

Scene 1

Scenario - Laura and Niki are at their apartment in Hoboken, New Jersey.

The view is of Laura's upper back and the back of her head. She's wearing a light blue robe. Her strawberry blonde hair is long and luxurious, with just a bend or two in the longer layers. Niki, 5'10" brunet, is standing halfway outside of the filmable spectrum. She pushes Laura forward, nudging, and encouraging her to do God-knows-what.

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!"

Niki's turns her head in a very cockeyed manor.

Niki: "And why are we doing this again?"

The viewers (whomever might watch this movie after it's produced) will see an iPhone mounted to a selfie tripod and pointed in Laura's general direction. Our film camera is just to Niki's right, only her arms and hands are visible in this shot. She clears her throat and jokingly lowers her voice to sound like a man.

Niki: "Loose the robe, bitch."

Laura turns, her facial expression is kind of wtf. Niki finds it humorous.

Niki: "Hahaha."

Laura takes a deep breath and grabs the loose end of the robe belt. In one fell swoop, the robe drops to the floor. She's completely naked, but viewers only see her backside, which is small, narrow, and well sculpted. Niki appears dishevelled. The iPhone tripod does not want to cooperate. She's clearly conflicted as to how she wants to capture Laura's body in this peculiar situation.

Niki: "Alright... I guess this is the moment of truth."

Laura: "This is more difficult than I thought."

Niki: Not for nothing... you got a great body."

Laura procrastinates.

Laura: "My heart is racing, big time!"

Laura catches her breath and walks over to the couch. Niki zooms in with the iPhone. Our film camera is behind Niki, now just off to her left side. Viewers can only see half of Laura's body as she kneels onto the couch cushion. From there, she bends at the waist, and slowly drives her head forward into the backrest of the couch. From here we'll move our film camera closer to Laura, and focus back at

Niki to capture her perspective. Again, she looks a little out of sorts, periodically shaking her head and somewhat trying to overtake her eyes. With Laura's face pressed into the crease of the cushions, her voice is muffled.

"Laura: "Are we good? Is it in focus?"

Niki: "All I can see is your ass and the bottom of your feet, but yes, it's in focus."

While the viewers can only see a portion of Laura's body, they can tell that she's on her knees, face down, with her back arched. They will also see her reach back slowly with both hands. Our film camera once again focuses back at Niki. She looks down at the tripod, then up towards Laura, and then back down at the display on the iPhone.

"Niki: "You're gonna have to spread your ass-cheeks more than that."

Niki looks flummoxed. The viewers can almost tell what Laura is doing by the expression on Niki's face. There's an exact moment where she breathes in through her closed teeth, indicating that Laura's objective was accomplished.

"Niki: "Ok... I think we got it."

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

Niki: "Do you want me to keep rolling with this?"

Laura: "Yes, I want to capture what it looks like as I'm walking away."

Niki: "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."

While our film camera only focuses on Laura's naked backside, the iPhone captures everything! Niki oscillates the tripod as Laura walks across the living room to retrieve her robe. From there, viewers will see her rush over to the iPhone to see the results of the video. The reality starts to kick in for Niki.

Niki: "Laura, honestly, what's going on?"

Jostling with the belt on her robe, Laura responds.

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: "Aren't you ever curious... how it all looks back there?"

Laura continues twirling her robe belt. All the while, the iPhone camera is still rolling.

Laura: "Like, haven't you wondered what you look like in the doggy style position?"

Niki: "Honestly, no!"

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. That's all there is to it."

Niki becomes defensive.

Niki: "Oh really. Is that how Jeremy is?"

Laura: "No, of course he's not like that. Lights are off, shades pulled all the way down, he can't get the room dark enough."

Niki's demeanor changes, and now she's concerned about Laura's actions.

Niki: "That's my whole point, why are you doing this?"

Laura: "What? I'm just 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 slows her voice and asks a more pointed question.

Niki: "You got something else going on?"

Laura: "What do you mean, something else?"

Niki: "You know what I mean!"

Laura: "Really? We're gonna get into that right now?"

There's an uncomfortable silence between them. Niki crosses her arms, turns her head, and waits for Laura to respond.

Laura: "I ended that... it's done. I promise."

Niki: "When?"

Laura does not respond. Niki repeats herself.

Niki: "When?"

There's a delay in Laura's response.

Laura: "Last week."

Niki eyebrows race to the top of her forehead. Laura immediately looks to her for sympathy.

Laura: "I needed closer. But I swear it's over. I swear."

Though Niki shakes her head with disappointment, she releases her arms and puts them on Laura's shoulders.

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: "I would 100% delete this if I were you."

Niki grabs her jacket and starts heading for the front door. She's now talking to Laura from a far. Our film camera rolls back to get both of them in the shot.

Niki: "By the way, are you taking that job?"

Laura: "Oh my gosh, I totally forgot to tell you. They want me to start in 2 weeks."

Niki: "Are they going to let you take off for your honeymoon?"

Laura: "We're gonna wait until after the new year. That way we'll have more money and can go wherever we want."

Niki: "Smart! Go to Mexico, like we talk about."

Laura: "Yeah, I'm really stoked about this job."

Niki: "Gotta be better than your last job, that's for sure."

Laura: "Oh, I've already put that behind me."

Niki runs back to Laura and gives her a hug.

Niki: "You're gonna have a beautiful wedding and a beautiful life with Jeremy."

Laura: "Thank you for saying that... and thanks for understanding."

Niki smiles, and then runs for the front door.

Niki: "You know... you might want to get that asshole bleached before your wedding. Just saying!"

Laura is embarrassingly caught off guard by Niki's words.

Laura: "Ugh... don't say that!"

Niki thrusts the door open and giggles on her way out.

Scene over

Scene 2

Scenario – Laura’s first day at her new job with Heritage Design and Marketing in Manhattan.

HDM leases the 4th floor of a building on 6th avenue. Viewers will get a sense of how prestigious the business is when our film camera circumnavigates the reception area. A massive horseshoe welcome desk sits in front of 2 separate, triple glass doors. The actual word, welcome is written in block letters across the solid oak desk. The name, Heritage hangs from the ceiling, suspend by cables, just behind where the receptionist sits. Laura is nothing short of stunning when she steps out of the elevator with an assortment of other employees. Some are walking in front of her and some are walking beside her. Once again, viewers can’t really see her from the waist down. Eventually she makes her way to the receptionist.

Laura: “Good morning, my name is Laura Pensali.”

The receptionist clicks around on her computer screen.

Laura: “I’m a new hire.”

Receptionist: “Oh, oh, yes. You’re on Nancy Jahnke’s team.”

Laura: “Yes I am.”

Receptionist: “It’s going to take me a minute to initiate your badge, would you like a coffee, or Espresso?”

Laura: “Espresso, please. Thank you.”

Our film camera is now repositioned at an angle towards the welcome desk and the first set of triple doors leading into the office suite. The idea is to capture just a glimpse of Laura’s lower half as she sits patiently for her badge to be scanned in.

Receptionist: “Here you go, Mrs. Pensali.”

Laura sits up straight and accepts the cup of Espresso.

Laura: “I’m engaged to get married, so not quite Mrs.”

Receptionist: “My apologies... Ms. Pensali.”

The receptionist glances down at Laura left hand.

Receptionist: “Your ring is amazing!”

Laura: “Why thank you!”

No sooner than Laura taking her first sip of Espresso, Nancy Jahnke emerges from the second set of triple glass doors. She makes eye contact with the receptionist, who tilts her head towards Laura. Our film camera reverts to the opposite angle by where the viewers again see the elevator door and the right side of the welcome desk. Nancy smilingly walks up to Laura with her hand extended.

Nancy: “Laura, I’m Nancy Jahnke. It’s a pleasure finally meeting you in person.”

Laura: “Likewise.”

Nancy: "We had a lot of strong candidates for this job, but I knew the first time we spoke on the phone that you were the right person."

Laura: "I appreciate you saying that, because I didn't know what to think after my Zoom with Alex."

Nancy: "He's a difficult read, but I can assure you he was impressed with your interview."

Nancy: "Oh my gosh...well, I'm grateful for this opportunity."

The receptionist hands Laura her official HDM work badge.

Nancy: "I want to start by giving you a tour of our facility."

Laura: "Sounds great. Lead the way."

The focus will primarily stay with Nancy and Laura as they walk past the reception desk, through the near side triple glass doors, and into the actual office suite. Our film camera will roll along beside them during the tour, but it's important to note that viewers will only see Laura from the waist up.

Nancy: "Laura, you are going to love it here. We have the best technology in the world, honestly. We literally have our own CGI team, CAD Engineers, and a very progressive R&D department. Not to mention every kind of audio/video equipment you could ask for."

Nancy walks Laura into a green-screen room filled with electronics. Laura stands next to one of the concave green/bluish walls, and then looks at her image on a nearby monitor. The effect is similar to what you might see when a meteorologist stands next to a weather map."

Laura: "Wow!"

Nancy: "I know, it's crazy, right?"

Laura: "Oh my God, I love it!"

Nancy: "Wait until you see our studio."

Once again, our film camera rolls alongside as Nancy leads the way to their newly finished, full size commercial studio. The corridor leading to the studio is lined with black acrylic walls and a grey chair railing that butts up to a biometric door and card reader.

Nancy: "Only certain badges work for this. You'll get one eventually."

Nancy holds the door and lets Laura walk in first.

Laura: "Holy shit! Whoops, that slipped out."

Nancy: "Don't apologize, that's the response we're looking for."

Laura: "This is like a real Hollywood movie set!"

Our film camera pans across the room, viewers see what appears to be an entire city block.

Nancy: "We can design just about anything. All of those mocked up structures are on wheels. When you turn them around, it looks like a suburban neighborhood."

Laura looks up at the top of the studio.

Laura: "How is it that the ceiling is so high."

Nancy: "Originally, it was a storage unit on the 5th floor. Now we lease it as part of this suite."

Laura: "Wow, you just sort of punched through to the next floor, huh?"

Nancy: "In a roundabout way, yes. Plus, going that route gave us access to the freight elevator."

Laura: "I was gonna say... how did you get all of that gear in here."

Laura points to a stack of telescopic lenses.

Nancy: "The cameras that we've incorporated into this studio are insanely high tech. It's going to allow us to stream AI enhanced videos to any device at the highest resolution. And more importantly, it opens the door for our clients to have a hybrid style commercial with interactive features. It's going to be like nothing they ever experienced before."

Laura: My background is more geared to A/V software, but I can tell you spent a fortune on that equipment."

Nancy: "Which is exactly why we brought you onboard."

Laura takes her eyes away from the studio to give Nancy her full attention.

Nancy: "We're hoping to roll out a new project in the coming weeks that will incorporate this studio, and I'm going to need your help managing some of the logistics."

Laura: "I'm up for the challenge, and I'm eager to get started."

There's a slight pause as Laura takes another peak inside the studio.

Nancy: "Come on, let me show you the rest of the office."

As Nancy and Laura exit the studio, our film camera will trail behind them. The footage and audio are dull and fading out.

Nancy: "After lunch, I'll take you upstairs to the 9th and introduce you to the executive team."

Laura: "9th floor?"

Nancy: "Yep, we occupy that space too."

Laura: "Wow!"

Scene Over

Scene 3

Scenario – We now move to the 9th floor. Our film camera is set up in the executive open suite, which is basically 4 lounge chairs and a coffee/conference table in the middle of the office. Three of the executive team members are discussing the day's high-level objectives.

John: "What about Delphini? Any chance we can put something together within their budget?"

Peter: "Probably not. They're asking for net 90 on the last PO. Alex is negotiating with them... which I'm totally against."

Tom: "Pete, we have room in the second half... we could squeeze Delphini in there."

Peter: "Tom, they can't pay their bills! Even if we put them in the worst timeslot, they're gonna need an additional net 90 on top of what they already owe."

Tom: "I hear what you're saying, but you were on the call. Philip is relying on us to get them in Superbowl. If we can't make it happen, they'll find someone else who can."

The conversation gets a little heated.

Peter: "What are they going to do... go across the street and negotiate a deal. They'll never make the deadline."

John: "Who are you talking about, LaVon?"

Tom: "Philip mentioned Sean Green's name the other day on one of our calls."

John: "They're not producing commercials in-house."

Tom: "No, but they have a co-op with NewArt."

John: "Here in Midtown?"

Tom: "No, no. Lower east side."

John: "Oh, you're talking that place over on Suffolk Street."

Tom: "Yes."

Peter: "NewArt is nothing more than a clown show... circus act."

Tom: "Pete, I don't even know what that means, but NewArt has the same technology as we do."

Peter: "Did you know they got their start making posters for Ringling Brothers?"

Tom: "No, I didn't know that."

Peter: "They also ran ads for donkey shows."

Though Tom is trying to be serious, he can't help but to giggle. John doesn't find it funny, but then again, he doesn't find anything funny. Viewers will get a sense that Peter and Tom are comfortable with this kind of banter.

John: "We're getting off track."

Viewers will surmise that John is likely the boss, but that Peter is content with steering the conversation in a different direction.

Peter: "Tom, they have a Barnum & Bailey tent... on display... in their office, right now!"

Tom: "Are you serious, or are you making this up?"

Peter looks at John to collaborate, but John only looks back at Peter with dismay.

Peter: "John, tell him! You've been over there... you've seen the display."

John looks up and to the right, somewhat shaking his head as if it might be true, but that he doesn't want to entertain this kind of conversation.

John: "If you're saying that Delphini is talking to LaVon Marketing, then we need to have a strategy for that."

Peter can't let it go, and more or less ignores John. Viewers can tell that John is very much in charge, but it's also clear that Peter is a major part of the organization, or at least someone that has worked for the business long enough, with enough success to acknowledge he doesn't care.

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

Tom: "No, I'm good."

Peter walks over to the break room, which is somewhat of an open area that allows him to stay engaged with the conversation. Tom leans forward and asks John if the circus tent is real."

Tom: "Is there really a circus tent in their office?"

John doesn't respond. Instead, he grabs his phone and calls the receptionist.

John: "Becky, can we get lunch catered today."

Pause for her response.

John: "I don't care, just something good."

Pause for her response.

John: "That'll work, thanks."

As John hangs up with Becky, our film camera will focus a little more on Peter. This will give viewers a better sense of his personality and physical presence. Overall, Peter is a handsome man, early 40s, perfect head of hair, clean shave. And though he could lose a few pounds, he looks great in a suit. In terms of personality... he's obnoxious, but it's hard not to like him."

Tom: "Ok, circus tent aside, we gotta make a decision. Either we put Delphini in that spot, or we sell it back to the network."

When Peter returns (coffee in hand), instead of addressing Tom's concern, he re-entangles the NewArt circus theme. And for reasons that no one can explain, he starts rattling off the names of known circus freaks.

Peter: "Bearded Lady... lizard man... that's our competition over at NewArt."

Our film camera captures the look on both Tom and John's face. All the while, Peter keeps rambling.

Peter: "... lobster boy... camel girl..."

There's a brief pause..."

Peter: "And I'm talking about the girl with two humps on her back... not one! Nobody's paying for one hump."

John diverts his attention back to his phone, as if he's heard this kind of rhetoric a billion times. Peter places his coffee cup on the conference table and begins to mimic certain circus characters and whatever oddities that may have afflicted them.

Peter: "Tom, look at my hands. Lobster boy had these crawl-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 then grabs a doughnut from a box that was brought into the office earlier that morning. He sits back in his chair, and starts talking with his mouth full.

Peter: "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 looking perplexed.

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

Again, John is sort of starring at his phone, half listening, and chiming in periodically.

John: "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 (mouth full of doughnut) finally gets serious.

Peter: "If LaVon finds out that Delphini has 90 days' worth of capital, plus the influx of business from the SuperBowl ad, they're gonna campaign a lot harder to steal their business."

John: "Tom, what do you think?"

Tom: "We have to keep in mind that we have over a million dollars tied up in that studio downstairs... specifically designed to build a Superbowl quality commercial. And we have no one lined up. Dephini is a perfect fit."

Tom taps on his laptop to refresh the page.

Tom: "They're cash poor now, but they're up 14%, ARR from last year, and they're still scaling. I say we lock them down. In terms of potential revenue, it's worth the risk."

John looks over at Peter for final thoughts.

Peter: "No offence Tom, but they've been gouging us for the last 3 years. They're sitting on three-quarters of a million-dollar purchase order. Up against what... 2-million-dollars' worth of revenue stretched out over 180 days? And then we're gonna do what... build them a new commercial for the Superbowl, and hope they pay us by summer of next year?"

John interrupts.

John: "Tom, what is our stake in this?"

Tom: "180 thousand."

John: "What's the contract worth?"

Tom: "2.75 million."

John: "Petey, how many spots do we have left?"

Peter: "Two."

John thinks about it for a few seconds.

John: "Let's concentrate on selling the airtime."

Tom: "Going back to the network at today's rate is a substantial loss."

Peter: "Hold on a second... one of those slots is 30 seconds, in the first quarter of the game. We can sell that at a premium in-house."

John: "To who?"

Peter: "Venture Capitalist group in North Carolina."

John: "The video game company?"

Peter: "Yep."

Tom: "If we can unload the 30 second slot in-house, and sell the 60 second slot back to the Network, we should be at break even."

John: "Ok, what are we going to do about Delphini?"

Tom: "Their contract is up for renewal. If we give them some additional branding; maybe a few of those digital side-line banners, they might consider signing another 2-year deal with us."

John: "Is LaVon a threat or not?"

Tom: "From a financial perspective, LaVon should have no interest in a live-stream outfit like Delphini. But according to Pete, Sean Green has some kind of vengeance against us."

Peter: "Look, we pulled the rug out from underneath LaVon's feet. Lightspeed was their account for 10 years, and we just straight-up took it from them. They'll do whatever it takes to pay us back for that, to include underbidding contracts that they have no real interest in. For all intent and purpose, Sean Green runs LaVon, and despite the fact that he's a horrible businessman, he is relentless when it comes to stealing clients."

John: "If LaVon has to sub the commercial work to NewArt, Delphini would be a major losing proposition."

Peter: "Of course it's a losing proposition, but it has long term value, and Sean knows that."

Tom: "Pete, let's be realistic. LaVon is not going to front load a half-mil to NewArt because of some grudge against us."

Peter: "Tom! Sean will say whatever it takes, fail to delivery, and not give two shits. And Delphini is just dumb enough to fall into that trap. Which is all the more reason not to throw money at this kind of client. I realize how petty it is, but if we can make it look like we don't care about Delphini, then Sean will suddenly not care about them either. And if it looks like we're more than willing to lose Delphini over this Superbowl ad, Sean will lose the motivation to engage NewArt."

John: "Why not iDublin and Linatech? In theory, they could outbid us on both of those accounts."

Peter intertwines his fingers behind his head, leans back in his chair, somewhat stretching his back.

Peter: "I'm sure those accounts are on Sean's radar, but those contracts have bidding models with performance criteria that they don't meet. iDublin, for one, does not allow contractors to sub out to other contractors."

John ponders over this decision regarding Delphini.

John: "Alright, let's table the commercial for now, but give them two banners in the second half of the Superbowl... in exchange for signing a 2-year live stream contract."

Tom: "Will do."

Peter once again steers the conversation in a direction that is awkward, to say the least.

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 acknowledges, but his expression is that of someone who's not interested in hearing another story. Peter turns his attention to Tom, who can't resist the allure.

Peter: "Tom, long story short, Sean was a consultant for this company that we were doing business with. And one night we all went out for dinner. This restaurant... I gotta tell you... craziest menu you've ever seen. All of the proteins were wild game; things like boar, venison, rabbit, that kind of thing. So, John and I order the Bison (seems like the closest thing to cattle). And a few other people ordered Elk (again, seems like a reasonable choice). But Sean (get this) he orders goat penises.

Tom eyebrows turn down.

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: "Hahaha, get out of here!"

Peter: "I kid you not."

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

Peter looks at John for collaboration.

Peter: "John, back me up here!"

There's a small distraction coming from the reception area. John lifts his chin and turns his head. Peter keeps talking to Tom.

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

Our film camera rotates in the direction of John's line of sight. Nancy and Laura have entered the executive suite, and are now walking towards the open office area. John taps Peter on the shoulder.

John: "Knock it off!"

Peter can't resist; he leans over to Tom and starts emphasizing certain words.

Peter: "Sean eats DICKS!"

Nancy and Laura enter the scene, but that doesn't stop Peter. He knows that they can hear him.

Peter: "He's a dick eater! Plain and simple, he eats ALL the dicks."

Nancy steps into their circle.

Nancy: "Gentleman!"

In this sequence, our film camera captures Nancy and Laura walking up behind our trio of executives. Tom's back is slightly turned to the girls; he immediately jumps to his feet to acknowledge their presence. John and Peter are a little slower to stand.

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

Tom somewhat stumbles as he backs away from his chair.

Tom: "Nice to meet you, Laura. Glad to have you onboard."

John doesn't say anything. Peter, more or less, nods his head. Viewers will get a sense that John doesn't spend much time with subordinates at this level, and that Peter thinks he's entitled to an equal amount of clout.

Nancy: "Tom, I'll have to know that Laura will be managing the Heatherton account."

Tom: "Great!"

Tom has more to say, but pauses to give Laura some personal space. She's standing behind his chair, and just to the left of Nancy. Her body language is difficult to read.

Tom: "Laura, the Heatherton account was my first responsibility when I joined the organization. After you get acclimated, message me through the executive channel, and I'll send you their financial summary."

Laura: "Thank you, I appreciate that."

Tom's words are slightly staggard, somewhat caught off guard by Laura's good looks. He feels compelled to keep talking as a means to continue eye contact.

Tom: "You'll see Dan Heatherton's name on the account file, but Maggie Streith is the point of contact."

Nancy steps in as she can see that Tom is getting a tad bit smitten with Laura.

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

Nancy smiles at Tom, as if she knew Laura would have this effect on him. And in that split second, Peter seizes the opportunity to speak his mind.

Peter: "Old man Heatherton... he's not still alive, is he?"

Tom: "Dan, yes... still alive."

Peter: "The guy must be a hundred years old."

Tom: "He is! He's exactly 100 years old. Maggie said they celebrated his birthday over at the French restaurant you like so much."

Peter: "Éphémère?"

Tom: "That's the one."

Nancy shakes her head as if she knows that Peter is just going to take over the conversation and be insufferable.

Peter: "Yep, old Dan the man; plenty of stories about that guy. Someone told me he would golf 18 holes over at the Chesterfield, and then sneak over to the lady's country club and pretend to be a tennis instructor."

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?"

Nancy and Laura turn and begin walking back towards the 9th floor lobby doors. For the first time, our film camera, our viewers, and the executive team will see a full body length shot of Laura walking away... which is nothing short of extreme. So much in fact, Tom forces himself to look away. His face becomes flush as if maybe he was staring at Laura's body a little too long. Our film camera goes back and forth between Tom's expression, and a slow zooming spectrum of Laura's backside and walking style.

The fashion in which Laura's lower body is displayed in her silver dress pants is unparallel. Her slacks (below the knee) loosely fan out around her grey suede boots. Her thighs stretch the material beyond its intended tolerance. The muscles in her hamstrings are so magnanimous, you can literally see the treads within the inseam pulsate with every step she takes. Meanwhile, her upper body is insanely small, making her ass look even bigger than it already is. Mind you, there's not an ounce of fat on this woman, but she is wickedly disproportionate. Simply put, her body is a paradox.

Our film camera reverts back to Peter, who's looking at John and Tom (frozen in their shoes).

Peter: "Is anyone going to say anything!"

Tom continues to look in the direction of where Laura was, even though she's long since left the office. He's clearly spellbound. Peter, on the other hand continues to voice his sentiments.

Peter: "Oh, come on! Really? No one is going to say anything? I'll be honest, I'm struggling to find the right words to describe that."

Peter looks at Tom.

Peter: "What do they call the back of the train? Is it called the, caboose? Is that what I'm thinking of?"

Tom, still stunned, doesn't acknowledge what Peter is saying. John just walks away, talking under his breath.

John: "Jesus..."

Tom looks off into the abyss, Peter keeps ranting.

Peter: "I can honestly say I've never seen anything... even remotely like that."

This scene ends as Nancy and Laura are midway down the elevator to their floor. Our film camera captures Laura trying to summarize her thoughts about the men upstairs.

Laura: "That was interesting."

Nancy: "How so?"

Laura: "Well... starting with the 1970's décor."

Nancy: "Oh, don't even get me started... God awful furniture... they spent a fortune on that crap!"

Laura: "Yeah, I wasn't expecting that. You would just automatically think... guys wearing \$5000 suits would have a modern-day looking office."

Nancy: "You would think!"

Laura: "And John, oh my God, he must be 7 feet tall!"

Nancy: "Hahaha, I don't think he's that tall, but if you couldn't tell, he is the CEO."

Laura: "Yeah, no, I picked up on that right away."

Nancy: "What did you think about the other two?"

Laura: "Tom seems nice... surprisingly young."

Nancy: "He's 29."

Laura: "Wow... ok!"

The bell on the elevator rings when they get back down to the 4th floor.

Laura: Peter is... certainly outspoken... one might say.

Nancy turns and faces Laura.

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

The elevator door opens, our film camera captures Nancy and Laura walking out. Laura was caught off guard by Nancy's response (eyes wide from that disclosure).

Scene over

Scene 4

Scenario – Tom and Peter are at Dion's Pub later that day: For this shot, we'll utilize different film camera positions. 1) Viewers will see Tom and Peter at an angle, waist high, as they sit at the far end corner of the bar. 2) Over Peter's shoulder towards the entrance to the bar to capture anyone that walks in. 3) From the perspective of the bartender. The scene begins with Peter shaking his head; his personality tends to lead off each sentence with a chuckle.

Peter: "Do you think she's like a power lifter or something? It's not like she was born that way. I almost want to see a picture of her mom to see if its genetic."

Tom looks at Peter, bewildered at his immaturity.

Tom: "Quit obsessing!"

Peter: "John looked like a deer in headlights when she walked out of the room."

Peter takes a sip of Jameson. Viewers can tell that he's pondering heavily over the situation earlier at work, and it somehow parlays into a side-note type of thought.

Peter: "I don't know why, but I can't visualize John fucking. You know what I mean?"

Tom: "No, I don't know what you mean."

Peter: "Maybe visualize is the wrong word, but you know how you can look at a guy and tell that he fucks?"

Tom: "No, I can't... my mind doesn't go to places like that."

Peter points to a man at the far side of the bar.

Peter: "How about him?"

Tom shaking his head.

Tom: "I'm not playing this game with you."

Peter being himself, he can't let it go.

Peter: "There's no way that guy fucks. You can just look at him and tell. And I bet women can look at a guy like that and tell."

Peter takes another sip of his drink, and looks right at Tom.

Peter: "How about me? Do I look like a guy that fucks?"

Tom: "Oh, for the love of God."

Peter: "I'm serious! When a woman looks at me, do you think she automatically knows?"

Tom takes a sip of his Chablis.

Tom: "First of all, I've seen you have sex with a woman, which is still an image I'm trying to get out of my head. Secondly, and I've told you this before, women are strangely attracted to you. The key word

being, strangely! I think it's safe to say that women sleep with you against their better judgement. So, maybe by that rationale, women probably view you as someone capable of having sex."

Peter: "I ask you a simple question, and you give me a complicated answer like that. You could have just said, yes!"

Tom: "No, no I can't. When it comes to you, I have to preface all of my answers, otherwise you'll go into this whole analogy behind what people should or shouldn't do behind closed doors."

Peter looks appalled and insulted.

Peter: "You know.... I was just about to say that you look like a guy that fucks. But now I'm taking it back. So there!"

Tom: "Thank you... thank you for taking it back."

Peter talks with his Jameson up to his lips.

Peter: "I try to talk to you about real-life stuff, and you get all defensive."

There's a lengthy pause as Peter orders another round of drinks. The subject somewhat changes.

Peter: "I'm envious of John; he goes home right after work, puts his feet up, and Glenda doesn't say a word to him. In fact, she knows better than to talk to him."

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!"

Peter takes another drink.

Peter: "Well 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 5000sq feet."

Peter takes another sip.

Peter: "Anyway, he and I closed this deal last year, and then afterwards we went over to his place. It was around the holidays, so it was all decorated and festive looking."

This is a flashback scenario where the footage is slightly grey to give it some age. Viewers will see the footage bounce back and forth between John's home from the previous year, and the present moment at the bar.

Peter: "So we walk in, John walks past the kitchen, but then he backs up when he sees Glenda emerge from the pantry. And he just starts staring at her."

Tom: "What was she doing?"

Peter: "I don't know... I think she was making Christmas cookies, but that's not the point. It was almost as if he was daring her to say something."

Tom: "Are you sure you weren't reading too far into it?"

Peter: "I'm telling you... it was uncomfortable."

Tom: "Ok, so then what happened."

Peter: "Alright, so, John and I go out on the balcony. And let me tell you, this is some balcony; view of the city... forget about it... beyond anything I've ever seen. Anyway, we're out there firing up a couple cigars, talking about the deal we closed earlier that day."

Tom interrupts Peter.

Tom: "Since when did you start smoking cigars?"

Peter, somewhat perturbed.

Peter: "The guys' my fucking boss. What am I going to do? Not smoke a cigar?"

Tom, somewhat apologetic.

Tom: "No, you're right. Understood."

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

Tom: "I apologize, continue with your story."

Peter takes a deep breath.

Peter: "We're out on the balcony talking about this-that-and the other thing. And then all of the sudden, John gets distracted by something that he hears going on inside of the apartment. Mind you, we're outside with the sliding glass door shut."

Footage is from John's balcony. He cuts Peter off mid-sentence.

John: "Do you hear that?"

Peter: "Hear what?"

John opens and then closes the sliding glass door.

John: "That humming noise. You don't hear that?"

Footage returns to the bar.

Tom: "What was it... what was the noise?"

Peter: "It was Glenda in the kitchen humming Christmas carols."

Footage is from John's balcony. He opens the glass door and yells at his wife.

John: "GLENDA!"

Footage returns to the bar.

Tom: "Like, for real, yelling?"

Peter: "Like a lion roaring."

Tom: "That's sooo not like him."

Peter: "Right! That's what I'm saying... he's a different person at home."

Tom: "So what happened after that?"

Peter: "John flipped out... that's what happened!"

The footage shifts back to John's apartment.

John: "Hang tight, let me go in there and straighten her out."

Peter looks through the glass balcony door and watches John sternly walk into the kitchen. The humming stops immediately, followed by John's ferocious gratitude.

John: "THANK YOU!"

Footage returns to the bar.

Peter: "One minute she's humming Silent Night, the next minute it's dead quiet."

Tom: "Silent Night! No wonder John flipped out! That's like the creepiest of all Christmas music."

Peter: "Yeah, but I'm telling you, it wasn't the song. It could have been any song, and he would have reacted the same way."

Footage returns to the balcony.

John: "I bought her those wireless earbuds that everyone's been talking about; you know... the new ones."

Peter: "Yeah, Jamboree."

John: "I figure that way she can listen to her music and pod casts without bothering me. But then yesterday when I got home, I hear that same humming noise."

John takes a puff of his cigar.

John: "I didn't even realize it was her. I hear that noise... I thought it was coming from the furnace."

Peter: "Hahaha, 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 airducts."

Peter: "Hahaha."

John takes a puff of his cigar and somewhat changes the subject.

John: "I'm having Becka's old room converted into a parlor."

Peter: "Really?"

John: "Yep. It's going to have a full-size bar, pool table, and TVs in every corner... the whole thing."

Peter: "No kidding?"

John: "It's going to be soundproof as well. Instead of insulation, they're going to put this special sound deadening material between the walls."

Peter: "Hahaha, come on John... Glenda's humming can't be that bad."

John: "I'm serious, I'll show you the plans. I'm also going to have a red light installed outside of the parlor door."

Peter: "Red light... what do you mean?"

John: "When the light is on, she's going to know not to bother me."

Peter: "Hahaha."

John: "I'm dead serious."

Peter: "Hahaha, John... come on! That's what drug dealers do. They put a red bulb in the porch light that tells everyone that they're currently out of drugs and not open for business. Hahaha."

John: "Yep, that's exactly what I want. I got nothing, don't want nothing, don't come by, no need to even knock on the door."

Footage from the bar.

Tom: "He wasn't serious..."

Peter: "He showed me the plans; full blown architectural drawings."

Tom: "Wow, I didn't realize he was that introverted."

Brief pause.

Tom: "He's not like that... at all... around office."

Peter: "Yeah, I know. But I'm telling you, he shuts it down cold when he goes home. I could only wish to have that kind of home life."

Tom: "Hahaha, with your wife? Please! That's never going to happen."

Peter: "If everyone had a wife like John's, man-o-man, life would be easy. And she's fucking good looking!"

Tom: "Very attractive woman, no doubt."

Peter and Tom take a few sips of their drinks and ponder over their discussion.

Peter: "I guess technically, Glenda is your aunt, no?"

Tom: "By marriage, yes. When my father passed away, she came over to the house a few times, brought over some food and stuff. But... I didn't know her that well."

Peter: "It seems odd to me that you work here, but yet you don't have a personal relationship with John."

Tom: "I think it's safe to say that John doesn't have a personal relationship with anyone."

Peter: "True, but I'm saying that I'm closer to him than you are, and I'm not related at all."

Tom: "Yes, but that's because you're financial 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: "Good point."

Peter takes another sip, thinking about John's hierarchy of relationships.

Peter: "Yeah, why is it that they don't invite me to their golf outings?"

Tom: "Well, for one, you don't know how to play golf."

Peter takes offence.

Peter: "Here we go again... I'm trying to talk to you about relationships, you go and point out things that don't have anything to do with the conversation."

Peter takes a sip... still somewhat agitated.

Peter: "You've never seen me golf, so why would you even say that?"

Tom: "Would it be wrong if I were to bring up that off-site work party we had at Top Golf?"

Peter doesn't respond.

Tom: "Seriously, at this exact moment... would it be wrong for me to bring up that incident?"

Peter doesn't respond.

Tom: "The... incident where the club flew out of your hand..."

Peter: "See, that's the difference between you and I... right there! I don't bring up stuff like that."

As Tom and Peter banter back and forth, in walks Nancy and Laura. Peter backhands Tom on the arm.

Peter: "Holy shit! Look!"

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

Our film camera captures Nancy and Laura grabbing a high-top table at the far end of the bar.

Tom: "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 here at HDM... ensure that everyone is an alcoholic, day one!"

Tom: "Hahaha. By the way, how is your relationship with Nancy nowadays?"

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

Tom takes a sip of his Chablis.

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

Peter: "You talking about the time I pulled her pants down in the driveway, and 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 to Alex's house, approximately 4 years ago, Peter is narrating.

Peter: "Alex works with us on the 9th floor. He just bought a house over in Lindenhurst. When Nancy showed up to the party, she was already drunk. She was struggling to get this house warming gift out of the trunk of the car. I basically walked up behind her and pulled her leggings down when she wasn't expecting it. Mind you, we were having an affair at the time, but you wouldn't know it by the way she reacted. Long story short, I was jokingly pulling on her pant leg, and she accidentally fell into the trunk. Ok, fine, I pushed her into the trunk, but the trunk lid did close on accident."

Footage shows Nancy kicking and screaming from inside the trunk, and Peter yelling at her to pull on the inside safety trunk release. Eventually the trunk pops open, and out jumps Nancy with a baseball bat in her hand. Flash forward to the bar.

Tom: "Where did she get the bat from?"

Peter: "It was in the trunk! It was her old man's bat."

Tom: "God only knows what he used it for."

Peter: "Oh, I think we know what he used it for."

Tom: "Yeah, right!"

Peter: "Remember meeting him at that fundraiser? He definitely looks like he's cracked a few heads in his day."

Tom: "Hahaha, all the more reason not to be messing with his daughter."

Flash back to a speculative moment, by where Nancy's father is portrayed as a thug. Viewers see Nancy's father pull the bat from the trunk and slam the lid. There's a man kneeling on the ground behind the car, hands tied behind his back and duct tape over his mouth. He looks up in fear, Nancy's father towering above, dark eyes, grey hair slicked straight back. There's a whimper and grouse as the bat swings at his head.

Flash forward to the bar before the bat makes contact.

Tom: "It's a wonder you're even sitting here right now."

Peter: "Oh, if she would have told her old man about me... forget about it."

Tom: "No, I'm talking about Nancy! She was seriously trying to kill you."

Flashback to Alex's party; Nancy chasing Peter through the house with the baseball bat.

Peter: "Things escalated quickly."

Flash forward to the bar, Tom takes another sip of his Chablis.

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. All of that furniture, and all of those appliances were brand new."

Flashback to Alex's party; Nancy swinging the bat, busted glass, red wine everywhere, massive dent in the refrigerator door.

Tom: "It was literally a house warming party."

Peter: "Talk about a warm reception, huh?"

Tom and Peter take another sip.

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

Flashback to Alex's party. Multiple cop cars screeching into the driveway with blue lights flashing. The police come barreling into the house and tackle Nancy to the floor.

Flash forward to the bar.

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

Peter: "Yeah, that was the problem. Everyone in the house told the cops that I attacked her, and that she was just defending herself. I don't know if you remember, but I was in handcuffs in the back of the cruiser."

Tom: "Oh, I definitely remember. I was on the phone with Jimmy... certain you were going to need an attorney."

Peter: "The entire party was standing outside of the cruiser, banging on the window, telling me what a piece of shit I am. I had no choice but to tell the cops about the affair. It was the only way to make sense of the whole thing. And of course, they had to go and ask her about it in front of everyone."

Tom: "They should have been way more discreet about that. I really felt bad for Nancy."

Slight pause.

Tom: "Her sister-in-law was there, Brian... Pam!"

Peter: "Don't remind me... they couldn't wait to get on the phone with Nancy's husband. Some friends."

Tom and Peter take another sip.

Peter: "Be that as it may, the second Nancy admitted to the affair, the cops let me go."

Peter chugs back the rest of his Jameson, and slides the glass to the side as if to indicate that he's done drinking for the evening.

Peter: "I gotta go. Unlike John, my old lady is not going to be quiet when I get home."

Peter offers to pay, but Tom stops him.

Tom: "I got this one. You paid the last one. Go ahead and roll."

Peter fist bumps Tom, and then turns to exit his bar stool. Our film camera continues to focus on Tom, who is now gazing across the bar at Nancy and Laura.

Scene over

Scene 5

Scenario – This shot takes place at the Maraschino Restaurant during lunch the following day. Tom discusses the Heatherton account with John and Peter.

Tom: “Pete, I highlighted a recent order from Heatherton Law Firm. I want you to take a look at it before I send it over to Alex.”

Peter: “Yeah, I saw it. It’s 90k, you don’t need my approval.”

Tom: “It’s not the dollar figure. They consistently spend 30k a month with us, and now suddenly they want to triple their ad budget for a 3-month period of time. It’s a law firm, so it’s not like they have some kind of seasonal rush of business. There are obvious changes going on within their organisation, the question is whether we are properly capitalizing on this opportunity.”

Peter: “I see what you’re saying. But it could be anything. Maybe they’re trying to land a new account, and they want to boost their image to help drive the decision-making process.”

Tom: “Or... maybe they’re bringing on new partners, and if that’s the case, we need to encourage them to update their commercial. Get these new faces out in circulation.”

John: “I’m all for pitching a new commercial to them, but let’s lock down the air time first. If they’re willing to spend an extra \$60k, they need to be on a 1-year contract. And if they’re willing to sign a two-year contract, I’ll give them all the spots they want for the next quarter.”

Tom: “If they’re business is truly expanding; they need to bring their advertising portfolio up to a reasonable standard. We have all that new equipment downstairs doing nothing. We could bundle up a deal, to include a new high tech commercial within 5% of their current budget.”

John: “Tom, I hear what you’re saying, but I don’t want to give Heatherton any reason to shop around. Get a 2-year deal signed first. Or a 1-year deal, I don’t care. In fact, have Nancy hand deliver a hard copy proposal; just in case Dan needs to sign off on it himself.”

Peter jumps back into the conversation with his usual rhetoric.

Peter: “I have an idea; let’s send the new girl over there to deliver the proposal. You know old man Heatherton would love that.”

John, ever so slightly adjusts his chair to face Peter. By the look on John’s face, he does not find it funny.

Peter: “What...”

Tom reels the conversation back in.

Tom: “John, with all due respect, I don’t think Dan Henderson is engaged with any of the day-to-day operations. Maggie runs that show.”

John: “Fine, then have her sign the contract. Afterwards, have Alex and Nancy put on a demo and see if she’ll bite on a new commercial.”

Tom: "Seriously? How's that going to look? Thanks for spending 90K with us, and... oh, by the way, give us another 120K, and we'll replace your out-dated commercial!"

John: "I don't care how it looks. They know their commercial is outdated, and they're not blind to how much it's going to cost to replace it."

There's a slight pause as John asks for the check.

John: "Again, so there's no confusion... the contract gets signed first."

John turns his attention to Peter.

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

And typical of Peter, he does that thing where he laughs before he speaks.

Peter: "Hahaha... I agree, let's get the contract signed first. But I'm not joking when I say that we should send the new girl over there for a meet & greet. She is in fact the PM for this account, so they're gonna meet her eventually. Might as well let old man Heatherton have a peek at her right now while he's still alive. You never know... something like that could make all the difference."

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

John: "I'll see you two back at 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. And you're a numbers guy, so you know that."

Tom: "Heatherton has been in business for 75 years; they probably have a hundred million in assets. The right marketing approach for any law firm is 15%... minimum! And now that Maggie's in charge, supposedly, they're going to take over the top floor in their building. Don't you find that just a little bit peculiar? Isn't that the tell-tail sign of a business expansion... maybe even a merger?"

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 see this opportunity, and capitalize on it. And 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. Just let Alex handle it, he knows what he's doing... everything will be fine. You and I have bigger fish to fry. Let's concentrate on landing new clients."

Tom stands up from the table, and catches Peter off guard.

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

Peter almost pulls the table cloth off of the table.

Peter: "WHAT?"

Tom: "Nancy is out today, she asked me to show Laura how to pull reports. No big deal."

Peter: "No big deal... it's a big deal to me! You meeting her in our conference room?"

Tom: "Yes."

Peter: "What time?"

Tom: "As soon as we get back."

Peter moves closer to Tom and lowers his voice.

Peter: "Alright... here's the plan. First, we remove all of the office chairs from the conference room, that way she has to stand the whole time. Second, stream the report to the main monitor so that she has to stand with her back to us when you run the logs. I'll just be in the background acting like I'm doing something important."

Tom responds immediately.

Tom: "First of all, you're not going to be in the conference room creeping her out. Secondly, everything you just said is an HR violation... to the nth degree."

Peter: "You know what? You gotta thing for her, and you're trying to put your pervy guilt onto me."

Footage fades out as Tom and Peter exit the restaurant, and then resumes at the point where Laura enters the 9th floor office suite. Our film camera will start out with a still profile of Tom sitting at the conference table, which is an office to itself, encased in glass. Laura is seen rounding the 9th floor reception area, wearing a burgundy skirt and a cream colored mini jacket. For a split second, our film camera zooms in on her figure from the waist down. Tom looks up momentarily as she scoots in between two chairs, and then sits in the chair directly opposite of him. Tom immediately looks down at his laptop; it's clear to the viewers that he's overly cautious about staring.

Laura: "Is it ok if I sit here?"

Tom: "Yes, sit there, it's fine."

There's a slight delay as Tom once again looks up at Laura and then quickly looks down at his laptop. Viewers will hear Tom's thoughts as he tells himself to just act normal.

Tom: "Laura, it looks like Heatherton wants to increase their airtime and broadcast to a larger audience for the next 90 days. It's going to be your job to plan their commercial spots, and then present them with a calendar that illustrates their target demographics."

Laura gets ready to say something, but then starts fiddling with her laptop and somewhat talking under her breath.

Laura: "Ugh, I just had the account pulled up, and now I can't find it. I told Nancy there's something wrong with this laptop."

There's additional silence, and then murmuring on Laura's part.

Laura: "Stupid thing."

Tom: "Here, let me take a look."

Laura slides her laptop over to Tom, and sits back uncomfortably. Within just a few seconds, Tom is able to access Laura's project portal (password protected). Tom hands the laptop back to Laura.

Tom: "Just enter your password."

Laura: "That's the problem. It's not accepting my password."

At this point, Tom is just a smidgeon perturbed.

Tom: "Just enter the original password that Nancy gave you."

Laura becomes defensive.

Laura: "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!"

The conversation becomes a little uneasy.

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

Tom giggles a little bit, part of his own defence mechanism. From there he stands up, walks over to Laura side of the conference table, and then pulls up a chair beside her.

Tom: "Ok, ok, let's start over. Is it alright if I open your Outlook and check your email?"

Laura: "Sure, of course."

Tom's eyes shift back and forth rather quickly, then looks 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 on to this project space."

Tom is unsettled as to why Laura isn't further acclimated with her projects. He puts her laptop in front of her and points out the email from Nancy with the subject line: Project Space User Name and Password. The email itself is marked unread. He continues to drive her laptop while she watches.

Tom: "Again, I'm not trying to put you on the spot, but if I open this email from Nancy, all I have to do is copy the password, click on the project space app, and paste it. The project tool gives you the option to save the original password, or create a new one. From there, you just open the accounts link, and there's the Heatherton portfolio."

Laura crosses her arms and doesn't say anything. Tom continues to look conflicted as to why Laura doesn't understand these basic operating skills.

Tom: "Nancy should have gone over all of this. I'm not really sure what..."

Before Tom can finish his sentence, Laura catapults from her seat and grabs the laptop. She's clearly embarrassed and reluctant to add reasoning behind her behavior.

Laura: "I'm sorry I asked for your help."

Laura aggressively shuts the laptop, and rudely turns her back on Tom. She navigates around the coffee table chairs while our film camera captures the utter surprise on Tom's face; his expression is conflicted between "What did I do?" vs. "What the fuck!"

Tom: "Where are you going?"

Laura doesn't respond. Our film camera focuses on the side of her body as she struggles to pivot past the chair she was sitting in. Bewildered and angry, Tom springs to his feet and backs up to the conference room window. In doing so, his chair scootches back, making it a little more difficult for Laura to pass by. Our film camera will zoom in on her lower backside as she turns sideways, moving up onto the balls of her feet in order for her butt to clear Tom's chair. She ever so cautiously tries not to knock over the chair that is now teetering on two legs. Tom is befuddled. His personality and position within the organization would never allow this kind of insubordination. But the fact is, he's spellbound over her. As Laura walks away from the conference room, it's not clear if she understands the effect she has on Tom. Our film camera follows Laura until she reaches the reception area. Meanwhile, Tom's footing and physical balance is completely off. His hands are flailing, and it almost looks like he's grabbing his neck, as if to check his blood pressure.

Scene over.

Scene 6

Scenario – Later that same afternoon, Tom and Peter are back at Dion's bar. Peter inquires about the meeting Tom had with Laura.

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

Tom: "Yeah... wasn't the most productive meeting."

Peter: "What did you do to scare her off?"

Tom: "I don't want to talk about it."

Peter: "Oh! We're talking about it!"

Tom takes a sip of his Chablis. He lowers and then lifts his head.

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

Peter: "Hahaha, so what are you saying... new girl isn't up to your intellectual standards?"

Tom: "It's not that..."

Tom takes another sip.

Tom: "We need seasoned, experienced professionals in order to take this company to the next level. Laura graduated college a year ago; how did that not just jump off the page when Alex interviewed her?"

Peter: "How do you know she graduated a year ago?"

Tom: "I looked at her resume."

Peter: "Please tell me you didn't look at her LinkedIn profile."

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

Peter face takes on a less than humorous quirk.

Peter: "Are you sure that's it? Are you sure there isn't a skosh of attraction going on there?"

Tom: "No!"

Peter takes a sip of his Jameson, pondering over whether he believes Tom.

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."

There's a moment of silence as Tom and Peter sip their drinks and reflect over the discussion. Tom then changes the subject.

Tom: "By the way, where have you been all afternoon?"

Peter: "I was at the dentist."

Tom: "Akoshi was looking for you."

Peter: "For what?"

Tom: "He needed a signature or something. I told him you were at the 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 takes another sip of his Jameson.

Peter: "You won't catch me in a strip joint these days? They got some new law where there has to be a certain amount of lighting; fire code or some bullshit. I want the place to be dark when I go in there, so no one can see me."

Tom starts giggling a little.

Tom: "Now that we're on the subject, I seem to remember Alex telling me that you got banned from that place over on 33rd?"

Peter: "Yeah, because they turned the lights up!"

Tom laughs a little harder. Drinks are kicking in.

Tom: "Hahaha... what did you do?"

Peter: "That was a long time ago, we don't need to rehash that."

Tom: "How long ago?"

Peter: "Like, a few months ago."

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

Peter: "First of all, I was stressed out. Can I say that?"

Tom: "Sure, you can say that."

Peter: "It was a Monday; I was on my way to the office when I noticed that my kid left a pack of Twizzlers in the back seat. Anyway... I stuck them 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."

Peter pauses to take a sip of Jameson, and talking as if this is some typical day in his life.

Peter: "I had a lot going on that morning, clients bitching and whatnot, so I popped over to see some titties for lunch. 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 in me."

Tom: "No, no, no. What did you do?"

Peter: "I umm... you know... I had one of the Twizzlers..."

Tom: "Hold on, hold on, hold on. You were upstairs getting a lap dance, and you were eating Twizzlers?"

Peter: "You keep cutting me off while I'm trying to explain what happened."

Tom: "Yeah, because you're not being forthcoming!"

Peter begins talking much slower.

Peter: "I took one of the Twizzlers out of the pack... 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, i.e, in and out gesture.

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

Peter: "It just sort of... slipped in there."

Tom is flummoxed, eyes wide open like an ostrich. He puts both hands over his face and shakes his head. Peter continues to mimic the back-and-forth motion. For a split-second Tom looks up at Peter and laughs, but then puts his hands right back over his face again. He then reaches for his glass of Chablis, somewhat embarrassed, yet highly entertained.

Tom: "You know what's really amazing? It's that you are somehow very successful, amidst the horrible... horrible things you do."

Tom takes another drink

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

Peter looks up at the entrance to the restaurant, and suddenly his demeanor changes.

Peter: "Fuck! Here we go again."

Tom looks up, it's Nancy and Laura entering the bar.

Peter: "AND... She's here with her husband, great!"

Tom notices that it's not just Nancy's husband, but there's another guy standing just behind Laura. He moves his shoulders around, and squints to better see the man Laura is with.

Tom: "Looks like a double date."

Peter looks surprised by the man that Laura is with.

Peter: "New girl is with that guy?"

Tom begins peeking his head up and jostling about to get a better look.

Tom: "I think that's her fiancé."

Peter looks at Tom in a peculiar way.

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: "Oh please, don't act like you don't read the message board. You knew she was engaged."

As Tom and Peter continue evaluating Laura's future husband, the bartender brings them a new round of drinks.

Tom: "Nancy told me he works at a glass shop in Brooklyn. I can't think of the name of it."

Peter: "Auto glass?"

Tom: "No, no. Windows and doors."

Peter: "Murphy's?"

Tom: "That's it. Yep."

Our film camera is aimed in the direction of Nancy, Laura, and the two men they are with. The four of them take a high-top table near the receptionist podium. Peter immediately notices what Laura is wearing.

Peter: "Holy mother of God! She wearing jeans. Look! Look! Look!"

Tom can't resist not to look.

Peter: "Unbelievable! I have honestly never seen anything like that. And where did she even buy those jeans?"

Tom (Chablis number 4) is equally fascinated, and just gives in to talking about it.

Tom: "Yeah... it's... uh...out there."

Though not intoxicated, per se, Peter begins talking theoretical.

Peter: "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: "Hahaha, what are you talking about?"

Peter: "I want to see how much denim material they pull off of the shelves for that enormous ass of hers. And those aren't stretchy jeans. That's regular denim. Where would you even find that anymore?"

Peter takes another drink and continues to ramble.

Peter: "And what about the person that actually sowed those jeans together. I want to see the prototype they used. And did they even question the design. I'm imagining some cardboard template laid out on a table and everyone standing around just staring at it. Like, scratching their heads."

Tom: "They could very well be custom made jeans."

Peter: "Hahaha, not in this country. That much denim would set you back 3-400 dollars."

Tom: "No... you can design your own jeans online nowadays, and they'll send the measurements to a factory in China. In fact, it cost less than buying jeans in a retail store."

Peter: "No kidding? I didn't know that."

Tom: "Yep, seems to be the new normal. Why try on clothes at a department store, when you can try them on in the privacy of your own home. If they don't fit, toss them in a return bag and send them back."

Peter: "Yeah, but answer me this. If you're the Chinese woman working in the factory, and you get her 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 sowing those jeans."

Tom: "Hahaha. 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."

Tom finishes his glass of Chablis.

Tom: "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 weird genetics where the lower half is far more substantial than the upper half. But hey, it's works. It's got us looking."

Peter takes another swig.

Peter: "Could you imagine banging her from behind. You wouldn't even see her... you'd just see ass."

Peter finishes his drink.

Peter: "It hurts my head just thinking about it."

Peter starts looking around.

Peter: "I think I'm gonna call it a day."

Peter signals for the bartender.

Peter: "Shit, there's no way I can walk out without Nancy's husband making eye contact with me. I think I'm going to escape out the kitchen."

Without much warning, Peter gets up off of his stool and ducks underneath the bar slab. From there, he darts for the opening into the kitchen. Our film camera turns towards Tom, who is still staring in Laura direction, but the focus is on the Bartender (Clinton) looking bewildered on account of Peter's exit strategy.

Clinton: "Tom, what's going on, man! What's up with Pete?"

Tom basically waves Clinton away as he continues to look in Laura's direction.

Tom: "Don't worry about him. He's fine."

Clinton: "You want another glass of vino?"

Tom: "No, let me go ahead a pay up."

Scene over

Scene 7

Scenario – Our film camera moves from where Tom was sitting at the bar, over to the conversations between Nancy, her husband David, Laura, and her fiancé Jeremy. The footage will circumnavigate the high-top table, concentrating on Laura and Nancy, as they are doing most of the talking.

Laura: “I could have sworn I just saw Peter.”

Nancy: “I’m sure it was him. He and Tom are here almost every day.”

Laura starts laughing.

Laura: “No, no, I mean, I saw Peter like... run into the kitchen. Like he was running from the law.”

Nancy: “Oh, he’s just embarrassed to walk past us. I guarantee you he skipped out on his bill, and looking for the back exit. He’s a fucking cheapskate. And I’m sure he’ll steal something from the kitchen on his way out.”

Nancy whispers “Fucking asshole” under her breath.

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 is aware that Nancy and Peter had an affair a few years back, but he’s weak and awkward, engaging the conversation as if he’s not affected.

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.”

Laura giggles, and David shakes his head.

David: “I’m talking about the dinner party we went to... the tall woman.”

Nancy: “Vicky? That was sitting next to us? Hair up in a bun?”

David: “Yeah.”

Nancy: “No! She works in our accounting department.”

Laura continues to giggle at the banter. David begins to say something, but Nancy is still entangled with negative thoughts about Peter.

Nancy: “Peter’s wife is that big fat woman you were talking to at the charity fundraiser.”

David: “What... really?”

Nancy: "Yes, he goes home to that every night... if you can believe it."

Laura: "Love is a funny thing... hahaha."

Nancy: "Oh, it's funny alright."

Based on the way our film camera captures the facial expressions of Laura and Jeremy, they get a sense that Nancy is a wee bit consumed with Peter's life. All the while, Laura is still confused as to why Peter snuck out of the restaurant the way he did.

Laura: "Hold on a second, I still don't understand. Aside from the fact that Peter can probably afford any bill anywhere, how is he able to just walk out on his tab?"

Nancy: "Oh, I'm sure Tom paid his tab, but I've seen Peter walk out without paying many times."

Jeremy: "And like, no one says anything?"

Jeremy is imbedded with Brooklyn mannerisms. He follows up his question with a small story."

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's ill feelings towards Peter segues into the story behind Dion's Pub, and the reason Peter has certain liberties.

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 takes a sip of her Grey Goose and grapefruit.

Nancy: "A guy named Francesco Marcello opened this restaurant back in the 60's. He named it Dion's because he loved this musical group, Dion and the Bellmonds; hence the barbershop quartet musical theme you see in the bathrooms. Anyway, Francesco ran this place up until 3 years ago, and then sold it to a guy named, Gene Stegmaier.

Nancy takes another sip.

Nancy: "The black guy that you see coming in and out of the kitchen, that's Clinton Mays. He's been tending bar here for 10 years. And the guys who work on the 9th floor at our office, they've been coming here for 10 years. When Gene bought the place, he brought in his own staff, and Clinton was temporarily out of a job. 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, Gene wouldn't hire Clinton back. Instead, he just kept rotating in new bartenders, which only agitated the 9th floor guys even more."

Flashback to when Gene owned the restaurant. Our film camera circles the bar and we see the 9th floor guys drinking, complaining, and being rowdy. Nancy is narrating.

Nancy: "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."

Flash Forward to Nancy telling the story... as she orders another drink.

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."

Everyone takes a sip.

Nancy: "Anyway... the 9th floor guys were hammered, acting like assholes, and eventually a glass was broken or something like that, and the owner, Gene, lost his shit!"

Flashback to the chaos that ensued. There's yelling and screaming until 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?"

John doesn't respond. He just stands there and waits for the bartender to hand over the check. In the background, the 9th floor guys are chanting Clinton's name. Clin-ton, Clin-ton, Clin-ton! Gene blows his stack. His sights are mostly on Tom and Peter, as they always seem to be the instigators."

Gene: "I'm not hiring him back! GO FUCK YOURSELF!"

Flash forward to Nancy telling the story.

Nancy: "You could hear a pin drop when Gene tells the entire bar to go fuck themselves."

Flashback to the event. Gene confronts the bartender.

Gene: "Who fucking taught you how to bartend? You don't know when to cut people off?"

Joe the Bartender: "I was getting ready to cash them out... they ordered food... and we're backed up in the kitchen... what am I supposed to do?"

Gene: "Fuck their order! Tally up their drinks and give the check to Mr. Bigshot over there!"

Flash forward to Nancy telling the story.

Nancy: "Again, not a peep in the place."

Nancy can tell that Jeremy is consumed with the name, Big John!

Nancy: "He's 6'6, and 275lbs, even you look small next to him."

Jeremy is a tad bit sluggish when it comes to grasping the flow of Nancy's story.

Jeremy: "Oh, so that's why you call him, big john."

Nancy pauses for a second... just staring at Jeremy, trying to understand his mental challenge.

Nancy: "No, I call him big john because he has an enormous cock."

There's a quick moment of discomfort, but that doesn't stop Jeremy from defending himself.

Jeremy: "I'm 6'2, 245... that's not nothing."

Laura gets in Jeremy's face.

Laura: "Jeremy, no one cares. Let Nancy talk... shut up!"

Nancy: "Anyway, Big John pays the bill, and the 9th floor guys get up and leave the bar."

Nancy takes a sniff of her drink (as if something tastes different) but continues to drink it anyway.

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

Jeremy: "Whoa!"

Nancy takes another sip.

Jeremy: "A \$1000 tip to put up with a bunch of drunks... sounds like a pretty good deal to me."

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

Laura: "What happened?"

Nancy: "Well, the following day at work I get a call from the receptionist. I go out into the lobby and there's Joe the bartender. His actual name is Joe Bellata. In short, Gene fired him, and divided up his tip amongst the staff."

Laura: "No way!"

Nancy takes a bigger than usual sip of her drink.

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 Big John with that kind of thing. He runs a billion-dollar business; he leaves a \$1000 tip at every restaurant he goes to. 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 that Joe got fired."

Nancy orders another Grey Goose and grapefruit.

Nancy: "But then the strangest thing happened. Like a month later, board members were in the office having lunch upstairs. I handled the catering, so I was up there just making sure all of the food was delivered. Not that I was ease dropping, but one of the board members, Martin Stoltz, says..."

Flashback to the 9th floor board meeting.

Martin: "How come we're not eating downstairs at the restaurant?"

Tom: "They changed the menu."

Peter: "And you can't get a drink... they don't have a bartender."

Tom: "Hahaha..."

Flash forward to Nancy telling the story.

Nancy: "Those fuckers were laughing about joe losing his job."

Laura: "That's messed up."

Nancy: "Oh, I fucking flipped out. I kept thinking... what if that was me! What if suddenly I'm out of a job because of someone else's bullshit."

Laura: "Yeah, for sure..."

Everyone has a sip.

Nancy: "So anyway, as I was standing there all teary-eyed, this board member, Martin, walks over and consoles me. I'm not one to hold back, so I told him straight up... I said, the reason you can't have lunch down stairs is because the 9th floor guys are banned from the restaurant."

Jeremy: "Oh boy!"

Nancy: "Yeah, I literally told him everything, to include the situation with Clinton."

Laura: "What did he say?"

Flash back to Nancy and Martin having this conversation out in the 9th floor hallway.

Martin: "Do you want me to go back in the conference room and ring some necks?"

Nancy's eyes are watery, half crying, half smiling.

Nancy: "Could you just... tell those guys not to be assholes."

Martin: "Hahaha, I tell them that everyday... doesn't seem to make a difference."

There's a slight pause.

Martin: "Let me ask you a serious question. Do you believe that there is a resolution to this. In your heart of hearts, do you believe that there is a way to turn this around?"

Nancy tears turn to a questionable laugh.

Nancy: "I guess not. It just hurts my feelings when the executive team is being insensitive towards someone less fortunate."

Martin: "Would you like me to say something to them."

Nancy: "No, because it will just kill the mood. We're coming off our best quarter ever, I don't want to disrupt that."

Martin is somewhat laid-back, somewhat hard-to-read, and 100% New Yorker. He has a funny way of changing the subject.

Martin: "Some pretty nice bonuses went out this week, no?"

Nancy: "Yes... very nice... thank you."

Martin: "Don't thank me, you know where that money comes from."

Flash forward to Nancy telling the story.

Nancy: "He was right. Despite the fact that the 9th floor guys are jerks outside of work, they are the ones that earn the money, and they're very gracious when it comes to profit sharing."

Jeremy: "Not for nothing, but isn't there a question of morals here?"

Nancy: "Please! David and I just had our second child... I needed every penny of that bonus money."

Laura: "Hahaha, I hear that."

David jumps into the conversation for a second.

David: "Nan, tell them the best part!"

Nancy: "Oh, yeah-yeah."

Nancy takes another sip of her cocktail.

Nancy: "So, as I'm sort of picking up and putting the catered food away, I hear Martin talking to one of the other trustees, a guy named Sam Fulton. Sam's wife... just happens to be Debra Fulton, director of the US Department of Health."

Nancy takes another sip.

Nancy: "At the time, I didn't think much of it, but in the weeks that followed, this restaurant was cited multiple times for health violations."

Laura: "No way!"

Nancy: "Way... and eventually, the Health Department stepped in and shut this whole place down."

Jeremy: "That is some serious pull!"

Nancy: "Pssshh, tell me about it."

Nancy takes another sip.

Nancy: "Long story short, this battle with the health department dragged on until Stegmaier couldn't take it anymore. He basically walked away from the business, and this place stayed empty up until a few months ago."

Everyone orders another round of drinks.

Laura: "So, who owns this place now?"

Nancy: "Funny you should ask."

Nancy glass is empty, but she still tries to get one last sip out of it.

Nancy: "When Peter found out the business was for sale, he encouraged a guy named, Luis Sheffield to buy it."

A little moment of silence.

Nancy: "Anyone want to take a guess who Luis Sheffield is?"

Another moment of silence.

Nancy: "Well, he just happens to be Big John's son-in-law."

Laura: "Oh, for heaven's sake."

Nancy: "Yep. And so, to answer your question as to why Peter thinks his drinks should be free..."
Waitress brings the new round of drinks.

Nancy: "Not only did he convince Luis buy the restaurant, which was a deal of a lifetime, he convinced him to hire Clinton back to run the bar."

Laura: "Huh! Well... that certainly explains a lot."

Everyone takes a drink. Jeremy scratches his head.

Jeremy: "What about the other bartender?"

With a new Grey Goose and grapefruit pressed to her lips, Nancy laughs and points to the (front of the house) restaurant manager.

Nancy: "That... is Joe Bellata."

Laura: "Wait... what?"

Jeremy: "Hahaha... small world."

Laura looks at Jeremy with a strange quark.

Laura: "Jeremy, I'm not sure that's the correct analogy, but..."

Nancy: "It's the one, non-asshole thing, Peter did to right this situation. Mind you, a fucked-up situation... that he essentially caused. To which now he expects to be rewarded."

Everyone has a sip.

Nancy: "How do you quantify something like that? You know?"

Laura: "Yeah, that's a tough one."

Tom walks into the scene. Our film camera navigates around the table to capture everyone's acknowledgment. Well, everyone but Laura. She focuses in on her drink while everyone else says, hi.

Tom: "Hello everyone. David, how are you?"

David: "Good, good. I haven't seen you in a while."

Before Tom can respond to David, Nancy jumps in.

Nancy: "Tom, this is Laura's fiancé, Jeremy Legger."

Jeremy quickly grabs his napkin, wipes his hands, and rises to his feet. As he extends his hand to Tom, our film camera will capture Tom's expression as he engages the handshake. Tom's eyes appear to be that of intense curiosity. As they release hands, viewers will see Tom's eyes shift to the right and slightly downward in Laura's direction. Though he's looking at Laura, he's talking to Nancy. It's clear there is an unresolved issue.

Tom: "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."

Tom: "Jeremy, it is was good meeting you."

Jeremy: "The pleasure is all mine."

As Tom walks away, Laura's eyes follow him. Everyone at the table could feel his demeanor. At the same time, it opened an opportunity for Jeremy to point out Tom's overly perfect attire and somewhat rigged personality.

Jeremy: "That's some shirt he's wearing, no? Got the collar ironed up nice and pointy, hahaha."

No one response, so Jeremy keeps talking.

Jeremy: "We got a guy in the neighborhood called, Starchy Bunker... wears his shirts just like that, hahaha."

Laura: "That's enough, Jeremy, we get it."

Nancy downs the rest of her drink.

Nancy: "Tom is a good egg. A little uptight, but I can deal with him a whole lot better than Peter."

As the scene fades out, viewers will see Laura continue to look in Tom's direction as he exists the Pub. She doesn't look particularly thrilled.

Scene over

Scene 8

Scenario – We are back on the 9th floor at HDM. Focus will come into play Monday morning in Tom's office with respect to his meeting with Nancy. Our film camera will start out facing Tom as he sits at his desk, focused on his work when Nancy walks in. We'll then reposition the film camera at the back corner of the office, close to his office window in order to capture a certain amount of sunlight coming in. Nancy and Tom are sitting opposite of each other, but within the same frame of view. As Tom begins to speak, we'll bring the footage up close and pivot according to who's speaking between the two of them.

Tom: "Hey, I'm going to make this brief. I met with Laura last week to go over the Heatherton account. In short, she was completely unprepared. Furthermore, she's lacking basic organizational skills, along with limited computer operating abilities."

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: "She couldn't even sign into the client portal!"

The conversation intensifies.

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

Tom: "All 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... based on the budget you set. This is New York City; what do you think you're gonna get for 110k a year? And by the way, was Alex in this meeting you had... with MY employee?"

There's a slight pause as Tom tries to regroup. Instead of answering Nancy's question, he tries a more subtle approach to get his point across.

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

At this point, Nancy has calmed down a little, but not enough to give in.

Nancy: "Tom, I appreciate your concern... I really do, but it's a solid no. I run my department the way I run it."

Tom considers Nancy's point, but still not convinced that Laura is the right resource.

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."

Uncomfortable silence.

Nancy: "Are we done here?"

Nancy stands and begins walking out of Tom's office. At first, he doesn't say anything, but then feels compelled to try and have the last word. His tone is a little over-the-top.

Tom: "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."

Nancy turns again and walks out.

Scene over

Scene 8

Scenario – Back at Laura and Niki's apartment. Laura is just getting home from work, whereas it appears that Niki has been home all day on the couch. This is your classic studio apartment footage by where viewers will see Laura come through the front door, and then make a b-line straight to the kitchen. Niki, still in her pajamas, mutes the TV as Laura talks to her with the refrigerator door open. At this point we'll reposition our film camera to capture both girls in the same frame.

Niki: "How was your day?"

Laura responds from the kitchen.

Laura: "It was ok, I guess."

Laura exits the kitchen with a Cliff bar half in her mouth and plops down at the far end of the couch.

Niki: "What do you mean, you guess... what's going on?"

A little delay before Laura responds.

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."

Niki: "You're probably overthinking it."

Laura: "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 weird names... Bishaka and Naveeth, and one guy's name is actually Harikrishna."

Niki: "Hahaha, welcome to my world."

Laura: "Really? You gotta 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: "Well, if you ever do, check out the drapes... or whatever window dressing they have. They understand woven fabrics better than anyone."

There's a bit of silence before Niki changes the subject.

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

Laura: "No, what day is it?"

Niki jumps to her feet in excitement.

Niki: "It's exactly one month until your WEDDING!"

Laura smiles, Niki hollers with excitement. Laura moves to the middle cushion of the couch.

Niki: "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."

Niki flops back down on the couch. Laura starts wrestling with her phone, all the while crawling towards Niki and eventually laying across her lap. The viewers will see Laura's stretchy black pants and the mountain-size curvature of her bottom half hovering over Niki.

Laura: "Look, look!"

Laura holds the phone behind her head; Niki takes it out of her hand.

Niki: "Oh wow! That's is gorgeous!"

As Niki stares at the photo of the bouquet, Laura smiles and wiggles her fanny like a bunny rabbit.

Niki: "By the way, I'm not even trying to catch this bouquet. Make sure you throw it to someone else, like your cousin, Pam. She's definitely trying to get hitched."

Laura: "Whatever. You know you want to get married."

Niki: "Oh no I don't! I need my independence."

There's a slight pause as Niki hands the phone back.

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

Laura: "It's not like I'm moving to Alaska. Jeremy's house is like 2 miles from here, at best. And you know you can come over whenever you want."

Niki: "I know, I know. It's just going to be a little different not seeing this big rump walking around the apartment."

As Niki makes the comment about Laura's butt, she squeezes each butt cheek and makes a silly grunting noise.

Niki: "It's like kneading dough."

Niki continues to scrunch and form Laura's buttocks.

Laura: "Oh my God, stop. I'm like... super sensitive right now."

Niki looks at Laura with a quirk. The way Laura is laying, it almost looks like Niki is talking to the back of her head.

Niki: "What do you mean, sensitive?"

Laura: "Like horny."

Niki: "What! Eew!"

Laura: "Just then when you squeezed it, I could feel it around the other side."

Laura points towards her vagina

Laura: "Yeah, this side."

Niki is caught off guard by Laura's comment. She finds it funny and creepy, both of which lead her to pushing Laura off of her lap and onto the floor. She responds to Laura laughingly.

Niki: "You Freak! Hahahaha."

Laura begins to laugh as she falls onto the floor. From there she rolls over onto her back, and puts both hands between her legs. She then crosses her legs and flexes her thigh muscles; her hands mashed together. She continues to laugh with a semi frustrated look on her face.

Laura: "Ehhh. I wish I had a ruler or something to beat it out of me."

Niki starts laughing. Her mouth is wide open in disbelief over the words Laura is speaking.

Niki: "What are you talking about. A ruler?"

Laura: "You've never paddled yourself between the legs to make the horniness go away?"

Niki: "Hahaha... what? Ouch... no!"

Niki shakes her head in disbelief.

Niki: "Jesus, Laura! I thought you and Jeremy were having sex on the regular."

Laura continues to moan and groan humorously.

Laura: "We are. I'm just... worked up. My whole job thing, extra hours and whatnot. It stresses me out, and then I just want to fuck!"

Niki: "Girl, you are crazy..."

Laura rolls over onto her stomach laughing, and then finds her way to her feet. From there she begins walking awkwardly to the shower, all the while still giggling.

Laura: "I'm going to take shower."

Niki: "A cold shower, I hope."

There's a pause as Laura goes into the linen closet for a towel. Before closing the bathroom door behind her, she hears Niki say something.

Laura: "What?"

Niki: "I SAID... you better not even do what I think you're going to do in there."

Laura: "A woman has the right to do what she wants in the privacy of her own bathroom."

Niki: "Our bathroom!"

As Laura grabs the frame of the bathroom door, she looks back at Niki, somewhat giggling.

Laura: "Oh, by the way, thanks for installing that shower massager. I like that one setting; it's like a machine gun... if you know what I mean."

Niki puts her hands over her ears.

Scene over

Scene 10

Scenario – This scene takes place later that same week, 3-weeks before Laura's wedding. She and Tom are having lunch at Tucci's sandwich shop on West 33rd. They are sitting at a high-top table near a book shelf at the far side of the restaurant. Our film camera will start out with both characters in the frame, but then zoom in on Tom's eyes and forehead so that the viewers can hear his thoughts before he actually speaks, "Just say it. Don't let her distract you."

Our film camera pans out to expose Tom's mouth and actual words.

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

Laura: "Tom, I know I can do this. It was a rocky start, but I'm fully engaged. I just need a little guidance. I'm on calls every day with Maggie. Problem is, 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."

Conversation becomes a little heated.

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."

Tensions begin to rise.

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

Laura looks at Tom, trying to understand why he's being so obtuse.

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

Tom: "I would."

Laura's eyes open wide in disbelief. She jumps to her feet enraged, and yells loud enough for everyone in Tucci's to hear.

Laura: "Then what the fuck are we doing here!"

There's a moment of silence. Everyone in the deli is watching. Tom appears completely unaffected, and in fact becomes increasingly less sensitive.

Tom: "You said you overheard something that might be detrimental to the company; something you're not comfortable talking to your manager about. That's the only reason I'm here."

Laura throws her napkin on the floor, stands up, and steps very methodically towards Tom. She first glances around to see who all is listening... which is pretty much everyone, and then she bends down to whisper in his ear.

Laura: "That was important when I thought I had a career at HDM."

Slight pause. Laura continues whispering in Tom's ear.

Laura: "Go... fuck yourself."

Laura walks away. Her confidence level is suddenly and uncharacteristically high. And once again, viewers see Laura's ass bump into everything on her way out of the deli.

Later that same day at Dion's Pub. This will be our standard in-bar film camera perspective. It will appear that Peter has been at the bar waiting longer than usual for Tom to arrive.

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 and check out those new watches that just came in."

Peter grabs hold of his watch and twists it back and forth a few times.

Peter: "I'm tired of this piece of shit!"

There's a slight pause.

Tom: "I met up with Laura at Tucci's for lunch."

Peter: "What!"

Tom: "Yeah... she told me to go fuck myself."

Peter starts to choke, followed by laughing.

Tom: "You find that funny?"

Peter: "Hahaha, it's funny for two reasons, starting with the fact that I've never heard you use the word, fuck!"

Tom: "Her words, not mine."

Peter: "Yeah, and that's the other reason it's funny. You of all people... fraternizing with subordinates outside of the office. She had every right to say that to you."

Tom shaking his head.

Tom: "It wasn't that kind of thing."

Peter: "What other kind of thing could it have been? You're trying to bang this broad, and she clearly wants nothing to do with you."

Tom: "No, no, no... she was concerned over something she overheard... didn't know who to talk to."

Peter: "What she overheard? She's been working for us, for like... a month. What could she have possibly heard?"

Tom: "I tried to ask her that, but then the conversation went south."

Peter: "What did you say to her?"

Tom: "I told her that we need someone with more experience managing the Heatherton account."

Peter: "No, I mean... what did you say to make her tell you to go fuck yourself?"

Tom: "That was it."

Peter: "And she just flew off the handle like that?"

Tom: "Yep."

Tom takes a sip of his drink.

Peter: "You should have clubbed her over the head with one of those baguettes. You know the one's I'm talking about? The one's in the display case... they're like 3 feet long."

Tom: "Really? That's your advice?"

They both take a sip.

Peter: "I was gonna suggest firing her, but then I remembered... she doesn't work for you, hahaha."

Tom: "Lord knows... you wouldn't have fired her."

Peter: "Me? Hell no! Her big ass is that only thing we got going on in the entire organization."

Tom shakes his head; Peter changes the conversation.

Peter: "Why didn't you bring me back a sandwich from Tucci's? You know how much I like that place. You could have got me that pastrami on rye."

Another slight pause.

Peter: "Oh, and I heard you were over at Debbie's yesterday picking up a cake for whatever bullshit party they were having downstairs."

Tom looks up at the ceiling; his mind stuck on this dilemma with Laura. Peter continues his rant.

Peter: "Let me ask you something. When you were paying for that cake, did you not notice those individually wrapped chocolates behind the counter? And did you think to yourself, gee, I bet Pete would enjoy one of these. Did any of that cross your mind?"

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

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

Peter: "You're still hanging on to that?!"

Tom: "It just... doesn't make sense."

Peter: "I'm baffled by the fact that Heatherton requires management at all. Doesn't that account sort of... manage itself?"

Tom: "With all the changes going on over there? No, it needs attention."

Peter: "I thought Nancy was supposed to send the Docusign contract over there last week?"

Tom: "She did, but then Maggie kicked it back. And then Nancy and Laura went over there for a meeting... and the contract still didn't get signed."

Peter takes a sip of his drink.

Peter: "Do I need to step in?"

Tom: "Hahaha, no, it isn't that bad. Alex just needs to rewrite the contract to show the itemization that Maggie is looking for."

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

Peter: "Alright, look... I waited here long enough for you, and now I have to go."

Peter starts to walk away, but something within his demeanor and position of authority kicks in.

Peter: "Tom, with regards to Heatherton, get with Alex and make sure funds are set aside for whatever it takes to close that deal. I want it handled exactly the way you, John, and I discussed. I don't want to hear any more about delays."

Tom: "Understood."

Periodically, viewers will get a sense of Peter's corporate weight and state of mind. When it comes to business, he is very astute. As well, he has an uncanny ability to switch from being Tom's friend, to being Tom's boss, under any circumstance.

Scene Over.

Scene 11

Scenario – Takes place the next morning on the 4th floor. Laura is at her desk when a direct message from Tom pops up in the corner of her monitor. Our film camera will shoulder-surf Laura's perspective as she apprehensively clicks on the message.

Tom's DM: "I'm still available if you need someone to talk to."

Our film camera holds steady on Laura's hands as she hesitantly begins to type.

Laura's DM: "When and where?"

Again, our film camera holds steady while Laura debates on whether to hit send. Waiting... waiting... and... click! There's a substantial delay before Tom responds.

Tom's DM: "Donatello's (8th & Walnut) 12:45pm."

The scenario shifts forward to lunch hour; Tom is sitting at a two-person table at Donatello's restaurant when Laura walks in. Tom flashes the clock on his phone, our film camera zooms in (12:46pm). From there the focus will shift back and forth between the unacceptable look on Tom's face, and the skepticism on Laura's face. Though Tom is course, it doesn't stop his chivalry; clearly present in the way he stands up and pulls the chair out for Laura to sit. Again, Laura's eyes are locked on Tom in a very untrustworthy way. Within the same moment and frame of focus, a waitress appears. Based on the way our film camera is set up, we don't see the waitress's face, only the serving tray she's holding and the two drinks she sets down on the table. Laura looks down at what appears to be cranberry and vodka. She then looks undecidedly up at Tom.

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

Tom: "I'm gonna go out on a limb and say that we're both responsible adults."

Tom takes a sip of what appears to be his usual Chablis.

Tom: "I think we can work together towards a common goal."

Laura: "Yeah... and how do you figure that?"

Tom: "Well, let's start with the fact that the Heatherton contact didn't get signed last week. Something obviously happened when you met with Maggie... something you're not comfortable talking to Nancy about."

Laura: "How do I know for sure that what I tell you stays between you and I?"

Tom: "I'm not one to break my promise, and I have nothing to gain by lying to you."

There's a sigh as Laura divulges this supposed secrete that she's been keeping.

Laura: "After our meeting with Maggie, I revised the contract and sent it up to Alex for approval. The next day, Alex asked me to resend the Docusign, and FedEx a hardcopy. I had to pick up some dry-cleaning right across the street from the Heatherton building, so I thought I would just walk the contract over to Maggie."

Laura nervously takes a sip of what is determined to be a Cosmopolitan.

Laura: "You know that bakery at the corner?"

Tom: "Yeah, Crust & Grain."

Laura: "Well... as I was crossing the street, I noticed Nancy inside of the bakery having coffee with this guy; a guy I recognized from the day before."

Tom: "And...?"

Laura pulls a business card from her wallet, and slides it over to Tom. Our film camera zooms in on the card which reads, "Sean Green, LaVon Marketing."

Laura: "He literally introduced himself to me while I was in the elevator going up to meet with Maggie. And then the very next day I see him and Nancy together at the bakery."

Tom takes a sip of his Chablis and starts to laugh a little.

Tom: "Well, first, let me just say that I'm glad you brought this to my attention. I can see how this might look to someone starting out with our company. But let me assure you that there are no red flags here. You are going to see Sean Green a lot. He's like the used car salesman of marketing."

Tom takes another sip of his Chablis.

Laura: "I understand that, I... was talking more about Nancy's relationship with him. Like, maybe they're more than just colleagues."

Once again, Tom projects a little laugh, surprised that Laura would insinuate such a thing.

Tom: "Sean... really? Hahah. You met the guy... does he look like Nancy's type to you?"

Laura delays her response.

Laura: "No..."

Tom takes another sip, not exactly prepared for the rest of Laura's response.

Laura: "But Peter doesn't look like her type either."

Tom stops, mid sip.

Tom: "Ok... wow! I didn't realize you and Nancy were that close."

Laura: "Yeah, which is why I was so concerned."

Tom revisits his previous sip of Chablis.

Tom: "Alright, let me set your mind at ease. Sean and Nancy used to work together, so it comes as no surprise that they might be sitting down somewhere having coffee. In this line of work, you keep your clients close, and your competition closer. Sean is bidding against us for the Delphini contract, which is Nancy's pride and joy. She's negotiating a deal to give him one of our Superbowl ad banners, in exchange for backing out of the Delphini bid."

With bewilderment and somewhat relief in her mind, Laura shakes her head.

Laura: "What? Really? She never said anything to me about that."

Tom: "It wasn't well ironed out at the time. She was more or less testing the waters with Sean to see where he might bend."

Laura: "I don't know what to say... I feel stupid for bringing all of this up."

Tom: "Well, you simply didn't have all of the details. Anyone might have come to the same conclusion."

Laura: "Oh man, my brain was really rattled over this whole thing. You know how... like, you stress over something so much that everything feels like it's tied together?"

Tom: "Yeah, I think I know what you're saying."

Laura: "It's so weird... it was like every tell-tail sign of having an affair. First the business card, then he kept calling her. And then last week when she was out of the office, I was like... oh my god, she's hooking up with him."

Tom: "Hahahaha, wow, you really were overthinking it."

Laura takes a big sip of her Cosmo.

Laura: "Please... please don't tell Nancy I said any of this to you."

Tom: "Don't give it another thought. Let us (you and I) form a little bond. There are some things you want to keep quiet, and there are somethings I want to keep quiet. I think we can help each other out, and do it in such a way as to help the company out. Deal?"

Laura: "Deal."

Tom: "Alright, I have to get back to the office. Let's get together tomorrow and talk about the challenges you're facing with regards to getting Maggie to sign a new contract with us. I have some ideas, but I would like to hear your thoughts on how we can move forward."

Tom finishes the last sip of his Chablis.

Laura: "Hey, let me ask you something. Do you think this guy Sean is trying to steal Heatherton from us, and that's why he was in the building?"

Tom: "Umm, he's kind of a low hanging fruit type of businessman. There are tons of other businesses in that building that are far more advantageous to him than Heatherton."

Tom pays the bill.

Tom: "Alright look, I've gotta roll. By all means, you can tell Nancy we're having lunch together, but maybe not-so-much about the specifics of our conversations. Know what I mean?"

Laura: "Totally understand."

The scene fades out with Laura and Tom rising from the table. Viewers will get a sense that Tom finally realizes the value in Laura. Alongside his growing appreciation of her professional wherewithal, there is of course other attributes about Laura that are starting to grow on him.

Scene Over

Scene 12

Scenario – Takes place the next day. Laura meets Tom at Doub Thorn for coffee. They are mid conversation when our film camera pans in.

Tom: “The advertising model for law firms is changing. Even smaller practices have 4 or 5 managing partners specializing in different areas of law. So, the question is, how do we capture these diversified legal offerings in a 60 second commercial?”

Laura: “Yeah, I see what you’re saying. You don’t want to over saturate a potential client with a bunch of legal services that don’t align with their needs.”

Tom takes a sip of his coffee and then oddly does an impression of a typical attorney you might see in a TV commercial.

Tom: “Have you’ve been injured in an accident... are your medical bills piling up? Well, then you need the law offices of Allan, Allan, Allan, and Allan. We’ll sue the pants off of anyone and everyone.”

Laura: “Hahaha... that was a good impression!”

Tom: “How did four attorneys, all with the name Allan, find each other and start a law firm.”

Laura: “I don’t know, but it’s brilliant. Everyone knows that commercial.”

Tom: “It’s a great 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.”

Laura: “Yeah, well, that’s not going to work for Heatherton. They want absolutely nothing to do with injury law.”

Tom takes another sip of his coffee; Laura takes a bite of her croissant (crumbs everywhere).

Tom: “Corporate law is so boring... how in the world do you twist that knife. And how do you define that client base. You know what I mean? Let’s say you own a business, and find yourself in a copyright litigation, the Heatherton commercial (as it is right now) in no way demonstrates their expertise in that area. How do you illustrate that particular type of competency, along with 20 other areas of business law that they specialize in.”

Laura responds while still chewing on her croissant.

Laura: “At my last job, we managed the 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. And no joke, they have 30+ different cheesecakes to choose from.”

Tom: “No kidding?”

Laura: "Yeah. The ads were effective. Instead of trying to entice a desert seeking demographic, their commercials were centered around the ambiance of the restaurant."

Tom: "Explain."

Laura: "Well, first of all, they don't concentrate on showing you cheesecakes. You kind of see that in the background. The commercial opens with a panoramic view of the bar; a bunch of TVs, people drinking and watching football. And then you see the families sitting down at the tables, laughing, stuffing their faces (kind of thing). And then at the end, this super attractive waitress tells you that they have 250 items to choose from on their menu."

Tom: "Like... literally they have 250 items?"

Laura: "Yes! Hahaha. It's insane! And that's the allure. The commercial leads the audience to believe that if a restaurant is capable of producing 250 different meals, then it has to be good."

Tom: "I think I know where you're going with this."

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

Tom: "You're thinking we can provide that same principle to a law firm advertisement?"

Laura: "I absolutely do. The Heatherton name is a brand, all unto itself. We just have to burn that image into a targeted audience without putting emphasis on any one area of law."

Tom looks at Laura for an extended period of time.

Tom: "We're sitting here talking about revamping Heatherton's entire advertising profile. Meanwhile, you and Nancy are trying to sell Maggie on a no-commercial contract."

Laura: "This goes back to what I said before; Maggie is saying one thing, and we're trying to sell her on something different. Counter intuitive... one might say."

Tom: "Yeah, and I'm not sure how to get around it."

Laura: "You're an executive, right? Can't you just make an executive decision?"

Tom: "Hahaha, I wish it was that easy."

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

Laura: "You know... you keep saying that Heatherton is bringing on new partners. What if we pitch our commercial demo to them (whoever they are)?"

Tom: "That would seem simple enough, wouldn't it? It begs the question, why is Maggie keeping this so tight-lipped?"

As Tom and Laura make their way out of Doub Thorn, the same older Jewish woman and her husband are sitting at a nearby table.

Jewish Woman: "Oh... you again!"

Laura turns around, squints at the older Jewish woman, and then proceeds to exit the coffee shop.

Jewish Man: "That's some tuchus!"

Our film camera is set up on the sidewalk outside of Doubt Thorn.

Tom: "Do you have time to meet up again tomorrow?"

Laura: "Let me check my calendar, but sure."

Scene over.

Scene 13

Scenario – Takes place the next day, back at Doub Thorn. Tom and Laura are in line to get coffee, and once again, so is the older Jewish woman and her husband. They are further towards the back of the line, more or less body-shaming Laura, and criticizing what she orders.

Jewish Man: “Black coffee, half of a brand muffin, that’s how you stay thin.”

Jewish Woman: “She puts whipped cream and sugar in her coffee.”

Jewish Man: “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. Laura’s face, red from embarrassment, proceeds to place her order.

Laura: “Can I just get a plain coffee, and an old fashion doughnut.”

Our film camera captures the look on the older Jewish husband.

Jewish Man: “Old fashion! Just as much sugar as a regular doughnut.”

In an attempt to absorb some of Laura’s humiliation, Tom orders an old fashion doughnut as well. After paying the cashier, Tom walks to the back of the line and confronts the older Jewish woman and her husband.

Tom: “Please keep your opinions to yourself.”

Tom then proceeds to sit with Laura at their usual high table near the bookshelf. Our film camera will initially capture the older Jewish couple in the background, which pairs well with the look on Tom’s face. Viewers will get a sense that Tom is uncomfortable with the type of attention that Laura draws. He genuinely feels her self-consciousness. As such, he immediately changes the tempo by jumping right into work a conversation.

Tom: “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. But we have to do it in such a way, so as not to step on anyone’s toes. In other words, this is something Nancy cannot know anything about.”

Laura takes a bite of her doughnut.

Laura: “I’m listening.”

Tom takes a sip of his coffee.

Tom: “Our studio downstairs was built under the premise that Heatherton would be our flagship model. In fact, the demo that Karthik and Anoop are working on was originally designed for Heatherton. We

were essentially going to give them the commercial for free, in exchange for letting us use snippets of the video for our HDM commercial. This is a deal that no one would turn down... and yet they did."

Laura: "Did they turn it down cold, or are they just holding off?"

Tom: "In our line of work, does that really make a difference?"

Laura: "Yeah, I see what you're saying."

Another pause as Tom and Laura enjoy their coffee and doughnuts.

Laura: "Did anyone pin Maggie down as to exactly why she's reluctant?"

Tom: "I spoke to her about it in passing a few times, nothing official, but she insists that they're bogged down with litigations and don't have the time to consider our offer."

Laura: "Then what's her motivation for signing a 1-year airtime contract?"

Tom: "Under the impression that Heatherton is merging with another law firm, it would make perfect sense to frontload their existing commercial for the next 90 days, or until the merger is complete. This is why she's asking you and Nancy to remove transfer fees from the contract."

Laura: "So why not just wait it out? Let the merger go through, and then present our demo once we know who all the players are."

Tom: "If we wait, we're likely to get hit with a request for proposal, which will give our competition time to gear up against us. Worse yet, if the merging partner is granted the right to sole source their own marketing provider, who's to say they would even consider us."

Laura: "According to Nancy, Heatherton is our longest standing client, so why wouldn't they give us a chance to earn their business? That doesn't make sense to me."

Tom: "That Loyalty went right out the window when Dan Heatherton handed the reins over to Maggie."

Tom takes another sip of his coffee and announces that he has to get back to the office.

Tom: "If we don't figure out who they are merging with, we're going to lose the contract. It's just that simple."

Laura: "Ok, then... where do we start?"

Tom: "With all the construction and renovations going on at the Heatherton building, every lawyer in town has to be talking about it."

Laura: "Talking about it amongst themselves, sure. They're all thick as thieves."

Tom: "Until they start drinking..."

Laura: "What are you saying?"

Tom: "Well, I don't know of any attorney specific bars around her, but there is that place, Palmetto's; known cop bar. I'm guessing there's a few lawyers that hang out there."

Laura smiles

Laura: "Ah-ha, I see. A little reconnaissance mission."

Tom: "Exactly!"

Laura: "Alright... I'm in."

Tom: "Yeah?"

Laura: "Sure, why not. The only thing I have to lose is my only client, and likely my job."

Tom: "What are you doing tomorrow?"

Laura: "Work, and then going to the gym."

Tom: "Skip the gym and meet me at Palmetto's. It's right down the street, we can walk there."

Laura: "I'm already scheduled for palates, but I can come by right after. It's only a 30-minute class."

Tom: "Ok, sounds good."

Scene over

Scene 14

Scenario: Takes place at Palmetto's Lounge the following day. This is a typical New York City elongated drinking establishment by where you see the near side corner of the bar as soon as you walk in, and then it stretches down the full length of its storefront dimension. Our film camera angle and visual perception is that of where the bartender is standing, looking out into a crowd of happy-hour patrons. 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: "WHAT DO YOU WANT?"

Tom: "A COSMO and a glass of Chablis!"

Bartender: "A COSMO AND WHAT?"

Tom: "CHABLIS... Chardonnay!"

By this time, Laura has navigated through the thick crowd and reaches Tom. Their conversation is one where they have to yell in each other's ear.

Laura: "Holy shit! This place is packed!"

Tom: "I ordered you a Cosmo."

Laura: "WHAT?"

Tom: "A COSMO!"

Laura: "Oh. I wanted tequila!"

Tom: "TEQUILIA!"

Laura: "Just KIDDING... but not really."

The bartender reaches across the bar and sort of parts the crowd as he passes each drink to Tom, one at a time.

Bartender: "You want to start a tab?"

Instead of yelling, Tom just waves his iPhone in front of the card reader. The bartender gives Tom a thumbs up and moves on to the next thirsty patron. Tom hands Laura her drink and begins telling her about this friend he bumped into.

Tom: "I want to introduce you to a buddy of mine. Follow me."

As they navigate through the heavy crowd, our film camera will remain stationary. We'll capture a quick instance where Laura turns sideways to get in between two people waiting at the bar. As she does so, her butt nudges into another woman, almost spilling her drink. Near the back of the bar there are low lounge tables and couches set up in a circular fashion. Tom's friend, Romain is at the far

corner of the lounge sitting with his friends (an interesting mix of people). In front of where Romain is sitting is an empty couch where Tom and Laura ultimately sit.

Tom: "Romain, I want you to meet Laura Pensali. Laura, this is Romain Desario."

Instead of standing up, Romain simply scootches forward on the couch and extends his cocktail glass out to Laura. Laura in return 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 longer than what most people would consider comfortable. Locking eyes is a cultural thing to determine Italian origin. Romain is tan, whereas Laura is as white as the driven snow. There are a few other things about her (like her body) that Romain ponders, in terms of where her heritage might be from. Like most people, he's befuddled at just how curvy she is.

Tom: "Laura just started with our company and she's got a major client on her hands."

Romain: "Salendo in cima."

Laura: "Ancora imparo."

Again, our film camera and viewers will see Romain and Laura smiling and staring at each other. At a glance, Romain looks like your prototypical Italian man... with one exception. He's uncharacteristically and unequivocally gay!

Romain: "Is this a new client you speak of?"

Romain is talking to Tom, but never takes his eyes off Laura. And she never takes her eyes off him. Somewhat of a stare-down, but mostly a figuring out process.

Tom: "No, it's an existing client... Heatherton Law Office."

Ever so gently, Romain reaches out to Laura with his free hand. Somehow Laura knows to extend her left hand and place it on top of his. From there, Romain rubs his thumb across the top of her engagement ring.

Romain: "You're engaged to an Irishman."

Laura nods her head, yes. Romain looks at Tom.

Romain: "This man has very good taste, Tom."

Tom: "It's an impressive engagement ring, for sure."

Romain stays focused on Laura.

Romain: "He is a kind man, no?"

Laura: "Very kind. Very gentle. And he is... (Laura lifts her arms and flexes her biceps) mór láidir"

Romain: "Oh, of course. Of course."

Tom intervenes as their conversation is getting further away from the objective. At the same time, Laura turns her wrist so that the top of Romain's hand is facing her. Our film camera zooms in on Romain's ring and a change in Laura's expression. She inhales slightly and holds her breath until Tom begins to speak.

Tom: "Romain, we have a peculiar situation. We have good reason to believe that our client is either merging with another law firm, or at a minimum bringing on additional partners to expand their legal portfolio. Either way, they're gearing up for a considerable influx of business. Problem is... they aren't coming to us for ideas on how to market and promote their expansion."

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

Romain: "You think their shopping around?"

Tom: "Possibly."

Romain can tell by Laura expression that she knows exactly what his ring personifies, evident in the way she releases his hand. From there, Romain gives Tom his full attention.

Romain: "Obviously, they don't want you to know that they have extra money to spend. But the real question is... are they talking to one of your competitors?"

Tom: "They're weighing options, that much I'm sure of."

Romain: "And you're certain they're bringing on new partners?"

Laura starts to jump into the conversation, but then backs out. Tom looks at Laura, and then looks back at Romain.

Tom: "They secured a second floor in their building, and supposedly renovations are underway. They're gearing up for major changes; I would say double... maybe tripling their staff."

Romain: "Who's your point of contact over there?"

Tom: "Maggie Streith."

Romain: "Managing partner?"

Tom: "She basically runs the day-to-day operations for Dan Heatherton?"

Romain takes a sip of his drink (type of cocktail is unknown).

Romain: "Let me ask around. Somebody's got to know something, right?"

Tom: "You would think so."

Romain stands up, and when he does, so does the rest of his entourage. A few other people (not in their group) also stand up out of sheer respect. Our film camera captures Laura's facial expression, which is a combination of surprise and validation. She and Tom also stand up, if for no other reason than to not look awkward.

Romain: "A few of us are going over to 1320; you want to join us?"

Tom laughs.

Tom: "Do they let straight guys in there?"

Romain laughs.

Romain: "They'll let you in there."

Laura finally responds, but it's clear that her veneration for Romain has changed.

Laura: "Yeah, Tom, you should go."

Romain: "It's a legit speak easy... mostly straight men."

Romain takes the last sip of his drink.

Romain: "Well, I mean... straight men that haven't met me yet."

Tom: "Hahaha... I'm not sure I'm ready to be converted."

Laura shakes her head.

Laura: "Wow!"

Romain takes a small step towards Tom's steadfast smiling face.

Tom: "I'm going to pass this time, but next time... I'll go."

Romain takes another step closer to Tom. Everyone around them is just standing there. They don't quite understand the relationship between Romain and Tom.

Romain: "In another life, my friend."

Romain places his hand on Tom's chest, and stares into his eyes. Tom leans in and whispers something into Romain's ear that brings a smile to his face.

Romain: "Hahaha... not a chance."

Romain dips his head slightly and continues to chuckle. He looks back up at Tom, taps him on the chest twice, turns, and begins walking away. His entourage (8-10 people) follow behind him. Laura, in a state of puzzlement looks at Tom.

Laura: "What in the actual hell!"

Tom: "What?"

Laura: "What did you say to him?"

Tom: "Silly inside joke, you wouldn't understand."

Tom and Laura slowly sit back down, Tom smiling all the while. Laura leans into Tom with an exhausted/breathy concern.

Laura: "He's a made-guy! You know that, don't you?"

Tom lifts his shoulders as if to play dumb.

Laura: "Tom, I'm serious! I don't want him doing favors for us."

Tom starts laughing.

Tom: "He's my dear friend, I've known him for a long time. Gay... if you couldn't tell."

Laura: "Oh, I get that. But he's also a full-blown mobster!"

Tom: "Hahaha, 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 continues laughing, and all the while looking at Laura as if she's lost her mind.

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

Laura takes on a more serious attitude.

Laura: "Listen, I agree he's extremely nice. 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 starts laughing again.

Tom: "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's laugh continues, although muffled by the wine glass pressed against his lips.

Tom: "I'm impressed that you speak Italian, and I love this story, but I feel like you're putting me on right now."

Just as Laura starts to respond, Tom cuts her off.

Tom: "Hold on, hold on, hold on. I'm going to replenish our drinks. When I return, you can tell me more about this ring thing."

As Tom walks away, Laura's phone starts to vibrate. It's Niki on the other end. This is really just a fill until Tom returns. The conversation between Laura and Niki is mostly about groceries, household chores, and a dripping faucet issue.

Laura: "Did the plumber come by?"

Laura: "Oh, that's great!"

Laura: "Wait... you didn't sleep with him, did you?"

Laura: "Oh, thank god."

Laura: "No, I'm with Tom... from my work."

Laura: "Eww, no! We're just having a couple of drinks, talking about work."

Laura: "No, this is not how it all starts. It's a straight-up working relationship."

Laura: "Hey, are you gonna be in the city tomorrow?"

Laura: "Yeah, let's meet up."

Laura: "Also, there's a place I just found out about called, the 1320 club."

Laura: "I don't know... supposedly, straight single guys. I figure we can get Katie to meet us there."

Laura: "Oh, please, she's dying for some dick!"

Laura: "Ok, ok, I'll talk to you tomorrow."

Laura hangs up on Niki about the time Tom returns. He sets the replenished Cosmo in front of her, and at the same time takes a sip of his newly refreshed Chablis.

Tom: "Alright, don't get mad at me... I googled Tarantismo when I was at the bar. It's a form of witchcraft. It has something to do with women being bitten by tarantulas, and dancing around."

Laura: "Oh my god... you and your phone. Tarantismo was a religious movement that took place in southern Italy. On Romain's ring, the spider represents Paganism, the church represents Christianity. The spider sits on top of the church as a means to suppress the resistance."

Laura takes a sip and looks at Tom to see if he's following what she's saying.

Laura: "Do you not see the metaphor?"

Tom: "Eh, no..."

Laura: "The Italian syndicate is a direct result of rural Catholicism. 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."

Tom chuckles, but give no evidence that he's buying into her story.

Tom: "What's really weird is that I'm 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."

Tom continues scrolling through Wikipedia for any type of proof.

Tom: "Literally... there is nothing to support what you're saying."

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

Tom: "Yes, that's exactly what I'm saying. There's no mention of a church, and there's no subsequent information about that ring. It's all superstition and fear driven fallacies."

Tom looks up as the bartender appears out of nowhere.

Bartender: "Romain order you another round before he left."

Laura looks at Tom with her head tilted to the side. When the bartender walks away, Tom finishes his second Chablis, and immediately starts slipping on the third. Laura follows suit.

Tom: "Ok, where were we? Oh, I remember what I was going to say; if that ring was of any importance, it would be well documented online. In fact, I would go as far to say that everything in history, at this point, has been well documented online."

Laura: "Are you kidding me right now? Most of history is either missing or misinterpreted on the internet. Did you watch 60-Minutes the other day; the Sarcophagi Tombs in Egypt. They've been excavating that site for decades, and they still don't know who all of those people are. It took 10 years to get authorization to open one Sarcophagus."

Tom becomes a tad defensive.

Tom: "First of all, can we just call it a coffin... because that's what a sarcophagus is. Second, a high-resolution satellite discovered those tombs, and sent a billion pics to the internet. Your church folklore is a story that gets passed down from generation to generation with no reasonable support of proof. It's a myth... at best!"

The table has turned. Tom has the serious look, while Laura cracks a smile.

Laura: "How about 20,000 Leagues under the Sea... is that a myth? Because they just found one of those giant squids at the bottom of the ocean. The tentacles were like 50 feet long."

Tom: "Ok, now you're just being silly."

Laura: "We just have a difference of opinion. It's healthy for people to not agree on every single thing."

Both Tom and Laura are a little tipsy and the conversation sort of swings back and forth, continually becoming more lighthearted. Viewers will get a sense that fondness is growing between the two of them. Laura smiles with a certain challenging admiration for Tom. Her tongue glides across the bottom of her teeth to suggest she's not going to give up on making her point.

Laura: "Why do you have to be so... self-justified. I'm simply telling you that the ring on Romain's finger is the same ring I saw on a guy that killed people for a living. And while Romain doesn't look your garden variety assassin, I would bet anything that he has all kinds of friends in the five boroughs that look exactly like goodfellows."

Tom smiles with an ever-glowing alcoholic gleam in his eyes.

Tom: "I gotta 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. But you actually have some smarts in that head of yours. And you're passionate about your beliefs. You don't just say something for the sake of talking. Having that ability to enlighten people, and bring them into the folds of your culture... that's not something that can be taught. It's a remarkable gift, actually."

Tom takes a bigger than usual sip of wine.

Laura: "Wow, that was... unexpected! Thank you for that compliment."

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

Tom: "What do you say we get out of here."

For a split second, Laura misinterprets what Tom is saying, and thus it turns into a funny, awkward moment.

Laura: "You mean like... get out of here and go back to your place?"

Tom stumbles for corrective words.

Tom: "What? No... I mean... No, like... call it a day."

Laura knew what he meant, she just felt it necessary to add a little shemozzle.

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 it came out of my mouth."

A bit of uncomfortable silence.

Tom: "How about we hit the lower east side tomorrow after work?"

Laura: "Sure, ok."

Laura forgot that she has plans.

Laura: "Oh shit, I can't do tomorrow. I promised Nancy I would hit the gym with her after work, and then I'm having drinks with roommate, Niki, uptown. I need to get her laid."

Tom's eyes are wide and glassy, a little shocked at how cavalier Laura speaks. As she and Tom rise from the couch and table, Laura stretches her back, and pats herself on the rear at the same time.

Laura: "This is my nemesis."

Tom has no idea how to respond. Laura's choice of words, and physical recognition of her unique body was unanticipated.

Laura: "How about Thursday after work?"

Tom: "Yeah, Thursday is good."

Our camera is positioned behind them and just to the left of Tom as they make their exit from the lounge, through the bar area. Viewers will once again get a sense that Tom is growing fond of Laura... and her body, for that matter. This quick shot will be a combination of Tom's eyes looking downward, and a closeup of Laura's backside (with a little bit of slow-motion edited in). There will be a quick (cut-to) as Tom and Laura exit the Palmetto bar and start walking in opposite directions. Tom somewhat yells back to Laura, all the while looking at his phone. They are roughly 20 feet from each other at a busy intersection with a lot of street noise between them.

Tom: "Laura! Hey! Listen, Romain just sent me two tickets to a fashion Gala Saturday night. Maybe we should go."

Laura holds her hands up and shakes her head, as this is totally out from left field. She can't tell if he's trying to be funny or flirtatious. Still, she continues to stand there, hanging on to his words.

Tom: "If we don't go, it might offend him! I don't want him to... you know... kill us!"

Laura tilts her head back; a funny look takes hold of her face with the attitude of someone getting their buttons pushed. Instead of responding, she just waves him away. Tom sees her head shake from side to side a few times, but smiling all the while. Eventually, she turns and continues walking.

Scene over

Scene 15

Scenario - Takes place at the 1320 club; a place Laura overheard Tom and Romain talking about. Our film camera is positioned in the standard bar room scenario as Niki walks in. Laura and her friend Katie are already at the bar with Cosmos in hand.

Laura: "What happened to five o'clock?"

Niki: "I got caught up at the dealership, and then of course my subway card wouldn't work."

Katie: "You're still dealing with that piece-of-shit car?"

Niki: "Fuck that car... I don't even want to talk about it."

Pause

Niki: "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?"

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."

Laura waves the bartender down.

Laura: "Niki, what do you want?"

Niki: "Sauvignon Blanc."

Laura yells at the bartender, Katie looks up at the ceiling.

Katie: "I understand it being dark outside, but why is it so dark in here?"

Niki: "It's dark, because that's the very nature of a speak-easy."

Laura: "Oh my God! It is not a SPEAK-EASY! Let's just move down a few bar stools where there's more overhead lighting."

The bartender serves Niki the glass of Sauvignon Blanc. The repartee between the girls continues.

Niki: "I don't know why I let you trick me into going to places like this."

Katie: "Yeah, and where are the cute single guys you promised."

Laura looks down at the far end of the bar; three middle age men standing and talking about this-that and the other thing.

Laura: "What about that guy with the black hat."

Niki: "What about him?"

Laura: "I don't know... he seems alright."

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

Katie giggles.

Laura: "What... you don't like cowboys?"

Niki: "Eh... no!"

The girls have a sip of their drinks, all the while assessing the true nature of black-hat-guy.

Katie: "Dude's all about the old west."

Niki: "Old west? How about just, old!"

Katie: "Hahaha."

Katie continues to giggle; Niki doesn't see anything humorous about it.

Niki: "I say we go somewhere else."

Laura: "Calm down... it's early. Let's just hang here for a couple of drinks and see how it plays out. If nothing happens, we'll go somewhere else."

Katie waves the bartender down.

Katie: "We need shots!"

Niki: "No!"

Laura: "Come on, Niki... what the hell!"

Katie: "We're doing shots, and that's all there is to it."

Niki turns her head to the side and quirks her lips the opposite direction.

Niki: "One! And that's it! And then I want to go somewhere else."

Laura reaffirms Katie's request to the bartender.

Laura: "Three shots of tequila! 1800!"

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 you he's good in bed."

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

Katie: "Hahaha..."

Laura: "Hahaha... yeah, that's hot!"

Niki: "No it isn't!"

The bartender overhears their conversation and slides 1 of the 3 tequila shots across the bar countertop the way it's often depicted in old western movies.

Bartender: "They don't call this place the 1320 saloon for nothing!"

There's a pause as the bartender pours the other two shots.

Bartender: "And we don't tolerate no vagrants... whatever that is."

Random patron at the bar responds.

Patron: "It's a drifter... that's what a vagrant is. Someone passing through town with no clear plan as to where they're going."

The bartender jokingly yells across the bar at the girls.

Bartender: "ARE ya'll DRIFTERS?"

Laura yells back.

Laura: "NAH, we're LOCAL!"

The bartender walks over to the girls with the remaining two tequila shots.

Bartender: "How about scallywags? Ya'll aren't scallywags are you?"

Katie: "What is a scallywag?"

Once again, the patron at the other end of the bar overhears the conversation and chimes in.

Patron: "Scallywag is a person that acts mischievous to be funny or get attention."

Niki aggressively points at Laura.

Laura: "What are you pointing at me for!"

Katie: "Oh my God, please... Laura you are 100% scallywag. Hahaha!"

Laura: "Whatever! You two are... fuck, I can't think of the word."

Laura downs her shot of tequila, and then looks over at the patron who may or may not be an English professor.

Laura: "Yo, man with the glasses! What do you call someone who thinks they know everything?"

Patron: "Charlatan!"

Laura: "There you go! That's the word I was looking for."

Laura (a little tipsy now) points to both Niki and Katie. The New York/Italian affect in Laura's voice starts to come out.

Laura: "Charlatans... the both-of-yaaz."

Laura waves for the bartender to come closer. She basically bends over the bar countertop to ask the bartender a question that she doesn't want broadcasted to everyone.

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."

There's a pause.

Laura: "By the way, I'm Laura... and these are my somewhat-judgmental friends."

Bartender: "Jimmy. Good to meet you."

Laura points to her girlfriends individually.

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: "Right here."

Bartender: "NYU?"

Laura: "Yep. How about you?"

Bartender: "University of hard knocks."

Laura: "Military?"

Bartender shakes his head, no."

Bartender: "Did a few semesters over at Rikers."

Laura: "Rickers Island!"

Bartender: "Best education I ever got."

Laura: "No kidding... dare I ask what you did?"

Bartender: "Robbed a jewelry store."

Laura: "Like, armed robbery?"

Bartender: "No, hahaha. Broke in after hours, stole some watches."

Laura: "How did you get caught?"

Bartender: "Well, like an idiot, I tried to sell the watches to a local pawn shop. The guy who owned the pawn shop... he's brother owned the jewelry store."

Laura: "Hahaha, no shit, hahaha!"

Bartender: "Yep."

Laura: "How much time did you have to do?"

Bartender: "Judge gave me 12 months, got out in 8."

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

Bartender: "Hahaha, no. You gotta go to Attica for that. Rikers is mostly soft-core (fuck ups) like me."

Niki tries to ease drop into their conversation.

Niki: "What are you two talking about?"

Laura looks at the bartender, lowers her eyebrows and shakes her head as if to indicate that Niki probably shouldn't hear the content of their conversation. From there, Laura changes the subject quickly.

Laura: "Jimmy, the man in the black... any idea how old he is?"

Niki: "Oh my God, here we go again."

Bartender: "No idea."

Laura feels Katie walking up behind her.

Laura: "Katie likes older guys."

Katie: "Hahaha, yeah, I don't know... he looks old enough to be my father!"

The bartender laughs, and then turns to wait on another customer. The 3 girls regroup and go back to their debate over the man in the black hat."

Katie: "I'm not even certain he's straight."

Laura: "What! Are you kidding me! Hetero to the 10th power!"

Katie: "That overcoat is cashmere, and some kind of... silk shirt underneath."

Laura: "The man to his left is gay... I'll give you that, but not black-hat-guy."

Niki: "I don't know what he is... other than scary as fuck!"

Our film camera moves closer to the floor and focuses upward as Laura lifts her butt off of the barstool, and waves the bartender down for another round of drinks. She once again looks at the man in the black hat before engaging her friends.

Laura: "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?"

Slight pause before Niki follows up her own question.

Niki: "How many knife fights do you have to lose before maybe deciding you shouldn't be in a knife fight."

Katie: "Hahahaha."

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 could be broke-back-mountain-ish."

Katie: "Hahaha... what?"

Laura: "Yeah, like... he's straight, but then when he goes camping with one of his buddies, there might be a little ass-grabbing."

Niki: "This is ridiculous... we need to go to another bar."

Laura can see that Niki is getting agitated.

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: "Katie, do one more shot with me."

Katie: "Hahaha... ok."

Laura waves down the bartender.

Laura: "Jimmy! Two more shots!"

As Jimmy grabs the bottle of Tequila, Laura once again lifts up from her barstool and leans over the bar countertop so that Niki and Katie can't hear what she's saying.

Laura: "Jimmy, what is the guy in the black hat drinking?"

Bartender: "Scotch on the rocks."

Laura: "Single malt?"

Bartender: "Yeah, it's McCallan 18."

Laura: "Fuck, I want to buy him a drink, but that shit's expensive."

There's a pause as Laura ponders over the quandary.

Laura: "And then of course he might not even come over here, even if I do buy him a drink."

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 the drink. If he doesn't, I'll pay for it."

Laura: "Alright, deal!"

Niki is a little on edge.

Niki: "Laura, why are you being so secretive?"

Katie: "Yeah, Rude!"

Laura: "I'm trying to get black-hat-guy to come over here. Let's get a closer look at him."

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!"

Katie: "He's definitely got that confidence about him."

Niki: "All the confidence in the world doesn't change the fact that he's an old man. Which means he has an old dick!"

Laura: "Hahaha, Jesus Christ, Niki! He's not 80!"

Katie: "Hahaha."

Niki continues to voice her opinion, but does so with her wine glass up to her lips, talking under her breath.

Niki: "Old Saggy balls..."

Katie: "Hahaha."

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

Katie: "Low-Hangers... hahaha! Oh my God, hahahaha."

Niki: "I'm going to throw up!"

Laura: "Hahahaha."

As Laura and Katie are bent over with laughter, black-hat-guy starts walking in their direction.

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

As black-hat-guy approaches the girls, Niki inadvertently looks away. He immediately introduces himself, looking directly at Laura.

Wayne: "Hi... Wayne Dahlgren."

Laura's eyes open up like an eclipse. There's a slight hesitation before she speaks.

Laura: "Oh my God... I know you!"

Wayne: "Yeah, hahaha, how's that?"

Laura: "You're the program manager for Lightspeed... I'm on a call with you Nancy Janke every Tuesday. I'm Laura Pensali."

In a business-like fashion, Laura extends her hand to Wayne.

Wayne: "Oh wow, right... Heritage. Nice to meet you... small world."

Laura: "I immediately recognized your voice... it's a unique voice."

Wayne: "Thank you... it's nice to put a face on the people I work with."

Laura: "These are my friends, Niki and Katie."

Wayne: "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 last hour."

Wayne: "Hahaha... well, I am a guy... and I am in fact wearing a black hat..."

Niki finally gets the nerve to speak up, and does so without holding back.

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

Wayne's eyes elevate, and he shakes his head up and down a few times.

Wayne: "Hmm... Wild Bill Hickock... nice pull! Not sure you had to go back that far for a cowboy reference... but, eh... ok."

Katie: "I like your whole get-up."

Wayne: "Born and raised in Austin... can't let it go."

Laura: "Yeah, it's a good look. Ties into the whole... everything is bigger in Texas... kind of thing!"

Katie laughs, knowing full well what Laura is hinting at.

Laura: "How did you get your start with Lightspeed?"

Wayne: "Long boring story."

Laura: "No, come on, enlighten me."

Wayne hesitates to respond.

Wayne: "After college, I went to work as an engineer for a wheat and grain refinery. We hired Lightspeed to design our distribution network. One day they offered me a job, and that was the end of my farming career."

Niki: "So did you actually grow up on a farm?"

Wayne: "Yep. Parents and grandparents were wheat farmers."

Laura: "And now you work for an internet service provider... the polar opposite of farming."

Wayne: "I know... crazy right?"

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

Wayne: "43... as of two weeks ago."

Niki: "Wayne, don't take this the wrong way, but we're in our mid-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."

There's a bit of silence, followed by on-again, off-again eye contact between Wayne and Laura.

Wayne: "Hey look, I just wanted to come over and introduce myself, because it's the right thing to do when someone buys you a drink."

Niki: "I'm not trying to chase you away, it's just that the three of us don't get out much."

Wayne: "Say no more."

Niki informs Laura and Katie that it's time to pay the bill.

Niki: "Are we spitting this 3-ways?"

Laura: "Katie, can you ask the bartender for the bill. I need to find my card."

Niki: "I'm gonna run to the ladies room."

As Niki walks away, she hands Katie her credit card, and Laura does the same. From there, Katie proceeds to the far end of the bar where Jimmy is standing. In the background, viewers will see Laura and Wayne having what appears to be a flirtatious conversation.

Wayne: "You live here in the city?"

Laura: "Hoboken."

Wayne: "No kidding. So do I."

Laura: "No you don't."

Wayne: "I'm serious... I do."

Laura: "Where?"

Wayne: "1st street."

Laura: "Where on first street?"

Wayne: "The condos at the end of the street."

Niki: "Sky Condos?"

Wayne: "Yeah."

Laura: "That place is like the Burj Khalifa of New Jersey."

Wayne: "Hahaha... you mean because of all the brown people... hahaha."

Laura: "The rich brown people, yes!"

Wayne: "I'll be honest... I don't hate it."

Laura: "I'm sure you don't!"

There's a moment of silence as Laura and Wayne gaze into each other's eyes.

Wayne: "Can I have your number?"

Laura hesitates for a second, but then extends her iPhone and air-drops her contact information. Wayne places his iPhone on top of hers to ensure she receives his contact info as well. All the while, Niki is returning from the restroom and sees everything that's going on.

Niki: "No, no, no, no, no, no, that's not happening."

Laura: "What!"

Niki steps in front of Laura and gets in Wayne's face.

Niki: "First of all, no offence, she's 20 years younger than you. Secondly, she has a fiancé!"

Niki turns to Laura.

Niki: "Grab your jacket, we're leaving now!"

Katie (from a distance) 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 fuck!"

Niki, completely livid, steps closer to Laura. Her voice is at a lower tone, but her temper is through the roof.

Niki: "We just had this conversation a week ago, and here you are doing the same fucked up thing again."

It takes a second for Laura to respond.

Laura: "He's... one of my clients."

Niki: "He's your client at work... not at this bar. Delete... his fucking... phone number... now!"

This a moment of immense discomfort, follow by Laura deleting Wayne's info.

Laura: "There! Done!"

Katie, shaking her head, grabs her jacket and the three of them head for the door.

Niki: "And no, I'm not going to another bar!"

The scene fades as Niki, Laura, and Katie exit the 1320 club.

Scene over

Scene 16

Scenario – Takes place on the lower east side of Manhattan; a restaurant called, The Mantel. Tom is already at the bar holding a seat for Laura when she walks in.

Laura: “Traffic is insane! Uber cost me \$30 to go 10 blocks, and still dropped me off one street short. I would have walked if it wasn’t for the fucking rain.”

Tom: “Why didn’t you take the subway? It literally stops right out front.”

Laura: “Hold on! You took the subway here?”

Tom: “What? No! Of course not.”

Laura: “Hahaha... but it’s ok if I take the subway... I see how you are.”

Tom and Laura smile at each other.

Laura: “This place is actually kind of nice!”

Tom: “Yeah, I don’t hate it.”

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.”

Slight pause as the bartender swipes Tom’s credit card.

Tom: “This might be a shot in the dark, but yesterday I reached out to a friend of mine that works for Paul Switzer. And...”

Laura: “Who’s Paul Switzer.”

Tom: “...Oh sorry, Switzer & Tate law firm, over on west 57th street.”

Laura: “Oh, gotcha, gotcha.”

Tom: “So, Paul’s wife, Janice... or Janet (maybe) is a law professor at NYU, but more importantly, she’s Maggie’s cousin.”

Laura: “No kidding...”

Tom: “Yeah, so... this friend of mine, Cale, said that... she knows everything about every law firm in the city, and that... she hangs out here apparently.”

Laura starts typing into her phone, and immediately shows Tom a picture of Mrs. Switzer.

Laura: “Is this her?”

Tom: “Yeah, I think so. Is her name Janice or Janet?”

Laura: "Says Janet on her Instagram, but then it says Janice on her university alumni profile."

Laura looks around the bar.

Laura: "There's a lot of people here... not sure how we're gonna recognize her."

Tom: "According to Cale... she's tall."

Laura: "Tall..."

Tom: "Yeah, like... really tall."

Laura: "Ok, well, that should narrow it down a little."

Bartender brings their first round of drinks.

Bartender: "You need a menu or anything?"

Tom touches Laura on the arm.

Tom: "Hey, do you want anything to eat?"

Laura: "No, I'm good, thanks."

Tom: "Half price wings!"

Laura: "Hahaha, no."

Tom: "Happy hour tequila shots!"

Laura: "No... had a few too many yesterday."

Tom waves the bartender away.

Tom: "What did you do yesterday?"

Laura: "Ehh, you're probably gonna laugh... I met up with a few friends over at the 1320 club."

Tom: "WHAT! Hahaha... really?"

Laura: "Yeah... my roommate and one of my sorority sisters from college... they're both single... so I figured... why not give it a try."

Tom: "Did you see Romain there?"

Laura: "No... thank God!"

Laura takes a sip of her cosmo.

Laura: "But you know who was there?"

Tom: "Who?"

Laura: "Wayne Dahlgren."

The name doesn't immediately set in with Tom.

Tom: "As in... Wayne Dahlgren from Lightspeed?"

Laura: "Yes."

Tom shaking his head, somewhat in disbelief.

Tom: "Wow, I'm a little surprised by that... I'll be honest."

Tom takes a sip of his Chardonnay.

Tom: "I don't know how well you know Wayne, but he's like a... county guy?"

Laura: "Oh, trust me... he was wearing the whole cowboy ensemble."

Tom still beside himself.

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

Laura: "Hahaha... 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. And dare say that Romain was right... it's mostly straight single guys."

Tom: "That's interesting. I mean... when you considered that Romain and his entourage are far from straight... and yet they hang out there all the time."

Laura: "Yeah, I don't get that. It's a lot of middle-age dudes; how are you gonna convert them? After so many years of being straight, aren't you just sort of set in your ways?"

Tom: "Good point."

Tom takes a sip of his drink.

Tom: "Although... what if after years of striking out over and over again with women... you eventually get tired of being lonely."

Laura: "Is that's 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 shakes his head.

Tom: "Why do you have to be so depraved?"

Laura: "Because that's the reality of that situation."

Their conversation turns a tiny bit combative.

Tom: "This city is full of hetero men, who after years of rejection from women, find solace in another man... for no other reason than companionship."

Laura: "What rock did you crawl out from under? Two guys look at each other for more than three seconds, someone is getting their dick sucked in the men's room. That's the reality of being gay. And when Romain and his henchmen walk into a club, companionship is the furthest thing from their mind."

Laura takes a sip of her drink, and looks at Tom as if there's something wrong with him.

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

Tom can only smile back at her.

Tom: "I kind of like it when you get all charged up, hahaha."

Lara: "YEAH, I know you do!"

Moment of endearing silence, followed by Laura changing the subject.

Laura: "Not sure if you knew this or not, but the 1320 club is the lounge-side of Kelpasi."

Tom: "Seriously!"

Laura: "Yeah."

Tom: "Can you order the same food?"

Laura: "It's a smaller menu, but yes."

Tom: "Ahh... love that place... best Indian cuisine in the city, bar none!"

Laura takes another sip of her drink, and underplays part of the story involving Wayne.

Laura: "Yeah, we had a good time... Wayne came over and talked to us... told us about life on the farm. He's got that funny way of talking, hahaha."

Tom: "He's a hoot... and a holler."

Laura: "A lot different in person than he is on our weekly calls."

Tom signals for the bartender to bring another round of drinks. Laura doesn't realize that she might be rambling on a bit much.

Laura: "Wayne tried to explain to me the difference between agriculture and horticultural. To be perfectly honest, I had no idea what he was talking about. He runs a fortune-500 company, but claims to be a wheat engineer."

Tom: "Technically, he's wheat doctor."

Laura: "He has a PHD?"

Tom: "Yes."

Laura: "... growing plants and shit?"

Tom: "Hahaha, yes!"

Laura: "Where did he go to school?"

Tom: "Cornell."

Laura: "Good God! Talk about having life by the horns."

Laura takes a sip of her drink.

Laura: "He told me that Lightspeed bought his family's farm, because they needed the land to run fiber optics, but then they also bought their distribution business and some kind of crop growing software that Wayne developed."

Tom: "Yeah, that whole relationship is odd. My understanding is that they originally hired him to foster relationships with other wheat farmers across the Midwest. But then I guess they realized how smart he was, and put him in charge of everything."

Tom and Laura pause for another sip.

Laura: "Do you think the scars on his face are from a farming accident?"

Tom: "Good question. And of course, it's the kind of question you can never ask."

Laura ponders...

Laura: "When you get passed that, he's actually handsome."

Tom: "Gee Laura... sounds like you got the hots for a man that runs a billion-dollar corporation."

Laura: "What? No! I'm just pointing out that you can't judge a book by its cover... kind of thing."

Tom: "Umm... okay!"

Brief moment of silence. Tom's head is cocked to the side, causing Laura to think that she needs to continue defending herself.

Laura: "No, he was with his buddies and I was trying to play match-maker with my girlfriends, who were more or less being bitches all night."

Tom: "I take it nothing panned out?"

Laura: Eh, no... a bit of an age issue. Those dudes are in their 40's. My girlfriends aren't really down for that. Also, my roommate, Niki dated an older guy for a while... he was a piece of shit, so now she's got this... anti-older men complex. We ended up just rolling out of there and going home."

Tom: "Shoot, you should have called me. I would have met up with you and your friends."

Laura: "Oh my God, they would have devoured you."

Tom smiles.

Laura: "I'm not kidding, there would have been a cat fight the minute you walked in there."

Bartender serves their second round of drinks. Laura changes the subject.

Laura: "Is it me? Or does it seem like every guy in here is wearing an ill-fitting suite?"

Tom: "I hadn't noticed, but now that you're pointing it out... yes, there's seems to be a theme going on here."

Tom takes a drink.

Tom: "This entire block is considered lawyer's row, so you have to assume that half the people in here are connected with the courthouse in one way or another."

Laura: "And that's why they wear shitty clothes?"

Tom: "I mean... it is a stereotype!"

Laura takes a drink.

Laura: "Also, are lawyers inherently short? You are by far the tallest guy in here. By the way, how tall are you?"

Tom: "Umm, I think I'm 6'2."

Laura: "That's interesting."

Tom: "Interesting, how?"

Laura: "6'2 is the perfect height for a tennis player."

Tom: "Yeah, and 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 senses that Tom is being factious.

Laura: "Oh my God..."

Tom: "I'm just saying..."

Laura: "...that I'm lying? Is that what you're saying?"

Tom: "That... you need to be fact checked."

Laura: "Hahaha... ok... whatever, Mr. Know-it-all!"

Laura waves at the bartender while chugging down her drink in large gulps.

Laura: "Bartender! Yes, I'll have another Cosmo."

After slurping the very last drop, Laura pushes her empty glass into the bartender's garnish tray, so that there's no mistaking her request for a refill. She then turns her attention back to Tom, insistent on making him believe her tennis philosophy.

Laura: "Tennis is a game of calculating distances, and knowing the geometry of the court, which is right up your alley. Feel free to look it up on your iPhone, and you'll see that there is an optimal line of sight from the baseline to the service line, which is measured from the height of the player."

Tom: "I was just kidding... I believe you."

Laura: "No you don't. You're just saying that... now that's there's a RIFT between us."

Tom: "Hahaha... there's not a RIFT between us."

Laura: "Whatever..."

As the bartender slides Laura her third Cosmo, Tom decides he needs another drink as well, and uses a combination of nodding his head and holding up his index finger to get the bartender's attention.

Tom: "When I get home... I'm going to research your whole tennis height theory."

Laura: "You do that!"

Tom: "If it turns out that you made up the entire thing... I going to..."

Laura: "What are you gonna do?" Seriously... I'm dying to hear this. Let's just say I made up the whole thing, and I did it deliberately to get under your skin. What is going to be the recourse?"

Tom: "Well, I'm definitely gonna call you out on it."

Laura: "Hahaha, that's it! You're gonna call me out on it. Wow, that's some punishment."

Tom: "I'm just saying..."

Laura: "You don't know what you're saying."

The bartender brings Tom his third Chardonnay. During this moment, our film camera will give the viewers a panoramic look at the bar and a sense that alcohol and attraction are ramping up. If there were any doubts before, it's now clear that Tom and Laura are veteran alcoholics who secretly enjoy bickering. The footage resumes from the bartender's perspective.

Tom: "I don't know... I'll have to think about that."

Laura: "Oh please... you're not going to think about anything."

Slight pause. Tom looks at Laura with glassy eyes.

Tom: "Another round of drinks?"

Laura: "Stai cercando di farmi ubriacare?"

Tom: "I'll take that as a yes."

The bartender sees that they are ready for another round.

Tom: "I took Spanish in high school, so I recognize some Italian phrases."

Laura: "It actually an easy language to learn if you grasp the emotion and delivery speed of the words."

Laura grabs Tom's free hand.

Laura: "There are far less Italian words than English, so you have to expand the vocabulary with body language. Let me give you an example."

Laura guides the backside of Tom's fingers along the side of her left cheek, down her neck, all the way to her collarbone."

Laura: "Sei più vicino al mio cuore di quanto tu sappia."

There's a pause."

Laura: "Did you get any of that?"

Another pause.

Tom: "No... not really."

Laura: "Hahaha, that's ok. I got a little carried away."

Tom: "I think I understand what you mean, though. You said something thoughtful, and although I don't know the exact words, I could respond by saying, thank you! Am I right?"

Laura: "Well..."

Bartender places new drinks in of them.

Laura: "The takeaway here... is that I'm giving you permission to touch my face. And that's a big deal in Italian culture."

Tom: "Interesting..."

Laura is trying to make it seem like the gesture was just an example. But the viewers know there's more to it than that. As such, Laura talks Italian under her breath.

Laura: "Devo stare attento."

There's a moment of silence before Laura concludes that she should change the subject before this attraction she's feeling for Tom goes any further. She looks down at her barstool, and squeezes the cushion.

Laura: "Every bar should have barstools like this. These things are amazing!"

Laura takes a sip of her drink. Our film camera captures the quality, comfort, and decreative nuance of these modern barstools.

Laura: "Do you ever think about that? Wooden barstools are so uncomfortable, and yet they're everywhere; even in the nicest restaurants."

Tom begins to respond, but Laura kind of topples his words with her continual thoughts.

Laura: "And if you have a big fat ass like mine... typical barstools just don't cut it."

Tom's eyes are about to pop out of his head!

Laura: "But these are like... the Cadillac of barstools. And this is real leather! Must of cost them a fortune."

Tom starts laughing, somewhat as a defense mechanism for his embarrassment.

Laura: "I don't know why you're laughing. 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 continues to laugh not knowing how to respond.

Tom: "Hahaha... I'll be honest, I've never really giving it any thought."

Laura can't seem to get off of the subject.

Laura: "I'm trying to be serious. 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 continues to smile, his drink nearly finished.

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 nice barstools like these."

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 gotta be the barstools, right?"

Bartender brings two new drinks. The effects of alcohol are ever so apparent.

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, all 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 night, after night, after night. I wouldn't call it lucky if you're the third guy that went home with her that week."

Tom takes a drink and ponders over the subject a bit more.

Tom: "Guys go to bars so they can speak freely and vent in a manor 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: "The whole point is that there are certain conversations that should not be shared with women... even under the context of you and I talking about it for curiosity reasons."

Feeling gypped, Laura tussles with the idea of getting a stronger drink.

Laura: "Tom, do a shot with me."

Tom: "No... no way, I'm... good."

Laura thinks about it a second longer, and then signals to the bartender that she wants a shot of tequila. Tom recycles his thoughts about men and women at the bar.

Tom: "Historically speaking, women simply were not allowed in bars. Unless of course, they were... you know... harlots."

Laura: "Historically speaking, who uses the word, harlot? Can't you just say, whore?"

Tom avoids Laura's question, and just continues on with his parody.

Tom: "Would you agree that the Irish culture is well known for consuming alcohol?"

Laura: "Sure."

Tom: "Did you know, back in the 1700s, that 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 has the look of disinterest, and responds with sarcasm.

Laura: "Gee, I didn't know that. Sounds fascinating."

Tom: "Also, back in those days, it was considered unladylike for women to be in the bar area. Pubs had special rooms, screened off from the actual bar where women could gather... and basically talk about whatever women talk about."

As the bartender puts the shot of tequila in front of Laura; she decides it's time to address Tom's 300-year-old, misguided interpretation of Irish pubs.

Laura: "Be it Ireland or any other country for that matter, men are no different than they are today. Regardless of sitting or standing at the bar, it's just drunk dudes bullshitting each other over money and possessions."

Laura downs the shot of tequila and bangs the shot glass on the bar countertop.

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

As usual, Tom is both shocked and uncomfortable with Laura's semantics.

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, somewhat defensive.

Tom: "I'm not saying that at all. I was simply explaining the culture... as it relates to your argument over barstool inequality."

Laura begins to giggle.

Laura: "You're funny. You really are. You have this constant need for approval... coupled with an uncanny ability to filter out any subject that might be considered, risqué."

Tom: "Approval! I'm simply stating a fact that I think makes for an interesting conversation. But for whatever reason (like many of our conversations) you twist it into something perverted."

Laura: "You literally turn your head and ignore me if I say anything remotely off the cuff."

Slight pause as Tom chooses his words carefully.

Tom: "The reason I don't point out your non sequiturs, is because I'm sure you regret half of the things you say."

Laura: "Hahaha, sequiturs... really? Am I supposed to be impressed with your command of the English language?"

Laura attacks the next few slips of her Cosmo, and finishes her response with an attitude.

Laura: "And I don't regret the things I say! In fact, when it comes to you, I'm actually holding back... I don't want to implode your virgin ears."

Laura downs the rest of her drink, and pushes the discomfort back onto Tom.

Laura: "Let me ask you something; I was at Starbuck's the other day, and I overheard two guys talking. One was talking about sports, and the other guy was talking about a girl he had sex with the night before. Which guy do you think is a better lover?"

Tom: "What?"

Laura: "You heard me."

Tom: "That's an impossible question to answer. There are countless variables. Even to make an educated guess, you'd have to know something about their background, work, diet, exercise. And then you have to factor in sex vs true love."

Laura starts with a giggle, but then turns into full laughter.

Laura: "And that's what's so funny; I knew you were going to say that, or at least something like that."

Laura continues to laugh.

Laura: "Here's the thing: I can go up to any guy in this bar and ask the same question. And you know what, they're going to give me all kinds of answers with a whole lot of follow up questions. And do you want to know why? Because most guys want to see where the conversation leads to. It's obvious that there are too many variables to determine who's the better lover. That's not the point of the question."

And most people know that. But not you! You see it as an opportunity to inject variables and other situationally elements that nobody cares about.”

Tom appears flabbergasted, mouth wide open.

Tom: “First of all, that’s harsh. I gave you a perfectly reasonable response.”

Laura: “You gave me a mathematical response!”

Tom: “It’s just logic!”

Laura: “TO YOU, it’s logic! Anyone else would see it as an opportunity. You’re like the master of drying out conversations.”

Once again, Tom is taking back by Laura’s audacity.

Tom: You know what I’m not? I’m not someone that makes other people feel self-conscience, which is sort of the way you’re making me feel at the moment.”

Laura: “Oh! Believe me when I tell you... you make people feel beyond self-conscience.”

Tom is befuddled.

Tom: “Jeez! This conversation went south... quick! Can’t we just talk about positive stuff, or work, or something?”

Laura continues to look as if she’s enjoying herself.

Laura: “Oh, you can handle it... calm down.”

Although Tom didn’t ask for another glass of wine, the bartender (overhearing some of their conversation) figured they both needed another drink.

Laura: “I do want to ask you a serious question. And I want you to answer it honestly.”

Laura has no intention of asking Tom a serious question.

Laura: “Here’s the scenario, hahaha. A woman overhears 3 guys having a conversation; one is talking about sports, one is talking about sex, and the other is a finance director at a Marketing Firm; who’s all about numbers and percentages. Who is she definitely not sleeping with that night? Hahahahahaha.”

Laura breaks out in full hysterics. Tom hops up as if he’s going to leave.

Laura: “No, no, no... I’m kidding. Come on... sit down.”

Tom acknowledges the satire with a fake giggle.

Laura: “Don’t leave... hahaha.”

Tom: “I’m not leaving, I just need to use the restroom.”

As Tom pushes away from the bar, Laura elevates her voice so that he will hear her as he makes his way to the bathroom.

Laura: “You have to admit, that’s funny!”

About the same time, the guy sitting next to Laura starts looking her up and down. Not the best-looking guy, mind you. Laura coils back and lowers her eyebrows.

Laura: "Dude! Yeah... no!"

When Tom returns from the bathroom, he notices a tall woman standing at the far side of the bar, talking with a few friends. Tom reaches over and taps Laura on the shoulder.

Tom: "Take a look over there."

Laura: "What..."

Tom: "All the way at the end of the bar."

Our film camera switches to following Laura's line of sight. In doing so, viewers will see a much taller than usual woman standing near the lounge entrance with a few friends at her side.

Laura: "Holy shit!"

Tom: "Cale said she's 6 foot. I dare say she's a few inches taller than that."

Laura: "Umm, yeah!"

Tom: "I'm going to introduce myself to her. See if you can't grab that table over there. It looks like those people are getting ready to leave."

Our film camera follows behind Tom as he stands up from his barstool and walks towards the tall woman, presumably Mrs. Switzer. Tom struggles to get through the crowded bar (a little wobbly), but eventually gets himself directly in front of her. Though Tom is a confident man, he's a tad bit drunk, and she's a tad bit taller than he is. Regardless, he extends his hand in hopes of getting her attention, which it does, but not quite the warm reception he was hoping for. And it doesn't help that he's not sure about her first name.

Tom: "My name is Tom McAvery."

Tall Woman: "And..."

Tom: "I wanted to introduce myself to you."

Tall Woman: "And so you have."

There an uncomfortable silence. Tom continues to look up at the tall woman.

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 pulls his card from his wallet and hands it to Mrs. Switzer. She in turn puts his business card in her wallet without actually looking at it. Instead, she continues staring down at Tom as if he's done something wrong. It's an uncomfortable stand-off."

Tom: "I can clearly see you're not interested in talking to me; likely due to the fact that I rudely interrupted you and your colleagues. So, for that... I apologise."

The uncomfortable silence continues a bit longer. Our film camera goes back and forth between Tom and this tall woman, until there's a breaking point.

Tom: "I'm... going to go back to my seat."

Tall Woman: "Wait... wait. What is it that you think I can help you with?"

Tom: "My understanding is that your husband is Howard Switzer. But I apologise, I'm not sure I know your name."

Tall Woman: "Janet. Get to your point!"

Tom turns his head towards the table that Laura has now secured.

Tom: "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. At a minimum, I'll buy the next round of drinks, and I promise not to take up much of your time."

Janet stares hard at Tom for what appears to be an eternity. She then turns to her circle of friends and announces she'll be back in a few minutes.

Janet: "Ok, lead the way."

Our film camera captures Tom and Janet navigating their way back to Laura, who stands up for the introduction. At the same time a beverage server steps in to take everyone's order. From there, everyone takes their seat. Since the viewers already know the situation, there's no need to hear the inquiry between Tom and Janet. Instead, our film camera will simply back up and let the viewers see their mouths moving and heads nodding. Then the focus will turn to the beverage server approaching the table with drinks. From there, our film camera will re-join the conversation in close proximity.

Tom: "In short, I think Heatherton is merging with another law office."

Janet: "Merger or buy-out?"

Tom: "Not sure, but it's big. And no one seems to know anything about it. I figured you're related to Maggie, maybe you know something."

Janet: "Related by marriage, yes, but we're not that close. If she doesn't want to say anything to you, then she's definitely not going to say anything to me."

Everyone takes a sip.

Tom: "Do you Paul Hubbert? My friend Cale said I should talk to him. I don't know him personally, other than the fact that he works for Stabler & Associates."

Janet: "I know Paul; celebrity-wannabe, devorce attorney."

Tom: "Yeah, Cale mentioned he was on TV or something."

Janet: "He was a contestant on the bachelorette."

Tom: "No kidding!"

Janet: "Yep... he was eliminated the first round."

Both Tom and Laura begin laughing.

Janet: "He's actually a good attorney, but yeah, I don't see how he or Stabler & Associates would be of any value to Heatherton."

Tom: "Yeah, I was just thinking that maybe he knows something; seems like he's connected to a lot of people."

Janet: "He's definitely connected. I'd say it's worth your time to reach out to him."

Janet takes another sip of her drink... which appears to be a Martini.

Janet: "Listen, I'm certainly intrigued by this conversation. If I hear anything in my circles, I'll let you know."

Laura somewhat barges into the conversation with a thought.

Laura: "What about Bernard Williamson?"

Tom: "Who's Bernard Williamson?"

Janet: "He's with Swartz-Feldman. Interestingly enough, he and Paul Hubbert were junior legal counsel for the Security & Exchange Commission right out of law school. But again, I don't see how Heatherton would have any interest in them, nor the firms they work for. Nowadays, financial contracts get settled in court, so you have to have lawyers that know how to argue a case in front of a judge."

Janet finishes her drink and announces that she must return to her friends.

Janet: "Good luck on your venture. Again, I'll reach out to you if I hear something."

As Janet stands up, so does Tom and Laura. Again, the height difference is astonishing. Tom looks over at Laura, somewhat perplexed, but waits for Janet to walk away before saying anything.

Tom: "Bernard Williamson? How'd you come up with that name?"

Laura: "He's on those stock market news channels every other day. He claims to be some kind of Wall Street legal expert. I figure... our whole investigation is about money... maybe he knows something."

Tom: "I guess, but... you heard Janet, Heatherton is looking to bring on real litigators."

Just as Tom takes his last sip of wine, the server walks over with their bill.

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

Tom and Laura look unjustifiably dumbfounded. Tom (belligerently) snatches the check from the server's hand.

Tom: "You should have cut us off 4 drinks ago."

Tom signs the check with ferocity in his penmanship. He's pretty much just an ugly drunk at this point.

Tom: "Next time, just bring us the check... we don't need to hear your reasoning."

As the server walks away with the signed bill, Tom lays into her a little more.

Tom: "And tell your manager that the people sitting next to us just got up and left... on account of you not waiting on them!"

The server turns around for a second, gives Tom a shitty look, and then continues on her way. Tom takes another last sip of his wine, even though there isn't really anything left in the glass.

Laura: "Oh man, I'm gonna be feeling this one tomorrow at work."

Our film camera captures Tom and Laura struggling to stand up.

Scene Over

Scene 17

Scenario - Takes place the next morning. Laura and her fiancé, Jeremy are at a small table for two having coffee at Hawthorn's breakfast house in Jersey City before Laura heads off to work. Our main film camera is set up to capture both Laura and Jeremy with a window seat, facing the busy intersection at 9th and Grove Street. Our secondary film cameras are over each of their shoulders to seize specific moments in their dialog as they converse back and forth. Laura is hungover from the night before, Jeremy is... being Jeremy.

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

Jeremy: "What's there to talk about it... 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 pastor; I don't know if you knew that or not."

Laura, still holding her throbbing temples, responds with little enthusiasm.

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

Jeremy continues his thoughts about Father O'Donnell.

Jeremy: "I've seen him through 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."

Jeremy: "Don't get all worked up... there's nothing to worry about."

Laura: "There's like 10 million things that could go wrong, starting with that retarded cousin of yours who thinks he's a professional DJ. No offence."

Jeremy: "Dominik is a good DJ. He knows what he's doing. And Julianna knows how to host a party. Listen... 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 don't need anyone's help."

Laura still looking perturbed

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: "Look, I don't need him reminding me every five seconds that your engagement ring isn't big enough. And tell him he don'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."

Sarcasm turns to smiles as Jeremy gets up from his chair and shimmies over to Laura, kissing her on the neck and reassuring her that everything is going to be ok. At the same time Laura's phone rings; she recognizes the number and answers the call.

Laura: "Hey, Anthony."

There's a pause as she listens. Anthony works at Bonnie's Bakery in Merrick. Apparently, there are changes regarding the wedding cake.

Laura: "No, no, no. I don't want to hear it. 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: "It's Anthony."

Jeremy looks confused

Jeremy: "From the bakery?"

Laura: "Yes, from the bakery!"

Jeremy puts Laura's phone up to his ear; she gives him an unwavering remark.

Laura: "We're getting married in a week, and you're pulling this shit on me right now? I don't want a chocolate fucking wedding cake!

Jeremy: "But the icing is white!"

Laura: "I don't give a shit! No part of that cake is going to be chocolate. You better straighten Anthony out."

There's a slight pause.

Laura: "I have to run to the lady's room."

As Laura walks away, Jeremy starts back-peddling with Anthony as it is clear that chocolate cake with white icing was a bad idea.

Jeremy: "I know, I know, I know. I thought it would be a good, something different, but she doesn't want it."

The viewers can sense that reverting the wedding cake back to vanilla is not big issue, and the conversation quickly comes to a close.

Jeremy: "Thanks, Tone, thanks."

When Jeremy hangs up the call, he hits the camera on Laura's phone and takes a selfie with a quirky face. He then hits the photo app to see what he looks like. Satisfied with the pic, he attempts to lock the selfie onto the screensaver as a joke. In doing so, he sees something on Laura's camera roll that grabs his attention. And... he clicks on it.

The viewers knew the second he touched Laura's phone that he was going to come across that video she made with her roommate, Niki. Within seconds of letting that video play, Jeremy's facial expression is that of a man whose world suddenly turned upside down. He's obviously bewildered and like a train wreck, he can't stop watching. Again, one of our secondary film cameras will hover over his shoulder with the video somewhat in focus. Though Jeremy is rambunctious most of time, he's also a man of great integrity, forthcoming, and conservative in his core beliefs. This video with Laura and Niki is the furthest thing he could ever imagine, and not at all indicative of the woman he thought he knew.

Jeremy, hand over mouth, looks over to see Laura returning from the bathroom. He quickly shuts down her photo app and places the phone on the table in front of her coffee cup. As she approaches the table, she can see that he's distraught. Instead of confronting her, he alludes to an issue at his job that needs immediate attention.

Laura: "What's going on... what's wrong!"

Jeremy: "Nothing, nothing. There's a problem at the shop. I just have to deal with it. I gotta go... I gotta go."

No hug, no goodbye, just a mad dash out of the breakfast shop. Laura is unaware of what Jeremy discovered, but based on his beet-red face, and the manner in which he walked away, she knows that the issue is more significant than a problem at his work.

The scene immediately skips forward to the end of the day, after Laura gets off from work. Footage picks up as Laura enters her apartment, somewhat frantic. Niki is on the couch, and senses something is wrong by the way Laura slams the front door behind her.

Niki: "What's going on!"

Laura: "Fuck, I don't know. I had breakfast with Jeremy, he stormed out, and now he won't return any of my texts."

Laura takes off her jacket and puts her hands over her face.

Laura: "I got two missed calls from his mom; I tried to call her back, it just goes to voicemail."

Niki: "Did you call Donnie at the shop?"

Laura: "Yeah, he said Jeremy didn't come into work today."

Laura starts shaking.

Niki: "You need to calm down; I'm sure there's a perfectly good explanation."

Niki stands up from the couch and walks over to Laura.

Niki: "Did you call Jeremy's father."

Laura looks beyond distraught, but manages to pull her phone out of her handbag.

Laura: "Hopefully he answers..."

Silent ringing: Laura's eyes somewhat light up when Jeremy's father answers the phone. Dialog can only be heard from her side of the call.

Laura: "Bob! It's Laura!"

Laura: "Have you seen or heard from Jeremy today!"

Pause.

Laura: "Why isn't he answering his phone?"

Pause.

Laura: "What!"

Pause.

Laura: "Bob! What are you talking about? What do you mean, it's not a good time?"

Pause.

Laura: "No! No! I'm coming over."

Laura hangs up the call and throws her phone back into her handbag.

Niki: "What the hell is going on!"

Laura talks while pacing the living room.

Laura: "I have no fucking idea, but I'm heading over there right now!"

Niki: "Is Jeremy home?"

Laura: "No, he's at his parent's house, and Bob said he doesn't want to talk to me."

Niki: "What... why?"

Laura: "No idea..."

Niki: "Do you want me to come with you?"

Laura: "No... let me deal with this."

Laura puts her jacket back on and puts her handbag strap over her shoulder.

Niki: "I'll be here if you need me."

Our footage fades as Laura walks out of the apartment, but then immediately comes back into focus when Laura pulls up in front of Jeremy's parent's house. Our film camera rolls along beside her as

she walks up to the front door. Viewers will get a sense that Laura is close with Jeremy's family, and that she's familiar with being in this house, thus she walks right in without knocking.

The very nature of this story is to never pass up an opportunity to highlight Laura's booty and curvy figure, so our film camera stays within close proximity to her backside as she opens the front door and walks in unannounced. She's wearing black leggings, and along with her black leather jacket, she's quite a sight, even in this moment of uncertainty.

Seeing no one in the living room, Laura continues walking towards the kitchen. As she rounds the narrow foyer, she looks down and sees a missed call from Anthony and immediately assumes something is still wrong with the wedding cake. As she enters the dining room, she sees the entire family sitting at the kitchen table. Everyone is staring at her, except Jeremy. It doesn't initially dawn on her that no one is speaking a word, so she just interjects the way she normally would.

Laura: "I just got a missed call from Anthony. I thought we straightened out the cake issue already this morning."

While Jeremy's mother and father stare directly at Laura, Jeremy's brother turns and looks the other way.

Laura: "What? What's wrong!"

Our film camera looks back at Jeremy's family from Laura's perspective. Jeremy's demeanor, body language, and swollen eyes reveal the immense stress he's under. Jeremy's mother, ever so kind, walks over to Laura and offers her a seat. Laura becomes a little defensive.

Laura: "I don't want to sit down. Tell me what's wrong?"

There's a slight pause before Jeremy's mother speaks up.

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!"

It takes Laura a second for it to kick in, but then her face turns pink with embarrassment.

Jeremy's mother: "Let's all just sit down and talk this through."

Mortified to no end, Laura somehow has enough backbone to ask everyone to leave the kitchen, except Jeremy.

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

Jeremy's mother: "We don't keep secrets in this house."

Laura, while still defensive, responds to Jeremy's mother in a calm and sensible manor.

Laura: "Debra, I respect that this is your home and I appreciate that we've always been open with one another... but I need five minutes with Jeremy... alone."

As everyone excuses themselves from the kitchen table, you can hear Jeremy's teenage sister in another room (apparently eavesdropping). She's... a little more outspoken than the rest of the family.

Jeremy's sister: "She needs to show us that damn video!"

Our film camera stays with Laura as everyone but Jeremy exits the Kitchen.

Laura: "Jeremy, it's not how it looks."

Jeremy voice, while scratchy, begins to pick up volume.

Jeremy: "It's exactly how it looks!" Who are you!"

Laura reaches out to put her arm on Jeremy's shoulder, but he quickly pulls away and begins to cry. Laura attempts to calm him down.

Laura, "I made the video because I was subconscious about the way I look..."

Before Laura can continue to explain, Jeremy cuts her off. The volume of his voice is at a steady climb.

Jeremy: "I don't care about that! It's not about how you look, it's about what you said! I'm not that person... I don't talk to you that way! You were describing someone that isn't me! So, who is he?"

There's a slight pause as Jeremy tries to catch his breath. His volume continues to grow.

Jeremy: "Are you cheating on me!"

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

Jeremy: "No you weren't. No... you weren't joking. You were talking about some guy that calls you a bitch and a whore. Who is he? I'll break is fucking neck!"

Each time Laura tries to speak, Jeremy cuts her off. But then it reaches a point where Jeremy starts to hyperventilate.

Jeremy: "I can't breathe... I can't breathe... I think I'm having a heart attack."

As the intensity of the situation increases, so does Laura's voice. The viewers will get a sense that Laura is somewhat unsympathetic to Jeremy's ardent reaction.

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

Jeremy rises from his seat, but then slumps towards the countertop in a very over dramatic way. From there, he lays his forehead in the crease of his elbow, bangs his fist, and continues to sob.

Jeremy: "Why...why!"

Laura: "Jesus Christ, Jeremy! I didn't do anything!"

Laura steps towards Jeremy and puts her hand on his back, but once again he shrugs her off.

Laura: "There's no one else, it's just you. Niki and I were being silly... girl stuff... I'm sorry."

Jeremy: "I don't know you. You're not the person I knew."

At this point Laura genuinely believes that Jeremy is completely overinflating the issue, so she lashes back at him.

Laura: "It's no big deal! What's your problem?"

Jeremy lifts his head in shock.

Jeremy: "What's my problem! Are you kidding me right now?"

Laura: "You're acting like a baby... snap out of it!"

Jeremy is stunned over the fact that Laura is so obtuse. There's a brief pause, and for whatever reason, Laura decides to invigorate her previous statement with something even more outlandish.

Laura: "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."

Not a split second later, Jeremy lets out the loudest "Fuck You" in the history of F-Bombs. As such, his family charges back into the kitchen to break matters up. As Jeremy's mother attempts to comfort him, he pulls away, puts his finger in Laura's face and screams at the top of his lungs.

Jeremy: "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: "Woe, woe, woe, that's enough!"

The situation gravitates to a physical altercation; Jeremy's father and brother literally put themselves between Laura and Jeremy as they tear into each other. During the chaos, Jeremy's mother loses her footing and collapses to the floor. It takes a few second before everyone realizes the seriousness of her fall. Jeremy pushes his father out of the way to tend to his mother, who's now sitting upright and clutching her ankle. Jeremy looks back at Laura.

Jeremy: "See what you did!"

Jeremy's mother hitting the floor put's Laura in a frozen state of surrealism.

Jeremy's father: "Laura, I'm sorry, but I have to ask you to leave."

Ever so gently, Jeremy's father places his hand on Laura's lower back and escorts her out of the kitchen. From there, he gingerly ushers Laura through the living room and out the front door. As the screen door closes behind them, the reality of situation starts to have an emotional toll on Laura. Jeremy's father stands with her on the porch as she begins to cry.

Jeremy's father: "It's a brave new world out there, and Jeremy is not ready for that. He's devastated. And he needs his family right now. I'm sure you can understand that."

As Jeremy's father begins to walk back in the house, Laura plops down on the stoop and continues to cry in a muffled manner. Our film camera backs up to the sidewalk leading towards the stoop in order to get a full spectrum of the front porch and this last-minute interaction between Laura and Jeremy's father.

Jeremy's father: "Look. I'll talk to him. But this is bad."

As the door closes, Laura's phone rings. Viewers will see that it's Niki checking to see if everything is ok. Laura continues to cry as she answers the call.

Laura: "It's over... done... wedding's off."

Pause as Niki responds.

Laura: "No... it's over."

Laura abruptly hangs up on Niki and lowers her head once again to manage the tears. As the footage begins to fade out, a window next to the front door opens. Viewers will once again hear the presence of Jeremy's younger sister as she voices her opinion from inside the 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.

Jeremy's teenage sister: "Get your fat ass off our property."

Scene over

Scene 18

Scenario – Fast forward from Friday to Monday morning at HDM. Our film camera is in Tom's office; Nancy walks in holding a sympathy card.

Tom: "What's this?"

Nancy: "Laura and her fiancé called off the wedding."

Tom: "Wait... what?"

Nancy places the card in front of Tom and asks him if he wants to sign it. The situation catches Tom off guard, and it's just like him to wonder if Laura's failed engagement was a result of his relationship with her outside of work.

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

The wheels in Tom's head begin to spin. His response is far from genuine.

Tom: "This is horrible. She has to be absolutely crushed."

Nancy: "It can't be good, that's for sure."

Tom: "Does she have family nearby, someone that can be with her?"

Nancy: "She's with her roommate, and 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 looks at Tom oddly.

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 becomes a tad irate.

Nancy: "Jesus Christ, Tom. 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 know who broke up with who."

Nancy and Tom have always had this sort of rub between them. But fact of the matter is that Tom is naturally insensitive, and the new-yorker in Nancy aims to set him straight.

Nancy: "There is no other day in a woman's life more important than her wedding day. It's a lifelong dream. And in this case, ripped apart. But in your analytical mind, there must be a measure of how bad something really is."

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 direction in order for you to feel better about it."

Tom appears unemotional, so Nancy snatches the sympathy card off of his desk and storms out of the office. From there, Tom picks up his phone and starts texting Laura. Our film camera takes a shoulder surfing position as Tom pecks away on his miniature keypad.

Tom's text: "Good morning."

Before Tom hits send, he has a little chat with himself. Viewers hear his inner thoughts.

Tom: "Good morning? Terrible choice of words. There's nothing good about it. Although... it could be good... no... ugh... think, think."

Our film camera zooms in as Tom back spaces his initial text and starts over.

Tom's text: "Nancy just informed me. Let me know if there's anything I can do. Please don't hesitate to call or text."

Tom talks to himself again.

Tom: "Sounds much better. Oh... maybe I should add a little prayer emoji... no... that's a bit much. It's good the way it is, just send it. And... send!"

Tom puts his phone down for maybe 15 seconds before picking it back up to see if she responded. Nothing. He places the phone down again for the same amount of time to see if his luck changes. But still no response. From there our film camera follows Tom as he leaves his office and walks towards the reception area. We'll then film him approaching the receptionist, Gracie, all the while looking down at his phone to see if Laura responded.

Tom: "Gracie, can you do me a big favor?"

Gracie: "Sure, Tom."

Tom: "First, let me ask you something. How much does a nice bouquet of flowers cost? Like purchased here in the city?"

Gracie: "Geez, I don't know... \$250."

Tom: "There's an employee on the 4th floor going through a rough patch right now. Nancy and her team are putting together a card, and I'm guessing they are going to send flowers. I want you to offer to pay for the flowers out of my account."

Gracie: "I can take care of that for you."

Just as Tom begins to turn back towards his office, Pete rounds the corner. No real words are spoken. Pete simply raises his MacBook to chest level, and says, "4pm." Tom nods his head, confirming their meeting. He then looks back at the receptionist.

Tom: "No matter what Nancy says... \$250, not a penny more."

Tom gives Gracie a flat-hand, slash across the neck gesture to further instill not going over his stated amount for the flowers.

Gracie: "Understood."

Footage picks up at 4pm later that day; Tom and Peter are having their meeting... at Dion's, of course. They are already on their second round of drinks.

Peter: "Two things we need to cover down on. One, Rockingham Gamers; I need a full cost analysis. And I mean everything, year to date. I'm not meeting with them until next week, so take your time, but I ratings, percentage shares, prime/non-prime demographics, the whole thing."

Tom: "What's going on with them?"

Peter: "Same as everyone else. They think their product sells itself, and that they don't need to advertise it. We of course know that isn't true, but now I have to explain it with numbers. Irrefutable numbers, I might add."

Tom: "We Just rolled out another streaming ad for them the other day. They're blowing up big time. I'm surprised they're not hitting us up for more spots."

Peter: "I agree. But apparently, they hired this cock-sucker to audit their spending. He's pushing back on some older invoices. He's been calling our accounting department almost every day. Some bullshit about not wanting to pay for ads that run after midnight."

Tom: "Who told you that?"

Peter: "I overheard Big Bird talking about it. There's like 2 or 3 unpaid invoices that are net 90 as of today."

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

Tom: "Joyce."

Peter: "What?"

Tom tilts his head to the side, and talks a little slower.

Tom: "Joyce... from accounting."

Peter looks confused.

Peter: "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: "You called her Big Bird."

Peter: "I did?"

Tom looks perturbed.

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!"

Tom continues to stare. Peter's face is all wrinkled up.

Peter: "You act like I don't know the people who work for us."

Tom shakes his head, Peter fades back into being insensitive.

Peter: "Joyce isn't the only woman in accounting with a big-giant schnoz."

Tom shakes his head as if there's no hope.

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

Peter takes a 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 know you're trying to figure out what's going on over there, 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 entire top floor of 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're usually the first person to press for this kind of business. You know how much it cost to renovate a floor here in Manhattan. Something is not right. They are a law firm. Law firms advertise! That's what they do; that's where they spend their money."

Peter: "Look, I realize this situation is not the kettle of fish you were hoping for, but it is what it is. The agreement that Alex put together for Maggie to sign... that is 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."

There's a bit of silence, followed by Tom receiving 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."

Our film camera hangs back as Tom steps away from the bar and walks towards the restaurant entrance with his phone to his ear. In the background, viewers see and hear Peter giving Clinton a hard time.

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

Tom returns to the bar minutes later and announces that he has to leave.

Peter: "What do you mean, you got to go?"

Tom: "I got this thing I need to take care of."

Peter: "What thing! What could be more important than our meeting?"

As Tom grabs his jacket, Peter looks over the bar at Clinton."

Peter: "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: "Tom, you can't leave your boy hanging!"

Tom starts walking away, Clinton keeps talking.

Clinton: "Come on Tom... don't leave me alone with Pete. That ain't right, man!"

Peter: "Oh, I'll remember that when it comes time to your tip."

Scene Over

CT Scene 19

Scenario – Footage takes place at Laura’s apartment. Our film camera is set up at the far side of the couch and aimed at the front door. The doorbell rings; Laura stands up wearing a robe with her hair in a bun. We’ll film her at a distance walking towards the front door, and then zoom in over her shoulder as she opens the door and sees Tom. Then will pull the camera back behind the couch as she invites him in and they walk towards the living room.

Laura: “Thanks for coming by.”

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 this can this be fixed; 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: “Yeah, she came by earlier, which really helped. And by the way, thanks for the flowers.”

Our film camera pans towards the arrangement on the coffee table.

Tom: “If you need a few days off, by all means, take it. I’ll make sure you get paid.”

Laura: “I’ve been on this couch three days... I don’t need any more time off. I need to go back to work, focus on something... anything to distract me from this.”

Tom: “I know you probably don’t want to hear this, but... this kind of thing warrants talking to a professional; some kind of therapist. I can set that up for you.”

Laura: “Thanks... and I will, but right now what I need is to wrap my head around anything other than my shortcomings.”

Laura pauses before speaking further.

Laura: “Should I even ask how the Heatherton account is going?”

Tom: “I wish I had better news, but it’s kind of dead in the water. According to Pete, Alex is going to send over the contract this week, and Maggie is likely to sign it.”

Laura: “Well, it’s not going to be this week, she’s on vacation.”

Tom: “Right, but point being, you and I have exhausted our efforts in finding out what’s going on over there.”

Tom kind of stares off into the distance, and then it dawns on him that Laura is still in a state of sadness and uncertainty.”

Tom: "In light of what you're going through, it feels odd standing here talking about work."

Laura: "I need the distraction... trust me."

Tom picks his next words carefully.

Tom: "I guess I should be going... but, I'll hang out longer if you want me to... talk more... or maybe watch a movie or something."

Laura: "What I really want is to get out of this apartment for a while... get a drink. Can we do that?"

Tom: "Eh... sure."

Tom pauses for a second before adding an additional thought.

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 get out of here."

Tom: "Ok. Let's do it."

Laura: "Alright, let me change real quick."

As Laura walks into her bedroom, she pauses and hollers back at Tom.

Laura: "Please don't say anything to Romain about my situation."

Tom: "Ok, but... you know how he is... he's likely to ask you how it's going with Jeremy."

Laura: "I understand, but just let me deal with it."

Laura emerges from her bedroom wearing worn-out Lucky Brand Jeans and her go-to black leather jacket. As they walk towards the front door, the spectrum of footage capitalizes on Laura's backside. Her walking in a pair of jeans... some would consider as good as it gets

Footage picks back up at the Palmetto Lounge. Romain is sitting at a table with two men dressed in suits; very different from his normal entourage. Tom and Laura hang back until the two men stand up and walk away. Romain blurts out the not-so-obvious.

Romain: "Friends from the old neighborhood."

Romain and Laura make eye contact.

Laura: "Hello Romain."

Romain: "Laura."

After Romain acknowledges Laura, he turns his attention to Tom.

Romain: "Have a seat."

Tom and Laura sit.

Tom: "Romain, you paid last time, let me pay this time."

Romain: "Be my guest."

Tom: "Laura, you want your usual?"

Laura: "Hold on a second. I need to text Niki and let her know I'm here with you. If she comes home and I'm not there, she's liable to send out a search party."

As Laura fiddles with her phone, a waitress approaches the table, ready to take drink orders. She stares at Laura until Laura acknowledges her presence.

Laura: "Umm... a cosmopolitan... and a shot of tequila."

Romain: "Oh, it's that kind of afternoon. Well, in that case I'll have the same."

Tom: "I'll have a Chablis."

Waitress: "Three shots of tequila?"

Tom: "No... just two... for them."

Romain: "Come on Tom!"

Tom: "I'll do a lemon drop, or something like that, but no tequila. That's just not for me."

Laura: "Lemon drop?"

Romain: "Hahaha, yeah Tom, really? What are we... fourteen!"

Tom: "I didn't know you when I was fourteen, but something tells me that you probably were drinking at that age."

Romain puts his hand on the waitress's arm.

Romain: "My non tequila drinking friend will have a shot of Lemon Absolute Vodka."

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-inquires about the lemon drop.

Laura: "Vodka and lemon juice?"

Romain: "Pretty much..."

Laura: "Weird."

Tom: "Hey, I'm just trying to play along."

Romain: "So says the last person on earth who drinks Chablis."

Slight pause before Tom changes the subject.

Tom: "Romain, when you and I were texting, you mentioned Paul Hubbert. What's the story with that guy?"

Romain: "Word around the campfire is that he's overseeing that renovation in your client's building."

Tom: "He's an attorney; what does he know about construction."

Romain: "Not sure, but my friend's brother is the superintendent on that project. He told me that Paul signs off on the completed work, and that Heatherton is footing the bill."

Tom: "Do you think your friend's brother could arrange for us to meet Paul."

Romain: "I can ask..."

Romain's phone rings.

Romain: "Hey, excuse me for a second, I need to take this call."

As Romain walks away, Laura turns her attention to Tom.

Laura: "I thought you said that this was dead in the water."

Tom: "It is... I'm just curious."

Romain returns.

Romain: "Hey, sorry about that."

Tom continues conversing with Laura.

Tom: "Laura, what's the name of that attorney you mentioned last week; the stock market guy?"

Laura: "Bernard Williamson."

Tom: "Romain, do you know who we're talking about?"

Romain: "The guy on TV? Yeah, I know who you're talking about... I don't know him personally."

Tom: "Last week we found out that he and Paul Hubbert were junior council members for the SEC, right out of law school. We're trying to figure out if they're in business together."

Laura: "Bernard and Paul are definitely friends. They're constantly commenting on each other's Instagram page."

Tom: "Yeah, I saw that... everyone's talking about the hemisphere game."

Laura: "So ridiculous... grown men playing video games."

The waitress brings their drinks.

Romain: "What is it? I don't know what you're talking about."

Tom: "One of our clients, Rockingham Gamers, created this real-world, game of life simulator; it's all over the news."

Romain: "Oh, yeah-yeah-yeah... there's a whole congressional hearing taking place regarding that game... that's your client?"

Tom: "Yep."

Romain: "Hmmm."

Laura: "It's retarded... if you ask me."

Tom: "I don't know if I would go that far; it's got merit with respect to AI and the metaverse concept."

Laura: "I still say it's retarded."

Romain: "I don't understand the controversy."

Tom: "In a sense, it's the first video game to introduce cryptocurrency as a gaming investment platform."

Romain: "And that warrants a congressional hearing?"

Tom: "The government alleges that the game is funded through a crypto blockchain that was developed in China."

Romain: "Oh ok, yeah, I can see how that might raise suspicion."

Laura: "The story that 60 minutes ran alluded to people making money while playing the game; how does that work?"

Tom: "The best way to explain it is to say that this game allows players to purchase imaginary possessions with crypto currencies, and then sell those possessions to other gamers for more than what they paid."

Laura: "Wait, what?"

Tom: "I know it sounds silly, but you can buy cars, boats, jewelry; pretty much anything you can think of... and you can sell it to another player at a profit."

Laura: "Hold on a second; all this shit is fake, right?"

Tom: "I believe the preferred word is, imaginary."

Laura: "Ok, sure, but... we're talking about non-tangible items that have legitimate value... with the potential of going up in price depending on supply and demand."

Tom: "Haha, yes! You could go into a jewelry store, purchase an imaginary Rolex, and then turn right around and flip it for a 5% to 10% gain."

Romain: "Why not just walk into the same jewelry store and buy that same watch?"

Tom: "Just as Laura pointed out... supply and demand. The game only allows for so many watches. And just like in the real world, everybody wants what someone else has."

Romain: "Could I buy a house?"

Tom: "Yes... but it cost the same as buying an actual house."

Romain: "That's crazy! Who would take that kind of gamble?"

Tom: "I'm with you... it seems incredibly risky."

Romain holds up his shot glass; Tom and Laura do the same.

Romain: "Cheers!"

Shots taken, and they resume drinking their wine and cocktails.

Laura: "Why do they call it, Hemisphere?"

Tom: "That's a good question, I have no idea, but it does have a nice ring to it... in terms of how it relates to metaverse."

Laura: "Seems more like a Monopoly game than anything else."

Tom: "Yeah, but on top of buying houses and hotels, you can be a doctor, lawyer, or some other profession and make money that way."

Laura: "How would I make money as a doctor?"

Tom: "Just like in real life, your character in the game might get sick, or have some kind of accident, which in turn becomes paid medical expenses to someone whose character is in that particular medical field."

Laura shakes her head.

Laura: "That is absolutely absurd."

Romain asks the waitress to bring another round of shots.

Romain: "Are people playing this game right now?"

Tom: "There's a pilot version floating around, but it officially launches on New Year's Eve."

There's a slight pause.

Romain: "I think the allure of crypto currency will definitely draw people to the game. I actually bought some crypto last year, so I can see this game being popular if there's way to make money."

Tom: "No kidding, you own crypto?"

Romain: "Yeah, I have some Bitcoin."

Tom: "Have you ever bought anything with it?"

Romain: "No."

There another slight pause.

Tom: "I keep reading about that guy down in Miami that sells oceanfront condos; he only accepts Bitcoin. You know what I'm talking about it?"

Romain: "Haha, yeah, you sent me the link. What was the catch phrase? I can't remember."

Tom: "Five Coin Condos."

Romain: "Hahaha, yep, that's it. I think I own half of one coin."

Laura: "Romain, don't let Tom drag you down into his financial vortex; you'll never get out."

Tom shakes his head.

Tom: "Crypto currencies are not in my vortex. Bitcoin was invented as a means to purchase software online without paying sales tax under the premise that software is non tangible. But now everyone, including myself, can see that these blockchains are creating wealth. Hence, video games are buying into it."

Laura looks around the room as if anyone might be listening.

Laura: "Tom... you're doing that thing again!"

Tom: "What thing?"

Laura: "That thing where you bore everyone to tears."

Romain: "Hahahaha."

Tom: "Ok, well, you and everyone else is saying that the metaverse isn't real, and I'm telling you that our client is sitting on 2.5 million pre-orders... all paid for with crypto... and in my world, that makes it real!"

Laura: "Fine, that means there are 2.5 million retarded people in the world."

Romain: "Hahaha, I know I shouldn't laugh at that... but... hahaha."

Viewers see Romain summons the waitress, and at the same time he pulls up the Rockingham Gamers website on his phone.

Romain: What does it mean when they say, "Free will?"

Laura (knowing nothing about the game) answers Romain's question with sarcasm before Tom gets a chance to answer.

Laura: "Yeah, so, that means you can rob a bank, or knock over a liquor store... that kind of thing."

Tom: "That's actually correct... you can commit crimes, but if you get caught, the game moderator can impose financial penalties."

Laura: "What? I was joking!"

Romain: "Boy, this just keeps getting better and better."

Tom: "No, that is in fact the free will aspect of the game."

Laura: "That is fucking idiotic! Who's going to play a game where you could get robbed and lose money... real or otherwise!"

Romain: "Hahahaha... I can't get enough of this... I really can't."

Laura raises her voice.

Laura: "I supposed you can kill a person in this game if you want to!"

Tom: "Umm... you can, yes! And you can go to prison; not only losing your right to play the game, but forfeiting all of your currency as well."

Laura looks absolutely perturbed.

Laura: "Alright, I'm done talking about this... complete bullshit!"

Romain: "Hahahaha..."

Romain, still laughing, still looking at his phone, somewhat changes the conversation.

Romain: "So this guy, Dameon Blankenship, he's the CEO of Rockingham Gamers?"

Tom: "Yep."

The waitress returns with the second round of shots. Laura scrolls through her phone.

Laura: "Interestingly enough, Bernard Williamson and Dameon Blankenship both went to the university of Kentucky. And in fact, they played lacrosse together."

Tom: "Really? I thought Bernard went to NYU."

Laura: "I just sent you the link, take a look. He went to NYU law after graduating Kentucky with an engineering degree."

Romain looks a little tipsy.

Romain: "Let's toast to the mystery to end all mysteries, hahaha."

All three shot glasses come together again, and the clank is audibly loud.

Tom: "Let's think about this for a second. Maggie knows Paul Hubbert, and he's somehow engaged with the renovations at the Heatherton building. Paul and Bernard Williamson went to Law school together. Bernard and Dameon Blankenship went to Kentucky together. So, what's the connection here?"

Romain: "Could there be a relationship between Rockingham Gamers and Heatherton?"

Tom: "Heatherton specializes in contract laws here in New York. Rockingham Gamers is down in North Carolina."

Laura: "I'm starting to think we've dug way too far into this, and that it's becoming conveniently coincidental. You know what I mean?"

Tom: "You're probably right."

Romain: "I say we order another round of drinks."

Tom: "No more shots for me!"

Laura: "Come on Tom... lighten up!"

Tom: "Nope... I'll have another Chablis, but that's it."

Romain: "Chablis, hahaha! Tom, every time you say that, it cracks me up. I mean... I'm gay, and that's somehow... gay'er, hahahaha."

Laura starts laughing.

Laura: "When I was like 5, I remember seeing a bottle of Chablis that my aunt Silvia brought over to the house for Thanksgiving."

Romain: "Hahahaha."

Laura can barely get the words out, on account of laughing so hard.

Laura: "And nobody drank it, hahahaha."

Romain: "HAHAHAHAHAHAHA!"

Romain might as well be on the floor at this point. Tom has absolutely no expression.

Romain: "Oh my god, I can't take it."

The waitress comes back to see if they want another round, and that somehow just re-sparks the laughter that Laura and Romain are having.

Romain: "Yes, another round of tequila, but no Vodka shot this time. Hahaha... just... Chablis... hahaha."

Laura: "Hahahaha."

Tom: "You two are ridiculous! See, that's why I don't drink tequila."

There's a slight pause as our film camera captures the expression on everyone's face.

Laura: "I don't why, but this all feels so ironic; I mean... we could sit here and drink all day, and no one is going to cut us off."

Tom: "Why is that ironic?"

Laura: "I don't know... like... we're here with Romain... and we're sort of untouchable... I guess."

Romain: "What! What do you mean, hahaha."

Laura: "Romain, please! We're in a bar mostly occupied by cops, and yet you get to walk right in here, sit wherever want, and everyone treats you like the president."

Romain: "The president? Hahaha."

Tom announces that he has to run to the men's room. Meanwhile, the waitress returns with round number three (cosmos, tequila shots... and of course, Chablis).

Romain: "First of all, my uncle retired as chief of police. My cousin Tony is a cop, my cousin Al is a cop, my sister and my sister-in-law are both dispatchers. And you wonder why I hang out here."

Laura: "Are you putting me on?"

Romain: "No!"

Romain pauses for a moment as Laura sort of sways back and forth.

Romain: "Are you drunk?"

Laura: "A little..."

Romain: "Something about you is different today."

Romain adds some Italian language to his thought.

Romain: "Qualcosa è cambiato a casa?"

Laura: "Yeah, big changes."

Laura pauses before responding in Italian.

Laura: "Non sposarsi."

Romain: "Il mio cuore e la mia preghiera vanno a voi."

Laura brings both of her hands up to her heart and thanks Romain for his prayers and sympathy. At this time, Tom returns from the bathroom and can see that the tempo has changed.

Tom: "What happened to the Dean Martin comedy hour?"

Romain: "Unlike you my friend, Laura and I wear our emotions on our sleeves, both joy and pain."

Tom's eyebrows rise up, and there's a slight delay before he responds.

Tom: "I just hold my liquor better than you two."

Laura: "Oh, please, you do not."

Romain and Laura make an Italian toast. Tom tries to touch his Chablis to their shot glasses, but they reject him, in a funny kind of way.

Romain: "Ok, where we going next?"

Tom: "No, no, no, no... that ship sailed 3 tequila shots ago. I have to get Laura home, especially if she's planning on working tomorrow."

Romain: "Oh, you're no fun!"

Tom waves the waitress down for the check. Romain reaches for his wallet."

Tom: "I told you I would pay."

Romain: "Oh... yes, you did say that."

Laura: "Umm, can I just get one more shot?"

Tom: "Absolutely not!"

Tom hands the waitress his VISA black.

Romain: "So... what will become of your client?"

Tom: "Oh, I don't know. I think I've taken it as far as it can go. They are either going to continue being our client, or they're not."

Romain: "That's too bad, I was having fun with all of this."

Tom: "Don't worry, I have plenty of other clients trying to leave us, so I dare say there will be many opportunities for us to get together... if for no other reason than to drown my sorrows."

Romain: "Is it that bad in your industry?"

Tom: "Clients just aren't as loyal as they used to be, and we're not as aggressive as we need to be."

Waitress returns with the bill. Tom signs the check and stands up.

Romain: "Hang in there my friend."

The scene ends as Laura stands up from the table, somewhat wobbly, and announces that she would like to use the lady's room before they leave. Tom, Romain, and our film camera focus on Laura's backside as she fades off towards the restroom.

Romain: "You don't see a figure on a woman like that every day."

Tom: "Yeah... as if I didn't notice."

The scene fades and we fast forward to Laura and Tom walking up to Laura's apartment after leaving the Palmetto Lounge. Laura is intoxicated and struggling to find her key to the door. Tom of little help.

Tom: "No, no... just show me which key it is..."

Laura hands Tom a giant keychain full of keys.

Tom: "Jesus Christ, there must be 20 keys on this loop... who needs this many keys!"

Laura: "It's the blue key."

As Tom fiddles for the right key, Laura, without warning, steps up to him and starts kissing him on the mouth. The kiss is very intense and passionate, so much in fact that Tom drops the entire set of keys. After about 30 seconds, she pulls away and begins lowering herself. Her left hand runs down Tom's chest as she descends to a full squatting position. Our film camera is looking over Tom's shoulder and focused down towards Laura's face, which is now level to the bulge in Tom's slacks. There's a brief pause as Laura's tilts her head back and looks up at Tom for his approval. From there, viewers will see Laura lean to her right, and then reach down for the keys. Though it looks like she getting ready to do a whole lot of something down there, her hand makes it no further than just above Tom's zipper. Our film camera zooms out as Laura slowly rises once again to a full standing position. She jingles the keys in front of Tom face, highlighting the blue front door key... which actually looks like a little house.

Laura: "This is the correct key."

No response from Tom. Laura holds eye contact a few seconds more before turning her body and attention towards the front door. Though clearly drunk, she's able to insert the key on the first try and turn the handle. She looks back at Tom before opening the door.

Laura: "You're a good kisser, Tom. Not sure why I'm surprised by that."

The scene ends with the door closing behind Laura. Footage fades slowly, capturing the left side of Tom's entire body as he continues to stand there in a state bewilderment.

Scene over

Scene 20

Scenario – Takes place at HDM the next morning in Alex's office. Our film camera is just outside of the door frame. Tom is standing overtop of Alex's desk; Alex is leaning back in his chair.

Alex: "I understand the situation, but he wants the contract delivered and signed this week."

Tom: "Maggie is on vacation this week, so you're not going to get it signed until Monday at best."

Alex: "Nancy is supposed to go over there today and meet with Alvarez. He's covering for Maggie."

Tom: "You know he isn't going to sign it until Maggie gets back!"

Alex: "Tom, I have a lot on my plate today, I don't have time for this. And I damn sure don't need Pete breathing down my neck; I barely get along with him as it is."

Tom turns slightly to his right and pushes Alex's door closed. The viewers will get a sense that Tom doesn't want anyone to hear this discussion he's having with Alex.

Tom: "There's a very good chance that Heatherton might option for a whole new ad campaign, new commercial, the whole works. And I'm talking about a contract that is... three, maybe four times what they're paying now. I just need a few more days."

Tom looks over his shoulder to make absolutely sure no one is listening, and lowers his voice even more. Our film camera continues to capture the conversation from the far corner of Alex's office.

Tom: "This kind of deal... it's the difference between 5-10 percent in bonuses this year."

Tom holds up his index finger and thumb to illustrate the physical distance of one inch.

Tom: "We are (this) close. Can you please just wait until next week?"

Alex takes a semi deep breath and nods his head.

Alex: "Alright."

Tom gives Alex a quick thanks and jets out of his office. Our film camera follows behind Tom as he retreats back to his own office. There waiting for him is Peter, pacing and speaking erratically into his iPhone.

Peter: "Junaaid, it's a block of non-prime commercial spots. Also, it's only considered prime time if we run your commercial on a major network. And you're not getting charged for spots that run after midnight."

There a pause as Peter listens hastily.

Peter: "No, I hear exactly what you're saying, but you're in the business of making games. I'm in the business of understanding demographics and deploying the analytics that push your product to the most likely buyers."

There's another pause as Peter gives his phone the middle finger, and at the same time mouthing the words (fuck you) to the caller.

Peter: "Yes, you can run a 50/50 spot, and cap at 11:30pm if that makes you feel better, but it doesn't reduce the cost."

Another listening pause.

Peter: "If that's what you want, I'll make it happen."

Another pause.

Peter: "Yes, I will send you a confirmation as soon as I get it over to the network."

Peter looks over at Tom as he ends the call and throws his phone against the wall. Our film camera is somewhat outside of Tom's office looking in.

Peter: "Oh my god, I can't stand that mother fucker!"

Tom: "Who was that?"

Peter: "He's the guy I was telling you about at Rockingham Gamers... Junaid."

Tom: "Is he still pushing back on the invoices?"

Peter: "He just keeps coming up with new bullshit every time I talk to him!"

Peter picks up his iPhone.

Peter: "Despite all the controversy, they're making money hand over fist, so it's not like they can't afford to pay these invoices."

Peter wipes the dirt and dust off of his phone screen.

Peter: "We are the reason everyone knows who the FUCK they are!"

Peter shakes his head; Tom puts his hand up to his forehead.

Tom: "I'm sure you already know this, but they are late, as in net 120, sitting on four unpaid invoices. This is usually when we send the... not-so-nice letter."

Peter: "A year ago... no one knew who they were. Now, their name is everywhere. They're on the New York Times news feed again today."

Tom: "Yeah, I saw that. They got everyone all upset with that new game they're releasing."

Peter: "It's good press for them, but... it's not helping our situation."

Peter continues to pace around Tom's office.

Peter: "John does not like being associated with them. In fact, he said that if they don't pay their old invoices, he is not gonna back their New Year's Eve campaign."

Tom: "Oh, he says that... meanwhile, it's only thing we have in the hopper right now for next year."

Peter: "I hear you, but make no mistake about it... he's seriously on the fence about doing business with them."

Tom: "Yeah, well, he'll be singing a different tune if we land their advertising rights for the next 2-years."

Slight pause as Tom shuffles past Peter.

Tom: "You two still flying down to North Carolina to meet with them next week?"

Peter: "Just Alex and I. John is going out to Vegas for that guest speaker gig."

Tom: "Oh, right, right."

Peter jostle with his phone; all the while changing the subject.

Peter: "Hey, that proposal you did for Light Speed... numbers aren't right."

Tom: "What are you talking about?"

Peter: "Check your email. I marked up the file and sent it back to you."

Slight pause.

Peter: "In the seven years I've know you, this is the first time I've seen a number's error."

Tom: "Impossible."

Peter: "Pull it up real quick. Could be a typo, but we gotta get it right."

As Tom fumbles with his laptop, he nonchalantly brings up the Heatherton account.

Tom: "Before I forget, I was talking to Alex about the fact that Maggie is on vacation, and that he might have to wait until Monday to get the Heatherton contract signed."

Peter: "I spoke with Alvarez, he's filling in for Maggie. He can sign the contract. Alex has it handled; nothing to worry about it."

Tom looks up at Peter, and then quickly looks away. It's never been clearer that he's going against Peter's expressed directions, and now he has Alex involved.

Peter: "How come you haven't been at the bar lately?"

Tom: "Been trying to spend more time at the gym."

Slight pause before Peter elaborates.

Peter: "Luis cut me off yesterday."

Tom: "Luis? Sheffield? Hahaha. I haven't seen him around the restaurant in months. He must have specifically come in there to deal with you, Hahaha."

Peter: "The guy is a complete jagoff."

Tom: "Let me here you say that in front of John... talking about his precious son-in-law that way."

Peter: "Let me find out he's running his mouth about my bill; John will be the first person I tell."

Tom: "Listen, you have to play the game when it comes to Luis. He's a straight shooter. It's not about the bill. He just wants you to respect him."

Peter: "Fuck that. The only reason he owns that joint is because of me."

Tom: "What is your tab, by the way?"

Peter: "Like... \$200."

Tom: "That's it! And you can't pay that?"

Peter: "It's the principle of the whole thing. Besides, my wife has been looking over my expenses lately."

Tom: "What do you tell her?"

Peter: "I tell her that I go to Dion's a couple of times a week for lunch."

Tom: "How do you explain the other days?"

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 haven't... and she knows that! But of course, she's going to eventually ask me, and catch me in a lie."

Peter: "She's not going to say anything to you, calm down!"

There a bit of a pause as Peter tries to refocus on work.

Peter: "Alright, let's concentrate on LightSpeed..."

As Tom pecks away on his keyboard, Peter points at the screen.

Peter: "Right there... line 87. Doesn't add up."

Tom highlights the details and Peter nods his head.

Peter: "Yep, change that... and we should be good."

Footage fades out and then resumes a few hours later at Dion's. Tom reengages Peter with their earlier conversation regarding his unpaid bar tab. They sit in their usual seats and our film camera takes its position at the bar, catty-corner from where they are seated.

Tom: "Pete, you have well-provided for your family. You put a lot of hours in the office, and you've made enough money to set your wife and kids up for life. You are financially entitled to a few drinks at this bar after work."

Peter: "Yeah, I know."

Tom: "Then why are you telling her you're at the gym with me?"

Peter: "No, I just say that sometimes I go to the gym with you."

Tom: "My point is... why not just tell her the truth. You... WE, come here to wrap up work and have a few drinks. How can that be bad?"

Peter: "You'd have to be in my shoes to understand."

Tom: "Apparently!"

Tom and Peter take a sip of their drinks.

Peter: "I also tell her that I've been taking tennis lessons at the country club."

Tom: "Oh, you gotta be kidding me... when's the last time you held a tennis racket?"

Peter: "She's been bugging about getting back into shape!"

Tom puts his hand over his mouth.

Tom: "Hold on a second... didn't she bust you with another woman back in the day when you did actually go to the country club?"

Peter: "Who? Lisa?"

Tom: "Yes."

Peter: "Lisa that worked in the pro shop?"

Tom: "Yes!"

Peter: "No, she never found out about her. You're talking about Kimberly. She didn't work at the country club. She was a bartender over at Arthur's Billiards."

Tom: "I'm talking about the time Sheela drove to the country club and made a scene."

Peter: "No, no. I left the country club to go meet up with Kimberly. When I didn't come home at my normal time, she drove over to the country club looking for me."

Tom: "Didn't she flip over a table, or kick over chairs, or something?"

Peter: "Oh, she did more than that! She pulled a knife on Frankie and his poker buddies. They eventually gave me up; told her exactly where I was."

Tom: "Whoa! Like Frank Telle and those guys?"

Peter: "Yeah... Hahaha!"

Tom: "And they gave you up... just like that?"

Peter: "Yep. Funny, because I never told those guys that I was hanging out at Arthur's."

Tom: "Oh, I'm sure Frank made one phone call and knew exactly where you were."

Slight pause.

Tom: "So what did Sheela do?"

Peter: "She hid in the parking lot at Arthur's, and waited for Kimberly and I to walk out."

Peter takes another sip of his Jameson.

Peter: "It was crazy because Kimberly walked out first. I turned for two seconds to grab my jacket; by then Sheela had Kimberly by the hair, banging her head up against the light post."

Tom: "No way!"

Peter: "Yep. It was ugly... like... blood... clumps of hair."

Tom: "Eew, really?"

Tom: "Yeah, it was not good."

Peter hollers at Clinton for another round, but continues talking to Tom about the incident.

Peter: "Hey, do you know Joey T?"

Tom: "Yeah, bouncer at the Corsaco Lounge."

Peter: "Yeah, but before that, he was bouncing at Arthur's. And unbeknownst to me at the time, he was also having an affair with Kimberly."

Tom: "I take it he didn't know that you were in the mix."

Peter: "Not until he came outside that day when Sheela and Kimberly were fighting."

Tom: "I would not want to be on the wrong side of Joey T."

Peter: "Tell me about it... I was looking over my shoulder for an entire year."

Clinton provides their next round of drinks.

Tom: "Was all of this going on at the same time you were fooling around with Lisa?"

Peter: "Yep."

Tom: "Were you actually having sex with her at the country club?"

Peter: "With Lisa? Oh, all the time! She used to drag me into the shed where they keep the golf carts."

Tom shakes his head

Tom: "I'll be honest... I don't know how you do it... that's a lot to deal with."

Peter holds his glass up in the air.

Peter: "So you see my dilemma, right? Though Sheela didn't bust me with Lisa, she noticed that I was going to the country club every day, and she got suspicious. If she thinks I'm coming here every day, she's gonna start getting curious, and that's just gonna lead to problems at home."

Tom: "Meanwhile... this might be the only place you haven't had an affair at."

Peter: "Other than Rachel."

Tom's mouth opens up wide.

Tom: "Ughh, please tell me you didn't."

Peter tilts his head to the side and then moves his chin up and down. Tom reaffirms with a disgusted look on his face.

Tom: "You had sex with Rachel, the caterer... grrross!"

Peter: "Yep, at that Easter fundraiser thing we did here a few years ago."

Tom: "You know she's in jail, right?"

Peter: "In jail... for what?"

Tom: "She was dating a guy that works in the Potenza building. He broke up with her, so she wrote his name on the side of the building with a sharpie, and then drew a picture of a penis next to his name."

Peter: "And she went to jail for that?"

Tom: "We're talking about Rachel; I'm sure she had other outstanding legal issues."

Peter: "True."

Tom: "I hope you wore a condom with her."

Peter: "Of course!"

Tom: "Sure you did!"

Tom waves down Clinton.

Tom: "Clinton, I need to pay up."

Peter: "Where you going? We just got here."

Tom: "I have a date... well... possibly a date."

Peter: "With a woman?"

Tom responds sarcastically.

Tom: "She told me she's a woman, looks like a woman... so I'm gonna go with, yes!"

Peter: "Tell her you're stuck at work, and hang out with me a bit longer."

Tom: "I can't."

Clinton approaches Tom with his check.

Tom: "Clinton, let me pay Pete's tab as well."

Clinton: "Hey man, that don't have nothing to do with me. That's all Luis."

Tom: "I know, I know, it's fine."

Peter: "Hey Clinton, tell Luis that that my prime rib was like chewing leather."

Clinton: "Yeah, I'll be sure to tell him that."

Peter: "Tom, just hang out for one more."

Tom: "I can't. Really, I can't."

Tom stands while signing his and Peter's tab.

Tom: "You're gonna be here tomorrow, aren't you?"

Peter: "Nah, I'm meeting with Light Speed tomorrow."

Tom: "Ok, I'll just see you when you get back."

Peter waves Tom off.

Peter: "Go do what you gotta do."

Peter turns his head, only to see Clinton starring right back at him."

Peter: "What?"

Clinton: "What woman in her right mind would sleep with you!"

Our film camera stays in place while Tom exits the bar area. Footage fades with the focus on Clinton staring at Peter and shaking his head from side to side.

Scene over.

Scene 21

Scenario – Takes place back at Laura's apartment. Our film camera is behind Tom's left shoulder as he rings the bell. A good bit of time passes before the door opens. Focus is on Laura's face as she seems surprised. She's standing half behind the door wearing full pajamas.

Laura: "Tom... hey."

Tom: "I thought I'd come check on you, see how you're doing."

Laura: "Yeah, I wasn't expecting you, but... I'm doing ok."

There's an uncomfortable silence before Laura speaks again.

Laura: "I'd invite you in, but my roommate just got home from work and she's trying to get ready to go back out."

Tom: "I bought you one of those sandwiches from Doub Thorn that you like so much."

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."

The situation is a little awkward. Though Laura is appreciative of the sandwich, she's a bit confused by Tom's unannounced visit.

Laura: "Tom... I don't know what to say. I wasn't expecting you, and now we're just standing here staring at each other."

The uncomfortable silence continues a few second longer, but of course it feels like forever.

Tom: "I could take you out to a restaurant... if you want."

Laura: "What?"

Tom: "Everyone has to eat."

Laura: "I had leftover pizza earlier, and now I have a sandwich."

Another awkward moment as Laura shows Tom the sandwich that he just handed to her.

Tom: "Ok, well, I just wanted to come by and see how you were doing."

Laura just stands there looking amiss.

Tom: "Alright, so... will I see you at work tomorrow?"

Laura: "We don't work on the same floor, how are you going to see me tomorrow?"

Tom: "No, I mean... are you... are you working tomorrow?"

Laura: "Depends on how I feel."

Tom: "Right, right..."

Laura: "Well, thanks for stopping by, and thanks for the sandwich."

Another obstinate moment.

Tom: "What about tea and crumpets."

Laura laughs and shakes her head.

Laura: "Hahaha, ok, ok, ok... you're not going to give up. I get it. Give me a second to throw on some clothes."

Laura basically closes the door with Tom just standing there on the porch. Our film camera will capture Tom pacing back and forth until Laura returns.

Laura: "Let's just do something local. I know a place right down the street; pretty decent bar-restaurant."

Laura closes the door behind her. It might be of interest to know that she's wearing the same floral pajama bottoms and slippers, but with the addition of a Jersey shore hoodie. As they walk away, viewers hear Tom inquire about the restaurant.

Tom: "Is it the kind of place where I can get a steak?"

Laura: "A minute ago you wanted crumpets, now you want a steak."

Tom: "I'm just curious."

Tom and Laura are completely out of the visible footage, but the viewers still hear Laura talking.

Laura: "Yes, you can get a steak."

Fast forward to the Hoboken Ale House. Our film camera is set up at the bar looking back at the entrance when Tom and Laura walk in. Tom pauses momentarily, and looks the establishment over.

Tom: "This... isn't exactly what I had in mind."

Laura: "Yee of little faith; the food is excellent here."

Laura leads Tom to the bar.

Tom: "Can we get a table or something."

Laura: "No. I want to sit at the bar. Less formal. I don't want you to think this is a date."

Tom: "Yeah, this place screams romance. I especially like the sawdust on the floor."

As a gesture of politeness, mixed with satire, Laura wipes off a barstool for Tom to sit down at. From there, she waves at Rick (the bartender) for a round of shots.

Laura – Rick, this is Tom McAvery; we work together.

Rick reaches over the bar to shake Tom's hand.

Rick: "Nice to meet you."

Tom: "Likewise."

Laura: "Tom, I'm sure they don't have Chablis here, so you're gonna have to settle for some other kind of wine."

Tom: "I'm just going to get tea?"

Laura: "Tea! Umm, this is New Jersey... you could get punched in the face for saying something like that."

Tom giggles under his breath.

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!"

Tom looks at Laura.

Tom: "You need to take it easy."

Laura: "Sure, whatever you say."

Tom looks back at Rick.

Tom: "Rick, can I get a menu?"

Rick: "Menu is on the board."

Rick goes to the other end of the bar to take someone else's order.

Tom: "Board?"

Laura: "On the chalkboard..."

Laura points to the board behind the bar. Our film camera captures the menu items written out in chalk, and Tom's reaction to the selections.

Tom: "I thought you said I can get a steak here."

Laura: "You can. Meal #3.

Tom's eyes light up, but not in the good way.

Tom: "Biker Flank!"

Laura: "Oh, you're gonna love it! Comes with a bake potato."

Rick yells from the other side of the bar.

Rick: "We're OUT of bake potatoes."

Rick returns with a bottle of wine in one hand, and Laura's cosmo and shot in the other.

Rick: "Dude, I'll be honest, this isn't the greatest white wine."

Tom: "Let me try it."

Rick pours a small amount of white wine into a highball glass and hands it to Tom. He takes a sip; his facial expression says it all.

Tom: "Do you have a Cabernet or something?"

Rick returns with a bottle of red wine, and bangs it on the bar countertop. He turns the bottle so the label faces Tom; a brand no one has ever heard of. Tom nudges Laura and speaks sarcastically.

Tom: "Hey look, it says red wine... right on the bottle. I guess that means red wine."

Rick doesn't say anything back. Instead, he simply pulls a dusty wine glass from the overhead wooden rail and begins pouring.

Tom: "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: "See, that's the spirit."

Laura takes her shot of tequila and asks Rick for another. Tom takes a sip of wine and reverts his attention back to Laura and his thoughts from the previous evening.

Tom: "Hey... about last night."

Before Tom can start his next sentence, Laura cuts him off.

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: "Ok, great, yeah, I had a good time too."

Tom: "And I liked the way it ended."

Laura: "See... you had to go there."

Tom: "What?"

Laura uses her lower tone of voice.

Laura: "Do you realize how many men and women in the city go out for drinks after work, get drunk, go home; maybe they kiss at the end of the evening, maybe the fuck, who knows..."

Tom: "What is your point?"

Laura: "My point is, no one cares! It's not interesting, it's boring! 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 opens her mouth real wide, and then puts her hand over her mouth in a shocking manner.

Laura: "Oh my God! You just used the F word."

Tom can't believe how obtuse Laura is acting.

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 go."

Laura yells to Rick who's at the other end of the bar.

Laura: "HEY RICK! Tom just used the F word!"

Though our film camera is not focused on Rick, the viewers can hear him yell back.

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, I'm kidding! Come on..."

Laura puts her hand on Tom's shoulder and reassures him that she'll stop the nonsense. From there, she kind of pulls him aside as to be more genuine about her feelings.

Laura: "Yesterday was great. But 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: "Well, you could have just said that."

Laura continues talking as they walk back to their barstools, steering the conversation back to the steak Tom ordered.

Laura: "As if you were going to walk out on your biker flank."

There's a brief moment where Laura looks deep into Tom's eyes, all the while moistening her bottom lip, as if she has something that absolutely needs to be said. Just as they get ready to sit back down, Laura pulls Tom in close to her. She delicately grabs his chin and turns his face to the side so that her mouth is practically touches his earlobe. Her voice barely reaches a whisper. Our film camera is equally close to their faces.

Laura: "I... cannot... be... trusted."

Tom doesn't respond; his expression clearly defines the look of not expecting her to say anything like that. He turns his head so that they are nose to nose; Laura looks very serious and raises her voice from a whisper to a normal tone of voice.

Laura: "Tell me you understand what I just said."

There's a long delay before Tom responds. Our film camera is right up close and personal. The eye contact and stare are unwavering between the two.

Tom: "I understand."

There's another brief moment of silence before Laura lets go of Tom's chin. He changes the subject as they retake their seats at the bar.

Tom: "Hey, you know how we were talking about Rockingham Gamers last week?"

Laura: "Yeah."

Tom: "Well, I think I figured out the connection between Dameon Blankenship, Paul Hubbert, and Bernard Williamson."

Laura: "Which is..."

Tom: "Fox news reported yesterday that Rockingham Gamers agreed to cut ties with their Chinese investors, in exchange for going public as a means to generate funds needed to launch their new game."

Laura: "And..."

Tom: "Now that this has turned into a congressional hearing, the Stock Exchange put their application on hold until it all gets sorted out. The hold up (if you will) is that Congress wants the account information for all of the gamers that preregistered."

Laura: "Why do they want that?"

Tom moves closer to Laura and speaks a little quieter.

Tom: "They claim that Rockingham Gamers has an algorithm built into their platform to determine which gamers might have terroristic tendencies."

Laura: "Oh, for the love of God! How about we just assume all gamers are terrorists."

Tom: "Hahaha, I agree it's a bit over the top, but the government wants that info, and for whatever reason Rockingham Gamers isn't willing to hand it over."

Laura shakes her head as if video games will always be nonsense in her mind.

Laura: "So, how does Paul Hubbert fit into this equation?"

Tom: "Paul and Bernard Williamson are representing Rockingham Gamers in a lawsuit against the Security Exchange Commission."

Laura: "Really? Isn't that like a conflict of interest?"

Tom: "I don't know how the legal system operates, but you have to assume that those two guys know the inner workings of the SEC, otherwise Rockingham Gamers wouldn't have hired them."

Slight pause.

Tom: "And I think we already know who's financially backing Paul and Bernard."

Laura smiles and tilts her head to the side.

Laura: "Fucking Heatherton..."

Tom: "Yep, haha."

The bartender brings another round of drinks.

Laura: "Though I despise video games to no end, you gotta give it to Maggie for having the wherewithal to jump on this bandwagon."

Tom: "And to keep it quiet the way she did!"

Laura: "For sure."

Laura downs her second tequila shot, and coughs.

Laura: "I just wish we could have figured it out sooner."

Tom takes a sip of his red wine.

Tom: "Part of the reason I came to visit you today is because I think we have one last shot at it."

Laura: "What do you mean? You said the original contract was final and that there was nothing we can do."

Tom: "Well... slight change."

Laura: "Slight change how?"

Tom: "Nancy kicked the contact back to Alex so that Alvarez could be added to the signature list. I asked Alex this morning to hold off on sending it back down to Nancy, so as to give us a chance to pitch our commercial idea to Paul and Bernard."

Tom somewhat predetermines what Laura is going to say.

Tom: "Karthik is in the commercial studio as we speak working on the demo."

Laura: "Holy shit! You're serious about this."

Tom: "I am."

Laura: "So, how do we pitch the demo."

Tom: "I spoke to Janet Switzer earlier today. She's going to reach to Paul and Bernard, and arrange a meeting at her office on Friday. Alex will put the presentation together; you and Nancy pitch it."

Laura: "Just like that?"

Tom: "Yep."

Laura thinks about it for second.

Laura: "What does Janet get out of all of this?"

Tom: "She's not dumb. If Rockingham Gamers go public, there's going to be a lot of money to be made. And as we all know; lawyers are thick as thieves."

Laura: "And what do I get out of all of this?"

Tom: "I'm sure Nancy explained the bonus structure; if we land Heatherton on a new commercial platform, it's 5% of your salary, paid to you in one lump sum. And if Rockingham Gamers gives us advertising exclusivity for next year, that's a 10% bonus for everyone!"

Laura: "Knowing what I make, to be perfectly honest, that's not a lot of money."

Tom: "Hahaha, considering last year was a total bust, I'd say its 10 times more than the previous bonus we handed out for your position."

Laura: "I guess I'll take whatever I can get."

Tom: "When Paul and Bernard see our technology, they're going to want it right then and there. And when Maggie sees that they're willing to take ownership of the commercial, she'll be glad to hand over that responsibility."

Laura: "So, how come she's being so secretive about it."

Tom: "I'll tell you why... because Dan Heatherton would never allow any of this."

Laura: "Yeah, but he's gotta know something is going on... 900 construction workers in his building."

Tom: "I'm sure he authorized the renovation. And he's been talking about expanding the Heatherton portfolio for years. I just doubt he's fully aware that Maggie's bankrolling Paul and Bernard's team. And there is no chance he would ever support a lawsuit against the government on behalf of a video game developer."

Laura: "As big as this thing is, he's going to find out about it."

Tom: "I think when this all started, Maggie didn't expect Dan to live this long, and now it's at a point where she has to make hard decisions, even if it goes against his business model."

Laura: "So, where is the return on investment? If Heatherton is covering the infrastructure and payroll for Paul and Bernard's team, how will they ever recoup those expenses."

Tom: "Yeah, that's a good question. Rockingham Gamers has no capital right now; hence they can't even pay our invoices. But I'm guessing that Maggie is playing the long game, and probably cut a deal for IPO shares... when and if Rockingham Gamers go public."

Laura: "That's a world I know nothing about."

Tom: "With these tech companies, it's a total crapshoot. But when it works out, it can go from pennies to billions overnight."

Laura looks around in a daze of possibilities. Viewers will get a sense that alcohol and ideas are spinning around in her head. She snaps out of it when Rick makes his way to her side of the bar.

Laura: "Hey Rick! Another round. And this time Tom IS doing a shot."

Tom: "No, just wine for me."

Laura: "Stop! Ok, just stop... stop being like that."

Tom: "What!"

Rick comes closers.

Rick: "Yes, or no?"

Laura: "Yes, he's having lemon drop... or whatever that gay drink is called."

Tom: "It's just Lemon Absolute vodka, which is not a lemon drop."

Laura: "Oh my god... YOU'RE the one who calls it that!"

Tom: "I don't normally do SHOTS! I wasn't sure what it was CALLED!"

Ricks steps into the conversation.

Rick: "Good grief! You sure you two aren't brother and sister?"

Tom: "She's does this to me every time!"

Rick: "Alright, look, I don't have Lemon Absolute, but I do have Grey Goose. I'll add a squeeze of lemon... basically the same thing."

Tom: "I didn't want one from the beginning, but now I guess I'm gonna have to have one."

Laura: "Oh... I have heard it all now!"

Our film camera zooms in on THREE shot glasses lined up on bar countertop.

Rick: "In light of this whole conversation... I think I need to join you two... peace keeper kind of thing."

The three shot glasses bang the countertop and then right down the hatch. After the alcohol is swallowed, our film camera resumes its position from the bartender's side of the bar looking back at Laura; her mind wondering off in different directions.

Laura: "If you think about it, our entire relationship is based on Heatherton. And now that there's nothing left to investigate, what are we going to do? Is there some other deadbeat client for us to get engrossed with?"

Tom: "That's an interesting way to put it, but yes... we have a few clients that need a little extra attention."

Laura thoughts and comments are all over the place.

Laura: "We should be in the private eye business; we're pretty good at it."

Tom: "You think?"

The effects of alcohol are ever-so present in Laura's thought process.

Laura: "Hey Rick, we're gonna start our own private eye business... detective agency... wanna join us?"

Rick plays along, responding from the kitchen.

Rick: "Sure!"

Rick returns with Tom's steak.

Rick: "Bon Appetit."

It dawns on Tom that Laura didn't order any food.

Tom: "Laura, you have to eat something."

Laura: "I'll just have some of your fries."

Laura is just plain drunk at this point; a French fry now dangling off the side of her mouth.

Laura: "Hey Rick? Tom is going to play the part of Sherlock Holmes, and I am gonna be Watson. Who are you going to be in our agency?"

Rick: "Who else is there?"

Tom, with a mouth full of food.

Tom: "You can be Tobias Gregson."

Rick: "Who's that?"

Tom: "Scotland Yard inspector... first introduced in a book called, A Study in Scarlet."

Laura slowly turns her head towards Tom, one eyebrow up, and lips quirked to the side.

Laura: "A Study in Scarlet... really?"

Tom: "It's just one of those titles you don't forget after reading the book."

Rick: "I like it! Call me Tobias from here on out."

Rick walks away to tend to other customers. Laura turns her barstool and faces Tom.

Laura: "Can you do me a favor... and never make a reference like that ever again."

Tom: "Hahaha. It was actually a good book."

There's a bit of silence as Tom chews away. Laura just stares off into the abyss, nibbling on Tom's French fries.

Tom: "This steak is surprising good... I'm actually shocked!"

Laura: "Told you!"

Tom: "Here, have a bite."

Laura: "No, I'm good with these fries."

Our film camera zooms in on Tom's facial expression as he appears astonished by the quality of the steak.

Tom: "I don't know what I thought, but when I saw the words, biker flank... I envisioned a slab of meat being cooked over the tailpipe of a Harley Davidson.

Our film camera is to the right of Tom (from Laura's point of view), as he continues to look down upon his steak as if it were the greatest meal of all times. But then as he looks at Laura, we'll move our film camera to his left side. From this perspective, viewers will see that Laura has turned her entire barstool so that she's facing Tom with the absolute look of lust. Again, she seems to be struggling with the French fries; each one hitting the side of her cheek before going into her mouth. Laura's disposition, while amusing, raises questions as to her real feelings for Tom. In fact, he knows that she's not going to wait for him to finish that steak. And thus... our footage moves from the Alehouse, back to Laura's apartment where she and Tom crash through the front door and into the living room.

Laura: "This is not good... this is not good!"

It's difficult to understand Laura's words; her mouth is vigorously mashed into Tom's lips.

Tom: "Your relationship with Jeremy was not meant to be... and you know it."

Again, lots of mushy mouth noises.

Laura: "Yeah... just like it's not meant to be with you either."

Tom pulls his lips away from hers, but still heavily embraced.

Tom: "You have to trust me; I know how to make this work."

Laura: "Just like all of my other relationships, it's just a matter of time before I screw this up. So why even bother."

Tom: "Because what we have is the genuine."

Laura: "Pshhh... that's what everyone says in the beginning."

Kissing and heavy petting resume and then pause.

Laura: "It won't take long... you'll see my true colors."

Massive kissing resumes as they shuffle over to the center of the living room. She puts her arms around Tom's neck and pulls him on top of her as they fall onto the couch.

Laura: "Consider yourself warned!"

Laura rolls on top of Tom, kissing his neck and ear, and then moving back to his mouth. All the while talking passionately, in a passive sort of way.

Laura: "You're not my type in the bedroom, but damn you're a good kisser! And you're handsome as all get-out."

Tom somewhat pulls away.

Tom: "How do you know I'm not your type in the bedroom?"

Laura: "Because you're not... that's why!"

Tom: "If what we're doing right now... is any indication..."

Laura: "Oh, I'm not saying you won't enjoy it."

The passion is quickly subsiding.

Tom: "Then what are you saying?"

Laura: "You have no idea how I roll! Let's just leave it at that."

Tom and Laura sit up on the couch.

Tom: "By that rationale, you have no idea how I roll."

Laura: "Hahaha, please!"

Back to awkward silence, followed by Laura changing the subject and killing the romance.

Laura: "I'll be in the office tomorrow. But only for half a day. Nancy set up an appointment for me to see a counselor."

Laura stands up, and is looking at Tom like it's time for him to leave.

Laura: "Ok, Mr. McAvery, time to say goodnight."

Tom stands up, but then rushes in for one last kiss. Laura does not resist; an epic end-of-the-evening kiss if there ever was one.

Laura: "You don't even want to know what I'm going to do when you leave."

Tom: "What?"

Laura: "Yeah, WHAT is right!"

Laura gives Tom a peck on the cheek.

Laura: "Goodnight, handsome."

Tom: "Night."

Scene Over

Scene 22

Scenario – Takes place at HDM at the end of the week. Our film camera is set up on the 9th floor office hallway looking into Tom's office.

Tom: "Janet, what's going on! We're all set up and ready to be at your place in an hour."

Pause. Viewers can only hear Tom's side of the conversation.

Tom: "Yes, I got the email... that's why I'm calling!"

Pause.

Tom: "Who?"

Pause.

Tom: "I'm saying, which advertising firm are they talking to?"

Pause.

Tom: "That's it? They didn't mention any names?"

Tom sighs out loud.

Tom: "This cannot be happening!"

Pause.

Tom: "I replied to the email; got out-of-office responses from both of them. Called Paul's number; went straight to voicemail."

Pause.

Tom: "This is bad... like really bad."

Longer Pause.

Tom: "I have some fires to put out on my end, please let me know if anything changes."

Pause.

Tom: "Ok... yep."

Tom jets out of his office, and runs down the hall to Alex's office.

Tom: "Alex, the demo for Heatherton is done; they cancelled."

Alex: "You gotta be fucking kidding me!"

Tom: "No, it's dead."

Alex: "What are we gonna do?"

Tom: "Spin up the old contract and get Nancy over to Heatherton there as soon as possible."

Alex begins pecking away on his computer.

Alex: "This is gonna blow up in our faces."

Tom: "If Nancy can physically hand off that contract to Alvarez, we should be ok."

Tom looks at his watch.

Tom: "I gotta run. Text me as soon as Nancy makes the handoff, I have to pick up Pete from the airport."

Footage fades as Tom turns and leaves Alex's office and then resumes at the airport as he pulls into the passenger arrival lane. Peter is already waiting carb side, and jumps into Tom's Mercedes before it even comes to a complete halt.

Our film camera is dash mount, pivoting back and forth between Tom and Peter in the car as they exit the airport. Peter appears distracted; he focuses more on looking at the passenger window than looking straight ahead.

Tom: "Hey..."

Peter: "If it's about Heatherton, I already know, and I'll address that when we get back at the office."

Tom: "I was gonna ask how it went with Lightspeed."

Peter: "The meeting went well. They signed a new contract; our AV crew is heading out there next week to start filming a new commercial."

Tom: "That's great news."

Peter: "Yeah."

A bit of silence; Peter continues staring out the passenger window. He appears to be thinking heavily about the next words out of his mouth.

Peter: "Tom, this issue with Heatherton is serious."

Tom: "I understand, and I take full responsibility for it."

Peter: "Yeah, well, that's the problem... it's not your responsibility."

Peter continues looking out the passenger window as he talks.

Peter: "Alex doesn't answer to you... he answers to me."

Tom doesn't respond. Our film camera moves from inside of the car to outside, and the view is from the sidewalk in front of the HDM building to capture Tom's car pulling into the garage. Footage resumes as Tom and Peter exit the car and begin walking towards the garage level elevators.

Peter: "It's getting late in the day. Just head to the bar, and I'll meet you as soon as I drop off my briefcase."

Footage shows Tom exiting the elevator on the mezzanine floor, while Peter continues up to the 9th floor. Our film camera will follow along as Peter exits the elevator, passes through the reception

area, and then through the double glass doors into the main office area. From there, footage will capture Peter walking down the hallway into Alex's office to have a chat about the Heatherton ordeal. Peter's temperament seems way to calm for a situation of this magnitude.

Peter: "I called Nancy while I was in a meeting with LightSpeed. I needed some number that were critical to closing the deal."

Pause.

Peter: "But she wasn't here."

Pause.

Peter: "She wasn't here because she was delivering the contract for Heatherton... which I explicitly said needed to be delivered by Monday."

Alex is at a loss for words.

Peter: "Here it is Friday... and from what I understand, it still didn't get delivered."

Alex: "Pete, I spoke with Alvarez, he said we had to wait until Maggie returns."

Peter: "That's irrelevant now, because Maggie's not going to sign the contract even when she does return."

Alex: "What are you talking about?"

Peter: "Heatherton cancelled their service with us today. I received their stop-payment notification, along with their release of business statement."

Alex: "That can't be right!"

Peter: "Dan Heatherton signed over the business to Maggie on Wednesday, and her new partners have their own advertising and marketing firm."

Alex: "If that's the case, we never stood a chance to begin with."

Peter: "See, that's where you're wrong. Dan instructed Alvarez to sign our contract before Wednesday so that they could keep their old commercial running throughout the holidays while transitioning the business to Maggie. We failed to do that, so they had to find someone else."

Slight pause. Alex is just stunned.

Peter: "That contract was worth over a hundred grand, not to mention how much money Maggie would have likely spent with us over time. And then to add insult to injury, we lost John's personal client of over 20 years."

Alex finally gets up the nerve to say something.

Alex: "Pete, I'm sorry, I didn't know what was at stake."

Peter: "What is there to know... I asked you for one simple thing, and I told you how important it was, but for whatever reason, you decided to take orders from Tom."

Alex: "I assumed you and he were on the same page."

Peter: "No, no, no, don't even go there. We're way past that!"

Alex basically has his hands up in the air, not certain where Peter is going with this conversation.

Peter: "Have your resignation on my desk before you leave here today."

Alex: "Resignation?"

Peter: "If you leave quietly, I'll give you six months of severance pay."

Alex stands up and sternly points to the hallway.

Alex: "Pete, with all due respect, get the fuck out of my office! I'm an officer in this company, just like you. I answer to the board of directors."

Peter: "If you want to argue your case to the board members, you go right ahead. But when they find out you lost their oldest client, they're going to fire you for cause."

Alex's face is red and beyond any ability to speak at this point. Peter keeps talking, but now at a much higher volume as he retreats back to his own office.

Peter: "LETTER OF RESIGNATION... ON MY DESK BEFORE YOU LEAVE!"

Footage will capture Peter as he storms into his own office space. He throws his work satchel across the room, and hunkers over his desk with both hands over his face. After a second or two, he kicks his chair and smashes a cup of ballpoint pins on the floor, clearly distraught over decisions that had to be made.

Peter: "Fuck!"

Our film camera moves from Peter's office to the standard bar room scenario at Dion's. Peter takes his normal seat next to Tom, and orders his normal Jameson from Clinton.

Tom: "Is everything alright?"

Peter: "No, it's not alright."

Peter takes a sip of his whiskey.

Peter: "What you and Alex failed to realize... is that Dan Heatherton, despite his age, still communicates with John on a regular basis."

Tom: "So, what does that mean?"

Peter: "It means you fucked up, that's what it means. Well, not you, per se... you're not in charge of operations."

Tom: "No, I mean, did we lose Heatherton as a client?"

Peter: "It certainly appears so. I'm sure you saw John's meeting invite. He's wants us in the office an hour early, so you know it's not good."

Tom takes a sip and thinks about his next words.

Tom: "Is Alex going to get fired over this?"

Peter: "He already resigned."

Tom: "No..."

Peter: "Yes..."

Tom: "We need him!"

Tom puts both hands over his face and leans on the bar countertop with his elbows. Peter takes another sip of his Jameson and coughs a little bit.

Peter: "Alex knew the risk he was taking. The request to deliver that contract came directly from John. He chose to disregard those orders."

Tom, hands still covering his face.

Tom: "This is all my fault."

Peter: "You can blame yourself all you want, but it doesn't change the outcome."

Tom finally rears his head.

Tom: "How are we going to fill his position?"

John: "Not that you should be concerned about that, but I have a couple of colleagues that I'm going to reach out to... see if I can lure them away from whatever shit outfits they work for."

There's a sudden and complete change in Peter's facial expression as he looks up to see Nancy, Laura, and two other fellows walking in.

Peter: "What the fuck?"

Tom looks up, and as he does our film camera follows his eye sight.

Peter: "What is this... a double date?"

Tom: "Who is that?"

Peter: "That's Nancy husband."

Tom: "Not him! I know who he is. The other guy."

Peter: "I don't know. But leave it to Nancy to try and hook up new girl. What's it been... two weeks since the engagement was broke off? A bit insensitive, wouldn't you say?"

Tom: "Do you really think that's what it is. Nancy and Laura just got off of work. Maybe that's David's business partner."

Peter: "And how does that change anything? The four of them are here for drinks, so unless he's gay, that ass of hers is bound to get his attention before the nights over."

Peter takes a sip of his drink and slightly glances at Tom.

Peter: "You gotta wonder how the ex-fiancé was able to give that up."

Tom doesn't respond; affected by the thought of Laura being on a double date. Peter, of course, isn't helping matters.

Peter: "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?"

Clearly upset by the situation, Tom pushes his half-full wine glass away from his reach. From there, he waves down Clinton for the bill.

Tom: "I'm out of here."

Peter: "Huh?"

Peter looks at Tom, then looks at Laura, and then looks back at Tom.

Peter: "Please don't tell me you have a thing for her."

Tom: "No... the situation with Alex is starting to weigh on me; I just want to go home."

Tom signs the check and pushes his barstool away from the bar counter. As he walks out of the bar, Laura takes notice that he didn't acknowledge her or anyone at their table, so she gets up and chases after him. Our film camera moves curb side as Tom exits the restaurant. Laura catches him as he turns right at the sidewalk.

Laura: "Tom, what the hell? You're gonna walk right passed me without saying anything."

Tom stops, dips his head a little, and then turns to Laura.

Tom: "You all looked like you were having an interesting conversation and I didn't want to interject."

Laura: "No, that's not good enough. What's wrong?"

Tom shakes his head.

Tom: "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. David's brother is in town. The two of them were over at Nelly's, so Nancy told them to come over and have a drink with us."

There's a moment of silence.

Tom: "You knew I was here, so why didn't you text me from the office and tell me you were coming; a little head's up, so that it doesn't look like a double date."

Laura looks puzzled; her head is sort of cocked back in disbelief.

Laura: "Listen carefully; I don't owe you that kind of courtesy, we're not in that kind of relationship. In fact, we're in no kind of relationship."

Tom doesn't respond, so Laura steps up closer to his face.

Laura: "If you think getting drunk at bars and making out on my couch constitutes a responsibility to let you know when I coming and going... you're sadly mistaken."

Tom, frozen for second.

Tom: "And I thought Pete was the worst person I knew."

Laura: "Really..."

Tom: "Yes."

Laura shakes her head as if she's about to give up on this conversation.

Laura: "I'm going to the ladies room now, do you need me to send you a text before and after I pee?"

Tom looks straight up at the sky, turns, and begins walking away; talking with his back to her.

Tom: "Un-fucking real!"

Laura yells back at Tom before he turns the corner.

Laura: "YOU'RE really starting to get the hang of that F-WORD."

Scene Over

Scene 23

Scenario – Takes place the next morning (Tuesday) in John's office at HDM. Tom and Peter are standing while John sits at his desk sorting through what appears to be dry cleaning tickets."

Peter: "John, we can wait outside if you need more time."

John: "Just give me a second."

John continues fiddling with paper receipts. Peter and Tom gingerly sit down in the leather chairs that face John's desk.

John: "Downstairs drycleaner still only accepts cash. Can you believe that? Telling me their prices haven't changed... \$100 for five shirts!"

Shuffling of the paper receipts final stops.

John: "Hahaha, there it is!"

John appears to be in a good mood, which is not what Tom and Peter were expecting (conflicting facial expressions). Meanwhile, John is stuck on his issues with the drycleaner and hands one of the receipts for Peter to validate.

John: "Petey, take a look... what date is that?"

Peter: "March 7th."

John: "This year, right?"

Peter: "Yes."

John hands Peter a second receipt.

John: "This is today's receipt... same five shirts."

Peter: "At a glance that looks like... I don't know..."

Peter shows Tom the receipt.

Peter: "What is that?"

Tom: "23% increase."

John's true personality emerges.

John: "Wow, you two are fucking geniuses!"

The viewers know where this is going.

John: "That's roughly the same percentage of airtime I have to buy back from Heatherton."

John looks at Tom.

John: "How much is 23% of that contract?"

Tom: "166 and change."

John: "A hundred and sixty-six thousand dollars... lost revenue!"

Peter's mischievous laughs creeps in.

Peter: "I'm not trying to downplay this oversight, but... haha, this is a blessing in disguise! The airtime we're buying back from Heatherton allows us to satisfy the requirements for LightSpeed."

John stares harshly at Peter.

Peter: "How can this be a bad thing? Our gross margin for LightSpeed is 35%! Heatherton was bleeding us dry over that airtime!"

John: "Well, isn't that interesting. You landed Rockingham Gamers at 35%, right?"

Peter doesn't respond.

John: "Wow, what a score! Remind me again, how many invoices have they paid?"

Somewhat silent as they stare at each other; John finally changes the subject.

John: "With holidays around the corner, I want to offer streaming banners to our cash clients. And I'm talking about the new banners; the ones that we can superimpose on any website. Also, I want to renegotiate non-prime airtime with all of our smaller vendors. We need as much as we can get going into the new year."

John looks at Peter and Tom for a response.

John: "Any questions?"

John looks directly at Peter.

John: "Petey, based on our call yesterday, looks like Delphini is in our crosshairs again. What's your plan?"

Peter: "Flying out tomorrow morning."

John: "Alright, good. And what about that New Year's Eve campaign for Rocking Gamers... still in a holding pattern?"

Peter shakes his head, yes."

John: "You need to let them know... running out of time."

Peter: "Understood."

John looks at his watch.

John: "Alright, let's get to work."

As Peter and Tom stand up, John motions for Tom to hang back.

John: "Petey, shut my door; I need to talk to Tom for a second."

Peter exits John's office.

John: "With regards to the Heatherton fiasco, I want you to tell me what's wrong with this company."

Tom doesn't immediately respond, so John continues.

John: "You clearly want to do things your way, so you must have a good reason for it."

Again, Tom doesn't respond fast enough, so John continues to pile on.

John: "Give it to me in terms of numbers... help me to understand."

At this point John decides to give Tom as much time as he needs to respond.

Tom: "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 level one cash accounts."

John: "And whose fault is that?"

Tom: "Well, it's a... sales infrastructure issue."

John: "Danny's team?"

Tom: "Yes."

John pulls out his daily planner and begins taking notes.

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's eyes get big and his body language appears unsettled. He clearly was not expecting that kind of blowback, but he nods his head as if this were the only logical outcome.

John: "Though Danny works on this floor, he is not an officer, and therefore requires a security guard to escort him out of the building."

Tom stands up, nods his head again, and proceeds to exit John's office.

John: "Tom, one more thing..."

Tom: "Yeah."

John: "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."

Our film camera will continue to focus on John writing notes in his day planner as Tom leaves his office, and then the footage comes into focus as Tom enters (what appears to be Danny's office). Tom closes the door behind him, and we hear just the beginning of the conversation.

Tom: "Hey Danny, you got a second?"

Danny: "Yeah sure, what's up?"

Tom closes the door behind him, and then the footage jumps ahead to Dion's a short time later.

Clinton: "Where's Pete!"

Tom: "He went straight home; heading out of town tomorrow."

Clinton pours Tom a glass of Chablis in a bigger than usual wine glass.

Clayton: "I only have red wine glasses, is that alright?"

Tom: "That's fine."

As Tom brings the wine glass up to his lips, he sees Laura out of the corner of his eye as she enters the bar. He continues sipping his Chablis as she pulls up a barstool and sits next to him."

Laura: "I'm not sure what to say."

Tom: "I take it Nancy told you about Heatherton?"

Laura: "Yeah..."

Laura signals to Clinton that she would like a cosmo, and then turns her attention back to Tom.

Laura: "I feel responsible."

Tom: "You shouldn't..."

Laura: "I mean... I feel like I let the company down."

Tom: "Hard lesson for both of us, that's for sure."

Tom tilts his head to the side and kind of looks off into the distance.

Tom: "Loyalty isn't a thing anymore. Every deal is cutthroat and everyone is down for the take."

As Clinton serves Laura her usual comso; she adds a little levity to her conversation with Tom.

Laura: "Don't tell Peter I sat here; he'll want the seat disinfected... possibly burned to the floor."

Tom: "Hahaha."

Tom acknowledges Laura's humor, but reverts back to the hardship of losing their client.

Tom: "The crazing thing is... we were right; Heatherton did everything we predicted they would do."

Laura: "Does Peter blame you for losing the account?"

Tom: "No, he's a forward-thinking guy. To him... that was last week's problem. Although we're both still conflicted as to how one of our competitors jumped in at the last second... unless of course they knew what our position was, and had time to prepare."

Tom takes another sip.

Tom: "Eventually, this will all come to light, but as I'm sitting here, I can't get it out of my head."

Both Laura and Tom take a sip of their drinks.

Tom: "Although, having said that, Pete is flying out to 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 land on your desk."

Laura: "Really!"

Tom: "Yeah, we're going to build their commercial from scratch, so you're going to be responsible for developing the project plan and putting together a schedule."

Laura: "No kidding!"

Tom: "It's going to be challenging, but a perfect way for you to step up and show this company what you're all about."

Laura: "Yeah, for sure! Wow, thank you!"

Tom: "Haha, you don't have to thank me, it's just business."

Laura: "No, I mean, thank you for telling me this! I was concerned that there wasn't going to be anything for me to do."

Laura downs the rest of her Cosmo and looks for Clinton to bring her another one. At the same time, she changes the subject.

Laura: "Hey look, about the other day. I had a lot going on in my mind, and I didn't mean what I said to you."

Tom: "No, no, no, that was all on me. Loosing that account... Alex resigning... that was just too much for me to deal with at once."

Laura turns her barstool so that she's more or less facing Tom.

Laura: "Not for nothing, but umm... I enjoy spending time with you."

Tom looks at Laura, slow to respond.

Tom: "Same! But... I think it's safe to say that we are better off just being co-workers from here on out."

Laura: "If that's what you want it to be, hahaha."

Tom: "Hahaha, well, truth be told... I like the other aspect of our relationship, but I think we're starting to get noticed."

Laura: "What do you mean?"

Tom: "John made a comment earlier today about inner-office relationships... which is to say he frowns upon them."

Laura: "You think he knows that we've been hanging out?"

Tom: "If I had to guess, I would say that someone probably saw us at Palmetto's, and it got back to him somehow."

Laura: "Yeah, we sort of stick out like a sore thumb in that place."

Tom: "Hahaha, that's an understatement."

Laura finishes her drink and then tells Clinton that she needs to pay up.

Tom: "No, put your card away... I got it."

Tom waves Clinton off.

Tom: "She's on my tab."

Clinton: "Okey-doke!"

Laura pushes away from the bar countertop.

Laura: "I didn't know Alex that well, but I'm sorry for what happened."

Tom: "Me too. Thanks for stopping by. I'm glad we're on good terms."

Laura stands up and grazes Tom's shoulder with her hand. Footage fades as Laura walks away, all the while Tom holds eye contact with her backside and unmistakable walking style. Footage resumes an hour later. Laura meets up with Niki at the Hoboken Ale House.

Niki: "Hey girl!"

Laura: "You don't even want to know how my day went."

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 the hell, what happened?"

Laura: "They decided to do business with one of our competitors."

Niki: "So, what does that mean... do you still have a job?"

Laura: "Supposedly, I'm going to get a new client later this week, but who knows... a lot of fucked up shit went down."

Niki: "That's a shame; you spent a lot of time on that law firm project, or at least you talked about it a lot."

Laura: "Yeah, it was painful, and then I found out that my boss's boss resigned after we lost that deal."

Rick slides a cosmo and a shot of tequila in front of Laura.

Laura: "I feel responsible."

Niki: "You've been there all of 2 months, how can you feel responsible?"

Laura downs her shot of tequila and chases it with a swallow of cosmopolitan.

Laura: "I'm pretty sure I know who stole our client."

Laura takes a larger gulp of her cocktail.

Laura: "I may have done something outside of work that I shouldn't have done."

Niki shakes her head.

Niki: "Here we go again!"

Niki takes a big gulp of her drink.

Niki: "Ok, let me have it... what did you do?"

Laura pauses a second before responding.

Laura: "After Jeremy and I broke up, I didn't think I would go back to HDM. I was just too embarrassed. I immediately starting sending out my resume. I got a call the very next day from a direct competitor, so I went in for an interview."

Niki: "Jesus Christ! Why would you do that? Especially considering how thrilled you were to get that job with HDM."

Laura: "I know, I know, I know... believe me... I know!"

Laura finishes her cosmo and orders another.

Laura: "It's worse than that..."

Niki: "It always is with you!"

Niki downs whatever cocktail she's drinking and orders another.

Niki: "Go ahead... let's hear it!"

Laura: "One thing led to another... and I went out for drinks with the hiring manager."

Niki's mouth drops.

Laura: "Also... I may have disclosed some things about HDM that I shouldn't have."

Niki: "Oh my God, Laura! What in the actual hell? Seriously, what the fuck is wrong with you?"

Laura doesn't respond. Niki puts the palm of her hand over her forehead.

Niki: "Dare I ask if anything happen with this guy after you had drinks with him?"

Laura lowers her head just a tad.

Laura: "... went back to his place afterwards."

Niki: "Holy hell!"

Rick brings the next round of shots and cocktails.

Niki: "I don't understand how companies get away with shit like that; doesn't that violate like... every HR policy!"

Niki takes a drink.

Niki: "Although, I'm guessing you probably instigated it!"

Niki takes another quick sip.

Niki: "Ok, so... after you fucked this guy; did you at least get a job offer?"

Laura: "I got the offer today."

Niki: "Thank god, because I don't see how you can go back to HDM... not to mention they could sue you!"

Laura downs her second tequila shot.

Laura: "I don't know what I'm gonna do."

The tempo of the conversation changes.

Laura: "I really felt like Tom and I were doing something important, and that it would launch my career... and then it just went crashing down."

Niki: "What did you think was going to happen? You were talking to your company's competitor; you probably gave them everything they needed to snatch that client away."

There's a slight pause.

Niki: "And you know what... this guy Tom... shame on him! You two were out every other night drinking; what kind of example does that set?"

Laura: "It wasn't like that. It was legit networking. We were meeting with potential clients and business contacts."

Niki: Legit! Really! You were making out with him on our couch!"

Laura: "It happened once."

Niki: "Twice!"

Laura: "Ok, it happened twice! Hahaha."

Laura has that alcoholic gleam in her eye.

Laura: "He's fucking handsome! What do you want me to do?"

Laura continues to smile; a tipsy kind of grin.

Niki: "Sweet Jesus, you have a seriously messed up way of rationalizing shit!"

Both of them take a drink. Niki is revved up!"

Niki: "And it sounds like you have feeling for him... just like every other guy you meet!"

Laura: "It's not like that... I swear."

Slight pause.

Laura: "But he is the kind of guy that any woman would be attracted to, so you can't put me down for wanting to kiss him!"

Niki: "Knowing you, it's just a matter of time before you fuck him. That is, of course, provided he doesn't find out that you banged some rando from a competing company."

Niki starts to backpedal.

Niki: "You know what, I'm sorry, I'm in no position to judge you. I just... never saw you so happy as when you got that job."

Laura: "No, it's fine, I deserve the criticism."

Niki: "I think what it is, is that I'm striking out left and right when it comes to men, and you seem to be overloaded with dudes." In that regard, I'm jealous."

Laura looks at Niki cockeyed.

Laura: "What about Matt? I thought you guys were hitting it off."

Niki: "Noo, he fucking ghosted me! And... I had a date last night that didn't show. Soo humiliating!"

Rick and other people around the bar overhear Niki's rant, and try to humorize the situation.

Rick: "Niki, there's a guy at the end of the bar... says you're the one that stood him last night!"

Niki peeks down towards the end of the bar, only to discover that Rick is talking about his brother, Oliver; long-standing friend of Niki's, and someone known for small pranks.

Niki: "Hey Oliver, shouldn't you be home with your wife and kids! I'm sure Julie has that ball & chain waiting for you."

Niki takes a drink and apologizes to Laura for the interruption.

Niki: "Fucking Oliver!"

Laura: "I didn't even know Rick had a brother."

Niki: "Yeah, he's got two brothers actually. Oliver is the oldest."

Laura looks down the bar.

Laura: "Damn!"

Niki: "Yeah, he's good-looking... annoying as fuck, though!"

Rick interrupts with more drinks. Somehow this reverts their conversation back to Laura's feelings for Tom.

Niki: "Let me ask you something. This guy, Tom... you say he's successful, right?"

Laura: "Yes, very!"

Niki: "Ok, so... what's not to like about him?"

Laura: "Well, starting with the fact that he thinks he's never wrong."

Niki: "How's that different than any other guy?"

Laura: "Because he quantifies everything. It's irritating! Doesn't matter what you say, he's gotta look that shit up on the phone. He's got like.... over a thousand active conversation on his AI app."

Niki: "Oh, Jesus! That is irritating."

Laura: "Right!"

Slight pause.

Niki: "Although it would be great to be in a relationship with someone where you don't have to worry about money."

Laura: "Yeah, but..."

Niki: "Alright, alright, alright, let's just say... hypothetically... this guy Tom wants to take you to Paris. Would you go?"

Laura: "Of course! And we'd probably have a good time. But I can't spend the rest of life with a guy like that. Plus, I want to make it on my own... pave my own way."

Niki: "Ok... you don't have to get all uppity about it."

Both take a sip of their drinks. Laura has additional thoughts about Tom.

Laura: "It really is a shame, because he's an amazing kisser, hahaha."

Rick walks back to their side of the bar.

Rick: "Another round?"

Niki: "No, no, no... we're ready to pay up."

Rick goes to the register to grab their check. Laura continues her thoughts.

Laura: "Also, when Tom and I are out, I like giving him a hard time, and then watching the veins pop out of his forehead."

Niki: "Hahaha... you like that look, do you?"

Laura: "Yeah, I look at this forehead, and then I instantly start fantasizing about the veins in his dick."

Niki: "Oh, for the love of God!"

Rick returns with their check. Niki and Laura are cracking up.

Rick: "There are some things you can't unhear... and that's one of them."

Niki: "Hahaha. Who knew women thought that way."

Laura looks at Rick with a suggestive smile, and the scene fades out.

Scene over

Scene 24

Scenario – Takes place at the HDM office a few days later (the week of Thanksgiving). Peter rushes into to Tom's office.

Tom: "What!"

Peter: "LightSpeed!"

Tom: "And?"

Peter: "A spot just opened up during the Superbowl, first quarter. Get Wayne Dahlgren on the phone and tell him it's eight and a quarter now, and likely nine and a half by the end of the day."

Tom: "On it!"

Peter turns and exits Tom's office. Viewers will see Tom shuffling through his recent texts to Laura, though it doesn't appear that she's responding. Tom then proceeds to call Wayne.

Tom: "Wayne! This is Tom McAvery... HDM."

Silent pause for Wayne to respond.

Tom: "A spot opened up for the Superbowl. If you want it, we have to grab it now."

Our film camera reverts back to Peter as he exits his office and hurries out towards the 9th floor receptionist.

Peter: "Becky, can you send a driver over to JFK. John's daughter and son-in-law are flying in this afternoon. I was going to pick them up, but now I have an appointment. I don't want them to have to get an uber."

Becky: "Yeah, sure, no problem. Actually, I think Johnnie's at the airport right now dropping off Mr. Sullivan."

Peter: "Even better. Have him just stay there until they land. And maybe text Luis so that he knows that Johnnie's there to pick him up."

Becky: "I'll do it right now."

Peter: "Thanks Beck!"

Fast forward to Dion's a few hours later.

Clinton: "No Pete again today?"

Tom: "Meeting up with a client; he might stop by afterwards."

Tom looks towards the entrance of the bar, only to find Nancy, Laura, David, and Richard grabbing a high top; pretty much the same table they sat at the last time the four of them were together. Tom resumes his conversation with Clinton, though his eyes are looking elsewhere.

Tom: "Clinton, what is your definition of a lemon drop?"

Clinton: "Well, technically, it's candy; Italian hard candy."

Tom: "No, I mean in terms of alcohol."

Clinton: "To me, it's a martini, but other people think of it as a shooter."

Tom: "What's the difference?"

Clinton: "Nothing really. Just fancier in a martini glass."

Tom: "I've determined that I like lemon vodka; just lemon, just vodka, no simple syrup."

Clinton: "What type of vodka?"

Tom: "Absolute."

Clinton: "Absolute Citron..."

Tom: "No, no, no... Absolute and a squeeze of a lemon. I've had Absolute Citron; completely different."

Clinton: "Hahaha, ok, I get it. You want that pure lemon flavor."

Tom: "It's not just the taste. There's a certain aromatic element to it; raises it up a notch."

There's a slight pause.

Tom: "Also, it gives me a completely different feeling."

Another slight pause as Tom thinks a little deeper about it.

Tom: "I love Chablis, in that it calms me down after a long work day. But sometimes I want to be a little more charged up, and vodka gives me that feeling."

Clinton: "If I didn't know any better, I'd say you're secretly asking me to pour you a shot!"

Tom looks over at Laura, and responds to Clinton at the same time.

Tom: "Yeah, maybe..."

As Clinton grabs the bottle of Absolute vodka, Laura takes notice of Tom sitting at the bar. She excuses herself from the high-top table and goes over to say hi to him.

Laura: "I got your texts, but I've been nose-to-the-grindstone with LightSpeed."

Tom: "No, for sure, you got your hands full."

Laura: "I saw that you were on the kick-off call."

Tom: "Yeah, I just... wanted to be available in case there were any questions around funding."

Laura: "Well, thank you. I was a bit nervous explaining the payment draws. I figured you would jump in if I got stuck."

Tom: "No, you handled it perfectly."

Tom takes his shot of vodka, smiles at Laura, and then looks over at Nancy's table.

Laura: "Hahaha, nope! Don't even speculate."

Tom: "What? Hahaha, four people having a few drinks... having fun, hahaha."

Laura: "You are more than welcome to join us!"

Tom: "Hahaha..."

Laura: "You can sit in between Richard and I... if that makes you feel better!"

Tom: "Hahaha, no thanks, hahaha, I gotta get up earlier tomorrow. I'm just gonna pay up and roll."

Laura: "Alright, suit yourself."

Laura holds up her glass, turns, and walks away. Our film camera follows Tom's line of sight as he stares at her lower half.

Tom: "Clinton, I gotta pay up."

Clinton: "Sure thing."

Tom: "If Pete comes by, remind him that we have meeting tomorrow morning... the kind you can't be hung over for!"

Clinton: "Hahaha... cut him off after three Jameson's... got it!"

Tom signs the check.

Tom: "Alright, I'm out of here."

Clinton: "Take care."

Tom somewhat stumbles as he passes by Laura and Nancy's high-top table. Nancy takes notice and makes a comment.

Nancy: "Walk much lately, Tom!"

Tom pauses for second, and looks back at Nancy.

Tom: "Pete was interviewing for Alex's position today. Funny... I didn't see you there!"

Nancy tilts her head, crooked twist in her smile.

Nancy: "What is that supposed to mean?"

Tom waves Nancy off in a less than respectful manner. He continues on his path; our film camera captures him leaving the restaurant.

Nancy: "Geez, what a dick!"

Laura holds her hands up, confused by Tom's sudden obtuse remark. David and Richard brush it off; semi engrossed in a sidebar conversation about sports. Footage fades.

Scene over.

Scene 25

Scenario – Takes place the following day at Laura and Niki's apartment.

Niki: "You're off for the holidays?"

Laura: "Yeah, we only had to work a half day today."

Niki: "Sweet! You going to see your folks."

Laura: "No, not this year. They're on a flight to Italy as we speak. My grandmother just turned 90. I really wish I could go. I haven't seen that side of my family in years. The flights are just so frigging expensive."

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 smiles.

Laura: "Maybe..."

Niki: "Oh my god... really? You like this guy, huh."

Laura: "Kinda, hahaha."

Niki: "Ok... alright..."

Laura: "How about you? Going to your parents?"

Niki: "It's at my sister's house this year, but yeah, just down the street from my folks."

Niki inquiries further about Richard.

Niki: "Have you and Richard... you know..."

Laura: "Hahaha... eh... yes... 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 water and whatnot."

Laura: "Yeah, all good in the romance department. Although, I have to say, he's like... real hairy... hehe."

Niki: "Eww!"

Laura: "Yeah... not normally my thing, but it works in his case. He's very clean and he smells good. But it does feel like I'm with a grizzly bear."

Niki: "Is he a good kisser?"

Laura: "Good, yes! As good as Tom? No!"

Niki hesitates for just a second before asking her next question.

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, hahaha. No, he's more than ok in that department."

Slight pause.

Laura: "Thick!"

Niki: "Oh really!"

Niki holds her hand up in the air, and fixes her fingers in the shape of the letter C.

Niki: "Beer can?"

Laura: "No... hahaha, thank God. I know who you are talking about... that's funny! No, he's like... paper towel-roll thick."

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!"

Laura: "Yeah, that's what I hear!"

Niki: "Hick dicks!"

Laura: "Hahaha! Yeah-no, Richard is proportionate."

Slight pause.

Niki: "He's tall, right?"

Laura: "Yeah, and muscular... liked jacked!"

Niki: "Like a bodybuilder?"

Laura: "Yes!"

Slight pause.

Laura: "I mean, Like... not roided out, but you can definitely feel the weight of him on top of you."

Niki: "I was with a heavy-set guy once; I thought my chest was going to cave in."

Laura: "Hahaha, no, it's not like that. He knows how to support himself."

Slight pause.

Laura: "Although, I'm not sure he knows his own strengths. He had me flipped over every which way."

Niki: "Hmm... interesting!"

Laura: "Yeah-yeah, it's different than being with most guys."

Niki: "I bet!"

Laura illustrates the size of Richard's biceps.

Laura: "His biceps are like this..."

Niki: "Damn!"

Laura: "Yeah, he had the lower half of my body completely lifted off the bed and my legs were... akimbo to say the least!"

Niki: "Jesus! Did he go down on you like that?"

Laura: "Oh 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! Hahaha. Caught me off guard, for sure! But... what are you gonna do; can't stop a dude!"

Niki: "Hahaha, no you cannot! Hahaha."

Niki disappears into the kitchen and returns with a drink.

Niki: "It sounds like you're gonna take this relationship to the next level."

Laura: "I... don't know. Play by ear, I guess. I would like for you to meet him, though."

Niki: "Yeah, of course. Hell, bring him to the Ale House; that's a test in itself!"

Laura: "Oh lord, hahaha."

Niki changes the conversation.

Niki: Look, I have to get back to the office. My work day isn't exactly over yet. We don't get a half-day... like most normal companies."

Laura stands and gives Niki a hug.

Laura: "Will I see you before you hit the road."

Niki: "I'm not leaving until early tomorrow morning, so just text me if you're out and about later this afternoon."

Footage fades as Niki grabs her nearby jacket and heads towards the front door.

Scene over

Scene 26

Scenario – Takes the place at Dion's the Friday after Thanksgiving. Tom and Peter are at their normal seats and our film camera is positioned at its regular position (bartender's perspective).

Peter: "No, no, no. These guys are coming here on Thursday. It's going to be a fucking show!"

Clinton jumps into the mix, having only heard bits and pieces.

Clinton: "First of all... what are you two doing here the day after Thanksgiving; you didn't get the day off?"

Tom: "Black Friday... we're in the retail business just like you!"

Peter: "With one exception... we don't actually have any black people that work for us."

Clinton: "See! That's fucked up, right there!"

As Clinton points his finger at Peter, Tom temporarily grabs his attention.

Tom: "Clinton, we have this new imaging machine at our office. Pete and I tried it out earlier today. It basically takes a 3D video image, and turns you into a virtual reality character. Kind of like a cartoon."

Clinton: "No kidding!"

Peter: "Yeah Clinton, come over to the office, we'll turn you into Hong Kong Phooey."

Clinton: "Man, what the hell you know about Hong Kong Phooey?"

Peter: "I know you talk just like Scatman Crothers... that's what I know."

Clinton: "Hahaha... man, you crazy."

Peter: "See! You didn't think I knew anything about black Hollywood."

Clinton: "Oh, so now all the sudden you're Donald Bogle!"

Peter: "Just about, yes! Ask me anything?"

Clinton: "What's Scatman Crothers real name?"

Peter: "Benjamin."

Clinton with a surprised look on his face.

Clinton: "Scatman's first movie?"

Peter: "Trick question. He was in a 1948 documentary called, Flat Foot Floogie with Louie Armstrong and Cab Calloway. However, the film never released on account of rumors that Al Capone was the executive producer. That aside, his first Hollywood recognized movie was called, Yes sir, Mr. Bones in 1951."

Clinton throws his hands up in the air in disbelief. Tom completely recoils.

Tom: "How in God's name do you know that?"

Peter: "NYU baby! Took a film class... professor was a black woman..."

Clinton: "Tom, is he lying?"

Peter: "I'll be honest... I have no idea."

Peter: "Alright, truth be told, my mother was a screen writer. She wrote for a television show called, Chico and the Man."

Clinton: "Get the hell out of here!"

Peter: "I'm telling you the truth. She wrote dialogue for Scatman and another actress named, Della Reese."

Tom: "You're serious!"

Peter: "Yes!"

Tom looks befuddled.

Clinton: "Pete, if you don't mind me asking, is your mom still around? I mean... is she still a writer?"

Peter: "Librarian."

Clinton: "Here in the city?"

Peter: "Brooklyn Heights Library."

Clinton: "I just signed out a book from there the other day!"

Peter: "Man, you know black people only go to the library to steal wifi."

Clinton shakes his head.

Clinton: "See, I try to have a normal conversation with you... and then you gotta go there."

Nancy and Laura enter the bar. Tom looks at Peter.

Tom: "Does Nancy know yet?"

Peter: "Not yet, but she's about to."

Tom puts his hand on his chin.

Tom: "She and I had a little tiff the other day..."

Peter: "Well, this should take care of that."

Laura and Nancy sit at their usual high-top table.

Peter: "Alright.... let me go over there and deal with this."

Our film camera follows Peter as he meanders over to where the girls are sitting. He looks directly at Nancy.

Peter: "As you already know, we're making changes within the organization."

Nancy fires back immediately.

Nancy: "And?"

Peter: "I want to sit down and talk about it like professionals."

Laura looks utterly confused.

Nancy: "Here, now?"

Peter looks at Laura

Peter: "Yes... this affects Laura as well."

Long pause.

Nancy: "Fine, say what you gotta say."

Peter: "Let me grab my drink and I'll be right back."

Laura grabs Nancy by the shoulder.

Laura: "Nancy, what is he talking about?"

Nancy: "I assume he's going to tell us that we have a new boss."

Pete walks back to the bar. Our film camera captures the visual of a short whispering conversation between he and Tom as they grab their drinks and walk back to where the girls are sitting.

Tom: "Clinton, a round of drinks for everyone."

Clinton: "Yeah, I got you."

As Tom and Peter sit down at the high-top table, there's a bit of uncomfortable silence at first.

Nancy: "We can pay for our own drinks, Tom!"

Just as Peter begins to speak, Clinton comes from around the bar with a tray of drinks, and interestingly enough, a drink for himself.

Clinton: "Cheers everyone!"

As a result of this unusual arrangement, each of them takes a sip of their drinks to break the monotony.

Peter: "Nan, what is that... Merlot?"

Nancy shakes her head.

Nancy: "Are we talking about work... or red wine?"

Peter: "No-yeah, it's just funny, I've... never seen you drink anything but Cabernet."

Nancy: "First of all, why is that funny? And this is Cabernet! Same shitty house Cab I get every time I come in here."

Tensions are climbing.

Nancy: "Do you have something to say about work? Or NOT?"

Tom tries to steady the drama.

Tom: "Hahaha, come on Nancy... we're just trying to break the ice here."

Nancy: "No you're not!"

A dark cloud hovers over the high-top table.

Nancy: "I was in the office 10 hours today, and all I want to do is unwind for a few minutes."

Dead quiet!

Nancy: "You two have probably been here for the last hour, and now you're fucking bored, so you're going to come over here to entertain yourselves?"

Tom: "Nancy..."

Nancy: "No Tom! I don't want to get into this thing where the four of us are hanging out. Nothing good comes from it."

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 gotta be cohesive."

Nancy looks at Peter all cross-eyed.

Nancy: "I'm not traveling... that's not in my job description."

Peter: "Well, technically it is... if you choose to accept my offer."

Nancy, still looking puzzled.

Nancy: "What offer?"

Peter responds calmly and sincerely.

Peter: "Alex's position."

Nancy confused look is coupled with her eyelids raised up to the ceiling.

Nancy: "WHAT!"

Tom's happy smile grabs Nancy's attention.

Tom: "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 at the same time."

Peter: "Your offer letter should be in your inbox by now. I think you'll find the compensation aligns with the position requirements."

Nancy tries to talk while crying.

Nancy: "I swear to God, Pete... if you're putting me on... I will 100% punch you in the face!"

Pete and Tom, while ecstatic for Nancy, are not sure how to respond. Nancy tries to level her emotions with humor.

Nancy: "I've done it before, hahaha!"

Laura hugs Nancy and continues to congratulate her. After a minute or so, Nancy tears of joy are bundled with bliss and relief as Pete reassures her that the offer is genuine.

Nancy: "Oh my God, I don't know what to say. I feel like I'm going to have a heart attack!"

Peter: "Hahaha, well, let's start with you saying yes, so I don't have to sit through anymore interviews."

Nancy looks at Tom, laughingly.

Nancy: "Tom, you are such a dick..."

Tom: "Hey, look, hahaha, at sat in on a few of those interviews, and you weren't one of them. I didn't know until this morning that Pete finalized the decision."

Nancy, smiling ear to ear; somewhat hyperventilating.

Nancy: "Ohh, I need to catch my breath."

Peter: "Not for nothing, but... I interviewed some good candidates. But as we all know, that position requires managing engineers that, quite frankly, don't want to be managed. Having said that... Nan, you're gonna have your hands full!"

Nancy: "Please... those guys aren't gonna know what hit them!"

Peter: "Hahaha!"

Still overwhelmed, Nancy jumps off of her chair and extends her hand to Peter.

Nancy: "I accept your offer on one condition..."

Slight pause

Nancy: "I get Tom's office!"

Peter: "Hahaha, done!"

Tom: "Woe, woe, woe!"

Everyone at the table begins laughing. Laura holds here Cosmo up in the air and hollers."

Laura: "Wahoo!"

Our film camera backs away from the table and takes an elevated, diagonal view of the four of them cheering, laughing, and parlaying conversations that are increasingly spirited. Viewers will get a sense that they have been talking and drinking for some time before our film camera re-joins the high-top-table at a closer proximity.

Peter: "Clinton! Another round!"

Nancy responds to the conversation that viewers weren't privy to while our film camera was away.

Nancy: "Oh my god. That is not the way it happened at all."

Nancy takes a drink of wine before elaborating.

Nancy: "First of all, it was Tom's birthday. That's the whole reason we were celebrating."

Laura: "How many years ago are you talking about?"

Nancy: "Oh... this had to be 6 years ago. It was like the first year we all starting working together."

Tom: "I think it was my 24th birthday."

Nancy: "We were no strangers to partying, but that night was way out of control."

Nancy leans over and whispers to Laura.

Nancy: "We were at this party, and someone had cocaine."

Laura: "Oh, snap!"

Nancy: "Yeah, that took it up a notch."

Nancy takes a sip of her wine.

Nancy: "All I know is that the sun was coming up, and we were all wide awake. Then SOMEONE mentioned going to Six Flags... for his birthday!"

Laura: "Six Flags! The amusement park?"

Nancy: "Yep. Worst idea ever. Not even sure how we got there."

Peter: "I drove, that's how got there."

Nancy looks at Peter with a crooked grin.

Nancy: "Yeah, that's what I mean!"

Tom takes a sip of his Chablis.

Tom: "I remember sitting in the parking lot forever, waiting for the place to open."

Peter: "The only thing I remember is that animal farm where they let kids pet the goats."

Nancy: "Oh, don't even jump that far ahead. When the amusement park opened, you went straight for the cable cars, and passed out immediately!"

Tom takes another drink and looks at Laura.

Tom: "The guy working the cable-cars didn't realize Pete was curled up in the cart behind us. He went around the turn-style, and back across to the other side of the park."

Nancy: "Twice!"

Tom: "Yeah, and then he jumped out of the cable-car, while it was still in the air! Landed on a haybale right inside the putting zoo."

Laura: "Oh my God!"

Tom: "Nancy and I had already gotten off the ride, so we were trying to help Pete climb out of the petting zoo; I turned around, and it was like... twenty security guards storming in from every direction."

Nancy: "Complete chaos!"

Laura: "What ended up happening."

Peter: "They through us out of the damn park! That's what happened!"

Nancy: "We literally got escorted out of the park by security guards."

Slight pause as everyone laughs.

Laura: "That is hysterical! Wow, you guys were really wild!"

Nancy: "Those were different times for sure."

Clinton re-enters the scene.

Clinton: "Dare I ask... ya'll ordering another round?"

Nancy: "Oh, lord no! I gotta go home."

Tom: "Clinton, just one bill."

Nancy: "Thanks, Tom."

Nancy is the first to get up off of her barstool.

Nancy: "Laura, are you good? It's a little late to be taking the subway."

Laura: "Yeah, no, I'm gonna Uber."

Tom: "Hey, let me get that for you. I don't trust those shared Uber rides you take. Especially on a day like this when everyone is shopping."

Laura: "Ok, sure, thanks!"

Tom looks at Pete as everyone grabs their belongings.

Tom: "Last week, this woman got in an Uber with a stranger... found her in the Hudson the next day."

Laura responds before Pete.

Laura: "Yeah, but they've since determined that it was Uber driver himself, not the other passenger!"

Tom: "Same difference. Point is... I gotta guy! Guarantees you're getting home safely."

Pete: "I hope your guy isn't Johnnie, because that's how I'm getting home!"

Tom: "Don't worry about it, I gotta guy."

Tom begins texting; everyone is putting on their jackets."

Tom: "He'll be here in five minutes."

Laura: "Ok, perfect!"

Nancy looks at her phone and then gives Laura a hug goodbye.

Nancy: "David is waiting for me out front, I'll see you on Monday."

Tom: "Nancy, have a good weekend!"

Nancy: "You too! Keep Pete out of trouble."

Peter acknowledges everyone's departure with a simple wave. At the same time, Laura grabs Tom by the hand.

Laura: "Hey... walk me outside."

As Tom and Laura walk away from the table, Peter retreats back to the bar.

Peter: "Clinton, what was that pasta special tonight?"

Clinton: "Penne with red sauce."

Peter: "Let me get a little of that to go."

Clinton: "You want it in a box?"

Peter: "Can you just put it in one of those nice Tupperware containers. I'll bring it back."

Clinton: "Sure."

As Clinton heads for the kitchen to get Peter some to-go food, our film camera moves outside as Tom and Laura wait for Tom's "guy" to show up. Their conversation is mostly jibber-jabber, that is until Laura lunges forward and surges her mouth onto his mouth. After a minute or so of mad, passionate kissing, Laura takes a breath of air."

Laura: "You have no fucking idea!"

Before Tom can respond, Laura grabs him around the neck and crashes their lips back together. Kissing continues until Tom's "guy" pulls up and beeps the horn. Laura, reluctantly pulls her mouth away, never losing eye contact, smiling, and nodding her head up and down. From there, Laura puts her hand on the silver door handle of a 4-door Porsche and lets herself into the back seat. The scene ends with Tom's "guy" driving away, and Laura gazing out the back window at Tom.

Scene Over

Scene 27

Scenario – Takes place Monday afternoon, 9th floor conference room at HDM. At the conference table: John, Peter, Tom, Nancy, and three representatives from Rockingham Gamers. Founder and CEO, Dameon Blankenship speaks first.

Dameon: “As you know, we’re under heavy scrutiny. And while we have the greenlight to release our game, the SEC is undervaluing the company. That in turn has had a negative effect on our lines of credit, as well as our borrowing power from gaming investors. All of that considered, we’re still going public. In order to raise the necessary capital we need to support our infrastructure, we’ll need significant gains over our initial public offering. For that to happen, we’re going to need enough pre-orders to meet our quarterly projections. And that of course is where you come in.

Nancy addresses the Rockingham Gamers executives.

Nancy: “Mr. Woodson, Mr. Claymore, Mr. Blankenship. Gentlemen, we’ve extended our financial layout for this endeavour, so our dedication to bringing your product to market is without question. As far as logistics; we can produce the commercial you want, and we can get it to your targeted audience. However, in order to provide you with a finished product, we need a spec file from your game, and we need a signed contract. In return, we’ll give you a skeleton copy of our software that will allow you to code your graphics however you want. If you’re onboard, we’ll have a full 30-minute promo of your game air on New Year’s Eve, and pump it up with teasers all throughout the holidays.”

Dameon turns to his solutions executive, Gary Woodson. Then he turns to his COO, Lyle Claymore.

Dameon: “Lyle, you good?”

Lyle: “Good.”

Dameon then stands up and addresses Nancy directly.

Dameon: “You can have our spec file. Show me the full commercial on Friday, and I’ll sign your contract.”

Lyle stands up, walks over to Nancy’s side of the conference table, and hands her a flash drive. From there, everyone exits the conference room. John signals for the receptionist to escort the executives to the elevators.

Tom and Nancy begin walking back to their office hall, discussing logistics for the rest of the week.

Tom: “How is this gonna work? Delphini is scheduled to be here on Thursday. The machines downstairs are set up for them... to include all of the props!”

Nancy: “We’re just gonna have to move that shit out into the common area and reset the equipment.”

Tom: “It literally took days to set all of that up.”

Nancy: “Won’t be the first time Karthik and his crew worked around the clock.”

Tom begins to say something; Nancy cuts him off.

Nancy: "Don't worry, it'll get done!"

As Tom and Nancy separate to go into their personal office space, Tom ponders aloud.

Tom: "Nan... why would Rockingham Gamers fly all the way up here... and not negotiate our offer?"

Nancy: "I don't know... I thought that was their whole reason for being here."

As Nancy retreats into her office, she finishes her response.

Nancy: "They play video games for a living... they're not businessmen!"

Our film camera follows Tom as he retreats into his office. Seconds later, Peter appears.

Peter: "I just got off the phone with Delphini; they agreed to push their appointment to Friday. I need you to hang back with John in case there's any bullshit about numbers. No matter what, they don't leave here without signing a contact."

Tom: "I hear ya."

Peter: "And that guy, Matteo, or whatever the fuck his name is... if he starts in with that nonsense about buyer demographics... I want you to take him down stairs and bash his head into that projector. And tell him... this is what you're paying for fuck-head!"

Tom: "Hahaha, I got it."

Peter grabs a pen off of Tom's desks and points it up in the air.

Peter: "And after he signs the contract, stab him in the neck with this pen, and remind him that WE are paying for the air time, not him!"

Peter continues to rant after he leaves Tom's office.

Peter: "I can't stand that cocksucker!"

Fast forward to Dion's a few hours later. Peter and Tom are at their regular seats at the bar.

Tom: "I'm still conflicted as to why they flew all the way up here."

Peter: "Yeah, I don't get that."

Tom: "What's going to change when you and Nancy fly down there?"

Peter: "I don't know... they're out of time, so... we'll show them the commercial, and they'll either buy it or they won't."

Peter has a sip of his Jameson.

Peter: "You know... they're boo-hooing about their IPO value... and while I agree \$9 a share is low, they're still projected to earn a quarter of a billion dollars at the opening bell! That's not nothing."

Tom: "Yeah, but in their world, it takes 20 data centers to handle their infrastructure; they're going to need every dime they can get!"

Peter and Tom take a sip of their drinks.

Peter: "They're saying they need to sell a million subscriptions of their game to break even. You think that's true?"

Tom: "I have no idea; I'm still trying to wrap my head around that statement Sony released yesterday... 25 million gaming consoles are reporting 40 hours a week of play time... each!"

Peter: "How's that even possible? That's full-time job hours!"

Tom: "Look, that's what they're claiming. You're sitting there asking me if Rockingham Gamers will sell a million copies of their game on New Year's Eve... I'm telling you it's going to be a whole lot more than that!"

Peter: "Let's think about that for a second. The initial cost is 85-dollars to download the game, and then 9-dollars a month for the subscription, right?"

Tom: "Yep."

Peter: "They're shooting for a million downloads. You're saying what? Four or five times that much?"

Tom: "Easily!"

Peter: "Ok, let's say conservatively, 2-mil."

Slight pause.

Tom: "Eh... 170-Million, plus 18-million a month."

Peter: "How many employees do they have?"

Tom: "I don't know... 2-3 hundred."

Peter: "That statistic alone makes them one of the most profitable businesses in the country. We land this deal... fuck... we're in a whole different league!"

Tom: "Even at 5% over the next 2-years... which is conservative... makes them our biggest client... by a long shot!"

Both Peter and Tom take a sip of their drinks.

Tom: "By the way, how are we looking on air spots for them?"

Peter: "We have half of what we need right now. The board meets on Wednesday to release the funds we need to purchase the rest."

Our footage jumps over to Laura's and Niki's apartment around the same time frame. Niki appears from the kitchen when Laura walks in after her day at work.

Niki: "Hey girl."

Laura: "Oh my god, glad to be home. The subway, ugh... you don't want to know."

Niki: "Pee or poo?"

Laura: "Oh, I wish! No, just some guy sitting across from me with his tongue out the whole time."

Niki: "Yeah that is worse than pee or poo."

Laura: "He never took his eyes off me the whole time. And... he was making those la-la sounds."

Laura quivers.

Laura: "Ugh... gave me the heebie-jeebies!"

Niki tries to humorously re-enact what Laura is describing, by sticking out her tongue and fluttering.

Niki: "You mean like this, la-la-la-la-la-la!"

Laura: "Oh my god, I'm going to throw-up... yes!"

Niki retreats back into the kitchen.

Niki: "Hey, there's a package for you... there by the coffee table."

Niki re-emerges from the kitchen, now with some kind of sandwich in her hand.

Niki: "What did you get?"

Laura: "Oh, nothing big, hahaha."

Niki: "That's a mischievous laugh... what did you get?"

Our film camera moves tableside as Laura opens the package. Focus is on Niki's facial expression as Laura rifles through the discrete cardboard box.

Niki: "Ok, wow, didn't realize you roll like that."

Focus is still on Niki. Contents of the box are initially obscured by the camera angle.

Niki: "Damn! It's so real looking."

Laura: "Right!"

Our film camera pivots so that viewers will see Laura suction-cup a dildo to the coffee table. Niki can be seen in the background with her eyes wide open. While looking straight at Niki, Laura points to the dildo.

Laura: "THAT is Richard."

Niki takes a second to respond; a bit confused.

Niki: "That's how big Richard's dick is?"

Laura: "No, that is his exact dick!"

Niki: "What do you mean?"

Laura: "I took a plaster cast of his dick, and I sent it to a company that makes real life dildos."

Niki: "No fucking way!"

Laura: "Way!"

Niki: "And you're saying this is an exact replica..."

Laura: "Shape, curve... even the veins are correct."

Niki: "Wow, and he just let you do that? Like, how did you make the mold."

Laura: "Came in a kit. You just mix up the powder with water, pour it in this plastic cylinder that comes with the kit, and then he puts his dick in the cylinder for a couple of minutes until the plaster forms."

Niki: "And then you just mail that out to some company that makes it?"

Laura: "Yeah, and you send in a few photos so they can get the color right."

Niki: "That's the craziest thing ever!"

Laura grips the dildo about mid shaft.

Laura: "Good thickness, right?"

Niki: "Yeah... I mean... in the world of cocks, that's certainly a good one."

Niki tilts her head to the side.

Niki: "And those are his balls?"

Laura: "Yeah, for the most part."

Niki continues to stare with her head tilted.

Niki: "Yeah, I don't really understand the need for balls... you know... for the purpose you plan to use it for."

Laura: "Oh, the best part... check this out!"

Laura pops the dildo free from the coffee table, and then shows Niki a small valve under the balls.

Laura: "You see... right there? You fill that with lube."

Niki: "What?"

Laura: "Yeah, that way it's always ready to go... you just... squeeze the balls, and some lube will squirt out the tip."

Niki shakes her head in awe.

Niki: "On one hand, I'm fascinated. On the other hand, it freaks me out how real it is."

Slight pause.

Niki: "Do have to squeeze both balls?"

Laura: "Hahaha... one ball for the lube, the other one shoots real cum!"

Niki: "Hahaha, get the fuck out of here!"

Though Laura was obviously joking, Niki can't take her eyes off of it.

Niki: "Man, that is... wild!"

Niki tries to look away.

Niki: "You gotta put that away. Oh my god... it's too much. I feel like there's some guy out there looking for his penis."

Laura: "Hahaha."

As Laura puts the dildo back in its box, Niki asks her about work.

Niki: "On a different subject... what's going on with your job?"

Laura hesitates to respond, somewhat shaking her head.

Laura: "I was gonna give my 2-week notice, but everything at HDM is back on track; we're having a huge influx of business. Plus, my manager just got promoted... and I think they are going to give me her old position!"

Niki: "But you accepted that other job, right?"

Laura: "Yes! I'm supposed to start there in two weeks... but I don't want to leave HDM."

Niki struggles to understand.

Laura: "Nancy is literally the Director of Operations for the entire company, and that's who I report to now!"

Slight pause.

Laura: "I'll never get another opportunity like this again."

Niki finally gets her opinions to surface.

Niki: "Listen! They are going to find out that you've been deceptive. You understand that, right?"

Laura doesn't respond.

Niki: "Mark my words, they will find out! And when they do, you better not be under their roof when it happens. Take that other job, and fuck giving anyone your notice. Jump ship and let the bridge burn behind you, because that shit is gonna go down in a bad way!"

Laura still looks conflicted. Niki moves closer to her.

Niki: "Do not under estimate what you did. You knowingly gave intellectual property to a competitor in exchange for a monetary gain... you can 100% go to jail for that shit!"

Slight pause.

Niki: "Get yourself planted with this other company. That way when it goes south... and it will... you might be protected under whatever policy and insurance they have."

Laura shakes her head up and down.

Niki: "It's not much of a guarantee, but it's the best you hope for."

Laura nods her head.

Laura: "I understand."

Niki: "Also, you gotta good thing going with Richard. Try to get yourself in a place where things are not on the ragged edge!"

Laura: "I got it, I got it, I hear what you're saying."

Slight pause.

Niki: "You got Richard's dick in that box... try to hang on to the rest of him."

Laura: "Hahaha."

Niki smiles, and suggests going to the Alehouse. Laura grabs her jacket and the scene fades.

Scene Over.

Scene 28

Scenario – Takes place over the next couple of days in various locations around the HDM offices. Our film camera will speed up and slow down between the technical meetings on the 4th floor, and the late afternoon conference room meetings on the 9th floor. Viewers will get a sense of controlled business chaos; Nancy standing in front of one of the whiteboards with a marker in one hand, and a hamburger in the other. There are delivery food bags, coffee cups, and other trash strewn across the conference table. There's a sense of struggle, argument, and uncertainty, coupled with rejoice, laughter, and relief. The footage lands on Tom's desk as he converses with the receptionist. Our film camera moves back and forth between Tom's laugh-driven advice, and Becky's facial responses.

Tom: "Just copy the data over onto a new spreadsheet and share it with Peter and I... it's that easy."

Becky rolls her eyes, followed by a long-winded sigh. She turns and walks out of Tom's office. At the same time, Peter comes barreling in. He waits until Becky is further down the office corridor before saying anything.

Peter: "What's going on with her?"

Tom: "Unbelievable. I asked her to do one simple thing; she starts talking about how's she's gotta leave early for some appointment."

Peter reverts back to his original reason for coming to see Tom.

Peter: "They have the intro to the commercial queued up downstairs. Let's go check it out!"

Tom eagerly stands up.

Tom: "Did you see that email from Karthik? They're gonna start coding tonight!"

Tom and Peter exit the office. Our film camera follows behind them.

Tom: "What time are we meeting with John tomorrow?"

Peter: "9am. After which, you, Nancy, and I need to get on the phone with Delphini and make sure all of their logistics are worked out for Thursday."

Footage moves from the 9th floor corridor to the elevators.

Peter: "Have you seen their website? They just updated their home page with the artwork we sent them."

Tom: "No, haven't seen it."

Peter: "Pull it up on your phone real quick."

Tom and Peter step into the elevator, presumably on their way down to the 4th floor. The viewers see Tom and Peter stepping out of the elevator; both looking at Tom's phone.

Tom: "Wow!"

Peter: "Pretty wild, right? Haha. Now tilt the phone the other way. See? Hahaha!"

Footage follows behind Tom and Peter as they enter the 4th floor office. All the while still looking at Tom's phone together.

Tom: "Hahaha, how in the world are they able to do that!"

Peter: "No idea... but it's addictive. Karthik tried to explain it to me. It's like... layers and layers of pictures on top of each other."

Our film camera continues to follow behind Tom and Peter as they make their way through the 4th floor corridor; ultimately on their way to the commercial studio.

Tom: "It's mind-boggling."

Peter lightly knocks on the studio door. Seconds later, a brown-skinned man steps out from behind the door.

Peter: "Karthik, I have to roll out for a meeting. I was hoping Tom and I could see the intro before I leave."

Karthik lowers his voice.

Karthik: "We gotta wait a second; they're changing filters and it has to be done in low light."

Tom: "Karthik, I'm blown away by this webpage!"

Tom tilts the phone and holds it away from his face.

Karthik: "Turn the phone sideways."

Tom starts to rotate the phone.

Karthik: "Now, turn it all the way upside down."

Tom: "How is that even possible?"

Tom shows the image to Peter.

Peter: "It's a completely different picture!"

Our viewers never get a chance to see what Tom and Peter are looking at.

Peter: "Hold on... does that mean the image changes every time we look at it?"

Karthik: "It's crazier than that; individuals see at different depths, which means that two people looking at the same image see two different things in the background."

Tom: "That is nuts!"

An Asian woman peaks her head out from the studio.

Asian woman: "Karthik, we're ready."

Karthik looks at Tom and Peter.

Karthik: "Ok, please be careful... there are wires everywhere!"

The scene fades out as Tom, Peter, and Karthik walk into the studio and close the door behind them.

Scene over.

Scene 29

Scenario: Picks back up the next morning at Tom's apartment. As he's gets out of bed, he notices a number of missed calls from Peter, so he calls him back.

Tom: "Hey."

Peter: "LaVon owns the other half of the airtime we need. When you get into the office, get Sean Green on the phone and conference me in."

Tom: "Woe, woe, woe, woe... we already have all of the prime-time slots."

Peter: "Not the prime-time, Sean bought the other half of the non-prime spots we need for New Year's Eve."

Tom: "Pete, that doesn't make sense; 2-hour air spots spread across 20+ channels? They don't have anywhere near that many clients."

Peter: "Not 20 channels! One channel! The exact channel we need to run the Rockingham Gamers promo."

Our film camera focuses on Tom's expression. The viewers will get a sense that Tom is starting to figure it out. Peter responds very calculatingly.

Peter: "Get Sean on the phone... let's cut a deal to buy that airtime from him... and then we'll look into how this happened."

Peter hangs up the call. Focus is still on Tom as he sits at the edge of his bed, rubbing his eyebrows. Footage picks back up as our film camera follows behind Tom as he badges into the 9th floor executive office and snakes his way through the corridor to his personal office. Seconds later, Peter enters his office and closes the door behind him.

Tom: "I've been calling Sean every 15 minutes since I left the house; left numerous messages."

Peter: "What time does their office open?"

Tom: "I assume nine."

Peter: "Ok, we still got 30 minutes. Can you pull up our airtime calendar? I want to check something."

As Tom pecks away on his computer, viewers will get a sense of the pressure, frustration, and anxiety. Peter walks around to Tom's side of the desk.

Peter: "Actually, go to the project summary."

Slight pause.

Peter: "No, not the Gantt view. Just... yeah, whatever that's called. Look at columns E and F. Now compare that to the calendar."

Tom: "I don't understand this... there's actually 32 channels in the block. Why did he just grab one? And why did he take the 2-hour lead in? It's not like they run infomercials."

Tom looks up at Peter and they stare at each other for a second.

Tom: "No way!"

Peter: "What else could it be?"

Tom: "Well, it's not Alex."

Peter: "Why not?"

Tom points to his monitor.

Tom: "Look at the date. He was no longer working here when you uploaded the request."

Peter rises his voice.

Peter: "Then what the fuck could it be? You, Nancy, and I are the only ones with access!"

Tom: "Maybe we got hacked..."

Peter: "We didn't get fucking hacked!"

Peter slams his hand on Tom's desk and then looks up at the ceiling as a means to calm himself down.

Peter: "There's only one person in the world that has an axe to grind with us, and that's Sean."

Slight pause.

Peter: "No one would purchase two-hours of non-prime air spots on that exact channel, at that exact hour... unless they were trying to fuck with us."

Tom doesn't respond. Instead, he just shakes his head. Peter jabs his index finger on top of Tom's iPhone.

Peter: "At 9 o'clock, not 901, at 9 o'clock, get that fuck-face on the phone. Offer him cost, plus 15% and that's it! If he pushes back, conference me in."

Our film camera follows Peter as he storms out of Tom's office and down the corridor to his own office. From there, will shift focus to the 4th floor studio; Nancy and Karthik arguing over the studio logistics and the room necessary for the engineers to do their job.

Karthik: "They're complaining that they can't get to their desks with all the equipment in the way."

Nancy: "I don't give a shit; they can sit on the fucking floor!"

Our film camera follows Nancy and Karthik as they exit the studio, walking down the corridor, and trying to avoid a bunch of equipment in the hallway.

Nancy: "See this? I want all this gone by the end of the day."

Karthik tries to respond, but Nancy cuts him off.

Nancy: "Just put it next to the break room; you and your team can go a day without using the kitchen. It's not gonna kill you!"

As Karthik tries to explain why it's not a good idea to store the equipment next to the break room, Nancy physically starts walking a different direction, and more or less ignores what he's saying.

Nancy: "I'm going to be in meetings until noon. When I come back down here, there better be a clear path to that studio!"

Our focus returns to the 9th floor. Our film camera follows Nancy as she exits the elevator, badging into the main office area, down the corridor, and into the executive conference room where Peter and John are conversing. Before closing the door behind her, Peter runs out, meeting Tom midstream down the hallway.

Peter: "What? Nothing!"

Tom: "Receptionist said he's not in the office today."

Peter: "You have his cell phone number, right?"

Tom: "If it's the same number... yes!"

Peter: "Alright well, I spoke with the network. They said if he doesn't submit for material review within 2 weeks, it will automatically go to us. Of course, will pay dearly for it that close to Christmas, but at least we can tell Rockingham Gamers that we have it."

Tom and Peter begin walking together back to the conference room.

Tom: "John's is not gonna be happy about this."

Peter: "He's all fired up about Delphini and that disaster going on downstairs, so we might catch a break."

Tom and Peter enter the executive conference room. And while our film camera remains stationary in the adjacent hallway, viewers will see John address their tardiness.

John: "Hey look, it's the two guys that show up 10 minutes AFTER the meeting started."

Slight pause.

John: "Sorry Nancy, I didn't mean to cut you off... please continue."

As Nancy continues with their meeting agenda, our film camera pulls away, and Tom closes the conference door behind him. We resume footage later that afternoon at Dion's. Once again, Tom and Peter are at their usual seats with Clinton pouring drinks.

Peter: "Big fucking day tomorrow!"

Tom: "No doubt."

Tom takes a sip of his Chablis.

Peter: "What's up with you... haven't been yourself lately."

Tom: "Yeah-no, I..."

Peter: "What?"

Tom: "I was up late last night doing the one thing your never supposed to do?"

Peter: "Jerking off? Yeah, you should never do that at night. Do that shit in the morning..."

Tom: "No..."

Peter cocks his head back and raises his left eyebrow.

Peter: "Please don't tell me you were texting some chick!"

Tom: "Yep."

Peter: "Ugh... never do that. That's like the only rule there is."

Peter takes a sip of his Jameson.

Peter: "Dare I ask who?"

Tom turns his face towards Peter and then tilts his head to the side."

Peter: "Oh my God... not her!"

Tom doesn't respond. Instead, he turns his attention back to his Chablis. All the while, Peter is still staring right at him.

Peter: "Aside from the fact that John told you to stay away from her, I'm sure you've seen her boyfriend down in the lobby every other day waiting for her to get off work."

Tom still doesn't respond.

Peter: "Hard hat... work boots! Don't act like you haven't seen him."

Slight pause.

Peter: "He will 100% bring a cinderblock into this building and wrap you upside the head with it!"

Tom still doesn't respond; sipping away at his drink.

Peter: "Don't start falling apart on me! Delphini is going to be here tomorrow morning... which means you're gonna be stuck with her big ass all day."

Tom finally comes to life.

Tom: "Once again, this is where the communication between us goes off the rail. I try to talk to you about something, and you don't reciprocate like a normal human being."

Peter rises his voice.

Peter: "There are a million women in this city that you can fuck tonight, why does it have to be her."

Tom: "Look, she's been texting me... telling me this guy, Richard is being abusive towards her..."

Peter rises his voice even louder.

Peter: "I DON'T CARE!"

Peter senses that maybe he's being a little too loud, so he tones it down a tad.

Peter: "I'm gonna be stuck with Nancy all day tomorrow and Friday. So, pardon me for not being a little more compassionate with respect to fat-ass texting you at all hours of the night, looking for sympathy!"

Slight pause. Peter lowers his voice even further.

Peter: "Look at me!"

Tom turns and reluctantly makes eye contact with Peter.

Peter: "You want to connect with me... is that it? Then listen carefully! That woman had her heart ripped out of her chest on account of the wedding being called off. I don't know what the circumstances were, and I don't care. But what I do know; two months later she's in another relationship that isn't going right. What does that tell you?"

Tom swirls his Chablis.

Tom: "Tells me she hasn't found the right man."

Peter: "Hahaha... ok!"

There's an awkward pause. Peter responds with his Jameson up to his lips.

Peter: "How about Wayne Dahlgren... is he's the right man?"

Tom, instantly deflated, immediately pushes his glass forward, and scoots his barstool back.

Tom: "Clinton, add this to my tab, I'll pay it up later."

Peter: "Tom, come on, sit down."

Tom doesn't respond. Instead, he grabs his iPhone and starts walking away.

Peter: "You heard those rumors the same way I did!"

Tom continues walking, so Peter talks louder.

Peter: "You want to communicate! We're communicating."

Peter looks at Clinton.

Peter: "I try to talk to him; he doesn't fucking listen."

Clinton standing there shaking his head.

Clinton: "Get a film crew up in here... this would be the number one reality show on tv."

Slight pause.

Clinton: "I have a sneaking suspicion that Tom doesn't want you on his tab this time."

Peter with a little more serious look.

Peter: "Yeah, well, you'd be wrong to think that!"

Peter finishes his Jameson and orders another.

Peter: "And don't think I don't know what's going on in that kitchen. I know what the specials are... I see you walking all the way to the far side of the restaurant so I can't see what people are ordering!"

Slight pause.

Peter: "Whatever it is... you can best believe I'm getting some to go."

Clinton walks away, still shaking his head. Peter talks to himself; more or less mumbling.

Peter: "What am I... chopped liver around here! I gotta sit here and listen to Tom's problems... I gotta be with fucking Nancy tomorrow... I hope the special is chopped liver tonight..."

Scene fades as Peter complains to his Jameson glass.

Scene over

Scene 30

Scenario – Takes place the next day. Peter and Nancy are in a limo heading to the airport. Our film camera is set up in the front seat looking back. Nancy is checking her email from her phone.

Nancy: "Laura isn't coming in today."

Peter: "Of all the days... she's not coming in today?"

Nancy: "She said she's not feeling well."

Peter: "Yeah, I'm not feeling well either, but I'm fucking here!"

Nancy tosses her hands up in the air.

Peter: "Fucking hell... hit Tom up and let him know."

Peter shakes his head. Viewers see the limo at a distance with the airport in the background. Footage resumes back at HDM. Tom and John are seen in the studio watching Delphini executives taking turns in front of the greenscreen. From there we fast forward to Tom in his office later that afternoon. As he pecks away on his computer, he receives a phone call from Laura. Viewers will only be able to hear Tom's side of the conversation.

Tom: "I don't understand what you're saying. Where are you?"

Tom: "How do you not know where you're at?"

Tom: "Yes, Broadway. I got that. You're obviously at a bar! What bar?"

Tom: "The Hilton? I didn't even know there was a Hilton there."

Tom shaking his head.

Tom: "Put him on the phone... yes... the bartender!"

Tom: "Hi... yes, I understand the situation. I just want to make sure we're talking about the same."

Tom still shaking his head.

Tom: "Oh-oh, I got it... the lounge area."

Tom grabs a pen and a sticky note.

Tom: "This time of day with traffic... at least 20 minutes."

Tom: "Yeah-no, I fully understand."

Scene fades and then picks back up inside the lounge at a hotel on Broadway that is owned by The Hilton. Our film camera catches Tom dashing through the hotel lobby; Laura sitting at the end of the bar with her hands crossed and her head slumped over the bar countertop. Tom puts his hand on her back to let her know he's there.

Tom: "Laura, what's going on?"

After a stern look from the bartender, Tom reaches for his wallet, and slides his AmEx across the bar countertop. He then turns his attention back to Laura; tears and mascara running down her face.

Tom: "Laura... sweetheart, what's wrong? What happened?"

Laura is barely comprehensible.

Laura: "I'm drunk."

Tom: "Yes, I can see that. How did you end up here?"

Laura: "I was across the street... Richard showed up."

Tom: "And...?"

Laura: "He broke up with me."

More tears.

Tom: "Oh Jesus!"

Tom signs the bill and explains to the bartender the situation.

Bartender: "Yeah, I've been hearing it for the last hour!"

Tom puts his AmEx back in his wallet.

Laura: "I should have known better. I'm so fucking stupid!"

Tom: "Laura, we have to leave... now! We can talk about this somewhere else."

Tom manages to get Laura off of the barstool, and together they wobble towards the hotel lobby.

Tom: "I'll ride with you in the uber to make sure you get home safely."

Laura stops in the middle of lobby, and ponders over the logistics of getting to work the next day.

Laura: "I can't go all the way back to Jersey. Nancy wants me in the office by 7am tomorrow. I need to stay in the city."

Tom: "Fine, you want to stay here... at this hotel?"

Laura: "Here? Can we just go back to your place?"

Tom: "In your condition... no!"

Laura starts to look like she's going to be sick, so Tom ushers her towards the women's restroom. As Laura manages to slumber into the bathroom, Tom scurries over to the hotel check-in to see if he can get Laura a room for the night. Our film camera toggles between the hotel reception area, and the lobby restrooms, waiting for Laura to come slithering out. With the room key in hand, Tom runs over to Laura and pushes her towards the elevator, and away from the hotel manager. From there, our film camera will pick up at the point where they are walking into the actual hotel room. Laura throws

her purse on the floor and slumps onto the bed. Tom grabs an empty glass next to the stationary desk, and goes into the bathroom to fill it. When he returns to Laura's bedside, he places the glass on the end table and sits down on the edge of the bed. He places his hand on her shoulder; her head is slightly turned away from him.

Tom: "I'm gonna call downstairs and arrange a wakeup call at 6am."

Laura: "Whatever..."

Slight pause.

Tom: "Laura, why weren't you at work today?"

Laura: "What?"

Tom: "Nancy told me you were sick, and that's why you couldn't make it into the office today."

Laura: "Ok..."

Tom: "You couldn't work today, but you were able to make it from Hoboken to Broadway... to meet up with Richard?"

Laura doesn't response.

Tom: "And then he... just decides to break up with you?"

Laura looks like she doesn't understand."

Tom: "Laura, answer my question... why would Richard ask you to meet him here, of all places, considering neither of you live in the city?"

Laura starts to answer, but gets stuck in her words.

Laura: "Because..."

Tom: "Because what?"

Laura state of mind takes a complete 360.

Laura: "Tom, how come you don't wanna fuck me... is there something wrong with me?"

Tom rears his head back, not at all expecting that response.

Laura: "We'd be the perfect couple."

Tom stands up, not sure what to make of Laura's brashness.

Laura: "Tom McAvery... Mr. Perfect. Always doing everything right. Meanwhile, you don't even have a girlfriend."

Tom backs away from the bed, and starts looking for an exit strategy."

Laura: "When is the last time you got laid? No, let me guess... 3 years ago?"

Signs of irritation take over Tom's face.

Laura: "I heard she was real pretty! So, what happened?"

Tom doesn't respond, all the while getting more apoplectic.

Laura: "What happened, Tom? Didn't fuck her hard enough? That's my guess!"

Viewers will see a side of Tom they haven't seen before; eyes scorched with disbelief, and face red as a beet!

Tom: "I have to go..."

Laura: "No-no-no, don't leave!"

Tom walks backwards all the way to the door.

Laura: "Come on Tom, teach me a lesson."

Tom: "You're drunk, and you are way out of line talking to me this way."

Laura mocks Tom by repeating what he just said in a snarky manner.

Laura: "Blah, blah, blah... you're way out of line... fuuuck you!"

Tom: "I can't believe how ungrateful you are."

Laura: "Ungrateful? I'm right here! Have at it... do whatever you want to me."

Tom: "You're not acting like the person I know you to be."

Slight pause as Laura gathers her drunken thoughts.

Laura: "I could have called anyone... I called you... that must mean something!"

Tom: "You called the person that could bail you out the quickest. If anyone else was closer, you'd have called them first."

Laura's inebriated thoughts continue to spiral.

Laura: "Tom, do you ever jerkoff?"

Tom: "What..."

Laura: "I just assume most guys do... but who knows with you."

Tom: "You're unbelievable! I don't know what I ever saw in you!"

Tom turns to leave; Laura shouts out to him.

Laura: "Tom! Do you know what a pansy is?"

Tom doesn't respond, but waits for her explanation."

Laura: "Any guy that walks away from this!"

Laura pushes her ass up in the air.

Tom: "I'm done with you!"

Tom clutches the door handle, swinging the door wide open, well beyond its hinges. As he steps out of the room and into the hallway, he kicks the door closed. Footage moves ahead as Tom leaves the hotel lobby and stomps out onto the sidewalk. There's a moment where he begins to walk, but then stops after a few steps, placing one hand on a sign pole, and the other on his hip. He looks across the street and sees the restaurant that he believes that Laura may have been at earlier. Our film camera will capture Tom crossing the street, but then skip forward to where viewers now see him taking a seat at the bar.

Bartender: "What can I get you?"

Tom: "Any chance you have Chablis?"

Bartender: "Not since 1985."

Tom: "I'll just have your house chardonnay. No, actually... vodka with a squeeze of lemon."

Bartender: "Grey Goose?"

Tom: "Sure."

The bartender makes an otherwise fancy looking cocktail, to include a lemon rind twist.

Bartender: "Relationship or work? It's got to be one of the two."

Tom pulls his hands away from his face and looks up at the bartender.

Tom: "Umm, work."

While scrolling through his phone, Tom circles the rim of his drink with the lemon rind.

Bartender: "Do you want anything to eat?"

Tom: "No thanks."

Tom shows his phone to the bartender.

Tom: "By chance was this woman here earlier?"

The bartender looks at the pic and then looks at Tom.

Bartender: "What, are you the husband?"

Tom: "No, hahaha... co-worker."

Slight pause.

Tom: "She called me from the hotel lounge next door; she couldn't find her wallet. She mentioned having dinner across the street, so I was thinking it was this place."

The bartender takes an extra second to respond.

Bartender: "She was here earlier... I have her wallet."

Slight pause.

Bartender: "No offense, I don't know you... I can't just give it to you."

Tom: "No, no, no, I'm just gonna let her know that it's here."

Tom finishes his vodka cocktail and orders another, all the while explaining Laura situation.

Tom: "She had a few too many drinks at the hotel lounge, so I got her a room... sleep it off. She'll probably come by tomorrow to get it."

Slight pause.

Bartender: "I was joking when I asked if you were her husband."

Tom: "Hahaha, yeah-no, far from it."

Slight pause.

Bartender: "Your lady friend, slash co-worker, she was here with some guy, and it turned into a whole spectacle."

Tom: "She told me that her and boyfriend broke up; I suspected there might be some drama."

Bartender: "I didn't see the whole thing, but it looked like one of those deals where the boyfriend caught her on a date with another guy."

Tom: "Another guy? Woe, woe woe... what other guy?"

Bartender: "I don't know... just some guy. They were sitting at one of the booths, and then this big meathead looking dude came in screaming and yelling at her."

Tom: "Yeah, that's her boyfriend... well, was her boyfriend. But I'm curious... who was the other guy?"

Bartender: "No idea."

Tom: "Cowboy hat, rodeo looking fellow?"

Bartender: "No..."

Tom: "No?"

Bartender: "He was wearing suit, like you... reddish, curly hair."

Tom: "Reddish curly hair?"

The bartender nods his head. Based on Tom expression, he has a sneaking suspicion who it is. Our film camera will incorporate the standard bar/customer perspective, and time lapse the next few hours. Most of the footage is centered Tom's consumption of alcohol, and coupled with the sounds of Laura's voice in his head."

Laura's Voice: "Tom, do you know what a pansy is... do you know what a pansy is... do you know what a pansy is?"

Once again, our film camera speeds up, showing drink after drink after drink. Viewers will see from Tom's blurry visual perspective. It reaches a point where the Bartender can no longer justify serving him.

Bartender: "I gotta cut you off, man."

Tom: "Ok... then I'll just have one more."

Bartender: "Hahaha, that would be the exact opposite of cutting you off."

Tom: "No, I understand. I don't want to cause a spectacle... as you like to call it."

Tom's eyes are looking off into the distance, and his facial expression has disconnected from the person he was when he first walked into the bar.

Bartender: "Here's your tab."

As Tom shuffles to find his credit card, he discovers that the hotel room key card is still in his possession. As the bartender finalizes the bill, viewers will see Tom tapping the edge of the key card against the bar countertop.

Bartender: "You good? I can call you a cab."

Tom: "No, no, no, I'm good. Just thinking."

Tom signs the bill and we move our film camera outside to capture his unsteady walk across the street, and presumably back to the hotel. From here, we'll skip head to the point where Tom desperately tries to push the 2nd floor button on the elevator. Our film camera follows behind Tom as he makes his teetering walk from the elevator to Laura room. His key card electronically opens the door on the first try. We move our film camera to the inside of the room and focus back on Tom as he enters ever so quietly. From his perspective, Laura is passed-out, face down in a pillow, fully clothed in what she was wearing earlier. She apparently ordered room service; messy plate on the floor next to the closet. As such, Tom reaches down and grabs what appears to be a steak knife. He walks over to where Laura is sleeping and he stands at the foot of the bed for an inordinate amount of time. There's a large quantity of bedsheet hanging off of the base of the bed, somewhat jaunted up in a pile on the floor. Tom grabs a corner of the sheet and drives the knife through the middle. From there, he tears a long strip, maybe half of the length of the bed itself. The tearing of the sheet makes an eerie noise, but doesn't wake her, so he continues shredding until he has two, equal length strips of the bedsheet. He wraps the first strip around the palm of his right hand, and without warning, he jumps onto Laura back, using the first strip of sheet as a means to gag her. Laura is horrifically awakened and screams to the best of her ability, but the sound is muffled due to numerous wraps of the bedsheet around her face and mouth. As Laura struggles to get free, Tom puts additional weight on her upper back. With her hands flailing about, Tom is able to secure both of Laura's wrists with the second strip of bedsheet, tying the loose ends to the base of the headboard. During the struggle, she's able to get one hand free, but in doing so, Tom grabs her hair and yanks her head backwards in a very unnatural and painful looking way. As a result, she gives up her free hand, which allows Tom to tie the knot even tighter. She struggles for maybe another 10 seconds, legs kicking unmercifully. Tom scootches down, now putting all of his weight on the back of her knees. Laura wincing, twisting her upper body and turning her head just enough to see who's assaulting her. Her expression is one of terror and utter shock; a version of Tom

she's never seen before. Using his left hand, Tom snatches the back of Laura's silvery dress pants, leaving a gap between the waistband of the pants and the bare skin of her lower back. He takes the steak knife and maneuvers the serrated edge along the belt loop of her pants. In one fell swoop, he pulls the blade upward, splitting her pants straight down the cleft of her butt cheeks. At this point, our film camera is over Tom's shoulder, and viewers hear him speak for the first time since he entered the room.

Tom: "This is what you wanted."

Tom slides back a smidgeon more, all the while unbuckling his belt and pulling down his zipper. Viewers will only see the white of Tom's dress shirt as it drapes over his rear end. Our film camera moves to the lower back corner of the bed, forefended from showing Tom's lower extremities. The main focal point is aimed at Tom licking his fingers as a means of lubrication. He does this several times in relation to the way he wants to penetrate Laura. Viewers will see her clinch and grimace upon the first few attempts, but then give in when it seems there are no other options. There's an uncomfortable and disturbing grrr sound that filters through Laura's gagged mouth, followed by her grunting each time he thrusts into her.

Tom: "Stupid... fucking... whore..."

The incursion ramps up to vicious pounding; a noise that's hard to describe in words. Laura's only defence is to push back against Tom with the lower half of her body. In a sense, it becomes a back-and-forth war of will. At some point, Laura's lower body strength and center of gravity allows her to pounce back into Tom with enough force to send him flying off the bed and onto the floor. His sense of mobility and balance is temporarily disable, giving Laura an opportunity to remove the ligaments from around her wrists. From there, she jerks the torn sheet out of her mouth, rolling over onto her back, and gasping for air. Tom eventually finds his way to his feet, completely dumfounded by Laura's ability to fend him off. She takes in 2 or 3 full breaths, followed by general heavy breathing.

Laura: "Give me a second to catch my breath..."

Laura continues to talk through her hyperventilating condition.

Laura: "Ok... ok... fuck... ok... oh my god..."

She sits up in the bed and wipes the sweat off her brow.

Laura: "Jesus Christ, Tom! Are you trying to kill me!"

Tom has no bearings at this point. He's essentially trapped within his distorted mind-set.

Laura: "I'm down for whatever, but fucking hell, you can't cover my mouth AND nose... I have to be able to breath!"

The reality of Tom's actions hit him like a ton of bricks. And now he doesn't know what to make of Laura taking control over the situation.

Laura: "We can go again..."

Slight Pause.

Laura: "As long as you don't cut off my... entire air supply!"

Laura rolls over onto her hands and knees, fully into the doggy-style position, and she re-ties the torn bedsheets so that her wrists are once again bound to the bottom of the headboard. From there, she drops down to her elbows, arching her back, purposely causing the seam in her slivery dress pants to rip down a little further.

Laura: "Go ahead, finish what you started!"

Denial, confusion, shame, and fear; Tom gathers himself and runs for the door.

Laura: "You gotta be kidding me! After all of that, you're gonna fucking leave?"

As Tom closes the door behind him, Laura flattens herself out on the bed, and draws one of the pillows closer to her face. Our film camera stays behind and zooms in as Laura caresses the torn sheets, contemplating over the knots around her wrists.

Scene over.

Scene 31

Scenario – Takes place at Tom’s apartment the following morning. He’s lying on the couch, texting Laura, asking her to call him. Our film camera follows him from the couch to the bathroom as he opens the medicine cabinet, running his fingers around the outside of his eyes, hoping to push out the puffiness. He tilts his head back and applies eyedrops. We move directly into the shower, focusing down from the ceiling. Tom has one hand on the tile in front of him, and the other hand over his face as the shower water rushes down on the back of his neck. After the shower, we move to the point where Tom is nearly dressed, adjusting his tie and putting on his suit jacket. He sits back down on the couch, places his elbows on the coffee table, and his head into the palms of his hands. He picks up his iPhone and calls the 9th floor receptionist. Viewers will only hear Tom’s side of the conversation.

Tom: “Good morning, Becky. Can you put me through to the 4th floor? Thanks.”

Tom: “Lizzy, it’s Tom, is Laura there? Can you just ring me on my cell when she arrives?”

Tom resends another text to Laura before leaving his apartment. We resume footage as Tom pulls up in front of the Hilton hotel lobby. He hollers at the valet to hold his car out front for a few minutes while he runs up to Laura’s room. Viewers will see Tom once again slide the key card along the door handle of the room. Cautiously, he peeps around the corner, but the bed is empty. He immediately calls her on the phone, but it goes straight to voicemail, so he sends another text. Tom runs out to his car and screeches tires as he exits the hotel turnabout. While in the car, our film camera will be set up in the passenger seat, focused on Tom’s phone as he makes a call to his attorney.

Tom: “Jimmy, it’s Tom McAvery. Hey, can I stop by your office around lunch today? It’ll be quick. Yeah, 12:30 works... thanks.”

We move ahead, Tom is now on the 9th floor of HDM and entering the conference room. John enters the conference room short thereafter with Peter and Nancy dialled in on Zoom. While our film camera is somewhat outside of the actual conference room; footage will show Tom, John, and a handful of engineers sitting at the table while Nancy goes over the meeting agenda.

Nancy: “First, I want to thank everyone for their hard work. As most of you know, Pete and I are meeting with Rockingham Gamers in a few hours, and the commercial we’re going to show them is our final edit.”

Footage moves down to the 4th floor receptionist.

Lizzy: “Thank you for calling Heritage Design & Marketing, my name is Lizzy, how can I help you.”

Lizzy: “Oh, hey Laura. Nancy is in a meeting on the 9th floor. Can I take a message for her?”

Lizzy: “Ok, will do. Hope you feel better.”

Footage moves back up to the 9th floor, just as the meeting is letting out. Our film camera follows Tom back to his office where he grabs the keys to his car. Footage will pick back up as he gets off the elevator on the 4th floor.

Tom: "Hey Lizzy. Did Laura make it in?"

Lizzy: "No, she called in sick."

Tom: "Ok."

Tom Texts Laura again.

Tom's text: "Please, please, call me."

Footage shows Tom retreat to the elevator, and then picks back up when he enters his attorney's office, and walks up to the receptionist.

Tom: "Hey Donna, I'm a little early... is Jimmy available?"

Donna: "Hey Tom, yeah, go right in. His office door should be open."

Tom: "Thanks."

Emotions get the best of Tom as he plops down in a chair in front of Jimmy's desk.

Jimmy: "What's going on, Tom?"

Tom stands up, walks around the office a few times, and then sits back down in the seat.

Tom: "Jimmy, I think I messed up."

Jimmy: "Ok, tell me about it."

Tom: "Do I have attorney/client privilege with you?"

Jimmy: "As long as it has nothing to do with HDM finances, personnel, or intellectual property."

Tom: "It's nothing like that."

Jimmy: "Ok, then yes."

Tom: "I'm coming to you as a friend. I need your help. I don't want John to know about it."

Jimmy: "I'll do the best I can... tell me what happened!"

Tom: "It's about a girl that works for HDM."

Jimmy: "I just asked you if this has anything to do with HDM, and now you're telling me it involves an employee."

No sooner than Tom trying to summarize the night before, Jimmy gets up from his desk and closes his office door so that the receptionist doesn't listen in. In doing so, he shuts out our film camera and any clear audio relating to their conversation. Footage resumes at the point where Jimmy tries to summarize Tom's situation and provide advice.

Jimmy: "Look, she was drunk, you got her a room, you went back to check on her, you two had sex, you wanted to leave, she wanted you to say. If that's the whole story... I think you're in the clear."

Jimmy walks from around his desk and opens his office door.

Jimmy: "There's a million people in this city that woke up regretting what they did last night. And chances are, it probably was someone they work with. She's not calling you back because (A) she's hungover, or (B) she's embarrassed. You say you know where she lives, go talk to her. Sit down and have a conversation. Tell her you feel awkward about it. Buy her a lotte, or something."

Viewers will see Jimmy walk Tom to the reception area, and out into the building hallway.

Tom: "Thanks, Jimmy."

Jimmy: "No problem."

Fast forward to Laura's apartment after Tom leaves Jimmy's office. We resume footage as Tom walks up to her apartment door and rings the bell. Seconds later, Niki answers the door.

Niki: "Can I help you?"

Tom: "My name is Tom McAvery. Is Laura here?"

Niki: "She not feeling well."

Tom: "Can I talk to her for a second?"

Niki: "She doesn't want to see you."

Tom senses hostility in her tone.

Tom: "You're Niki, right?"

Niki: "Yes."

Tom: "Listen, I really need to talk to her. She didn't come into work yesterday, supposedly her boyfriend broke up with her... she lost her wallet... she didn't come into work today..."

Niki: "I don't know what to tell you!"

Slight pause.

Niki: "Look, I don't know what's going on between you two... but now is not the time."

As Niki slowly closes the door, viewers will get a sense that she may not have all the details. Footage fades and we move straight to Peter and Nancy's meeting with Rockingham Gamers. The executives just finished watching the final commercial.

Dameon: "I have to say, this really has exceeded my expectation. I'm used to a lot of visual nuances; I was concerned how our game would look through the restrictions of commercial video. But it does in fact look very much like the way we designed it!"

Nancy: "Thanks for putting your trust in us. This was exceptionally challenging for our team, especially considering the timelines, but now seeing the finished product... this is going to answer a lot of questions our clients have regarding video coding. Which is to say, the possibilities are endless!"

There's a pause as Dameon opens a folder in front of him. It not only contains the contract award documents, but other files that appear to be equally important. Our film camera is initially set up in the corner of the conference room to get everyone in the frame, but more focused on Dameon flipping through some hard copy files.

Dameon: "Ok, so the business at hand. It's come to my attention that you only own half of the commercial air time we agreed upon for New Year's Eve. This is binding, per the contract, no?"

Peter immediately jumps in, almost cutting Dameon off.

Peter: "Dameon, the very nature of what we do involves buying and selling airtime on the backside of our marketing business. While we don't personally own all of the time slots, we've reserved allocation for your commercial, meaning no one else can run their commercial in its place."

Dameon: "Oh, I understand that perfectly. But you still have to purchase that specific airtime from another vendor, correct?"

Peter: "And we will, it's baked in as a normal part of our process. It clearly states in the contract that we take the financial loss for unattained or unoccupied commercial slots."

Dameon: "That's part of the cost protection addendum, I got that. What I need is a guarantee that my commercial is going to run for every minute we agreed upon. I'd feel a lot more comfortable executing this contract if I knew you already owned 100% of airtime."

Nancy jumps in.

Nancy: "Dameon, negotiations are already underway. There are no other commercials in the queue during the lead-in times you requested..."

Nancy is interrupted when Dameon slides his folder across the table to Peter, all the while only staring at her. She finishes her sentence with lagging words.

Nancy: "... we are negotiating as means to get you the best price."

Dameon keeps his eyes on Nancy while Peter flips through some of the pages in the folder. As such, a defeated look washes down his face. Instead of responding, Peter just closes the folder and looks up at the ceiling.

Dameon: "One of your competitors owns the other half of the airtime we need. For the record, I'm here to do business with you. But this needs to be tightened up before I official award HDM this contract."

Peter's attitude is rapidly changing, but his words are calm and well-articulated.

Peter: "LaVon Marketing doesn't have the capability to build this kind of commercial. But somehow, they knew exactly when you wanted it to air. Is there a relationship between you and LaVon that I should know about?"

Dameon: "I didn't know who they were until yesterday. I got an email from a guy named, Sean Green, followed by a FedEx delivery with that airtime memorandum inside of it."

Suddenly, things start to come together in Peter's mind. And of course, the mere mention of Sean Green's name begins to boil his blood.

Peter: "Dameon, can you give Nancy and I a few minutes to make a phone call."

Dameon: "Absolutely. Let's call it lunch and reconvene in an hour. You and Nancy can have the conference room to yourselves."

Dameon and his team rise from the table and exit the conference room. Peter and Nancy stare at each other for a few seconds before Peter slides the folder and documents her way. Nancy recognizes the intent of the document immediately, but somewhat confused over cost associated with buying the remaining airtime they need from Sean.

Nancy: "What am I missing here?"

Peter: "Notice how the numbers are broken down to the nearest dollar?"

Nancy: "Yeah."

Peter: "It's exactly 50% of our gross margin. The only way Sean could know that is if he saw our airtime portfolio. And the only way he could have seen those details... is if someone from our office show it to him."

Nancy: "Who? The only people that have access to those tools are you, Tom, and I!"

Peter: "You heard what Dameon said... he just received the airtime ownership report yesterday."

Nancy: "And?"

Peter: "Who wasn't in the office yesterday?"

Nancy takes a defensive posture.

Peter: "Who's not in the office today?"

Nancy: "Stop! Just stop it! She doesn't have access to any of those reports."

Peter looks at Nancy sideways.

Nancy: "We don't have time to sit here and figure out how Sean stole our data. We need to get him on the phone and cut a deal... and quick!"

There's a pitcher of water on the table. Peter pours himself a glass and offers Nancy the same.

Peter: "Let's get John on phone first."

Peter calls John from the conference table portal with the speaker on.

Peter: "John, can you hear me."

John: "Yes."

Peter: "They love the commercial, ready to sign, but we have an issue with regards to the non-prime air spots."

John: "Let me take a wild guess; LaVon owns it and Sean wants to sell it back to us at a ridiculous rate."

Peter: "I haven't spoken to him yet, but that's what it looks like."

John: "Where you at with the margin?"

Peter: "32.50."

John: "Alright, get Sean on the phone, conference me in, and make sure Rockingham Gamers is in the room. I want full transparency."

Peter: "Got it."

Slight pause.

John: "You and Nancy flying back this afternoon, right?"

Peter: "Yep."

John: "What time do you land?"

Peter: "Six."

John: "I'll have a car waiting for you at JFK. Come straight to the office... both of you!"

Viewers will hear John hang up the phone. Peter looks at Nancy with unsettling eyes.

Nancy: "Something is WAY wrong!"

Peter: "Yeah..."

Peter starts dialling Sean on the conference room speaker phone.

Peter: "Sean knows something that we don't know... and so does John."

Sean answers the phone on the first ring.

Sean: "Hello..."

Peter: "Sean, it's Pete."

Sean: "Peter, what can I do for you."

Peter: "As I'm sure you already know, Nancy and I are in North Carolina, getting ready to finalize our award contract with Rockingham Gamers. We're set to reconvene with them in 20 minutes. I want to conference you into that meeting."

Sean: "Sure, just call the main line; my team and I are on standby."

Peter: "Sean, I don't want to get into a bidding war. I just need Rockingham Gamers to know that HDM owns the non-prime air spots."

Sean: "Well, then you better talk to John. I offered him 12%, but he wants Heatherton in exchange... and I'm not willing to do that."

Uncomfortable silence; Peter shaking his head, Nancy mouthing the F word."

Sean: "Pete, we got Heatherton fair and square. You guys failed to deliver and you know that. Heatherton partnered with Rockingham Gamers legal team, which is why we're having this conversation."

Peter: "Dameon Blankenship said that he had never heard of LaVon Marketing until yesterday."

Sean: "We bid on the contract through NewArt Studios. You all had the better platform; hence you won the contract."

Peter: "Yeah well, that still doesn't explain how you were privy to our airtime position."

Sean: "I guess I could say... similar to how you knew my position with Lightspeed earlier this year?"

Peter: "Woe, woe woe... you fired Danny and he came to work for us. That's completely different."

Sean: "You fired Alex, and he came to work for us; how is it different?"

Peter starts to blow his stack.

Peter: "Because that's not who fucking tipped you off!"

Peter shakes his head while looking at Nancy.

Sean: "Look, I'll say whatever you want in front of Rockingham Gamers to ensure this deal gets done. And I'm willing to settle at 10%."

Peter: "10%, and you give us Heatherton back!"

Sean: "10%, and I'll give you Heatherton in exchange for your ad banners during the second half of the Superbowl."

Peter ponders the offer.

Peter: "I'm gonna be back in New York later this evening. Will you have time to meet up with John and I to finalize this?"

Sean: "Sure."

Peter once again responds to Sean while looking sternly at Nancy.

Peter: "Also, knowing John... he's gonna ask you to divulge your source."

Sean: "Anything else?"

Slight pause.

Peter: "Give me a few minutes, I'll conference you in as soon as Dameon and his team get back from lunch."

Sean: "Talk to you then."

The scene fades at Peter hangs up the call, all the while still looking at Nancy. It appears at this point that she understands the reality of what's going on.

Scene over

Scene 32

Scenario – This will be sporadic footage throughout the weekend capturing Tom's dismal state of mind, moping around his apartment, and trying to convince himself that things aren't as bad as they seem. From there we'll move straight to Monday morning at HDM. Our film camera is stationary in front of Tom as he comes through the building entrance, wearing semi-mirrored orange tinted sunglasses, and one of his usual blue suits. As he steps into the elevator, he removes the sunglasses, revealing this new face he's developed since his encounter with Laura. When the elevator door opens on the 9th floor, Tom steps out and looks at his watch; 8:59am. As he passes the reception area, Becky, while on the phone, greets Tom with her typical good morning wave. Tom takes his usual path through the office corridor, peeking into Peter's office along the way, taking notice that he's not at his desk. From there, he continues to his own personal office and sets up his laptop like an ordinary work day. After a minute or two, he shakes his head, and ventures back to the main office area. Standing next to the coffee table in the common area, he looks around as if something is amiss. Before returning to his office, he stops by Nancy's new office; paperwork on her desk, old food wrappers, but no sign that she's been there. As such, he walks back through the open office area and into the reception area.

Tom: "Becky, where's everyone at?"

Becky: "Peter left for an appointment, and Nancy... I don't know, haven't seen her."

Tom: "There's literally no one in the office. We just signed the largest contract in the history of this business... and no one is here!"

Becky: "Umm, John's here... I think."

Our film camera is set up just outside of John's office door, which is closed. Tom walks up and gently knocks. Viewers will hear John respond.

John: "Come in."

Tom slowly opens the door and walks in. Our film camera moves to John's perspective, and we'll utilize alternate viewpoints depending on who's talking.

John: "Have a seat."

Tom: "Where's everyone at? I've been calling Pete all weekend. Is everything alright?"

John side-lines Tom's question, and moves straight to the issue.

John: "On Friday, I received legal documents from an attorney representing Laura Pensali, who no longer works for us. She alleges having a relationship with you that turned volatile, and that she no longer feels safe working here."

Tom: "John, I can explain..."

John holds up a vanilla envelope and continues making his point.

John: "I'm going to spare you the details of her affidavit, but I can assure you that it's enough to bring criminal charges against you, and ruin this company beyond repair."

Tom's eyes begin to water, because he knows what's coming next.

John: "Your employment with HDM is terminated, effective immediately."

Tom lowers his head and places his hands over his face.

John: "I have a contractual responsibility to inform the board that you were fired... with cause. They will likely stop payment on your next check and freeze your money-market account until their investigation is complete."

Tom takes in a deep breath, and sits up straight in his chair.

Tom: "John, you need to understand the whole story."

John: "What is there to understand? I told you to stay away from her, and you didn't."

Tom: "I learned on Thursday that she and Sean Green were in cahoots, possibly having an affair. But I couldn't figure out how she was able to give him our airtime data."

John: "And that's why you raped her? Because that's what this affidavit is accusing you of!"

Tom: "That's not what happened..."

John's look and attitude might lead the viewers to wonder what's the point in discussing it any further. Unless of course you take into consideration that Tom is his nephew.

John: "Nancy allowed Laura to use her laptop to help with the Lightspeed presentation, and she somehow was able to hack into the airtime log. Allegedly, she gave that information to Sean."

Tom: "She's not computer savvy enough to pull that off."

John: "I don't know what she is... but she definitely got over on you!"

Tom doesn't respond.

John: "Sharing laptops goes against our policies, and Nancy knew that. As a result, I had to let her go."

Tom: "You let Nancy go... you fired her?"

John: "Neither of you left me with any other choice."

Tom: "John! She's been with the company 10 years; she more loyal and honest than any person I know!"

John: "Drinking with subordinates, hanging out in bars, going on double dates... I can give you 20 more reasons."

Tom once again lowers his head in shame, crying follows soon thereafter.

John: "Look, you have bigger issues to deal with now. The board is going to vote unanimously on suing Miss Pensali for stealing intellectual property with intent to bargain and secure financial gain. And if they can tie her to LaVon Marketing, they will sue them too."

Tom still has his head in his hands.

John: "Are you listening to me? LOOK AT ME, SO I KNOW YOU UNDERSTAND!"

Tom quickly lifts his head and wipes the tears away from his face. John once again shows him the vanilla envelope.

John: "There's enough dirt in this affidavit to put you in prison for life! She asking for full immunity from any legal action against her... in exchange for not filing charges against YOU!"

Tom somewhat nods his head.

John: "If the board were to find out that I'm helping you, over and above the needs of this company, they will vote me out, and not think twice about it."

Tom continues to show acknowledgment.

John: "I'll have to convince them that there is a larger financial gain by not going after her. In order to do that, I'll have to insert some of my own personal funds and then somehow get creative with regards to my relationship with LaVon."

Slight pause.

John: "In exchange for doing this, you're going to do me a favor."

Another slight pause. John is nodding his head to ensure that Tom fully understands.

John: "One, you are never going to talk to that woman ever again. Two, I have a friend in Colorado, Carl Stoner; you know him. He owns a small hedge fund and he's going to set you up with a job. No job title, no team, no co-workers.... just you managing his money. Three, you're not coming back to New York... ever!"

Tom eyes are red, looking in different directions.

John: "This city is not the financial mecca that it used to be. Someone with your brain can make just as much money anywhere else."

Tom nods his head.

John: "Lastly, you leave today!"

Tom: "What!"

John: "TODAY!"

Tom: "What about all of my stuff?"

John: "Go home, pack the bare minimum. I'll have all of your stuff boxed up and shipped to you."

Tom: "What about my car?"

John: "Leave me the key; I'll have auto transport pick it up and deliver to you."

Tom: "John... I need a few days to get my things in order."

John: "I'm not asking you; I'm telling you... I've got your boarding pass, your flight leaves at 3:30... TODAY!"

Tom is more or less at a loss for words.

John: "Don't stop anywhere, don't call anyone, don't do anything to bring attention to yourself. And whatever you do, do not contact her under any circumstance. Got it?"

Tom nods his head again.

John: "When you land in Denver, give Carl a text. You got his number right, right?"

Tom: "Yes."

John: "He'll pick you up from the airport and you'll stay at his place until you find something better."

John tugs on the vanilla envelope to get Tom's attention.

John: "Tom, you can never come back here. Not ever."

There's a moment of uncomfortable silence as John puts some of the blame on himself.

John: "If your father was here right now, he would say that I failed you. And he'd be right to say it."

Tom: "You didn't fail me..."

Slight pause.

John: "Do you remember when he was in the hospital dying. I brought you in there to see him... you were kicking and screaming. Do you remember that?"

Tom: "Sort of."

John: "You didn't want to look at him. Neither did I for that matter. He was in bad shape. He had just enough energy to tell me that you are my responsibility from now on. Do you remember what he said?"

Tom shakes his head from side to side.

John: "He said, my son comes first."

Tom: "What did he mean by that?"

John: "It meant that nothing should ever be more important to me, than you!"

John sighs.

John: "I wasn't there for you when you were growing up. I just kept sending your mom more and more money so that I didn't have to be involved."

Tom: "I don't know why you're saying that. You went to all of my soccer games when I was a kid, and you used to come visit me at school... you were always talking to my teachers, making sure I was doing good."

John: "Do you know what I remember? That one teacher you had... calling me every time you acted up in class. I told her... I said, look... you got the wrong number!"

Tom laughs half-heartedly.

John: "Point being... I did the bare minimum for you. I had it in me to prepare you for the business world, but there's a whole other world out there... a world your father knew very well. And he would have prepared you for it."

There's a picture of John and Tom's father in a 5 by 7 frame on John's desk. Tom looks at the picture and nods his head.

Tom: "He was always gentle and kind with my mother and I, and then I would hear these stories about him... and then I would worry that whatever was wrong with him would somehow get passed onto me."

John: "Your father was a brilliant man. He was very good to me, very protective; could do no wrong in the eyes of our parents. Unfortunately, he chose a life by where you're just not going to be long for this world."

Tom continues nodding his head.

John: "Please take my advice and know that your father would definitely agree; go... start... a new life! I promise you, in time, you'll look back at this place as a faded memory. You'll remember the good times, and you might even reference HDM as having launched your career. But believe me when I tell you... you will go onto much bigger and better things."

Tom nods his head one last time. From there, we fast forward to his apartment as he frantically sifts through all of his belonging, trying to decide what he actually needs, versus what won't possibly fit in his carry-on luggage. Our film camera captures Tom getting into the back of a cab and telling the cabbie to take him to JFK airport. A few stop lights later, Tom begins talking to himself.

Tom: "I have time... I have time... ."

They pass through a few more traffic lights, all the while Tom is looking at his watch.

Cabby: "What time is your flight?"

Tom: "3:30"

Cabby: "You're not checking bags, are you?"

Tom: "No."

Cabby: "We'll be there with plenty of time to spare."

Tom: "Yeah..."

Tom looks out the window for a second or two.

Tom: "I just need you to make a quick stop for me."

Cabby: "No problem, where do you need to go?"

Tom: "Hoboken."

There's a bit of silence as the cabby makes a lane change.

Cabby: "Hoboken! That's the complete opposite direction! I thought you were talking about stopping at the liquor store or something like that."

Tom: "If I miss the flight, then I miss it. But this is something that has to be done."

Cabby: "It's your dime."

Our film camera moves outside of the cab, somewhat of a curb side perspective, capturing the cab as it makes its way out of the city. We then move our film camera to the southside of the Holland tunnel as the cab passes by. Ultimately, we resume footage when the cab pulls up in front of Laura's apartment complex. Tom taps on the back of the cabby's seat.

Tom: "I'll be back in 5 minutes... just wait for me."

Our film camera follows Tom to Laura's apartment doorstep. His hand quivers as he reaches out to push the doorbell. There's a pause before Laura answers. She responds with the door closed. Her voice is fearfully quiet.

Laura: "What do you want?"

Tom: "I need to talk to you."

No response.

Tom: "Can I at least apologize to you... face to face?"

No response.

Tom: "I have a cab waiting for me... I just need a minute of your time. And then I'm gone."

Laura opens the door, but keeps the chain lock attached.

Laura: "Say what you want to say... and then leave."

Tom: "I apologize from the bottom of my heart. What I did was unthinkable. I'll spend the rest of my life living with that regret, and the harm I've caused you."

Laura: "You're not getting closure from me if that's what you came for."

Tom hesitates to respond, but musters up enough courage to tell her what he really wanted say.

Tom: "I love you."

Laura's face turns red with anger.

Laura: "You love me! You fucking try to kill me!"

There's a brief moment of silence, followed by Laura lifting the chain lock and swinging the door all the way open.

Laura: "Is that your definition of love? Is that how it works? Wait for me to pass out... and then sneak back to the hotel room and hold me at knife point!"

Our film camera is to the left of Laura, focused on Tom, but now the two of them are standing face to face. Her voice is back to its normal tone.

Laura: "I have something of yours... that money clip that doesn't actually have any money in it."

Laura walks back into the house, leaving the front door open. She's talking to Tom from the living room couch.

Laura: "You can come in."

Tom cautiously enters, somewhat shutting the door behind him.

Laura: "Who carries a money clip and a wallet... makes absolutely no sense."

Tom: "Look, I didn't come here to ask for forgiveness. It's an unforgivable thing. But the fact of the matter is... I ruined my life, and now I don't know what to do. I have a cab outside waiting to take me to the airport."

Laura is looking under the couch and under the coffee table for Tom's money clip.

Laura: "Where are you going?"

Tom: "Well, I was going to fly to Denver, but I'm sure I'll miss the fight, so I guess I'll just pick whatever destination gets me away from here."

Laura: "And then what?"

Tom: "I don't know... start a new life."

Slight pause.

Tom: "Maybe you can come with me."

Laura: "Come with you?"

Tom: "We can start a new life together."

Laura: "A new life together... are you insane!"

Tom: "I could be that man you want me to be. I can provide for us... take care of you. We can leave all of this behind us."

While still looking for his money clip, she picks up a glass of wine that she was apparently drinking before he showed up. Her voice takes on a flippant tone.

Laura: "Really... and what exactly are we putting behind us."

Tom doesn't answer. Laura sits down on the couch.

Laura: "Are we putting behind the fact that you shoved my head into a pillow and wouldn't allow me to breathe. Is that what we're putting behind us?"

Tom lowers his head.

Laura: "How about when you yanked my head back and almost broke my neck. We putting that behind of us too!"

Tom's lips start to chatter and his eyes become watery. Laura flies off of the couch enraged, yelling at the top of her lungs.

Laura: "Oh, don't you fucking start crying. You weren't the one tied up. You weren't the one with a goddam bedsheet shoved in your mouth."

Tom's hands are over his blubbing face."

Laura: "You jammed your knee into my fucking back, you asshole! Do you have any idea how much that hurt?"

Slight pause.

Laura: "Do you want to see the bruises you left behind?"

Tom grabs the door as if to leave.

Laura: "Just answer me one thing, Tom!"

Tom holds up at the door.

Laura: "Why... why in my ass?"

Laura finds his keepsake money clip, and slings it at him.

Laura: "You left this here... when you were normal!"

Tom reaches down and picks up the leather money clip.

Laura: "I was going to throw it away, along with your business cards, but then I remembered you saying that it belonged to your father, and that it's the only thing you have of his."

Laura starts to calm down.

Laura: "For the life of me, I can't figure out why you would reduce yourself to my level."

Tom puts the money clip in his pocket.

Laura: "Most people just automatically live in this despicable layer of life, but you were above it. How did you allow yourself to stoop that low?"

For whatever reason, Tom becomes defensive.

Tom: "Why did you ask me to stay?"

Laura: "Oh, don't even go there... I didn't ask you to stay! I thought some hotel worker broke into my room; only to discover it was you! I figured, damage already done, might as well get something out of it. And then you just fucking left! Talk about insult to injury."

Tom reverts back to his prerogative.

Tom: "If you trust me, we can build a life together that is completely different than this. Erase everything that went wrong, and replace it with everything that is right between us."

Laura: "You just don't get it. There's no escaping shame. There are certain lines of indignity you can't cross. Because if you do, there's no coming back. It's a life sentence. The ugliness follows you wherever you go. The best you can hope for is to put that guilt and regret onto someone else."

Viewers will get a sense that Tom is unable to connect the dots. His distorted feeling for her won't let him walk away.

Laura: "I told you a few months back that I can't be trusted. You didn't listen then, and you're not listening now. How much clearer do I need to make this for you?"

Tom: "I choose to fight for us, and I will never give up. I'll do whatever it takes to ensure your happiness. And I will see to it that you are comfortable, safe, and secure. And there's no shame in wanting the finer things in life... which you know I have the means to provide you with."

Laura stares at Tom for a second, and then grabs a box of tissues from the coffee table. As tears start to fall, she puts her hand over her mouth and then dashes into her bedroom crying. Tom gives chase, stopping short of her bedroom, begging her to come back into the living room so they can talk about it. Our film camera is set up in a way that viewers can only hear the racket going on in Laura's bedroom. These are the sounds of small items being thrown, general shuffling, and scuttling about. When Laura talks, her voice is snivelling.

Tom: "Laura, come out and let's talk about it. Please!"

Laura: "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 and the ruckus in Laura's bedroom subsides. Tom continues standing in the same spot, anticipating she will walk out any minute.

Tom: "Laura?"

The entire apartment becomes very quiet. Tom becomes more and more concerned.

Tom: "Laura, you ok?"

Tom takes small steps towards Laura bedroom; the door is partially open.

Tom: "Laura, please."

Again, she's not responding. Our film camera will move back and forth between the footage from her bedroom perspective, and footage from Tom's perspective as he slowly opens her bedroom door.

Tom: "Laura..."

As the bedroom door creaks open, Tom slowly peaks his head in, taking small steps at a time. Our film camera zooms in on his facial expression; his fingers holding close contact to his lower lip, as if he's trying to bite his nails.

Tom: "No... God no..."

Tom's eyebrows drop and his upper lip starts to curve downward. Again, it appears as if he's betting his finger nails. As such, his voice is muttered.

Tom: "Laura, no. Please don't do this."

Our film camera follows Tom's line of sight. Viewers will see Laura in her bed, on all fours, with her wrists tied with the same bedsheet strips that Tom used on her at the hotel, to include the strip that he lassoed around her mouth. More notably is the fact that she's wearing the same silvery dress slacks that Tom ripped with the knife. The crack of her ass clearly visible. As Tom stands there looking traumatised and grief stricken, the focus will capture a sudden change in his expression. As our film camera slowly backs out of the bedroom, viewers will see Tom face revert back to the look he had that night at the hotel. Staring down the lens of our film camera, he slowly shuts the bedroom, leaving viewers to speculate what's going to happen next. As our film camera continues backing out from the bedroom and into the living room, the sounds going on between Tom and Laura behind closed doors can only be described as heinous. Having said that, some viewers will likely reflect back to a point in their lives when things weren't as seemed. What you see, what you feel, what you hear, and what you think only exist between you and that person. And only in that moment, forever sketched in the darkness of self-preservation, does one see a grain of sand in their hourglass that looks any different than the rest. As such, the focus of our film fades to permanent black.

The End