reaches for Laura's hand. She offers her left hand; he rubs his thumb across her engagement ring.

ROMAIN

You're engaged to an Irishman.

LAURA

Yes.

ROMAIN

He is a kind man, no?

LAURA

Very kind. Very gentle. And he's
Mór láidir

ROMAIN

Oh, of course, of course.

Laura turns her wrist, glances at the ring on Romain's finger, and quickly pulls her hand away.

TOM

Romain, Our client is undergoing a massive expansion. In fact, they're in the midst of renovating two additional floors in their building.

ROMAIN

(surprised look)

Two floors?

TOM

Yeah... so, we're assuming there merging with another law firm, or at a minimum bring on new partners. Problem is... instead of coming to us for promotional ideas, they're kind of avoiding us.

Romain responds to Tom, all the while never taking his eyes off Laura, who hasn't taken her eyes off of his ring.

ROMAIN

What is it that you think I can do for you?

TOM

You know a lot of people, especially on this side of town. Maybe some of your lawyer friends know who the new partners are.

ROMAIN
 Sure, let me ask around.
 No promises, of course.

TOM
 (giggling)
 Of course.
 Thank you!
 Seriously... thank you.

ROMAIN
 Anything for you, my friend.

Romain stands up, and when he does, so does the rest of his entourage.

ROMAIN (CONT'D)
 Hey, have you been over to the new
 1320 Club?

TOM
 Straight club?

ROMAIN
 Legitimately straight...
 (laughing)
 Single guys... just like you!

TOM
 No, I'm not familiar with that
 place.

ROMAIN
 You should check it out.

TOM
 I might just do that.

Romain and his entourage walk away.

LAURA
 (state of puzzlement)
 I don't want him doing any favors
 for us!

TOM
 What, why?

LAURA
 Well, for starters... he's a made-
 guy!

TOM

Made-guy! He's my dear friend, I've known him forever. Gay... if you couldn't tell.

LAURA

Yeah, from a mile away. But he's also a full-blown mobster!

TOM

He's not a mobster. He's 100% on the level.

LAURA

That ring he's wearing... they don't just hand those out to anyone!

TOM

It's just a ring. You can probably buy that thing anywhere.

LAURA

(serious)

He's extremely nice, I get that. And yes, it's a bit unusual to meet an untouchable gay guy, but he is fully connected back to the old country. That's an actual Tarantismo ring on his finger.

TOM

(in hysterics)

What! Get out of here... is that even a real word?

LAURA

The only other time I've seen that ring was on a dead man's hand at a funeral.

TOM

I can't tell if you're kidding me right now.

LAURA

I'm telling you the truth. When I was 15, my parents took me to an Italian funeral. The guy laying in the casket had that exact same ring on his finger. He was extremely revered in my community.

TOM

I'm impressed that you speak Italian, but I feel like you're putting me on right now. I'm gonna get us a few more drinks.

As Tom walks away, Laura gets a call from Niki.

LAURA

Hey, what's up?
No, I'm with Tom... from my work.
What, no!
We're just having a few drinks...
Work related stuff.
Hey, Katie's flying in tomorrow...
Let's all get together.
(seeing Tom returning)
Hey look, I got to go.
Ok, we can talk about it later.

Tom sets a new Cosmo down in front of Laura.

TOM

Ok, tell me more about this ring.

LAURA

If you look at it closely, it depicts a spider sitting on top of a church. The spider represents Paganism, the church represents Christianity.

TOM

And?

LAURA

It was a religious movement that took place in southern Italy. The spider sits on top of the church as a means to suppress the belief in Jesus.

Tom, looking confused takes a sip of his new Chablis.

LAURA (CONT'D)

Do you not see the metaphor?
The Italian syndicate is a direct result of rural Catholicism.

(MORE)

LAURA (CONT'D)

They didn't have a church to protect them against the rise of multicultural beliefs, and thus they interpreted the word of God however they saw fit, to include breaking people's legs if necessary!

TOM

(chucking)

I'm really enjoying this conversation. I don't think I've ever been more intrigued, and yet you have not provided one ounce of proof that Romain's ring is anything more than a nifty looking ring. Literally, there is nothing to support what you're saying.

LAURA

(a little annoyed)

Oh, is that how it works? You can't find it on the internet, therefore it must not be true?

TOM

Umm, yes, that's exactly how it works!

LAURA

Why do you have to be so self-justified. I was simply pointing out that I saw the same ring on a guy that killed people for a living. And while Romain doesn't look your garden variety assassin, I'll bet you anything he has friends in the five boroughs that look exactly like goodfellas. And by the way... isn't this a cop bar? I mean... how in the world does a guy like Romain just walk into a place like this without causing a stir?

TOM

I got to say, I had you pegged all wrong. No offense, but based on that first meeting we had, I honestly thought you were some ditsy blonde. Well... strawberry blonde.

LAURA
Some people might call that a
backhanded compliment.

TOM
No, seriously, I was wrong about
you, and I apologize for that.

LAURA
Apology accepted.

As Laura takes the last sip of her drink, Tom catches her off guard.

TOM
What do you say we get out of here.

LAURA
(awkward)
You mean like... get out of here
and go back to your place?

TOM
What? No, I mean... No, like...
call it a day.

LAURA
Ok, yeah... you had me a little
confused there for a second.

TOM
Sorry about that. I now realize it
didn't sound right... the way I
said it.
How about we hit the lower east
side tomorrow... after work?

LAURA
Can't tomorrow. I got spin class
with Nancy, and then meeting my old
college roommate for drinks
afterwards.

Laura rises from the lounge couch, stretches her back, and pats herself on the rear.

LAURA (CONT'D)
This is my nemesis... if you
couldn't tell.

Tom, eyes wide, tries to look away from the obvious.

LAURA (CONT'D)
How about Thursday after work?

TOM
Thursday? Yeah, that works!

INT. 1320 CLUB, THE NEXT DAY AFTER WORK - DUSK

Laura, her college roommate, Katie and Niki are at the bar.

LAURA
What happened to five o'clock?

NIKI
I got hung up at work.
Hey Katie.

KATIE
Long time, no see!

NIKI
For sure!
What is this place? A speak-easy?

KATIE
That's what I said!

LAURA
It is NOT a speak easy. Did you see
a peephole in the door when you
came in?

NIKI
I couldn't see anything; fucking
pitch-black outside. I almost got
mugged in the alley.

LAURA
Oh stop it, you did not.

NIKI
Whatever... I need a drink.

Bartender comes over and takes their order.

NIKI (CONT'D)
(head shaking at Laura)
I don't know why I let you trick me
into coming to places like this.

KATIE
Yeah, and where are the cute single
guys you promised.

Laura looks down the bar; three middle age men talking.

LAURA

What about that guy with the black hat.

NIKI

What about him?

LAURA

He seems alright, no?

KATIE

The guy that looks like he road in on a horse... that guy?

LAURA

What, you don't like cowboys?

NIKI

Umm, no!

KATIE

Dude's all about the old west.

NIKI

Old west! How about just, old!
I vote we go somewhere else

LAURA

Let's just hang here for a couple of drinks and see how it plays out. If nothing happens, we'll split.

KATIE

We need shots!

As the bartender shuffles about, Niki and Laura continue arguing over the man wearing the black hat.

LAURA

A guy that wears a hat like that...
I guarantee he's good in bed.

NIKI

Laura, he's the scariest guy I've ever seen. Fucking Wyatt Earp up in here.

LAURA

(laughing)
Yeah, that's hot!

NIKI

No it isn't!

After downing tequila shots, Laura pulls the bartender aside.

LAURA

Hey, let me ask you something; the man wearing the black hat... do you know him?

BARTENDER

Not personally.

LAURA

I mean... he's not axe murderer or nothing like that, is he?

BARTENDER

Not that I'm aware of.

LAURA

By the way, I'm Laura.

BARTENDER

Conner. Good to meet you.

LAURA

That's Niki, she's my current roommate. And that's Katie, she was my college roommate.

BARTENDER

Where did you go to school?

LAURA

Saint Johns, how about you?

BARTENDER

University of hard knocks.

LAURA

Military?

BARTENDER

No, Rikers.

LAURA

Rikers Island!

BARTENDER

Best education I ever got.

LAURA

Dare I ask what you did?

BARTENDER

Robbed a jewelry store.

LAURA
Like, armed robbery?

BARTENDER
(half laughing)
No... Broke in after hour.

LAURA
How did you get caught?

BARTENDER
Like an idiot, I tried to sell some
of the jewelry to a local pawn
shop. The guy who owned the pawn
shop.. his brother owned the
jewelry store.

LAURA
(laughing out loud)
No shit... that's hysterical!
How much time did you get?

BARTENDER
Twelve months, got out in eight.

LAURA
No kidding... wow.
Did you have to like... snuggle up
next to bubba in the jail cell?

BARTENDER
(laughing)
You got to go to Attica for that.
Rikers is mostly local fuck ups.

LAURA
(Walking back to Katie)
The man in the black hat... how old
would you guess he is?

KATIE
Old enough to be my father!
I'm not even certain he's straight!

LAURA
What! Are you kidding me! Hetero to
the 10th power!
The boots he's wearing... those are
Tecovas. Gay guys don't wear boots
like that.

KATIE
Really? You can tell that just by
looking at his boots?

NIKI

Boots! What about his face! What can you tell me about that? How many knife fights do you have to lose before maybe deciding you shouldn't be in a knife fight.

KATIE

(giggling)

I wasn't gonna say anything... but yeah, that's a little scary.

LAURA

The scars add to his whole mystic.

The bartender brings another round of drinks.

KATIE

How about the guy to his right... you think he's straight? He's wearing cowboy boots.

LAURA

Yeah, but those are Lucchese.

NIKI

What does that mean?

LAURA

It means he might be broke-back-mountain-ish.

KATIE

(laughing)

What?

LAURA

Yeah, like... for the most part, he's straight. But then when he goes camping with one of his buddies, there might be a little ass-grabbing.

Katie bends over with laughter, half spilling her drink.

NIKI

This is ridiculous... we need to go to another bar.

LAURA

Ok, ok, ok, just one more drink, and then we'll try another place.

NIKI
One more drink! I just got this
drink.

LAURA
Come on, do another shot with me.

Laura waves down the bartender.

LAURA (CONT'D)
Conner! Three more shots!
(talking quieter)
Hey, what is the guy in the black
hat drinking?

BARTENDER
Scotch on the rocks.

LAURA
What kind?

BARTENDER
McCallan 18.

LAURA
Fuck, I want to buy him a drink,
but that shit's expensive.
And there's a chance he might not
come over and talk to me.

BARTENDER
I tell you what... I'll go ahead
and pour the drink. If he comes
over and talks to you, then you pay
for it. If he doesn't, I'll pay for
it.

LAURA
Deal!

Laura turns back around and hands Katie her shot.

LAURA (CONT'D)
I think black-hat-guy is gonna come
over and talk to us!

NIKI
Oh, for the love of God.

KATIE
I kind of do want to see what he
looks like up close.

NIKI

Good Lord! What is wrong with you two. He's not only twice our age, he's gross!

LAURA

I bet he's got a big dick!

NIKI

Eew! Do you even hear what you're saying. He's old... which means he has an old dick!
And old saggy balls.

LAURA

Jesus christ, Niki! He's not 90!

KATIE

(comically whispering)
Old saggy balls...

LAURA

What... you don't like a nice set of low-hangers!

KATIE

(in hysterics)
Low-Hangers... Oh my God!

NIKI

I'm gonna throw up!

Black-hat-guy starts walking their direction.

NIKI (CONT'D)

Shit! Here he comes. I swear to God, you two!

BLACK-HAT-GUY

Hi... Wayne Dahlgren.

Laura's eyes open up like an eclipse.

LAURA

Oh my God... I know you!

BLACK-HAT-GUY

Yeah, how's that?

LAURA

Lightspeed... you're the product engineer! I'm on a call with you Nancy Jahnke every Tuesday.
I'm Laura Pensali.

BLACK-HAT-GUY

Oh wow, right... Heritage.
Small world!

LAURA

These are my friends, Niki and
Katie.

BLACK-HAT-GUY

It's a pleasure to meet you. And
thank you for this drink.

KATIE

We've been over here calling you
black-hat-guy for the last hour.

BLACK-HAT-GUY

(laughing)
Fair!

NIKI

Wayne, don't take this the wrong
way, but this is New York City, and
you're dressed like Wild Bill
Hickok.

BLACK-HAT-GUY

Hmm... Wild Bill Hickok... nice
pull!
I'll take that as a compliment.

KATIE

I kind of like your whole get-up.

BLACK-HAT-GUY

Born and raised in Austin... can't
escape it.

LAURA

Yeah, it's a good look. Ties into
the whole... everything is bigger
in Texas... kind of thing.
(deviant laugh)

KATIE

Wayne, is it too much to ask how
old you are?

BLACK-HAT-GUY

Forty three... as of two weeks ago.

NIKI

Wayne, we're in our twenties, and once again Laura brought us to a bar where all of the guys are in their 40's. We're trying to find a club where the guys are closer to our age.

BLACK-HAT-GUY

I just wanted to come over and introduce myself, you know... right thing to do when someone buys you a drink.

NIKI

No, I appreciate that... really.
 (looking at Katie)
 Can you grab the check, I need to use the ladies room.
 (looking at Laura)
 No more shots!

Niki hands Katie her credit card and proceeds to the restroom. Katie walks to the far end of the bar to get the bartender's attention. Wayne steps closer to Laura.

BLACK-HAT-GUY

You live here in the city?

LAURA

Hoboken.

BLACK-HAT-GUY

No kidding, me too!

LAURA

No you don't.

BLACK-HAT-GUY

I'm serious... I do.

LAURA

Where?

BLACK-HAT-GUY

First street.

LAURA

Where on first street?

BLACK-HAT-GUY

The condos at the end of the street.

LAURA
Sky Condos?

BLACK-HAT-GUY
Yes.

LAURA
That place is like the Burj Khalifa
of New Jersey.

BLACK-HAT-GUY
(laughing)
You mean because of all the brown
people?

LAURA
The rich brown people, yes!

BLACK-HAT-GUY
I'll be honest, I don't hate it.

LAURA
I'm sure you don't!

BLACK-HAT-GUY
Well, it was nice talking with you.
Can I give you my number?

LAURA
Sure, airdrop it to me.

Returning from the restroom, Niki intervenes.

NIKI
No, no, no, no, no, no, that's not
happening!
(in Wayne's face)
First of all, she's half your age.
Secondly, she has a fiancé.
(in Laura's face)
Grab your jacket, we're leaving
now!

Katie rushes over to see what the commotion is about.

KATIE
What's going on!

NIKI
Katie, grab your shit, we're
leaving!

Wayne turns and begins walking back to where his friends are
standing.

LAURA
Niki... what the hell!

NIKI
(lowering her voice)
We just had this conversation a week ago, and here you are doing the same fucked up thing again.

LAURA
He's my client!

NIKI
He's your client at work, not at this bar.
Delete... his fucking... phone number... now!

Laura begins deleting Wayne's info.

LAURA
Fine! Whatever... Done!

Laura, Niki, and Katie uncomfortably exit the bar.

INT. THE MANTEL RESTAURANT, LOWER EAST SIDE - DUSK

Laura meets Tom at a bar the very next day after work.

LAURA
Uber cost me \$30 to go 10 blocks, and still dropped me off one street short.

TOM
Why didn't you take the subway? It literally stops right out front.

LAURA
Hold on! You took the subway here?

TOM
Me? No! Of course not.

LAURA
(half laughing)
Oh, but it's ok if I take the subway... I see how you are.

The bartender points at Tom and asks him what he would like to drink.

TOM
Chablis and a Cosmo!

BARTENDER
What is a Chablis?

TOM
Chardonnay... whatever house brand.
(looking at Laura)
This might be a shot in the dark,
but yesterday I reached out to a
friend of mine that works over on
west 57th street.
He told me about this law professor
at NYU... supposedly Maggie's
cousin.

LAURA
What's her name?

TOM
Switzer. Apparently she hangs out
here all the time.

LAURA
There's a lot of people here, how
are we supposed to know who she is?

TOM
My understanding is that she's
tall.

LAURA
Tall?

TOM
Yeah, like... really tall!

LAURA
Ok, well... that might narrow it
down a little.

Bartender wanders over.

BARTENDER
Half price tequila til 6.

TOM
(smiling at Laura)
Right up your alley!

LAURA
No... had a few too many yesterday.

TOM

Oh, that's right... night out with your friends... how did that go?

LAURA

You're probably gonna laugh when I tell you this. We met over at the 1320 club.

TOM

(laughing)
What... really?

LAURA

My roommate and sorority sister, they're both single. I figured, why not give it a try.

TOM

Did you see Romain there?

LAURA

No, thank God!
But you know who was there?
Wayne Dahlgren.

TOM

As in... Wayne Dahlgren from Lightspeed?

LAURA

Yep.

TOM

I'm kind of surprised by that.
He's like a... country guy.

LAURA

Oh, trust me, I know. He was wearing the whole cowboy ensemble.

TOM

I've never been to the 1320 club, so I don't know why I'm passing judgment, but Wayne does not strike me as a man that hangs out in a speak-easy.

LAURA

(laughing)
Here we go again!

TOM

What?

LAURA

Just because you enter the bar from the alley, doesn't make it a speak easy. It's a regular club. To some degree Romain was right, it's mostly straight single guys. But they don't look like you, and they're a lot older.

TOM

I find it odd that Romain knows every straight club in town. I have to assume he's really good converting hetero men.

LAURA

Yeah, I don't get that. After so many years of being straight, aren't you just sort of set in your ways?

TOM

You would think so.
(sipping and thinking)
Although... what if after years of striking out with women, you get tired of being lonely.

LAURA

(scorned kind of look)
Is that how it works? A few too many bad dates with the opposite sex, and now you're ready to make that leap to sucking another guy's dick?

TOM

Why do you have to be so depraved?

LAURA

That's not depravity! That's the reality of that situation.

TOM

I'm simply saying that there are tons of hetero men, who after years of rejection from women, find solace in another man... for no other reason than companionship.

LAURA

(completely cockeyed)
What rock did you crawl out from under? This is New York City!

(MORE)

LAURA (CONT'D)

Two guys look at each other for more than three seconds, someone is getting their dick sucked in the men's room.

When Romain and his henchmen walk into a club, companionship is the furthest thing from their mind.

(shaking her head)

Been here all of five minutes, and you somehow managed to get on my last nerve.

I need another drink!

Tom signals for the bartender to bring another round.

TOM

So I take it nothing panned out for your two friends.

LAURA

Yeah-no, my girlfriends aren't really down for middle aged men.

TOM

Shoot, you should have called me. I would have met up with you all.

LAURA

Oh my God, my girlfriends would have devoured you.
I'm not kidding, there would have been a cat fight the minute you walked in there.

The bartender brings over new drinks, Laura looks around the bar.

LAURA (CONT'D)

Still no sign of the tall woman.
By the way, how tall are you?

TOM

6'2.

LAURA

(thinking)

Did you know that's the perfect height for a tennis player?

TOM

Yeah, how do you know that?

LAURA

I played tennis in high school. My coach was a retired professional tennis player.

TOM

But why is 6'2 specifically the ideal height?

LAURA

When you serve the ball, your visual point of reference is the white tape at the top of the net, and the white paint at the service line. Too tall; creates a gap between the lines. Not tall enough; the lines become blurred.

TOM

That's interesting... if in fact it's true.

LAURA

Why wouldn't it be true?

TOM

Well, based on our last conversation...

LAURA

Oh my God, really?

TOM

I'm just saying...

Laura chugs down her otherwise new Cosmo.

LAURA

(signaling the bartender)
Can I have another Cosmo.
And a shot of tequila.

Laura looks down at her seating arrangement.

LAURA (CONT'D)

Every bar should have barstools like this. These things are amazing!
Wooden barstools are so uncomfortable, and yet they're everywhere, even in the nicest restaurants.

(MORE)

LAURA (CONT'D)

Dion's is nicer than this place,
and yet they have ricketiest
barstools in Manhattan. And you and
Peter sit there almost every day.
Doesn't that bother you?

TOM

I'll be honest, I've never really
giving it any thought.

LAURA

Let me ask you a serious question.
When you see a woman sitting on a
small wooden barstool with her ass
falling off the sides, there's no
way that's hot, right?

TOM

I don't know how to respond to
that, but you make a good point.
There's no reason why Dion's can't
have nicer barstools.

LAURA

Just answer me this one thing, why
is it that you never see an
attractive woman sitting at the bar
at Dion's? It's got to be the
barstools, right?

Bartender brings two new drinks, plus a shot of tequila.

TOM

Let me fill you in on a little
secrete. Men don't actually want
women at the bar; hence the
barstools weren't designed for the
female form.

LAURA

Oh please! You guys are praying
some lonely woman scampers up to
the bar, vulnerable and whatnot...
hoping you'll get lucky.

TOM

No-no-no, that's what you see in
the movies. In real life, the woman
you speak of isn't lonely at all.
She's at that bar every other
night! I wouldn't call it lucky if
you're the third guy that went home
with her that week.

(MORE)

TOM (CONT'D)

Guys go to bars so they can speak freely and vent in a manner not appropriate for women.

LAURA

Give me an example.

TOM

Like... just, guy talk. Some people call it locker room talk.

LAURA

Ok, fine, give me an example of a topic not appropriate for women to hear.

TOM

Just... certain conversations...

LAURA

You can't say it, can you? You're incapable of saying inappropriate things.
What are you... Holier than thou!

TOM

I was just... raised a certain way.
(thinking)
Did you know, back in the 1700s, Pubs in Ireland did not have barstools. Men just stood at the bar. Most of the conversations were centered around business and politics. Physically standing meant that you were standing up for your beliefs.

LAURA

(sarcasm, eyes rolling)
Gee, I didn't know that. Sounds fascinating.

TOM

Pubs had special rooms that were screened off from the actual bar where women could gather and talk about whatever women talk about.

LAURA

(a little annoyed)
Be it Ireland or any other country for that matter, it's just drunk dudes bullshitting each other over money and possessions.

(MORE)

LAURA (CONT'D)

And I guarantee back then, just like today, those guys were lying about all the pussy they get.

TOM

I'm trying to have a normal conversation with you.

LAURA

Tom, you're being ridiculous. You're making it sound like men get together at bars to discuss topics too intellectual for women to understand.

TOM

I was simply explaining the culture as it relates to your argument over barstool inequality.

LAURA

I have a scenario for you. Bar room situation. One guy is talking about sports, the other guy is talking a woman he had sex with the night before. Who's the better lover?

TOM

It's an impossible question to answer; too many variables.

LAURA

It's really quite simple. It's the guy talking about sports, because the other guy is a liar!
(laughing)

TOM

(Half laughing)
Ok, that's sort of funny. Although, just because he's a liar, doesn't automatically mean he's a bad lover.

LAURA

Only you would say something like that.
Alright, I got another one for you. A woman overhears three guys having a conversation;

(MORE)

LAURA (CONT'D)

one is talking about sports, one is talking about sex, and the other is a finance executive at a marketing firm, who's all about numbers and percentages.

Who is she definitely not sleeping with that night?

(in hysterics)

Tom hops up as if he's going to leave.

LAURA (CONT'D)

No, no, no... I'm kidding. Come on... sit down!

Tom acknowledges the satire with a fake giggle. Before sitting back down, he notices a tall woman at the far side of the bar.

TOM

Take a look.

LAURA

Holy shit!

She's even taller than you!

TOM

I'm going to introduce myself to her. See if you can grab that table over there. It looks like those people are getting ready to leave.

Tom walks to the far side of the bar.

TOM (CONT'D)

Hi, my name is Tom McAvery.

TALL WOMAN

And...

TOM

I wanted to introduce myself to you.

TALL WOMAN

And so you have.

TOM

I work for Heritage Design & Marketing. I was wondering if I could talk to you about one of my law firm clients.

TALL WOMAN

Do you have a business card?

TOM

(handing her his card)

I was hoping you and I could sit down for a few minutes so that I can better explain the situation. My associate has a table right over there. I promise not to take up much of your time.

Accelerated footage as Tom, Laura, and the tall woman continue to talk and drink.

TOM (CONT'D)

In short, I think Heatherton is bringing on new partners. I figured you're related to Maggie, maybe you know something.

TALL WOMAN

Related by marriage, yes, but we're not that close.

(finishing her drink)

I'll tell you what, you've certainly peaked my interest. Renovating a floor in Manhattan is no small order. Two floors? Forget about it. They're definitely bringing on some heavy hitters.

LAURA

The question still remains... who?

TALL WOMAN

Sorry I couldn't help you more, but if I hear anything. I'll certainly let you know.

TOM

Thanks again!

The tall woman leaves, the server returns to the table.

SERVER

I'm sorry, but my manager said I have to cut you off.

LAURA

What? Hold on a second... the people that were sitting here with all of the margarita glasses... they left...

SERVER

Look, if you want to talk to my manager, I'll go get him.

TOM

No-no-no, just give me the bill.

The server hands Tom the bill, Laura takes a peak.

LAURA

Damn!
Five Cosmopolitans, five
chardonnays, and a shot of
tequila... whoops!
(giggling)

INT. HAWTHORN'S BREAKFAST HOUSE IN JERSEY CITY - MORNING

Laura, hungover, having breakfast with Jeremy

LAURA

Oof... my head! Jeremy, I don't think I can talk about this right now.

JEREMY

What's there to talk about, I got it all figured out.

LAURA

We need a wedding planner!

JEREMY

No we don't! I'll direct people where they need to go. And Father O'Donnell will take care of anyone that gets out of line. He was a Marine before he became a paster; I don't know if you knew that or not.

LAURA

No, I didn't know that... what does that have to do with wedding planning?

JEREMY

I've seen him throw a guy out of church one time for sleeping during the sermon... head first, right down the cathedral steps.

LAURA

Gee, that's reassuring.

JEREMY

Listen, everything is going to be fine. Julianna said she will help out at the reception.

LAURA

Julianna! She'll be three sheets to the wind before the ceremony even starts.
And I want a professional DJ.

JEREMY

Oh, that's not fair... Dominik is an excellent DJ.
We're gonna be drinking and dancing... having good time. Let everyone else worry about the little things.

LAURA

It's not going to be a little thing if we run out of liquor, or some old person falls down. Wedding planners handle that kind of stuff.

JEREMY

Uncle Joey is running the bar; you can best believe we're not running out of liquor. And grandpa Pete... he probably will fall down, but he'll be alright.

LAURA

I'm not kidding, Jeremy. I don't want to have an anxiety attack over this.

JEREMY

How about you just deal with your father... how bout that.

LAURA

What about my father!

JEREMY

He doesn't need to wear mirrored sunglasses inside the church; the man drives a bread truck... sitting there acting like he works for the CIA.

LAURA

All the more reason to have a wedding planner.

Laura's phone rings; she recognizes the number and answers the call.

LAURA (CONT'D)
 Hey, Anthony.
 No-no-no, talk to Jeremy, he's
 right here.

Laura puts her hand over the mic of the phone, stands up, and sternly leans over towards Jeremy.

LAURA (CONT'D)
 It's Anthony... from the bakery.
 We're NOT changing the cake design!
 (handing Jeremy her phone)

JEREMY
 Tone... what-a-ya say, what-a-ya
 you know!

Laura walks off to the ladies room.

JEREMY (CONT'D)
 I know, I know... I thought it
 would be a good idea, but she
 want's traditional icing.
 Yeah, just keep it simple.
 Thanks, Tone... thanks!

After Jeremy ends the call with Anthony, opens the camera on Laura's phone and proceeds to take a quirky selfie pic. In doin so, he discovers the video that Laura made with Niki.

JEREMY (CONT'D)
 No... no-no-no-no...

As Laura returns from the bathroom, Jeremy shuts her phone down pushing it to her side of the table.

LAURA
 What's going on... what's wrong!

Without saying a word, Jeremy stands up and storms out of the breakfast shop.

LAURA (CONT'D)
 (yelling)
 Jeremy... JEREMY!

INT. LAURA AND NIKI'S APARTMENT MINUTES LATER - DAY

Laura crashes through the front door.

NIKI
What's going on!

LAURA
I was just having breakfast with
Jeremy over at Hawthorn's, and
he... fucking stormed out on me!
And now he won't return any of my
texts.

NIKI
What happened?

LAURA
Nothing happened! We were talking
about the wedding, everything was
fine... he just stood up and left!

NIKI
Did you call Donnie at the shop?

LAURA
Yeah, he said he didn't come into
work.
(hands shaking)

NIKI
You need to calm down; I'm sure
there's a perfectly good
explanation.
What about Jeremy's brother... did
you call him yet?

LAURA
Hopefully he answers...
(waiting)
Stevie! It's Laura... have you
heard from Jeremy!
Why isn't he answering his phone?
No, fuck that! I'm coming over.

Laura hangs up the call and grabs her handbag.

LAURA (CONT'D)
He's at his fucking parent's house!

NIKI
Do you need me to go with you?

LAURA
No... let me deal with this.

INT. JEREMY'S PARENT'S HOUSE A FEW MINUTES LATER - DAY

Laura opens the front door and walks straight back to the dining room, Jeremy's family is seated at the kitchen table.

LAURA

(angry)

What the hell is going on here!

JEREMY'S MOTHER

Laura, this morning when you and Jeremy were having breakfast, he saw a video on your phone, and we're trying to make sense of the whole thing.

LAURA

What!

JEREMY'S MOTHER

I think we all just need to sit down and talk this through.

LAURA

I'm not talking about this with all of you here. This is between Jeremy and I.

LAURA (CONT'D)

I need five minutes with Jeremy... alone.

As everyone excuses themselves from the table, Jeremy's teenage sister chimes from her bedroom down the hall.

JEREMY'S TEENAGE SISTER

She needs to show us that damn video!

LAURA

Jeremy, it's not how it looks.

JEREMY

It's exactly how it looks! Who are you!

LAURA

I made the video because I was subconscious about the way I look...

JEREMY

I don't care about that! It's not about how you look, it's about what you said! You were talking about someone else! So, who is he? Are you cheating on me!

LAURA

I'm not cheating on you. It was just Niki and I joking around.

JEREMY

(angry)

You weren't joking! You were talking about some guy... who is he?
I'll break is fucking neck!
(clutching his chest)
I think I'm having a heart attack.

LAURA

You're not having a heart attack; calm down!

Jeremy rises from his seat, slumps towards the countertop forehead resting on his elbow, bangs his fist.

JEREMY

Why... why!

LAURA

(equally upset)

Jesus christ, Jeremy! I didn't do anything!

JEREMY

You're not the person I thought you were.

LAURA

Quit being overdramatic... you're acting like a baby!
(desperate)
You know what? I made that video for you; something we could share in the privacy of our bedroom, but clearly you don't get it, you're obviously ashamed of me!

JEREMY

Fuck you!

Jeremy's family hears the disturbance and barges back into the kitchen area.

JEREMY (CONT'D)
(his finger in her face)
I hate you! We're done!

Laura slaps Jeremy's hand away from her face with such force that Jeremy's father gets decked upside the head.

JEREMY'S FATHER
Whoa, whoa, whoa, that's enough!

During the chaos, Jeremy's mother loses her footing and collapses to the floor.

JEREMY
(tearing at Laura)
See what you did... you bitch!

Jeremy's father and brother physically put themselves between Laura and Jeremy.

JEREMY'S FATHER
Laura, I'm sorry, but I have to ask
you to leave.

The reality of the situation stops Laura in her tracks. Jeremy's father escorts her to the front door.

JEREMY'S FATHER (CONT'D)
It's a brave new world out there,
and Jeremy is not ready for that.
He's devastated... and right now he
needs his family... I'm sure you
can understand that.

Jeremy's father walks back into the house. Laura plops down on the stoop and begins to cry. Niki calls seconds later.

LAURA
It's over... done... wedding's off.
No... it's over.

As the scene fades, Jeremy's teenage sister is heard from inside the house through a screened-in window.

JEREMY'S TEENAGE SISTER
You don't deserve my brother! I
don't know what he ever saw in you.
(slight pause)
Now get your fat ass off our
property!

INT. HDM 9TH FLOOR ON MONDAY - MORNING

Nancy walks into Tom's office holding a sympathy card.

TOM

What's this?

NANCY

Laura and her fiancé called off the wedding.

TOM

Wait... what?

NANCY

I know you don't know her all that well, but she could use some support right now.

TOM

This is horrible. She has to be absolutely crushed.

NANCY

It can't be good, that's for sure.
(waiting)
I'm going to take a half day today to be with her.

TOM

Do you know what happened. I mean... did some event take place.

NANCY

I don't know. Her roommate called me first thing this morning, but didn't provide any details.

TOM

Did he call it off, or did she call it off?

NANCY

I just said I don't know! What does it matter?

TOM

I just... I don't know... I mean... if she broke it off it's not as bad, right?

NANCY

(irritated)
Jesus christ, Tom.
(MORE)

NANCY (CONT'D)

Do you not have a soul! They were supposed to get married this weekend, and now it's off. Do you have any idea how humiliating that is for a woman? Her world just got turned upside down, and you're sitting there wondering who broke up with who.

TOM

Nancy, I think I speak for a lot of people when I say that it only makes sense to want to know what happened!

NANCY

I understand that, but you're looking at this situation as if the scale needs to tip in someone's favor in order for you to feel better about it!

Tom begins texting Laura as soon as Nancy leaves his office. After which he requests the receptionist to send flower.

INT. DION'S LATER THAT SAME DAY - DUSK

Peter and Tom are at their regular seats at the bar.

PETER

No shit! What happened?

TOM

Not sure.

PETER

(changing the subject)
Hey, before I forget, can you run those numbers one more time for Delphini... with the new algorithm?

TOM

I just did two days ago.

PETER

I know, but it doesn't align with the invoice we sent out.

TOM

Who told you that?

PETER

Big Bird mentioned it on one of our
breakout calls.

Tom immediately dips his head in embarrassment as he knows
exactly who Peter is referring to.

TOM

Joyce.

PETER

What?

TOM

Joyce... from accounting.

PETER

(confused)

Huh?

TOM

Her name is Joyce Abernathy. I'm
telling you this so that you can
address her by her rightful name.

PETER

What did I say?

TOM

(smiling)

You called her, Big Bird!

PETER

(genuinely unaware)

I did?

TOM

See, this is the very reason
everyone in our office has to
attend those dreadful civil
treatment classes. You think no one
hears you when you make these
references, and then someone files
an anonymous complaint. And instead
of John coming straight to you, he
makes all of us sit through those
training modules.

PETER

Hold on a second! You automatically
assumed I was talking about Joyce,
so that's on you!
And just so you know...

(MORE)

PETER (CONT'D)

Joyce isn't the only woman in
accounting with a big-giant schnoz!

TOM

Let's just move on. What else is on
your plate?

Peter takes another sip of his Jameson, and coughs a little
before responding.

PETER

Heatherton.

TOM

And...

PETER

Alex told me that you asked him to
hold off on the proposal.

TOM

I simply told him to wait until the
end of the week.

PETER

I understand you're position, but I
need you to leave it alone. Let
Alex deal with it.

TOM

Pete, we're missing the bigger
picture here. Heatherton has never
had more than 20 employees, ever!
And now suddenly, they're
renovating the top two floors in
their building; enough to bring on
200 employees!

PETER

I hear what saying, but you were
there when John said leave it
alone.
As your friend, and more
importantly, as your boss, I'm
telling you not to get involved.

TOM

I don't understand why this isn't
on your radar. You know how much it
cost to renovate a floor here in
Manhattan. They're a law firm, law
firms advertise, that's what they
do, that's where they spend their
money!

PETER

While this isn't the kettle of fish you were hoping for, it's a bird-in-hand deal for us. And we're not going to risk that against your merger theory and the unlikelihood that Heatherton's partners are just going to automatically give us their business.

Tom receives a text from Laura. He shields his phone so Peter doesn't see her name displayed.

TOM

Hey, I have to make a phone call right quick.

Tom steps away, Peter complains about his Jameson.

PETER

Clinton! Come on, Man... what kind of pour is that? And top off Tom's drink as well.

Tom returns and implies that he has to leave.

PETER (CONT'D)

What? Where are you going?

TOM

I got this thing I need to take care of.

PETER

What thing! What could be more important than this conversation?
(looking at Clinton)
Do you believe this guy?
I'm sitting here trying to have a serious meeting with him, and now all of the sudden he has something better to do.

CLINTON

(yelling at Tom)
You can't leave me here with him!

PETER

I'll remember that when it comes time to your tip.

CLINTON

Man, you ain't tipped nobody... here or anywhere else... ever!

INT. LAURA AND NIKI'S APARTMENT AN HOUR LATER - NIGHT

Laura opens the door and lets Tom in.

TOM

I'll be honest, I have no idea what to say. This is something you hear about, or see in the movies, but it just doesn't seem possible that it could happen to someone you know.

LAURA

Well, it happened.

TOM

Dare I ask if there's any way for you two to work it out?

LAURA

No.

TOM

Ugh... I'm truly sorry, I really am.

LAURA

Thanks... yeah, it's rough... like embarrassingly rough.

TOM

Not for nothing, but... Nancy has you covered at work, so don't even worry about that.

LAURA

She came by earlier, which really helped. And by the way, thanks for the flowers.

TOM

I know you probably don't want to hear this but, this kind of thing warrants talking to a professional. I can set that up for you.

LAURA

Thanks... and I will, but right now all I want to do is get off this couch and get out of here.

TOM

Out of here? Like... where?

LAURA

I don't know... go get a drink or something.

TOM

I know you're not crazy about Romain, but I told him I would meet up with him after stopping by to see you.

LAURA

At this point, I don't care who we hang out with. I just want to escape this misery for a while.

TOM

Ok... umm... you want to drive with me?

LAURA

Sure.
Let me change real quick.

INT. PALMETTO LOUNGE - NIGHT

Romain is sitting at a table with two men dressed in suits who stand up and walk away when Tom and Laura enter the bar.

ROMAIN

Tom, Laura... have a seat.

LAURA

Hello Romain.

TOM

Laura, do you want you're usual?

LAURA

Yeah, a cosmopolitan, and a shot of tequila.

ROMAIN

Oh! Ok... it's that kind of afternoon. Well, in that case I'll have the same.

TOM

(signaling the waitress)
Hi, yes, two Cosmos, two tequila shots, and one Chablis.

WAITRESS
(crosseyed)
Chablis?

TOM
Sorry... Chardonnay.

ROMAIN
Come on Tom, do a shot!

TOM
I'll do a lemon drop, or something
like that, but not tequila. That's
not for me.

LAURA
Lemon drop?

ROMAIN
(laughing)
Yeah Tom, really? What are we...
fourteen!

TOM
I didn't know you when I was
fourteen, but I'm guessing you
probably were drinking at that age.

ROMAIN
(talking to the waitress)
My non-tequila-drinking friend will
have a shot of Absolute Citron.

WAITRESS
And what brand of tequila would you
like?

ROMAIN
Casa Azul for me and the young
lady.

As the waitress leaves to retrieve their drinks, Laura re-
inquiries about the lemon drop.

LAURA
Vodka and lemon juice? Is that what
it is?

ROMAIN
Pretty much.

LAURA
Weird.

TOM

Hey, I'm just trying to play along.

ROMAIN

(chuckling)

Says the last person on earth who drinks Chablis.

(changing the subject)

Hey, by the way... I did a little snooping around... a guy named Bernard Williamson is on the renovation permit at your client's building.

TOM

(stunned)

Williamson Law Group?

ROMAIN

Not sure.

LAURA

(looking at her phone)

According to this, his firm specializes in contract law.

TOM

Yeah, but... not at the corporate level that Heatherton operates at!

LAURA

(still strolling)

Oh... interesting!

TOM

What?

LAURA

Bernard's family owns the largest gold mine in the US.

ROMAIN

In California?

LAURA

Apparently in the Carolinas.
Who knew!

TOM

Wow, this just keeps getting better and better... and more mysterious.

LAURA
 (startling revelation)
 Tom! Guess who's listed on
 Williamson's website as a client?

TOM
 Who?

LAURA
 Rockingham Gamers!

TOM
 You got to be kidding me?
 (hand on his forehead)
 Laura, I dare say we need get in
 front of Bernard, and quick! It's
 just a matter time before every ad
 agency in the city gets wind of
 this.

Accelerated footage as Tom, Laura, and Romain down their
 shots and order another round, and down those drinks as well.

TOM (CONT'D)
 Romain, whatever happened to our
 buddy Lance? I haven't him around
 lately.

ROMAIN
 Yeah... he doesn't come around here
 anymore.

TOM
 You two were really close, now I
 feel like I'm your hetero bestie.

ROMAIN
 Lance, he umm... roughed up that
 girl he was seeing.

TOM
 What? Marietta? No!

ROMAIN
 Yep.
 (sipping his drink)
 I don't care what men do to each
 other, but I don't tolerate
 mistreating women. Hence, you won't
 see Lance around here anymore.
 (unsettling)
 I'd rather talk about something
 else if you don't mind.
 (uncomfortable silence)
 (MORE)

ROMAIN (CONT'D)

Actually, I think I'm ready to call
it a night.

Tom and Laura look at each other. The uncomfortable silence continues as the scene fades.

INT. LAURA'S APARTMENT AFTER LEAVING PALMETTOS - NIGHT.

Laura and Tom are on the stoop. Laura is struggling to find her key to the door. She hands Tom the entire keyring.

TOM

Jesus christ! There must be 20 keys
on this loop... who needs this many
keys!

LAURA

(slurring)
It's the blue key.
(expressing attraction)

Laura kisses Tom, he drops the keyring. She eventually pulls away from Tom's mouth and lowers herself to retrieve the keys. Her face is level to the bulge in his pants.

LAURA (CONT'D)

(jiggling the keyring)
I would invite you in, but...
(rising up from squatting)
You're a good kisser, Tom. Not sure
why I'm surprised by that.

Laura retreats into her apartment, leaving Tom on the stoop in a daze of excitement.

INT. HDM, 9TH FLOOR THE FOLLOWING DAY - MORNING

Tom is in Alex's office, mid conversation.

ALEX

I understand the situation, but
Pete wants the contract delivered
and signed this week.

TOM

Alex, that contract is pittance
compared to what their new partners
are willing to spend.
I'm talking about a contract that
is three, maybe four times what
they're paying now. I just need a
few more days.

(MORE)

TOM (CONT'D)

(standoff)

Alex, this kind of deal... it's the difference between 5-10 percent in bonuses this year.

ALEX

Alright, I'll give you until Friday.

Tom gives Alex a quick thanks and jets down the hallway to his own office. Peter enters seconds later.

PETER

Luis came into the bar after you left yesterday.

TOM

I haven't seen him in the restaurant in months.

(laughing)

He must have specifically come in there to deal with you! What is your tab, by the way?

PETER

I don't, like... \$200.

TOM

That's it! And Luis is complaining about that?

PETER

He tried to tell me that it's not about the money, it's about the principle.

(slight pause)

Everything I've done for him... (shaking his head)

TOM

Pete, just pay him... good God!

PETER

I would but... wife's been looking over my expenses lately. I don't want her to know that I'm there everyday.

TOM

If you're not here, how do you account for the hour or so your after work?

PETER

I say I'm at the gym with you.

TOM

With ME!

PETER

What? I can't go to the gym with you.

TOM

I'm not saying you can't... I'm saying you don't! And she's gonna call me out on that the next time I see her.

INT. DION'S, AN HOUR LATER - DUSK

TOM

I'm struggling to understand why you don't just to her you're with me at Dion's to unwind after work.

PETER

You'd have to be in my shoes to understand.

(slight pause)

I also told her that I've been playing pickleball over at the country club.

TOM

Oh, you got to be kidding me!

PETER

What am I going to do? She's been bugging about getting back into shape.

TOM

Hold on a second... didn't she bust you with another woman a few years ago... when you did actually go to the country club?

PETER

Who, Kimberly?

TOM

Yes!

PETER

No, that was at Arthur's billiards.

TOM

I'm talking about the time Sheila drove to the country club, yelling and flipping over tables and whatnot.

PETER

Yeah, well, that's where it started. She couldn't find me at the country club, so she drove over to Arthurs, and that's where the shit really hit that fan.

TOM

I don't know if you ever told me about that.

PETER

It was bad... really bad!
(thinking)
Sitting at the bar, Sheila snuck up behind us, grabbed Kimberly by the hair, started banging her head up against the bar countertop.

TOM

No way!

PETER

Yep. It was ugly, like... blood... clumps of hair.

TOM

Eew, really?

PETER

Yeah, it was not good.

Peter waves Clinton down for another round.

TOM

No, no, no, I'm good.

PETER

What do you mean you're good, where you going?

TOM

I got to thing...

PETER

A woman?

TOM
(sarcastic)
I think so... pretty sure.

Tom walks away. Clinton starring directly at Peter.

CLINTON
What woman in her right mind would
sleep with you!

INT. LAURA AND NIKI APARTMENT AN HOUR LATER - NIGHT

Tom rings the doorbell. Laura answers wearing full pajamas.

LAURA
(surprised)
Tom... hey.

TOM
I thought I'd come check on you,
see how you're doing.

LAURA
I wasn't expecting you... umm yeah,
I'm doing ok.

TOM
I stopped by Tucci's... got you a
sandwich.

LAURA
Oh wow, thanks!

TOM
If you're not hungry now, you can
always put it in the fridge for
later.

LAURA
That's very thoughtful, thank you.
(awkward)
I don't know what to say. I wasn't
expecting you.

TOM
I could take you out to a
restaurant... if you want.

LAURA
What?

TOM
Everyone has to eat.

LAURA

I had leftover pizza like an hour ago, and now I have a sandwich... that you just brought me.

TOM

Ok, well, I just wanted to come by and see how you were doing.

LAURA

Well, thanks for stopping by, and thanks for the sandwich.

TOM

(long delay)

We could go out for tea and crumpets!

LAURA

(laughing)

ok, ok, ok... you're not going to give up. I get it. Give me a second to throw on some clothes.

(talking from a far)

Let's just do something local. I know a place right down the street.

INT. HOBOKEN ALE HOUSE, A FEW MINUTES LATER - NIGHT

TOM

This isn't exactly what I had in mind.

LAURA

Yee of little faith; the food is excellent here.

TOM

Can we get a table or something?

LAURA

No. I want to sit at the bar. Less formal. I don't want anyone to think we're on a date.

TOM

(sarcastic)

Yeah, this place screams romance. I especially like the sawdust on the floor. But nice barstools... I'll give you that!

LAURA
(signaling the bartender)
Rick, this is Tom McAvery; we work
together.

RICK
Nice to meet you.

TOM
Likewise.

LAURA
(whispering at Tom)
There's absolutely no chance they
have Chablis here, so don't even
say it.

TOM
Rick, I'll just take a glass of
white wine, whatever house brand
you have.

LAURA
I want a cosmo, a shot of tequila,
and a lemon-drop for my friend.

TOM
No shots for me today. And you need
to take it easy!

LAURA
Sure, whatever you say... dad!

TOM
(head shaking, looking up)
Rick, can I get a menu.
And maybe I will have a shot.
Absolute Citron.

RICK
How about Grey Goose and a squeeze
of lemon?

TOM
Yeah, that works!

RICK
Menu is on the board.

Rick walks away to take someone else's order.

TOM
Board?

LAURA
On the chalkboard.

TOM
What the heck is biker flank?

LAURA
Oh, you're gonna love it! Comes
with a bake potato.

RICK
We're OUT of bake potatoes!
(server Tom wine)

TOM
Not sure I've ever seen a bottle of
wine that just says wine on the
label.
(taking a sip)
Well, it's not horrible!
This is a when-in-Rome moment if
there ever was one, so I guess I'll
take the biker flank, medium rare.

RICK
The steak is only a half inch
thick. It's going to be medium as
soon as it hits the grill. Fries or
mixed vegetables?

TOM
I think fries are the safer bet.

LAURA
Good choice!

TOM
What are you gonna eat?

LAURA
Not hungry.

TOM
You got to eat.

LAURA
My fat ass has been on the couch
for the last 6 days, the last thing
I need is more food!

Laura takes her shot of tequila and asks Rick for another.

TOM
Hey, about last night...

LAURA

No, no, no... we're not going there.

TOM

I just... I wanted to tell you I had a nice time with you yesterday, that's all.

LAURA

(talking real fast)
Ok, yeah, me too.

TOM

And... I liked the way it ended.

LAURA

(lips quirked)
See, you had to go there!

TOM

What?

LAURA

(lower tone of voice)
Do you realize how many men and women hook up after work; maybe they go for drinks, maybe they kiss at the end of the night...

TOM

What is your point?

LAURA

My point is, no one cares! We kissed, big deal! You probably kiss all kinds of chicks.

TOM

Umm... you kissed me!

LAURA

What's the difference... get over it, dude!

TOM

Are you fucking kidding me right now?

LAURA

Oh my God! You just used the F word.

TOM

You know what, I don't need to be here. I just came to check on you, and you're obviously fine, so I'm gonna leave.

LAURA

Hey Rick! Tom just used the F word!

RICK

That's fucking awesome!

Tom springs from his barstool and storms to the exit. Laura quickly hops up and catches him at the door.

LAURA

I'm kidding, come on... don't go!

Laura pulls Tom aside to be more genuine about her feelings.

LAURA (CONT'D)

Yesterday was great. But look, these people know me and they know my ex-fiancé. That shit just happened last week, so maybe a little discretion is in order here.

TOM

Ok, fine, you could have just said that.

Laura continues talking as they walk back to their barstools.

LAURA

As if you were going to walk out on your biker flank!
Hey Rick! Another round of shots!

INT. LAURA'S APARTMENT A FEW HOURS LATER - NIGHT

Tom and Laura crash through the front door kissing.

LAURA

My roommate's gone til tomorrow.

TOM

(spellbound gibberish)
Your relationship with Jeremy was not meant to be.

LAURA

Yeah... just like it's not meant to be with you either.

(kissing continues)

TOM

You have to trust me, I know how to make this work.

LAURA

Pshhh... that's what everyone says in the beginning.

(mushy mouth noises)

But I will say one thing... I can't resist kissing you.

If this goes any further...

(having second thoughts)

We got to stop, this is wrong.

TOM

It's not wrong!

LAURA

(creating distance)

You're an amazing kisser, and handsome as all get-out, but...

TOM

But what?

LAURA

(disqualifying laugh)

Ok, Mr. McAvery, time to call it a night.

TOM

(hundred percent confused)

I don't understand... what happened just now? What did I do wrong?

LAURA

Goodnight, handsome!

INT. HDM, 9TH FLOOR, TOM'S OFFICE - MORNING

Tom is on the phone with Williamson Law Group

TOM

Bernard, what's going on! We're all set up and ready to be at your office in an hour. We put a lot of time into this presentation.

(slight pause)

(MORE)

TOM (CONT'D)

Are you considering another
advertising firm? Is that it?

(pleading)

Bernard, all I'm asking for is an
opportunity to demo of our
commercial technology to your team.

(deflated)

Tom hangs up the call and dashes into Alex's office.

TOM (CONT'D)

We need to get Nancy over to
Heatherton... and quick!

ALEX

What's going on?

TOM

The demo we put together for their
partners... they just cancelled;
they're going with someone else.

ALEX

You got to be fucking kidding me!

TOM

Just have Nancy deliver the
original contract, directly to
Maggie... and let's see where it
goes.

ALEX

(angry)

Where it goes? It's gonna go right
in the fucking trash...
We were supposed to execute this
agreement last week... we waited,
and they found someone else; end of
story!

TOM

We don't know that for certain.

ALEX

I fucking told you this was gonna
happen, I should have never
listened to you.

INT. JFK AIRPORT LATER THAT SAME DAY - AFTERNOON

TOM PICKS PETER UP AT THE TERMINAL

TOM
How was your trip?

PETER
Fine.

TOM
That's it... fine.
You went all the way to Arizona to
close a deal, and all you have to
say is, fine?

PETER
Nancy called me on the plane.
Shortly there after I received an
email from Maggie, informing me
that Heatherton no longer needs our
services.

TOM
Pete, there was no way to save
them.

PETER
I agree, but John is not going to
see it that way.

Tom pulls his car into the parking garage of their building.

PETER (CONT'D)
I got to run upstairs and drop off
my briefcase. Just meet me at the
bar.

Peter exits the elevator, passing the reception area, down
the 9th floor corridor, and into Alex's office.

PETER (CONT'D)
Alex, help me understand what
happened today.

ALEX
With regards to what?

PETER
With regards to Heatherton.

ALEX

Nothing we could do. I sent Nancy over there last week, Maggie pushed back. I adjusted the contract, Nancy tried again today; no-go.

PETER

Yeah, but I specifically told you to have Nancy deliver that contract at the beginning of the week. And here it is, Friday!

ALEX

What's the difference... they're in the middle of a merger. They're bringing on new partners, and those partners are bringing in their own ad agency.

PETER

You and everyone else think you know how this business works, but you don't. Maggie didn't have power of attorney until close of business Wednesday. Dan Heatherton was in the office Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday. You could have picked any one of those days.

Alex begins to say something, but Peter cuts him off.

PETER (CONT'D)

While I realize that contract was only worth 90k, the fact of the matter is... you lost John's personal client of over 20 years.

ALEX

Pete, no disrespect... Maggie would have redacted any contract that Dan signed. The man is senile!

PETER

Have your resignation on my desk before you leave here today.

ALEX

What the fuck are you talking about?

PETER

I'll give you 6-months pay, plus 4th quarter bonus.

(MORE)

PETER (CONT'D)

Or, you can take your chances with
the board Monday morning.

ALEX

Pete! This is irrational!

PETER

In case you didn't know, John's
grandfather and Dan fought in World
War Two together, so you may want
to leave out that part about him
being senile!

INT. DION'S, MINUTES LATER - DUSK

Tom's at his usual seat when Peter walks in. Clinton has his
drink waiting for him.

PETER

Clinton, how long has my whiskey
been sitting there?

CLINTON

Man, I just made it... ask Tom.

PETER

Yeah, and I bet you made it with
Bushmill?

CLINTON

Truth be told, I made it with Old
Crow, and even that's too good for
you!

Peter takes a sip and turns his attention to Tom.

PETER

We have a board meeting on Monday.
Be prepared to talk about
Heatherton.
Alex... likely wont be there.

TOM

Why?

PETER

Because I asked him to resign.

TOM

What! Why?

PETER

Come on, you know how this works. We lost a major client, and the board is gonna want answers. I asked Alex to do one simple thing, and he refused to do it.

TOM

This is complete bullshit. In two weeks the Heatherton name isn't even going to exist anymore.

PETER

Doesn't change the fact that Alex has zero respect for my authority.
(sincere)
Look, it's just you and I, at least for a while. Let's concentrate on the clients in front of us. Delphini has every intention of making a new commercial, and if we can pull that off, plus Rockingham Gamers, we can still hit our bonus.

Tom, still holding his hand over his eyes.

TOM

I can't help but to feel responsible.

PETER

I know you and Alex were close, and I'm sorry about that, but I need someone stronger than him in that position.

A change in Peter's facial expression when he sees Nancy, Laura, and two other fellows walk into the bar.

PETER (CONT'D)

What in the actual hell?

Tom pulls his hand away from his eyes.

PETER (CONT'D)

What is this... a goddam double date?

TOM

Who is that?

PETER

That's Nancy's husband.

TOM

Not him! I know who he is. The other guy.

PETER

I don't know.
What's it been... two weeks since the engagement was broke off?

TOM

Do you really think that's what it is?

PETER

Eh, yeah, that what it looks like.

TOM

Maybe he's one of David's co-workers.

PETER

And how does that change anything? They're here for drinks, so unless he's gay, her ass is bound to get his attention before the night's over.

Look at that skirt she's wearing! How her ex-fiancé was able to give that up... I'll never understand.

(sorta talking to himself)

If a man gets into an ass like hers, and the relationship doesn't work out... how does he ever go back to a normal woman's ass.

TOM

(upset)

I got to go.

Peter looks at Tom, then looks at Laura, and then looks back at Tom.

PETER

Please don't tell me you have feelings for her!

TOM

I'm just tired, been a long day.

Tom signs the check, pushes his barstool away from the bar counter, and proceeds to exit the lounge. Laura gives chase.

LAURA

Tom, what the hell? You're gonna walk right past me without saying anything.

TOM

You all looked like you were having an interesting conversation, and I didn't want to interject.

LAURA

That's bullshit, what's wrong?

TOM

(reality)

Really? You're out on a date after all the time we've been spending together.

LAURA

Date? Nancy and I just left the office.
That's David's brother!

TOM

You knew I was here, why didn't you text me? A little head's up, so that it doesn't look... the way it looks!

LAURA

(puzzled)

Oh, so I have to text you every time I leave the office now?

Tom doesn't respond, so Laura steps closer to him.

LAURA (CONT'D)

(quieter tone)

If you think making out with me gives you the right to know when I coming and going... you're sadly mistaken.

TOM

(delay)

It's just common courtesy.

LAURA

Oh, is that what it is?
What if I have to go to the ladies room; do you need me to send you a text before... or after I pee?

Tom looks up at the ceiling, turns, and begins walking away.

TOM
(walking away)
Un-fucking real!

LAURA
You're really starting to get the
hang of that F-word!

INT. HDM, 9TH FLOOR BOARD MEETING

Peter and Tom are exiting the conference room after the meeting adjourns.

JOHN
Petey, you can go. Tom, I need you
to hang back for a second.

Tom retakes his seat at the table, alongside John and four other board members.

JOHN (CONT'D)
With regards to Heatherton, I want
you to tell me what's wrong with
this company.

Tom doesn't immediately respond, so John continues.

JOHN (CONT'D)
You clearly want to do things your
way, so you must have a good reason
for it.

Again, Tom doesn't respond, looking around the room at the other board members, trying to get a feel for the situation.

JOHN (CONT'D)
Give it to us in terms of
numbers... help us to understand.

TOM
(long delay)
If we're talking year-to-date, our
client retention is down two
percent. And while new business is
up three and a half percent, most
of those clients are month to
month.

JOHN
And whose fault is that?

TOM
(cautious)
Well, it's a... sales
infrastructure.

JOHN
Danny's team.

TOM
Yes.

JOHN
What do you suggest?

TOM
Well, at present, the sales team
reports directly to operations.

JOHN
And you want them to report
directly to finance?

TOM
In terms of control measures, yes,
they should report up to me. And
then I'll report their status to
Pete.

JOHN
Fine, the sales team is yours.
Inform Danny that his employment
here at HDM has been terminated.

Tom eyes get big and his body language appears unsettled.

MARTIN - CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD
Though Danny works on this floor,
he is not an officer, and therefore
requires security to escort him out
of the building.
You can go now.

Tom nods, takes a deep breath and proceeds to exit the
conference room. John shows him to the door.

JOHN
(quiet tone)
Tom, one more thing...
I don't have an issue with work
relationships outside of the
office... as long as it's strictly
work related.
Do I need to elaborate any further?

TOM
No, fully understand.

Tom proceeds down the corridor to Danny's office.

TOM (CONT'D)
Hey Danny, you got a second?

INT. DION'S, LATER THAT SAME DAY - DUSK

Peter and Tom are at their usual seats, drinks in hand.

PETER
(half laughing)
You got two people fired within a week. Man, you're on a roll!

TOM
Pete, it's not funny! Our entire organization is on it's heels. Everyone's freaking out.

PETER
Good! It's about time people take their jobs seriously. Oh, and by the way... thanks for taking the sales team off my plate.
(giggling)
I can't believe you signed up for that.
(laughing)
You know... the irony in this is that I wanted to fire Danny two years ago, and John wouldn't let me.
(taking his last sip)
Alright, I got to roll; early flight tomorrow.

Peter exits the bar, Tom orders another Chablis, Laura enters the bar soon thereafter.

LAURA
I'm not sure what to say.

TOM
About what?

LAURA
About how I acted on Friday. I was being insensitive.
(MORE)

LAURA (CONT'D)

I didn't realize we lost the Heatherton account, and then I just found out today that Alex lost his job over it.

TOM

For the record, Alex resigned. But yeah, losing Heatherton was a major blow. But... this is business.

LAURA

I feel responsible.

TOM

Yeah, well don't. This happens all the time this industry.

Laura sits down at the bar, Clinton serves her a Cosmo.

LAURA

Don't tell Peter I sat here; he'll want the seat disinfected... possibly burned to the floor.

TOM

(half laughing)

I'm still perplexed as to how the entire rug got pulled out from underneath of us. We had this whole thing lined up. How did someone get to Bernard before us... and have the means to provide them with the product and service that we already had in place.

Laura doesn't respond, somewhat distracted by Clinton.

CLINTON

(serving Laura a Cosmo)

You wanna shot to go with that?

LAURA

No, not today... thank you.

TOM

On a positive note, Pete is flying out tomorrow to close a deal with this company called, Delphini. It's a full life-cycle project, and I'm pretty sure it's going to you.

LAURA
 (shocked)
 Really!

TOM
 Yeah, why would you be surprised by that.

LAURA
 (somewhat lost for words)
 I don't know, uhh...

TOM
 Look, we have a lot of new business coming down the pike, so hang in there.

LAURA
 Yeah, ok, Wow! I thought for sure I would be let go this week without Heatherton to manage.

TOM
 No-no-no, we need a PM, more than ever.

Laura, eyes wide in disbelief as she downs her Cosmo.

LAURA
 Hey look, I still want to apologize for the way I acted. I enjoy spending time with you.

TOM
 I feel the same, but I think we're better off just being co-workers.
 (lips quirked)
 Truth be told, we've been spotted together outside of work, which uh... let's just say, frowned upon within the organization.

LAURA
 Palmetto's, no doubt. We stick out like a sore thumb in that place.
 (gazing into Tom's eyes)
 I got to go.

INT. HOBOKEN ALE HOUSE AN HOUR LATER - NIGHT

Laura pulls up a barstool next to Niki. Cosmo already there.

NIKI
How was your day?

LAURA
You don't want to know.

NIKI
I probably don't, but go ahead and tell me.

LAURA
I lost my one and only client.

NIKI
The law firm?

LAURA
Yep!

NIKI
What happened?

LAURA
They decided to do business with someone else.
(reluctant to elaborate)
Thing is... I'm pretty sure I know why it happened.

NIKI
What do you mean?

LAURA
Uhh, where to I start.
(signaling the bartender)
Rick, let me get a shot.
(turning towards Niki)
After Jeremy and I broke up, I was so embarrassed that I didn't think I would go back to work, so I... starting sending my resume out.

Rick returns with the tequila shot.

LAURA (CONT'D)
I got a call the very next day from a direct competitor, so I went in for an interview.

NIKI
Why would you do that, you love your job.

LAURA

I know, I know... believe me, I know! I just... wasn't in the right frame of mind.

(looking up, embarrassed)

One thing led to another and... I went out for drinks with the hiring manager.

NIKI

You had drinks with this person?

LAURA

Yeah, and uhh... I may have disclosed some things about HDM that I shouldn't have.

NIKI

Oh my god, Laura! Seriously? What the fuck is wrong with you?

(shaking her head)

I'm not even gonna ask you if you slept with this person...

LAURA

(angry)

I didn't sleep with HIM!

NIKI

(doubtful)

Yeah, I bet you didn't... You know they're gonna fire you, right? They're gonna find out that you've been running your mouth to a competitor, and they're gonna fucking fire you!

LAURA

(upset)

You know... I turn to you for support, and you just...

Rick looks at Niki as if she wants or needs another drink.

NIKI

No, I'm good. Thanks Rick.

(reverting back to Laura)

I don't understand you... you were so happy when you got that job with HDM. Why throw it away like this?

LAURA

I'm fucked up in the head... And now I don't know what to do.

INT. LAURA AND NIKI'S APARTMENT MINUTES LATER - EVENING

Both are walking through the front door, a little drunk, and making their way to the couch.

NIKI

Hey look, I'm sorry. You've been through a lot. I'm in no position to judge you. I just... I care about you and I want you to be happy.

LAURA

Thanks.

Now sitting on the couch together.

NIKI

Are you officially off for the holidays?

LAURA

Half day tomorrow, and that's it.

NIKI

You going to see your folks.

LAURA

No, not this year. They're going to visit my grandmother in Italy. I wish I could go, but flights are way too expensive right now.

NIKI

So what are you going to do for Thanksgiving?

LAURA

I'm going to spend it with Nancy and her family.

NIKI

And by Nancy's family, that includes Richard?

LAURA

(smiling)
Maybe...

NIKI

Ok... alright...
Have you and Richard... you know...

LAURA
Uh... sort of...

NIKI
What do you mean sort of?

LAURA
Umm... like, everything but...

NIKI
Ok, well, that's probably a good thing... test the waters and whatnot.

LAURA
(hesitant)
He's like... kinda hairy...

NIKI
Eew!

LAURA
Yeah, but he's very clean and he smells good.

NIKI
Still...

LAURA
Yeah, I know... it's gonna take some time to get used to it.

NIKI
Is he a good kisser?

LAURA
Good, yes. As good as Tom? No!

NIKI
How about you-know-what... did that check out ok?

LAURA
Oh that? To be honest, there was so much hair that I couldn't find it.

NIKI
WHAT?

LAURA
Just kidding! No, he's good in that department... pretty thick, actually.

NIKI

Oh really?

Niki holds her hand up in the air, and fixes her fingers in the shape of the letter C.

NIKI (CONT'D)

Beer can?

LAURA

(laughing)

No... thank God! He's like... paper towel-roll thick.

(laughing harder)

Beer can... I know who you are talking about, that's funny!

NIKI

Oh, so you remember Beer-Can-Charlie?

LAURA

How can I forget! You were in the bathtub for two days after sleeping with that guy.

NIKI

I'm telling you... all those guys from the Catskills are like that! Hick dicks!

LAURA

Yeah-no, Richard is proportionate.

NIKI

And your saying you didn't sleep with him?

LAURA

Well, we've only been together one time, and he's the type of guy that goes right for third base.

NIKI

Really!

LAURA

Yeah, and he was down there for the long haul!

NIKI

Texas style?

LAURA

Actually... a little further south than that!

NIKI

Oh my God... that's dirty for a first encounter.

LAURA

Yeah, tell me about it!
Caught me off guard, for sure!
(sigh)
But... what are you gonna do...
can't stop a dude!

NIKI

No you cannot!
(gettin up from the couch)
Alright, well, I got to hit the hay. Unlike you, I have a full day tomorrow!

Niki stands up from the couch and begins walking away.

LAURA

Niki... thanks for understanding.

NIKI

Of course...

INT. DION, THE FOLLOWING DAY, THANKSGIVING EVE - NOONE

Laura and Nancy are already at a hightop table when Tom and Peter walk in.

PETER

(sarcastic)
When I said half a day, I didn't mean 11:30!

NANCY

I was at work at 7am, so don't even go there.

Uninvited, Tom and Peter take a seat at the hightop.

NANCY (CONT'D)

Nah-nah-nah, you two can enjoy yourselves at your regular seats at the bar.

TOM

Come on Nancy, it's the holidays.

NANCY

No Tom! Were not doing that thing
were the four of us hang out.

PETER

Look, we're at the precipice of
really big things going on at work.
We can't have this rub between us.
We're gonna be traveling, and
spending a lot of time together.
It's got to be cohesive.

NANCY

Umm, I'm not traveling... that's
not in my job description.

PETER

Well, technically it is... if you
choose to accept my offer.

NANCY

(puzzled)
What offer?

PETER

Alex's position.

NANCY

WHAT!

TOM

(sincere laugh)
Welcome to the 9th floor!

Nancy puts her hand over her mouth, and her eyes start to
swell. The reality sets in with Laura as well.

LAURA

Oh my God!

Laura reaches over to console and congratulate Nancy.

PETER

Your offer letter should be in your
inbox by now. I think you'll find
the compensation aligns with the
position requirements.

NANCY

(crying and laughing)
I swear to God, Pete, if you're
putting me on... I will totally
punch you in the face!
I've done it before!

(MORE)

NANCY (CONT'D)

Tom, you are suck a dick! How could you know about this and not tell me?

TOM

(half laughing)

I honestly didn't know until 5 minutes ago. He was interviewing all week... I didn't see you up there!

NANCY

My heart is beating like a rabbit... Pete, I don't know what to say. My entire career... 10 years of my life at this company... it finally happened!

Nancy spontaneously jumps off of her hightop chair and extends her hand to Peter.

NANCY (CONT'D)

I accept your offer on one condition... I get Tom's office!

PETER

(smiling)

Done!

TOM

(caught off guard)

Whoa, whoa, whoa!

Accelerated footage, many hours, drinks, and stories later.

NANCY

Oh my god, Pete, that is not the way it happened at all. It was Tom's birthday.

LAURA

How many years ago are you talking about?

NANCY

Oh... this had to be 6 years ago.

TOM

My 24th birthday.

NANCY

We were no strangers to partying,
but that night was way out of
control.

(whispers to Laura)

There was cocaine at this party...
and there was a lot of it.

LAURA

Oh, snap!

NANCY

Yeah, it was an all-night kind of
thing. And then just as the sun was
coming up...SOMEONE... wanted to go
to Six Flags for his birthday!

LAURA

Six Flags! The amusement park?

NANCY

Yep. Worst idea ever. We weren't
even there an hour before getting
kicked out!

PETER

Not kicked out... escorted out!

NANCY

Tom passed out in the cable cars,
and Pete had to pee so bad, that he
hopped the gate at the petting zoo,
and relieved himself in the stable
where they keep the goats!

LAURA

Oh shit!

PETER

In all fairness, the main restrooms
were out-of-order right when we
walked in there, so what was I
going to do.

Clinton re-enters the scene.

CLINTON

Dare I ask if ya'll need another
round?

NANCY

Oh lord no! I got to go home. I
have the entire world coming over
tomorrow for Thanksgiving.

TOM
Clinton, just one bill.

PETER
Nan, you're not taking the subway,
are you?

NANCY
No-no, David's over at O'Malley's,
I just texted him.

TOM
(looking at Laura)
How bout you, how you getting home?

LAURA
I'm gonna Uber.

TOM
No-no-no, I'll take care of it.

LAURA
You're gonna pay for my Uber?

TOM
The last thing you want to do is
take an Uber on Thanksgiving eve.

LAURA
(confused)
Well... how am I gonna get home?

TOM
Don't worry about it, I got to guy.

LAURA
(laughing)
You... got to a guy?

PETER
How do you got to guy? I don't got
to guy!

LAURA
Tom, maybe the guy you got needs to
get you home.

NANCY
Ok, David's here, I'll see ya'll
later.
(touching Laura's arm)
I'll see you tomorrow!

TOM

Alright, my guy's gonna be here in
5 minutes.

LAURA

(whispering to Tom)
Walk me outside.

Tom and Laura exit the bar, Clinton circles back

CLINTON

How is it that you're that last
person in the bar... again!
(shaking his head)
Nope... nope, there's no food,
kitchen's closed!

INT. HDM, 9TH FLOOR, FOLLOWING WEEK, TOM'S OFFICE - MORNING

TOM

(looking at Peter)
Where have you been all week?

PETER

I told you I was going to my
sister's house in Maine.

TOM

You told me you were going there
for Thanksgiving!

PETER

This place... on the lake... forget
about it. I couldn't leave.

John barges into Tom's office.

JOHN

We got to problem.

PETER

So much for my vacation story.

JOHN

The other half of the airtime you
need for Rockingham Gamers is no
longer available.

PETER

Not possible...

TOM

John, we reserved the block. No one is going to purchase 30 minutes across 260 channels.

JOHN

Fine, get it figured out!

John exits Tom's office.

TOM

(looking back at Peter)
What time is your meeting tomorrow?

PETER

11am, but I'm flying down there this afternoon.

TOM

I'll make sure that airtime is locked down before your meeting.

PETER

Is it possible for someone to purchase a lead-in spot after the block is reserved?

TOM

It's possible, but highly unlikely. They'd have to know our position, and have a buyer lined up at the same time.

PETER

But it is possible.

TOM

Let's just say in the off chance that someone purchased the exact lead-in spot, on the exact channel we agreed to, we could swap it with prime time if our back was against the wall.
I wouldn't concern yourself over it.

PETER

Yeah-yeah, I just... don't want any loose ends when I walk into that meeting. It's gonna be hard enough to close that deal as it is.

TOM

I'll call over to the network this afternoon and get it all straightened out.

INT. DION'S, LATER THAT AFTERNOON - DUSK

Tom is at the bar by himself when Laura rings his phone.

TOM

I don't understand what you're saying. Where are you?
How do you not know where you're at?
Hand the bartender your phone.
Hey, sorry about this. I'm gonna come by and get her.
The lounge inside the hotel, or across the street?
Ok, got it. I'll be there in 20 minutes.

INT. HOTEL LOUNGE, NEAR BROADWAY - DUSK

Tom enters the lounge, Laura nearly passed out at the bar.

TOM

Laura, what's going on?
(signaling the bartender)
Let me get her bill. Here's my card. Again, I apologize for this.

TOM (CONT'D)

(helping Laura stand)
Listen, I got you a room, right here. We just need to make it to the elevator.

Tom and Laura stumble to the elevator.

INT. HOTEL, ROOM 203 - MINUTES LATER

TOM

How did you end up on this side of town?

LAURA

Richard... showed up here.

TOM

David's brother?

LAURA
(heavily slurred)
He broke up with me!
(tears)

TOM
(confused)
I... didn't know you were dating...
(still confused)
Laura, why would Richard ask you to
meet him here, of all places,
considering neither of you live in
the city?

LAURA
(ignoring Tom's question)
Tom, when is the last time you got
laid? No, let me guess... 3 years
ago?
I heard she was real cute!

TOM
(irritated)
I have to go...

LAURA
No-no-no, don't leave!

Tom walks backwards towards the door.

LAURA (CONT'D)
(attitude)
Don't you want to fuck me?

TOM
You're drunk... and you're way out
of line.

LAURA
Blah, blah, blah... you're way out
of line!

TOM
I can't believe how ungrateful you
are.

LAURA
Ungrateful? I'm right here! Have at
it, handsome!

Tom opens the door and begins to leave.

LAURA (CONT'D)

Fine! Go home and jack-off to
memories of your old girlfriend!
(yelling)
Fucking pansy!

INT. BACK DOWN AT THE HOTEL LOUNGE.

BARTENDER

She gonna be alright?

TOM

Yeah, I think so. Got her a room...
sleep it off.

BARTENDER

You look like you could use a
drink.

TOM

That's an understatement. You don't
have Chablis by chance, do you?

BARTENDER

Not since 1985.

TOM

In that case, house Chardonnay.

BARTENDER

You're not the husband by chance,
are you?

TOM

(chuckling)
Far from it! She and I work
together... sort of.

BARTENDER

The reason I asked, is because she
made quite a scene in here earlier;
Looked like one of those deals
where she got caught cheating...
kind of thing.
And then after those two guys left,
you showed up... I didn't know what
to think.

TOM

Whoa-whoa-whoa, what two guys? She
told me that her boyfriend broke up
with her... what other guy are you
talking about?

BARTENDER
Shaved head, muscular...

TOM
Yeah, that's her... supposed
boyfriend. But I'm curious as to
who the other guy was?

BARTENDER
Sean... something another.
(looking at the bill)
Yep, Sean Green.

TOM
Sean Green?
Short, reddish curly hair?

BARTENDER
Yep. I take it that's not good?

TOM
No... that's not good... at all.

Accelerated footage - Many hours and many drinks later.

BARTENDER
(approaches Tom)
We're about to close up.

TOM
(blank stare)
Yeah... what do I owe you.
(Laura's voice in his
head)
Fucking pansy!

As Tom pays his bar tab, he notices that he still has Laura's
hotel room key in his wallet.

INT. LAURA'S HOTEL ROOM - MINUTES LATER

Tom creeps in, Laura is passed-out, face down in a pillow,
room service plate on the floor. Tom grabs the steak knife,
and quietly cuts the overhanging bedsheet into long strips.
He jumps onto Laura's back, gags her, and uses the remaining
strips of bedsheet to tie her hands to the headboard. He uses
the knife to tear the backside of Laura's silvery dress
pants, and rips them down to bare skin.

LAURA
(muffled horrific scream)
Nooo!

Tom pulls down his zipper, licks his fingers, and proceeds to penetrate Laura.

LAURA (CONT'D)
(muffled grrr sound)
Please don't!

TOM
Stupid... fucking... whore!

Vicious pounding commences and continues until Laura finds enough lower body strength to thrust Tom out from inside of her and ultimately onto the floor. With Tom temporarily disabled, she removes the ligatures from around her wrists and mouth.

LAURA
Holy fuck, you scared me!
I thought the maintenance guy or
someone like that snuck in here.
(catching her breath)
You really fucking startled me! I
honestly thought I was being raped.

Stunned and dizzy, Tom manages to get up off of the floor.

LAURA (CONT'D)
I'm down for whatever, but... you
can't cover my mouth AND my nose! I
have to be able to breathe!

Tom and Laura appear to be on completely different wavelengths.

LAURA (CONT'D)
We can go again, just... don't cut
off my entire air supply.

Laura rolls over onto her hands and knees, and she re-ties the torn bedsheets around her wrists. She drops down to her elbows, arching her back so that the seam in her silvery dress pants rips down a little further. She looks back at Tom, who's now standing in the corner looking distraught.

LAURA (CONT'D)
It's ok... you just got a little
carried away.

Delusional, Tom gathers himself and runs for the door.

LAURA (CONT'D)
Where are you going!
(yelling)
(MORE)

LAURA (CONT'D)

After all of that, you're gonna
fucking leave?

As Tom closes the door behind him, Laura flattens herself out on the bed and shakes her head in a frustrated manner.

INT. TOM'S APARTMENT THE NEXT DAY - MORNING

Tom in the shower, and then on the couch texting Laura, and then on the phone with the 9th floor receptionist.

TOM

Becky, I'm a little under the
weather, so I'll be working from
home today. Can you patch me
through to downstairs?

(slight pause)

Liz, it's Tom... hey... did Laura
make it in today?

LIZZY

No.

TOM

You haven't heard from her?

LIZZY

Nope.

TOM

Alright, call me as soon as she
makes it in.

LIZZY

Will do.

Accelerated footage - Tom mopes around his apartment all weekend. Couch, kitchen, bedroom, etc.

INT. HDM, 9TH FLOOR, MONDAY - MORNING

Tom walks past the receptionist and into his office. Everything seems way too quiet, so he walks back to the reception area.

TOM

Becky, where's everyone at?

BECKY

Peter just left for an appointment,
Nancy... I don't know, haven't seen
her.

TOM

Peter and Nancy were in North Carolina on Friday to sign the largest contract in the history of this business, and no one is here! How is that possible?

BECKY

John's here... I think.

Tom walks from the reception area, down the corridor, and knocks on John's office.

JOHN

Come in.

TOM

John, where's everyone at? I've been calling Pete all weekend. Is everything alright?

JOHN

Tom, have a seat. On Friday, I received legal documents from an attorney representing Laura Pensali, who alleges having a relationship with you that turned volatile, and that she no longer feels safe working here.

TOM

John, I can explain...

JOHN

I'm going to spare you the details of this affidavit. Your employment with HDM is terminated, effective immediately.

TOM

John... you don't understand!

JOHN

I told you to stay away from her and you didn't.

TOM

She was in cahoots with Sean Green.

JOHN

Yeah, and I heard she was also running around with Wayne Dahlgren. What's your point?

TOM

I'm pretty sure Sean stole information off of Laura's computer, which...

JOHN

(cutting Tom off)

No-no-no, that information came from Nancy's laptop, which I understand was in Laura's possession. So either Nancy was in on it, or negligent with our proprietary information. Either way, I can't have someone like that working here.

TOM

(tears)

No! John, she had nothing to do with this!

JOHN

Drinking with subordinates, hanging out in bars, going on double dates. Not to mention that debacle with Petey a few years ago.

Tom begins to cry.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Tom, you're a grown man, stop it!

Tom wipes away his tears as he looks at a picture of John and his father in the corner of the window sill.

JOHN (CONT'D)

(sympathetic)

Do you remember when your father was in the hospital dying... I brought you in there to see him... you were kicking and screaming, do you remember that?

Tom nods his head.

JOHN (CONT'D)

You didn't want to look at him, and neither did I for that matter... he was in bad shape. Do you remember what he said to me?

TOM

No.

JOHN

He said, look after my son!

(long pause)

I was hardly a parent to my own kid, let alone you.

I just kept sending more money to your mom to try and offset the guilt.

I guess I could say that it bought you a good education, but...

(stopping his emotions)

Look, you're a smart guy, you'll figure it out. And you'll have no problem advancing your career... it just won't be this organization.

John stands up from his desk and shows Tom to the door.

JOHN (CONT'D)

I'll see to it that you get severance and all of your stock options.

(holding the affidavit)

Tom, these allegations are extremely serious. From what I can tell, her attorney is willing to keep this concealed, in exchange for us not bringing charges against her. Do you understand?

TOM

Yes.

JOHN

I highly... and I mean highly recommend that you do not contact her in any way, shape, or form.

Just as Tom is walking away.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Tom... one other thing...
Becky said that a guy named, Romain came by the office on Friday.
Is there anything I need to know about that?

Tom shakes his head and proceeds to the office exit.

INT. LAURA'S APARTMENT, MINUTES LATER - NOON

Tom's hand shakes as he pushes the doorbell.

LAURA
What do you want?

TOM
I need to talk to you.

LAURA
We have nothing to talk about.

TOM
Can I at least apologize to you...
face to face!

LAURA
Say what you want to say, and then
leave.

TOM
What I did was unthinkable, and I'm
sorry.

LAURA
You're not getting closure from me
if that's what you came here for.

TOM
(hesitant)
I love you...

LAURA
You love me?
You snuck into my hotel room and
fucked me when I was passed out!
Is that your definition of love?

TOM
When I found out about you and Sean
Green... I snapped. I'm sorry.

Leaving the front door open, Laura walks towards the living
room and talks to Tom from the coffee table.

LAURA
You left your money clip... the
last time you were over here.
I was going to throw it away, but
then I remember you saying it was
the only thing you have from your
father.
(handing him the clip)

TOM

Give me a ;chance... give us a
chance.
We can leave this place right now
and go start a new life together.

LAURA

A new life together... are you
insane!

TOM

We can put all of this behind us...

LAURA

(bewildered)
You shoved my head into a pillow
and wouldn't allow me to breathe.
Is that what we're putting behind
us?

Tom's lips start to chatter and his eyes become watery.

LAURA (CONT'D)

Do you want to see the bruises you
left behind?

Tom lowers his head and turns as if to leave.

LAURA (CONT'D)

Do you even realize you were
fucking me in my ass!

Tom begins walking away.

LAURA (CONT'D)

(crying)
How could you reduce yourself to
that?

TOM

(with his back to her)
I'm sorry!

LAURA

There's no coming back from what
you did. That ugliness will follow
you wherever you go!
(sniffing)
You broke my heart, Tom.

Laura runs into her bedroom and slams the door. Tom gives
chase.

TOM

Please don't give up on us!

Stopping short of Laura's bedroom, Tom begs her to come back into the living room so they can talk about it.

TOM (CONT'D)

Laura, come out and let's talk about it. Please!

LAURA

(yelling from inside her bedroom)

No! I'm a stupid fucking whore, remember?

TOM

We can make this work between us; I know it in my heart. Just please come out and talk to me.

A period of time goes by, the silence leads Tom to the slowly open the door to Laura's bedroom.

TOM (CONT'D)

Laura, you ok?
Laura...

Concerned, Tom slowly enters Laura's bedroom

TOM (CONT'D)

No... God no!

Laura, on all fours – she has retied herself in the exact configuration as when she was in the hotel room. Wrists bound with the same ripped bedsheets, a strip lassoed across her mouth, and wearing the same silvery dress slacks ripped down to the cleft of her rear end. Tom slowly closes the door behind him.

THE END