

**THE GRAVEYARD GANG**

Written by

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FADE IN:

1 INT. MEDIA NEWS, DISTRIBUTION WING - NIGHT 1

The double doors to the back of a factory swing open, giving way to a parking lot shrouded in the blackness of night.

Two young adults in their early twenties saunter inside, removing their jackets and tossing them on a nearby table.

LOUIE HERZBERG is in the midst of tearing open a pack of Poptarts. RICH WESLEY cleans his glasses with his lens cloth and slips them on the edge of his nose, sliding them into place.

They pass by machinery, strappers, stacker-machines and large rolls of printing paper, stacked on top of one another, extending to the rafters. The rolls of paper line the walls, leading into the printing press room.

Rich and Louie shuffle over to the time clock, perched on a small wooden shelf next to a refrigerator and vending machines. They grab their time cards and punch in.

RICH

I wonder if his highness will be  
joining the rest of us on time  
tonight.

Louie takes a big bite of his Poptart.

LOUIE

(chewing)  
Don't fucking count on it.

2 INT. GOLDEN AGE PRODUCTIONS, OFFICE - DUSK 2

INSERT TITLE: SIX HOURS EARLIER

DALEN GUS, mid twenties, wears a neatly tailored suit and glossy black dress shoes. Incongruously, he sports a scraggly, unkempt beard.

He sits across from a young attractive blonde in her late twenties, ATHENA RAY.

They're in the midst of a conversation.

ATHENA

You've got to be kidding me! I honestly don't know what's worse -- the fact that you dog ear your books or Darth Maul being your favorite Sith Lord!

Over Athena's shoulder, a Chewbacca poster hangs on her wall. A few majestic framed photos of various mountains and incredible landscapes sit below on her book shelf.

DALEN

Whoa! First off, Darth Maul is extremely marketable, which is exactly why Phantom Menace was so successful. Secondly, I'm addicted to the written word, not the pages they're written on.

ATHENA

All I'm trying to say is you should have much more respect for the well-being of books -- especially considering you want to be a writer!

DALEN

Yeah, a screenwriter -- not a novelist.

ATHENA

That makes no difference my friend!

DALEN

Time will tell, I suppose.

ATHENA

Speaking of which, how's your script coming along?

DALEN

I finally finished it the other week!

ATHENA

That's great!

DALEN

Oh yeah. I put the finishing touches on it and submitted it to that big screenwriting competition I was telling you about based out in LA.

ATHENA

And this is, uh, your sci-fi script  
you were tellin' me about, yeah?

DALEN

Yes, ma'am. The guys who are born  
with the superhuman ability to  
steal memories from people and  
thwart crime.

ATHENA

That sounds right up my alley! I'd  
love to read it sometime!

DALEN

Yeah?

ATHENA

Absolutely! Toss it over.

Dalen smiles.

DALEN

Will do. I'll email you a PDF  
before I leave the office.

(beat)

Oh, oh! Before I head out, I gotta  
show you that thing I was tellin'  
you about!

3

INT. MEDIA NEWS, DISTRIBUTION WING - NIGHT

3

Louie and Rich are the only ones here, going about their  
regular routine.

They stand at a large "Quipp stacker-machine" attached to a  
conveyer belt terminal, suspended above. Sentinel &  
Enterprise newspapers for the next morning slowly roll down  
the belt from the adjoining room -- emerging fresh off the  
press.

The papers roll gently into the Quipp stacker-machine. The  
stacker collects 200 papers and drops them down, shooting  
them out of the machine. Louie and Rich grab the bundles of  
200 spitting out slowly, one by one.

Louie and Rich take each bundle and jog (shape) it on a  
vibrating board until the bundle is neat and orderly. They  
stack the bundles onto a pallet, resting on the concrete  
floor beside them.

LOUIE

So seriously, how much longer do you think this place has?

RICH

You mean how much longer until you can sit on your lazy ass and start collecting?

LOUIE

Are you shitting me? I do everything around here. I'm the king of paper, man, the royal highness of this paper palace!

RICH

(facetious)

Yeah, it's a palace alright.

LOUIE

Hell, if it wasn't for me, this place would crumble to the ground.

Louie grabs the next bundle that shoots out of the stacker-machine.

LOUIE (CONT'D)

(jogging the bundle)

I'm telling you -- one day they're gonna build a monument of me out there in that parking lot.

RICH

You despise this place!

LOUIE

I've told you a million times -- I love my job. I just hate the people I work with.

Louie grasps the bundle he jogged and places it down on the pallet with the others.

Rich leans into the stacker-machine and grabs the next messy bundle to spit out. He fumbles with it as he places it onto the vibrating board to jog and neaten.

LOUIE (CONT'D)

Remember those SAW movies? Nothing would make me happier than if I could be Jigsaw for a day and place all these assholes that work in the office in one room together and put them through the most gruesome trap and just watch it all happen.

Louie stares off into oblivion, clearly engrossed in his own vindictive thoughts. A malevolence radiates from his beady eyes.

LOUIE (CONT'D)

The suffering, the blood, the desperate cries for help!

Rich takes his bundle and stacks it on the pallet.

RICH

This would all be believable if it wasn't coming from the guy who updated his facebook status yesterday to -- quote, "I am just a giant ball of warm snuggley love, dot dot dot, okay that was random." Unquote.

Louie flashes Rich a sullen look, waiting for the next bundle.

4

INT. GOLDEN AGE PRODUCTIONS, OFFICE - DUSK

4

Dalen scrolls through his phone and holds the screen up. Athena leans in, looking at a picture that's never shown.

ATHENA

Yeah, see -- no. That's too nasty for me! You definitely have a much higher tolerance than I do.

(beat)

Horror flicks are great, but I'm much more of the suspense type of gal.

Dalen leans back in his chair, slipping his cell phone into his jacket pocket.

DALEN

Hey, if it's not gory and visceral, than I'm not comfortable.

Athena laughs.

ATHENA

Oh my god, you're too much.

(beat)

So you said you needed Friday off,  
right?

DALEN

Please. That would be fantastic. I  
don't mean to pester you but this  
is sorta last minute and you're one  
of the only people left in the  
office this late. Well, I know Mike  
is still here, but he's always on  
some type of call.

ATHENA

Tell me about it! Sometimes it's  
hard for me to even get his  
attention! But it's totally fine.  
You've come to the right place.

DALEN

Awesome.

Dalen quickly glances down at his watch.

DALEN (CONT'D)

I really gotta get going though.  
Tonight is one of the nights I work  
my part-time job and I like to  
catch a few Z's before I go in.

ATHENA

You're kidding, you work third  
shift after coming here for eight  
hours a day?

DALEN

It's only two nights a week. I  
guess that's one upside to still  
mooching and living off the rents.

ATHENA

Hey, don't have any shame in your  
game. You're a really intelligent  
kid, you'll get there.

Athena leans in closer.

ATHENA (CONT'D)

(whispering)

And between you and I -- you're one  
of the most promising interns this  
semester.

Dalen flickers a smile.

DALEN

Thanks Athena, appreciate the vote  
of confidence.

Dalen rises from his chair, approaching the office door.

DALEN (CONT'D)

And don't worry, my lips are  
sealed!

ATHENA

I wasn't worried. You're a modest  
one.

DALEN

Have a good night, Athena.

ATHENA

Don't work too hard, kid!

5 INT. MEDIA NEWS, DISTRIBUTION WING - NIGHT

5

Machinists, fork lift drivers, and various pressmen inhabit the work space. Machines come to life. Fork lifts roll up and down the aisles. Workers situate themselves at their designated stations.

The pressmen are the only workers with uniforms. The machinists and fork lift drivers all wear street clothes -- A very laid back environment.

CLOSE ON a large circular newspaper inserting machine with twelve individual hoppers to operate (station to insert the newspaper or ad).

One large pallet with thousands of copies of a specific ad rests on the concrete floor next to each hopper. Each hopper holds a different ad.

Various workers congregate around the circular inserting machine -- each worker operates two hoppers at a time.

CLOSE ON a RANDOM WORKER who operates the main hopper. He takes a handful of the Sentinel & Enterprise newspaper that Louie and Rich stacked earlier at the beginning of the shift, jogs it again on a vibrating board and inserts it neatly into the hopper.

The hopper spits each Sentinel & Enterprise newspaper into a metal pocket below.

Each metal pocket clamps the newspaper, opens it to the middle section and rotates the machine for the remaining eleven individual hoppers to spit an ad into. The machine is made of 100 different metal pockets.

Once the first of 100 metal pockets makes a full 360 degree turn, after all eleven ads have been slipped in -- before it hits Louie's main hopper, the pocket opens and drops the newspaper filled with ads onto a conveyer belt below, one by one, freeing each metal pocket for the next round to spit into.

The papers slide down a long conveyer belt, twisting and turning around the factory until it reaches a stacker machine. The stacker collects bundles of 15, spits it out onto a smaller line that rolls directly into a strapping machine.

Each bundle of 15 is strapped with plastic banding and shoots out an open window, leading outside to the drivers picking up the papers for the night.

CLOSE ON Rich, standing at a nearby table in the middle of the shop. He is surrounded by stacks of comics. He grabs one comic at a time, opens it, removes a Walgreens ad, and places it down beside him. He repeats the process over and over, making a new stack of comics beside him without the Walgreens ad.

Louie rounds the corner, inching his way toward Rich, slightly bemused.

LOUIE

The fuck is this? Why aren't you on the machine?

Rich peers up, meeting Louie's gaze, slightly annoyed.

RICH

If you must know, I'm in the process of fixing the day shift's mistake.

LOUIE

What the hell happened?

RICH

They inserted the Walgreens into the comics for this week when it was supposed to be inserted next week.

LOUIE

Fuckin' day shift.

RICH

To their credit, it's entirely Robbie's fault. He filled out the order and set up the machine for them.

LOUIE

So now Robbie is making you take them out by hand?

RICH

Correction -- he's making us take them out by hand. He told me to tell you once you got back from droppin' the Obama's off at the pool.

LOUIE

(rolls eyes)

Wonders never fuckin' cease with this place.

He joins Rich at the table. He reaches for a stack of comics and begins removing the Walgreens ad from each comic.

LOUIE (CONT'D)

Anyway, how many are we doing on the machine tonight?

RICH

10 grand and some change for the Sentinel and around 23 grand for The Sun.

LOUIE

Jesus, they lowered it again?

RICH

It's only gonna get worse.

LOUIE

We used to do 50 grand alone just for The Sun when we first started here!

RICH

I thought you'd be the last person complaining about this. Less work, more time for XBOX.

LOUIE

More like, less work, less money, can hardly scrounge up enough change for an XBOX game!

RICH

Touche.

6 INT. DALEN'S HOUSE, BEDROOM - NIGHT 6

An alarm clock blares in the corner. An arm emerges from underneath the bed sheets, slowly, knocking various trinkets off the night-stand, searching for the alarm clock.

The hand grazes the alarm clock and taps it off. The bedsheets whip to the side, revealing Dalen -- very fatigued. He rubs the sleep from his eyes.

Dalen sits upward, ruffles his fingers through his hair, and hops out of bed, scrambling through the dark.

7 INT. MEDIA NEWS, DISTRIBUTION WING - NIGHT 7

The last remaining workers punch in for the night and find their stations.

A tall and skinny man with wavy gray hair, mid forties, emerges from the office, sporting a wrinkled t-shirt and holey jeans. An unlit cigarette dangles from the corner of his frown. This is ROBBIE ROBERTS.

Robbie shuffles over to Rich and Louie at the table with the comics.

With the cigarette still perched on his lips --

ROBBIE

(To Rich and Louie)

Where's the Broski?

LOUIE

Planning a terrorist attack?

RICH

Hopefully on this place!

Beat.

ROBBIE

(facetious)

I thought you guys were livin' the dream here?

LOUIE

Not when you have us doing extra work for the boo-boo that you made.

ROBBIE  
 (chuckles)  
 C'mon guys! It's character  
 building! You're just missing the  
 third musketeer. Once he gets here,  
 it'll be a party.

Robbie starts toward the double doors leading outside.

RICH  
 (rolls eyes)  
 That guy has to be the laziest  
 supervisor.

LOUIE  
 But that's what makes him a total  
 fucking badass!

RICH  
 Weren't you just bitchin' about the  
 fact that we have to do his dirty  
 work?

LOUIE  
 Honestly, I'd probably do the same  
 thing if I was him.

RICH  
 Leave it for your slaves?

LOUIE  
 More or less. Isn't that what being  
 in a position of power is all  
 about?

RICH  
 You have some warped ass logic, yah  
 know that?

8

EXT. MEDIA NEWS, REAR PARKING LOT - MOMENTS LATER

8

A car rounds the corner. A pair of headlights illuminate the  
 darkness as it rolls slowly into the lot. It creeps into an  
 empty space.

A dark figure emerges from the parked car and advances toward  
 the double doors.

The figure passes by numerous vans and trucks lining the  
 backside of the building, waiting their turn to back into the  
 open windows and load their vehicles with newspapers.

Robbie sprawls out next to the back-entrance, finishing his cigarette. He peers up, exhaling a large cloud of smoke. He squints at Dalen in silhouette until he fully emerges, unmasking himself from the nighttime shadows.

ROBBIE  
(Shouting, excited)  
Broski!

DALEN  
There's my favorite supervisor hard at work! Thought it was your night off?

ROBBIE  
It is. Why do you think I'm out here and not in there?

DALEN  
See? That's why you're a-okay, man - - you're always doin' it right! You should write a book, yah know?

ROBBIE  
Great idea. Maybe you could be the lead character -- yah know, the one who's always showing up late and leading by example!

DALEN  
(facetious)  
Pffft. And people say I'm a bad influence!  
(beat)  
I'd be honored! We'll show em'! Get on it and start writing!

ROBBIE  
Yeah we'll see what tomorrow brings.

Dalen opens the double doors and leans in the door way.

DALEN  
I got the perfect title for it --  
"Procrastinators Unite --

Dalen steps inside and quickly pops his head back out.

DALEN (CONT'D)  
-- Tomorrow!"

9

INT. MEDIA NEWS, DISTRIBUTION WING - CONTINUOUS

9

Dalen makes his way to the punch-in station.

A short and plump young adult with down syndrome watching the bundles on the line, runs over to Dalen. He sports a backwards baseball cap and goofy round glasses, too big for his face. This is ANDREW ROSS.

ANDREW

Dalen, my man!

Andrew lifts his arm in the air, gesturing for a high-five. Dalen high-fives him.

DALEN

What's up Andrew! Since when do you wear glasses, bud?

ANDREW

(points to glasses)  
Not bad?!

DALEN

Pretty snazzy, dude! But are those even prescription?

ANDREW

What?

DALEN

Are they real glasses?

ANDREW

(chuckles)  
No.

DALEN

Yeah, I thought so!

Dalen looks down at a notebook, tucked underneath Andrew's arm.

DALEN (CONT'D)

What're you working on? Writing a new song?

ANDREW

No, no, no! This is my movie! I want to be a movie writer just like you!

DALEN  
That's awesome bud! What's it  
about?

A big smile glistens across Andrew's face.

ANDREW  
Me and you!

DALEN  
Oh nice! What's it called?!

Andrew slaps his chest and then slaps Dalen's chest.

ANDREW  
"Me and You!"

DALEN  
(laughs)  
Can't wait to read it when it's  
done!

ANDREW  
You the man, Dalen!

Dalen starts toward the punch-in clock.

DALEN  
(over-shoulder)  
You too bro!

ANDREW  
(shouting)  
You're my best friend, Dalen!

Dalen gives a wave without looking back at Andrew. He searches up and down for his time card. He grabs it and we ZERO IN on his full name "Dalen Gus." He punches in.

He turns and is met by Louie and Rich -- who have abandoned their stations momentarily.

They playfully fire back and forth at Dalen.

LOUIE  
Jesus fucking christ, it's about  
damn time!

RICH  
(facetious)  
We were about to start without you!

LOUIE  
What the hell took so long?

RICH  
Indulging in your self-defeat?

LOUIE  
There's not a second more to waste!

From afar, a voice shouts over the roar of the machines.

The group turns their attention to an energetic and enthusiastic African-American, late twenties, who struts in their direction. He sports a baggy t-shirt and jeans with a beanie covering most of his forehead. This is TERRELL ROBINSON.

TERRELL  
(shouting)  
Jedi Knights!

He reaches toward an imaginary weapon, strapped at his waist, pulls it out, and fires rapidly.

TERRELL (CONT'D)  
(making blaster noises)  
Pew! Pew! Pew!

Dalen quickly reaches for his imaginary light saber and pulls it out. In an overly-animated fashion he twists his body in various directions, deflecting Terrell's shots.

DALEN  
(making light saber sounds)  
Vroom! Vroom! Vroom!

Terrell grabs his chest, in agonizing pain, faking his own death from one of the bullets that ricocheted off of Dalen's saber, and hit him. He falls to the ground. His body convulses.

He stops shaking, leaps back up unexpectedly, and crackles with laughter.

TERRELL  
God damn, son! You too much for me, dawg!

He leans in and gives Dalen a handshake.

TERRELL (CONT'D)  
(Re: Dalen)  
Master Gus!  
(looks at Louie and Rich)  
Jedi Knights!

Terrell puts his arms around the group as they form a circle.

TERRELL (CONT'D)

(in a gentlemanly accent)

I believe it is time to dock the ship in the hangar, don our robes, and congregate around the knights of the round table! There is much to be discussed!

DALEN

(imitating Terrell)

I do believe Master Rells makes a valid point!

Rich performs the meaning of "break-time" in American Sign Language.

RICH

Another twenty minutes, boys.

Beat.

LOUIE

Well, back to the cotton fields!

Everyone nods in accord. The group disperses, heading to their individual stations. Production continues.

10

INT. MEDIA NEWS, BOILER ROOM - LATER

10

Dalen, Rich, Louie, and Terrell form a tight circle in the small, dank space.

Terrell rolls a joint and lights it. He and Louie pass it back and forth.

Rich unveils a flask, unscrews the top and passes it back and forth between he and Dalen. Seems like a regular routine between the group.

DALEN

Realistically, what do you think Robbie would do if he ever caught us up here?

RICH

Honestly, he'd probably be pissed that we never invite him up here with us.

Terrell takes a big hit.

TERRELL  
(holds up joint)  
Especially considering we smokin'  
this super dank stank, baby boy!

LOUIE  
You gonna pass that shit or what?

Terrell passes Louie the joint.

RICH  
(to Dalen)  
So man, how's the big internship  
treating yah?

DALEN  
It's actually going exceedingly  
well. Couldn't be happier.

TERRELL  
I'm tellin' you boys, this is the  
next Steven Spielberg right here,  
dawg!

Dalen laughs.

DALEN  
Thanks bro. Now if the rest of the  
world could adopt your mind-set,  
I'd be golden.

TERRELL  
No doubts in my mind, Dal. You'll  
get there playa! Yo, you gotta put  
me in that new flick you're writing  
right now -- bout the dudes with  
the memories and shit!

Terrell extends his arm forward and grabs Dalen's head. He emits strange noises, shaking his body back and forth simultaneously.

TERRELL (CONT'D)  
See?! I gotch you playa! I can  
steal those memories all day every  
day! Whatta you call em'?

DALEN  
(laughing)  
Extractors. But this is a high-  
concept thriller. I'm writing it to  
put into a competition and try and  
get noticed for my writing ability.  
I won't be filming this one myself.

LOUIE

Like a big-budget flick?

DALEN

Bigtime. There's high speed car-chases, shootouts -- hell, there's even a scene with a massive killer shark.

RICH

Why not just slip this script to the big guy at your internship?

DALEN

Oh trust me I would, but they only produce and specialize in kid's films.

Louie passes the joint back to Terrell.

LOUIE

Whatta they have you do at that big movie producing company anyway?

DALEN

It's a very laid back environment. Mostly just read screenplays and do coverage on em'.

RICH

That sounds right up your alley.

TERRELL

What's coverage?

DALEN

Essentially just writing a short but detailed analysis of the script for the higher-ups to read so they don't have to actually read the screenplay themselves. But if you give exceptional coverage, then they may be compelled to read the full script.

LOUIE

So that's really how it works? Interns are the first people to see scripts before anyone else?

DALEN

Generally, yeah. Lowly, unpaid interns.

(MORE)

DALEN (CONT'D)

We get so many that the responsibility falls on us to weed through the slush-pile.

RICH

It makes sense though. Because if the average joe, being the general audience, doesn't like the screenplay, why would a producer even give it the time of day?

DALEN

Precisely.

TERRELL

That's pretty tight. I can dig it!

Rich takes a swig from the flask and passes it to Dalen.

RICH

So what do you think your chances are for getting a job with these guys?

Dalen takes a sip.

DALEN

It's funny you ask, because something really interesting happened tonight right before I left the office.

TERRELL

Oh snap! Jedi Knight has his foot in the door, baby!

LOUIE

Spill the fucking beans!

Rich, Louie, and Terrell lean in, listening attentively.

DALEN

Alright, alright. Well --

CUT TO:

11 INT. GOLDEN AGE PRODUCTIONS, BREAK ROOM - FLASHBACK 11  
 Dalen enters the break room. He opens the fridge, looking for something.

DALEN (V.O.)  
-- on my way out of the office, I  
swung by the break room real quick  
to grab my lunch bag.

Dalen grabs his lunch bag, closes the fridge. He nearly steps  
in a huge puddle of coffee on the floor.

DALEN (V.O.)  
Then, I look down and notice this  
gigantic mess on the floor. This  
pool of coffee that someone spilt  
and didn't even bother cleaning up.

Dalen side-steps the puddle and grabs some paper towels. He  
kneels down next to the mess.

DALEN (V.O.)  
So, I just started cleaning it.  
Then, the president walks in,  
really chill guy, very easy to talk  
to.

The president of Golden Age Productions, MIKE BADENHOP,  
appears in the doorway. He flashes a look of bewilderment.

DALEN (V.O.)  
He asks me what I'm doing. I look  
at him and tell him I'm cleaning up  
this mess.

Dalen continues to clean the mess.

DALEN (V.O.)  
And he just looks at me long and  
hard and finally asks me if anyone  
asked me to do that. I told him no.  
Then he asks me why I'm cleaning up  
someone else's mess -- somehow  
knowing that it wasn't mine to  
begin with. And I just simply told  
him because it needed to be cleaned  
up. So the guy just smiles at me  
and says --

MIKE BADENHOP  
You're one of the hardest working  
kids at this internship. You're  
really willing to do anything  
aren't yah? How bout a real job?

CUT TO:

12 INT. MEDIA NEWS, BOILER ROOM - PRESENT

12

Rich, Louie, and Terrell react.

LOUIE  
No fucking shit.

RICH  
Are you kidding?

DALEN  
I swear. The guy pulled me into his office and told me that if I was willing to go out of my way to clean up someone else's mess, that's the type of person he wants working for him.

(takes a swig from the flask)  
Come to find out, it was his mess all along.

TERRELL  
God damn, son! Pop that collar!

Terrell leans into Dalen, flicking the collar of his t-shirt up and down.

RICH  
Proud of you man. Way to be, way to be. When do you start?

DALEN  
Well, uh -- I don't have the job yet, per say. He said he would be interviewing a few people along with me tomorrow for the position. He even said I could come in for it around 2 in the afternoon, because I told him that I work third shift. Very, very chill guy.

TERRELL  
This dude sounds dope. That's big business right there!

DALEN  
And the job is actually out in their LA office.

LOUIE

That's still fucking killer dude!  
Getting that interview is the first  
step. You'll kill it and finally  
get the hell out of this shit hole!

Dalen smiles.

DALEN

Thanks guys. That's the plan.

RICH

Wow. LA man. That's huge. But hey,  
that's the place to be if you want  
to be a screenwriter, right?

DALEN

That's what everyone's always  
telling me.

LOUIE

We should all drink to that!

They pass the flask around the circle and swig.

13

INT. MEDIA NEWS, HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

13

The group make their way back toward the distribution wing.

RICH

(to Dalen)

So man, you still good for the  
wedding shower this Friday?

DALEN

Yeah I gotch you man. Requested it  
off tonight actually. Everything's  
all set.

RICH

Awesome.

DALEN

Can't believe you and Bethany are  
finally tying the knot man.

RICH

Seven years. I think I finally owe  
it to her.

DALEN

Couldn't be happier for you guys.

Rich smiles and turns into the distribution wing with Louie.

Terrell grabs Dalen and pulls him back.

TERRELL

Yo, Master Gus, hold up.

DALEN

What's going on dude?

TERRELL

I wasn't gonna do this, but considering I already got a fish on the line, I'mma gonna give this one to my main man.

DALEN

(rolls eyes)

You always got a fish on the line.

TERRELL

(cocky)

What's my name?!

DALEN

Which poor, innocent girl are you luring into your lair now? Do I know her?

TERRELL

(chuckles)

Later baby boy, right now it's all about you!

DALEN

What the hell are you talking about?

TERRELL

Alright peep game, kid. We got some fresh meat up in here. I dunno how Robbie did it, but he hired this beautiful specimen. I'm talking total knockout, like too gorgeous to be working here, it's ridiculous dawg.

DALEN

What the hell?! We have a new girl at work and no one bothered telling me?!

TERRELL

I'm tellin' you now, kid! Alright, alright, consider this my gift to you for gettin' that big job interview for the west coast!

DALEN

How about I actually get the job first?

TERRELL

Nah dawg, consider this your pu pu platter!

Terrell grabs Dalen's shoulders, leaning him slowly into the door way. He guides his body until he locks eyes on a petite brunette, operating the machines. Her back is turned to us. She has a gorgeous figure.

Dalen leans back into the hallway, exhaling a large breath.

DALEN

Oh my god, baby got back!

Terrell emits a soft, evil laugh.

TERRELL

That's my man right there! First thing he notices is that bubble! That thing is ridiculous! Skinny little white girl like that?! Game over!

Dalen turns to Terrell.

DALEN

That ass is the fire of Olympus.

TERRELL

Oh my god, that boy said the fire of Olympus!

DALEN

A gift from the higher Gods.

TERRELL

He said the higher Gods!

DALEN

You know what time it is?

TERRELL

Taggin' --

DALEN  
-- And baggin'!

TERRELL  
Big things poppin' --

DALEN  
-- Little things stoppin'!

TERRELL  
God damn Dal, you blacker than me!  
Now go show me how the Jedi Master  
gets shit done! I'll be the Padawan  
this time! Teach me the ways of the  
wise, Master Gus!

Dalen looks out onto the floor one more time. He returns his gaze to Terrell.

DALEN  
Lock and load, Master Rells. Lock  
and load!

TERRELL  
(claps hands)  
Let's go!

14 INT. MEDIA NEWS, DISTRIBUTION WING - CONTINUOUS

14

Dalen walks out onto the floor. Terrell heads in the opposite direction, keeping a close eye on Dalen's every move.

Before Dalen makes it to the petite brunette -- Louie approaches her. They engage in small, indistinct chatter.

A beat.

Dalen watches for a few moments. He saunters over, acting casual.

Before Dalen can say anything --

LOUIE  
Oh, hey, Dal! Get over here!

Dalen grins toward Terrell at the opposite end of the floor. He approaches Louie and the petite brunette.

LOUIE (CONT'D)  
Hey man, I forgot to introduce you  
earlier. This is Ellie. She just  
started working here.

ELLIE FLETCHER, late twenties, striking and intense, shoots Dalen quite a seductive look.

ELLIE

(to Louie, still looking  
at Dalen)

How come you've never brought this  
one around?

LOUIE

Oh well Dal isn't really the --

DALEN

(interrupts)

Whoa, whoa. I'm sorry?

ELLIE

(to Dalen)

To the club.

DALEN

Am I uh, am I missing something?  
You two know each other?

LOUIE

Yeah man this is the girl I was  
tellin' you about from the other  
week ago when I went out!

ELLIE

Oh, Louie mentioned me, huh?

DALEN

(to Louie)

No shit!

(to Ellie)

Oh he mentioned you! He was telling  
me about this girl he met while he  
was watchin' those cage dancers  
down at the club he goes to once a  
month in Boston.

ELLIE

Ah, must be talking about "Bite."

(winks)

My favorite club.

DALEN

Wait, uh -- the, the club's called  
Bite? Does the name allude to  
anything in particular?

ELLIE

It implies more things than you could imagine.

DALEN

(smirks)

I bet it does, I mean with the cage dancers and all.

LOUIE

I been tellin' you man, that place is hot. Plus you meet a lot of cool people like Ellie.

DALEN

(to Ellie)

Yeah I mean shit, you look perfect for a cage dancer. I mean, wow. I'm sorry, that came out wrong. I'm not implying that you're a slut or anything.

ELLIE

Oh, I didn't take it like that.

DALEN

Shit, I mean, not that cage dancers are sluts or anything. I'm not usually this judgmental. I apologize.

ELLIE

(smiles)

Oh no. It's totally fine. Most of them are sluts. I just go for the drinks and the people.

DALEN

Ah, good looks. Nothing wrong with that.

(joking)

So I guess I can start calling you Mistress Ellie from now on?

ELLIE

You can call me whatever you want.

DALEN

Jesus Christ.

ELLIE

Except that.

Louie claps his hands, leans into Dalen, puts his hands on his shoulders.

LOUIE

Well then! Everyone clearly has their limits! Including us. We should get back to work.

(to Ellie)

Robbie gets moody on nights that he's not technically supposed to be here.

DALEN

Ain't that the truth. It was nice meeting you Ellie. I'll cya later.

ELLIE

Hopefully not too much later.

Louie and Dalen make their way across the floor, away from the inserting machine.

DALEN

My god, she is a feisty one. And she's really not a cage dancer?

LOUIE

She just has a really dirty sense of humor. Thought you'd appreciate it!

DALEN

Oh I think appreciate is an understatement! What's not to like about a girl who speaks sarcasm fluently?!

LOUIE

Told ya she was cool shit! You gonna start coming to the clubs with me now?

DALEN

Not a chance.

LOUIE

It was worth a shot.

DALEN

Appreciate all the offers, man. But the whole night club thing just isn't my scene.

LOUIE

I'm tellin' you man, half the shit that goes on at places like that is a gold mine for movie-making! You realize the type of stories you could get out of those people?! They're fuckin' crazy!

DALEN

I won't argue with that, but why go to them, when they're clearly coming to me?

Dalen gestures toward Ellie at the inserting machine.

LOUIE

Oh boy. Just get to her before Terrell does.

Dalen flashes a grin.

DALEN

He's already given me the green light.

LOUIE

Must mean he already has a -- ah, wait, what does he always say?

DALEN

A fish on the line?

LOUIE

Yeah, yeah. That's it. Fuckin' Terrell.

Terrell unexpectedly jumps up from behind.

TERRELL

I heard my name, I heard my name! So, was "The Force" strong with Master Gus just now?

Dalen puts his hand on Terrell's shoulder.

DALEN

Baby steps, my young apprentice, baby steps. All in good time, all in good time.

TERRELL

Oh, oh, alright! I see you, I see you, playa!

(MORE)

TERRELL (CONT'D)

That's my man right there. He be  
takin' the road less traveled by!

DALEN

Because that, will make all the  
difference.

TERRELL

In the words of the movie director  
himself --  
(snaps fingers)  
-- that's a wrap!

15 EXT. MEDIA NEWS, REAR PARKING LOT - LATER

15

Still relatively dark out. Workers file out of the back of  
the building, heading home for the day.

Louie, Rich, and Terrell hop in their cars and pull out.

Ellie sits next to the double doors, playing on her phone.

A beat.

Dalen emerges -- noticing Ellie. He stops momentarily,  
digging in his pocket for his car keys.

DALEN

Can't get enough of this place,  
huh?

ELLIE

Just waiting on a ride.

DALEN

It's lookin' pretty deserted out  
here. You sure they're comin'?

ELLIE

Hope so, or else I'm gonna be  
walkin'.

DALEN

I'll stick around just in case they  
don't.

Dalen approaches, sits down next to Ellie.

ELLIE

That's pretty bold of you.

DALEN

What is?

ELLIE

To think that you're allowed to sit next to me.

DALEN

Yeah, but I know you don't mind.

ELLIE

Oh, am I that transparent?

DALEN

Actually you're exceptionally difficult to read. I just see you as the adventurous type. Never afraid to try new things.

ELLIE

Because I like to watch cage dancers, right?

DALEN

Something like that.

ELLIE

Yeah but I already told you, the only reason I go to those clubs is for the drinks and the people.

DALEN

And I think that's total bullshit.

ELLIE

Oh yah?

DALEN

Yeah, yeah. Absolutely. Anybody who steps foot in those clubs aren't just going for the drinks and the people. They're goin' because they have a certain itch and they're trying to scratch it.

ELLIE

Are you implying that I'm, "curious?"

DALEN

Yeah, but not in the way that you think.

ELLIE

Enlighten me.

DALEN

You wanna find someone equally as crazy as you. Not too crazy. Not over the top, psycho bullshit, I'm gonna pull out the whips and chains on you crazy. I'm talkin' just the right amount. A respectable amount. The icing on top. Someone a little fun and a little sweet, but not too addictive. Not someone who will lead you down all the wrong roads. That type of crazy.

ELLIE

And how would one go about seeking out this type of crazy that you're proposing? Those are far and few between, it seems.

DALEN

You gotta look for the signs. They're subtle. But they're there. You dig deep enough, you can find anything or anyone.

ELLIE

Pretty positive outlook for the future.

DALEN

I like to believe there's a silver lining in every dark cloud.

ELLIE

Hmmm. Yeah, yah know, you're right. Sitting down next to me without permission, engaging in small talk, trying to act smooth. Now that's what I call the perfect type of crazy.

DALEN

You know, brutal sarcasm only wins more points with me.

ELLIE

When did I ever say I was being sarcastic?

Dalen gives Ellie a searching look.

DALEN

Exceptionally difficult to read indeed.

ELLIE  
But the adventurous type  
nevertheless.

DALEN  
The bold type.

ELLIE  
The perfect type --

DALEN  
-- of crazy.

Ellie's cheeks turn crimson.

ELLIE  
Well I'm infatuated.

DALEN  
Come on there, Miss Adventurous.  
I'll give yah a ride.

ELLIE  
What type of ride we talkin'?

DALEN  
Jesus Christ, Louie wasn't kidding.

ELLIE  
Hey, what did I tell you about  
calling me that?

DALEN  
In all fairness you did say I could  
call you anything that I wanted.

ELLIE  
Except that!

DALEN  
Alright, alright, the dead guy on  
the cross is off limits. Gotch yah.

ELLIE  
Watch it bucko, I'm religious.

DALEN  
My god. You get offended when I say  
the Lord's name in vain but going  
out to see cage dancers on the  
weekend doesn't bother you?! You're  
definitely some type of crazy.

ELLIE  
The perfect type, right?

DALEN  
Time to put that to the test.

Dalen stands, offering a hand. Ellie gives him the same seductive look she gave him when they first met.

She takes his hand and he lifts her up.

16 EXT. ELLIE'S APARTMENT - MOMENTS LATER 16

Dalen's car rolls up, remaining idle.

17 INT. DALEN'S CAR - CONTINUOUS 17

Dalen puts the car in park.

DALEN  
You workin' tomorrow night?

ELLIE  
Yah, you?

DALEN  
I'll be there.

ELLIE  
Cool.

Ellie doesn't unbuckle her seat belt. She stares at Dalen.

A beat.

DALEN  
(points to apartment)  
Um, this, this is you, right?

ELLIE  
You wanna come up?

DALEN  
Oh um, yah know that'd be great,  
but I uh, I really should get home  
and try and get some sleep. I got a  
big interview tomorrow.

ELLIE  
What time's the interview?

DALEN  
2 o'clock.

ELLIE  
You're shittin' me right?

DALEN  
No, it's really at 2.

Ellie laughs.

ELLIE  
C'mon. Just a drink --  
(pinches Dalen's cheek)  
-- and then you can go home and get  
your precious beauty sleep.

DALEN  
Yeah, no trust me, I'd love to. I  
want to. I really shouldn't though.  
Maybe next time, yah?

ELLIE  
Don't be such a poon.

Dalen laughs.

ELLIE (CONT'D)  
You said you wanted to, so come up  
for a few. Don't deny yourself the  
simple pleasures in life. It's just  
a beer.

Dalen turns the car off.

DALEN  
Alright, I'm holdin' you to it! A  
beer!

Ellie smirks.

ELLIE  
I bet you will.

18 EXT. ELLIE'S APARTMENT, SIDE ENTRANCE - CONTINUOUS

18

Ellie and Dalen approach the door. Ellie fiddles with her  
keys and drops them.

Dalen leans over and grabs them. Before he meets Ellie's  
gaze, she thrusts him against the door unexpectedly. She  
forces herself onto him and shoves her tongue down his  
throat.

Dalen immediately embraces her and kisses her back. They engage in an everlasting tongue tie.

Ellie jumps onto him, wraps her legs around his waist and reaches for the keys in his hands while simultaneously sucking face.

She maliciously jabs the door with the key numerous times before she finds the lock. She slips the key in, twists hard, the door swings open and they disappear into the darkness of the apartment. The door kicks shut behind them.

19

INT. ELLIE'S APARTMENT, BEDROOM - DAY

19

Dalen's eyes flutter open to the bright rays of sun, shining through the window. He rubs the sleep from his eyes, getting his bearings.

He shoots upward and scans his surroundings. CLOSE ON perfume on a dresser. CLOSE ON bra and panties on the floor. CLOSE ON an exorbitant amount of empty beer bottles, strewn across the floor. He turns and sees Ellie, lying on her stomach, naked, fast asleep.

He jumps out of bed with a sheet covering his bottom half. He searches the floor for his clothes. He finds them.

He leans over quickly and grabs his pants, boxers, and shirt. As he stands up straight, he grasps his head in a gesture of headache pain or just pure anguish.

CLOSE ON Ellie, waking up. She turns and faces him.

ELLIE

Oh, it's okay. You definitely don't have to put your clothes back on. In fact, never wear them again, K?

BACK ON Dalen who has his boxers on. He wrestles with his shirt, attempting to pull it on.

DALEN

Do you know what time it is?

ELLIE

Who cares, come back to bed!

DALEN

(stern)

Come on, I'm serious, what time is it?

Ellie points with her index finger, still a little drunk.

ELLIE  
Whoa, whoa. That right there.  
That's not okay.

Ellie leans over and grabs Dalen's junk without hesitation.

ELLIE (CONT'D)  
But this right here, this was more  
than okay!

DALEN  
(sighs heavily)  
Jesus Christ --

ELLIE  
Say it again and I'll rip him off!

Ellie has a firm grip on Dalen's cock.

ELLIE (CONT'D)  
Nah, actually I won't. I'd miss him  
too much! C'mon! Come back to bed!

Dalen grunts. He leans over Ellie and twists the alarm clock  
around. It reads 1:30 P.M.

DALEN  
Oh my fucking god!

Dalen scrambles, pulling on his pants as quickly as possible.

ELLIE  
Whoa, where the hell are you going?

DALEN  
I told you I have an interview at  
two!

ELLIE  
Chill out psycho, you have a half  
hour!

DALEN  
The place is forty minutes away  
from here! And I can't go looking  
like this! Shit, shit, shit!

Dalen dashes out the door without saying goodbye.

Ellie stares at the empty doorway for a moment. She rolls her  
eyes, flops back in bed, and falls back to sleep.

20 EXT. GOLDEN AGE PRODUCTIONS - DAY 20

Establishing shot of building.

21 INT. GOLDEN AGE PRODUCTIONS, LOBBY - CONTINUOUS 21

Dalen frantically rushes in, looking very disheveled. He continually glances at his watch.

He slips on a suit jacket, climbing the stairs. He adjusts his neck tie, approaching the office doors.

22 INT. GOLDEN AGE PRODUCTIONS, MAIN OFFICE - CONTINUOUS 22

Dalen enters, meeting the gaze of Athena, filing papers and documents. She looks surprised.

ATHENA

Dalen, lookin' dapper kid! What's the occasion?

DALEN

Hey Athena! Is Mike in?

ATHENA

Mike? Uh, no, no he's not. You just missed him. He slid out about, I dunno, I'd say fifteen minutes ago. Why what's up?

Dalen exhales a large breath, looking defeated.

DALEN

(reluctant)

I uh, well I, um. I sorta had an interview with him at two.

Athena stops what she's doing and gives Dalen her full attention.

ATHENA

Oh my god! You were his third interview today?!

DALEN

I was supposed to be, yeah.

ATHENA

Oh no!

She glances at the clock in the office. It reads 2:30.

ATHENA (CONT'D)

Why you so late? You know how punctual he is.

DALEN

Yeah no, I know. It's my fault. I had this family emergency at the last minute and things sorta went haywire but I know it's no excuse not to be here on --

ATHENA

Oh jeez, I'm sure he'll totally understand that's not a problem.

(beat)

I just feel bad because he told me that he already made a decision before he left the office.

CLOSE ON Dalen, a dejected expression on his face.

DALEN

Thanks Athena.

Athena remains silent, looking very sympathetic.

DALEN (CONT'D)

I have some errands I gotta run before I head into work. Have a good afternoon.

Dalen waves over his shoulder, exiting the office.

23 INT. MEDIA NEWS, DISTRIBUTION WING - NIGHT

23

An establishing shot of the working environment. Machines running, newspapers streaming down the conveyer belts, bundles being strapped.

24 INT. MEDIA NEWS, DISTRIBUTION WING, LOADING DOCK - CONTINUOUS

Dalen and Louie lounge in the docking area, passing time rather than actually working.

LOUIE

Hypothetically speaking, if you could be an expert on absolutely anything, I'm talkin' like having this superhuman power to know everything about anything for the rest of your life, what would it be?

DALEN

Pop-culture.

LOUIE

You would want to be a pop-culture expert?

DALEN

More than anything.

LOUIE

Alright, alright, alright. I don't think you're fully grasping what I'm saying. You could literally have the power to know how women think. Yah yah, think about it, you could be an expert on the warped female mind or --

(beat, thinks)

-- you could be an expert on medicine and create the cure for cancer.

DALEN

I'm stickin' with my decision.

LOUIE

You've gotta be shittin' me?

DALEN

What can I say, I've always dreamed of being a pop-culture expert.

LOUIE

So in other words, you wouldn't wanna get laid for the rest of your life?

DALEN

Come on dude. You've seen dozens if not hundreds of pictures from those comic-cons of absolute smoke shows dressed up as your favorite video-game characters.

(beat)

They're called catches. And they do exist if you look hard enough.

LOUIE

Yeah, nothin' says gettin' laid like knowing how to put a price tag on toy collectables that have been sitting in your mom's basement for the last twenty plus years.

Dalen rolls his eyes.

DALEN

There's more to it than that dude.

LOUIE

You already know everything about pro-wrestling and Star Wars and Resident Evil and --

Louie ponders real hard, lost in thought.

DALEN

(smirks)

And...

LOUIE

Hmm. Maybe you really are more narrow-minded than I thought.

DALEN

Exactly! I'm fully aware! Hence, the hopes and dreams of being a pop-culture expert. Knowing everything and anything in the realm of nerd.

LOUIE

AKA -- never getting your dick wet.

DALEN

(confident)

Knowledge is power my friend.

LOUIE

Alright, alright. Whatever. My turn. Ask me something.

Dalen ponders momentarily.

DALEN

What was the most fucked up thing that you thought as a kid and then later on it turned out not to be true?

LOUIE

Oh I got a good one! I shit you not, when I was like, uh, I dunno, maybe seven or eight and started watching horror and action flicks for the first time -- whenever some character died in the movie, I really thought the actor died.

DALEN

I said the most fucked up thing,  
not the most retarded thing.

LOUIE

Please. You're meaning to tell me  
you never once thought they  
actually died in real life when  
they died in the movie when you  
were super young?

DALEN

You're meaning to tell me you never  
saw two different movies with the  
same actor?

LOUIE

Valid. I guess I just never really  
thought about it when I was that  
young.

DALEN

Well don't start thinkin' about it  
now. No use in doing more damage.

LOUIE

(playfully)  
Fuck you.

Rich enters.

RICH

What's all this about doing damage  
and dying?

LOUIE

We were just talking about your  
wedding.

RICH

Funny. But I gotta say, after all  
these preparations I've been doing  
with Beth, I do sorta wanna kill  
myself.

DALEN

Yeah I would definitely be shittin'  
my pants if I were you.

RICH

Trust me, I already have.

LOUIE

Fuck it man. If you don't shit your pants at least once a year, you ain't livin' hard enough!

The group bursts into laughter, getting back to work.

Rich and Louie load a truck with pallets of packaged newspapers.

Dalen makes his way back to the main distribution wing and we are --

25

INT. MEDIA NEWS, CONNECTING HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

25

-- inside a narrow, unlit, and deserted concrete hallway.

Ellie rounds the corner and shoves Dalen against the wall with force.

DALEN

Jesus Ch--  
(beat, catching himself)  
I mean, sorry um, wow. Hi.

ELLIE

(lifts eyebrows)  
Hey.

Ellie slowly slips her hands underneath Dalen's shirt, caressing his body.

ELLIE (CONT'D)

You been avoiding me?

Dalen looks down at his shirt, surprised. Ellie's hands glide up his stomach.

DALEN

No, no of course not. I'm just in, uh, I dunno -- a weird mood I guess. I thought I'd spare you the strange behavior for the time being.

With her hands still underneath his shirt, Ellie wraps her arms around Dalen and pulls him in close.

ELLIE

Well, aren't you the generous one. But really, I don't mind. I can always make you feel better. You don't have to be distant. Ever. K?

Dalen grins.

DALEN

Sorry, I guess, I um. I'm just not used to this, is all.

ELLIE

Used to what?

DALEN

All the attention. But don't get me wrong, I um, I'm definitely not mad at it.

ELLIE

Mmmm. A modest one. I like that.

DALEN

No I'm actually being pretty serious.

Ellie releases her grip from Dalen's waist. She stares intensely into his eyes.

ELLIE

I find that very hard to believe.

DALEN

How so?

ELLIE

You're just, I mean c'mon. Seriously? You're being serious? Look at you!

Dalen looks down at himself, shrugging his shoulders.

ELLIE (CONT'D)

You're fuckin' eye candy dude. And the way you walk? Oh my god don't even get me started.

DALEN

Okay stop.

ELLIE

Why?

DALEN

Because you're makin' me wanna, yah know -- and we're here -- and there's no possible way we could --

ELLIE  
 (interrupts)  
 Oooohhhh. Does he wanna come out  
 and play?

Ellie reaches for Dalen's junk. Dalen quickly swats Ellie's arm away.

ELLIE (CONT'D)  
 Come on, don't deprive me!

Dalen makes his way through the shadowed hall leading to --

26

INT. MEDIA NEWS, DISTRIBUTION WING - CONTINUOUS

26

-- the main work area.

DALEN  
 (over-shoulder)  
 You're something else, yah know  
 that?

ELLIE  
 Whoa, whoa, hold up!

Dalen stops, turns, facing Ellie.

DALEN  
 Yes, Mistress Ellie?

ELLIE  
 Mmmm. Now that's much better!

Ellie reaches into her pocket, pulling out a slip of paper. She hands it to Dalen.

ELLIE (CONT'D)  
 Call me tomorrow. Let's hang out. I  
 wanna make it up to you after last  
 night. I feel bad about your  
 interview.

DALEN  
 It's fine. It was my fault. Not  
 yours. I'm the one who kept  
 drinkin'.

ELLIE  
 True. I still feel bad though.

DALEN  
 Trust me, I've made peace with it.

ELLIE  
So, tomorrow? It's your day off,  
right?

A beat.

Dalen peers down at the slip of paper -- Ellie's number.

DALEN  
It is, but I have plans. I'll keep  
this handy though.

Ellie puts her hands on her hips.

ELLIE  
You are avoiding me!

DALEN  
No seriously. Rich and his girl are  
having a wedding shower tomorrow.  
It's really important to them that  
I come. I'm sorta the best man.

ELLIE  
Rich?

DALEN  
Yeah he works here. He's one of my  
best buddies. I'm surprised you  
haven't met him yet.

ELLIE  
Oh right, right. I saw him talking  
to Louie earlier. So make an  
appearance, and then call me.

DALEN  
(smirks)  
You're bad, yah know that?

Dalen makes his way toward the inserting machine.

ELLIE  
(shouting)  
Cya tomorrow!

27 EXT. RESIDENTIAL STREET - DAY

27

A thickly settled area.

Dalen's car rounds a corner and makes a turn onto a side  
street.

28 INT. DALEN'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

28

Dalen drives and Louie sits in the passenger's seat. They engage in conversation.

LOUIE  
So whatta you really think of  
Bethany, man?

Dalen focuses on the road.

DALEN  
Bethany?

LOUIE  
Yeah, Bethany. Yah know, Rich's  
fiancee. The girl he's marrying.

DALEN  
Yeah I know who Bethany is,  
asshole.

LOUIE  
What's up with you? You seem  
totally out of it.

DALEN  
Gotta lot of things on my mind I  
guess.

LOUIE  
How'd that interview go the other  
day?

DALEN  
I don't wanna talk about it.

LOUIE  
That bad, huh?

DALEN  
Unfortunately I didn't end up  
making it.

LOUIE  
You fucking missed it!?

DALEN  
Yeah and as soon as I got there,  
one of the supervisor's for my  
internship told me he had already  
made a decision anyway.

LOUIE  
That's the drizzling shits, bro.  
Why'd you miss it?

DALEN  
I was with Ellie.

LOUIE  
During the day time?

DALEN  
I slept over her place.

LOUIE  
Oh shit! Who's got a fish on the  
line now?! Terrell would be proud!  
You get it in, bro?

DALEN  
From what I can remember, yeah.

LOUIE  
Ah, time's never wasted when you're  
gettin' wasted. God damn, man. You  
really nailed Ellie. That's  
phenomenal.

DALEN  
Yeah, but not without a price.  
Really kickin' myself in the ass  
for blowing what was essentially a  
golden opportunity.

LOUIE  
But dude, you tapped Ellie!

DALEN  
Yeah, thanks. I know. I was there.

LOUIE  
Sorry man. The whole interview  
thing sucks, but I'm definitely  
jelly about Ellie.

DALEN  
Please never say jelly ever again.

LOUIE  
Bro, I'm legit Smuckers over that  
shit!

29 EXT. VFW HALL, PARKING LOT - CONTINUOUS 29

Dalen's car pulls into a packed parking lot. The car finds its way into an empty space.

Dalen and Louie exit the car, popping the trunk. Dalen grabs a few gift bags, handing one to Louie.

They approach the VFW hall's entrance.

DALEN

Alright, let's get this over and done with.

CUT TO:

30 INSERT TITLE CARD: 20 MINUTES LATER 30

CUT TO:

31 EXT. VFW HALL, PARKING LOT - DAY 31

Dalen emerges from the hall, Louie trails him.

LOUIE

Dude, he's gonna notice that you're not there!

DALEN

Honestly dude? How many times have I covered for you in the past? You can't do this for me, this one time?

LOUIE

I can't control him looking over at our table and seeing your empty chair next to me!

DALEN

If he asks, tell them there was an emergency. Make something up! This isn't fucking quantum physics.

LOUIE

Jesus Christ man, you're his best man. You can't show a little support by suffering through this thing for a few hours?

DALEN

Dude, this is important, Ellie is stranded on the side of the road right now and can't get a hold of anyone else. It's not like I'm just up and leaving to go hang out with her.

LOUIE

And this isn't important?! Right here, right now?

DALEN

Oh, watching them open a bunch of gifts is suddenly a monumental occasion? These things are meant for broads anyway! I don't even know why he invited us!

LOUIE

Because you're his best man! We're groomsmen! This is sort of our job to show up to these things leading up to the big day!

DALEN

Listen, you do this for me, I go to one of your stupid fetish clubs with you. Deal?

LOUIE

Damn this girl must be a freak underneath the sheets.

DALEN

She needs my help, nothing more nothing less. I'm trying to be a nice guy.

LOUIE

Right, right. You scratch her back she scratches yours. Only in this case, your cock.

DALEN

Do we have a deal or what?

LOUIE

You'll really go with me?

DALEN

Yes.

LOUIE  
 You're not just pulling my penis  
 like how Ellie is gonna be pullin'  
 yours later, right?

DALEN  
 You have my word.

A beat. Louie ponders.

LOUIE  
 I can just see it now. We're both  
 gonna get chewed out for this.

Dalen fist bumps Louie.

DALEN  
 Love you, man!

32 EXT. CROSS FALLS ENTRANCE, ROADSIDE - DAY

32

Dalen pulls behind Ellie's broken down car.

Dalen hops out with a gas cannister in his hand.

DALEN  
 How the hell does one venture all  
 the way out to east bum fuck  
 nowhere without enough gas? This  
 has gotta be like 15 miles out.

ELLIE  
 Hey listen, I thought I was gonna  
 have just enough to get out here  
 and back.

DALEN  
 (rolls eyes)  
 Yet you barely even made it to your  
 actual destination.

Dalen unscrews Ellie's gas cap, pouring in gas.

ELLIE  
 (smiles)  
 I really appreciate it!

DALEN  
 Somehow I'm thinking this is all an  
 elaborate ruse.

ELLIE

Oh come on, give me more credit than that.

DALEN

This coming from the girl who lured me up into her apartment after hours, to have more than "just a drink."

ELLIE

Hey! You already took the blame for that one! I didn't force you to have any beers after that first! That was all you, going for seconds and thirds.

DALEN

And fourths and fifths. Yeah I know, I'm just messin' with yah.

Ellie leans on Dalen, wrapping her arms around his neck.

ELLIE

I'm glad you did though.

DALEN

Yeah, I gotta admit, it was fun. I definitely needed to let loose a little bit.

ELLIE

Oh, you can let him loose anytime!

Ellie rubs her hands against Dalen's cock.

DALEN

Oh my god, you are thirsty!

ELLIE

Oh what? Girls aren't allowed to have an equally burning desire for sex every five minutes like the entire male population?

Dalen turns, ignoring the question. He screws Ellie's gas cap back on.

DALEN

Alright, alright. You should be good now.

ELLIE  
You bring a change of clothes like  
I asked you to?

DALEN  
Yeah, got em' in the back seat.

ELLIE  
Good! Get changed.

DALEN  
For what?

Ellie motions toward the entrance to "Cross Falls."

ELLIE  
A hike. I wanna take you to my  
favorite place.

Dalen meets Ellie's gaze. They smile and kiss.

BEGIN MONTAGE:

-- Dalen and Ellie pull on hiking boots together. They venture down a path, leading deep into the woods. They hold hands.

-- CLOSE ON Louie sitting at a table at the VFW hall, tapping his fingers, constantly looking at his watch, looking nervous.

-- Dalen and Ellie laugh together, making their way through the ancient looking forest. They take sips of water, splashing each other simultaneously.

-- CLOSE ON Rich tearing open his gifts at the wedding shower. He laughs, opening more gifts, showing them off to the people off-camera.

-- Dalen and Ellie standing, admiring a large, majestic waterfall.

-- CLOSE ON Rich, looking around, scanning his audience. ZERO IN on an empty chair. PAN TO Louie, trying not to make eye contact with Rich.

-- CLOSE ON Dalen and Ellie, kissing. A haze of mist advances in their direction from the exploding waterfall before them.

END MONTAGE.

FADE TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

33 EXT. RICH'S HOUSE - NIGHT 33

Establishing shot of Rich's house. Dalen walks into frame, approaching the door.

34 INT. RICH'S HOUSE, LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS 34

Dalen enters. Rich lounges on the couch. He leans over, grabbing a beer from a case sitting beside him.

RICH  
Beer?

DALEN  
(takes beer)  
Thanks bro.

RICH  
Sox are down by two. And Farrell  
just got ejected from the game.

Rich motions toward the TV, off camera.

DALEN  
What the hell happened?

RICH  
Price has already nailed two of our  
guys with wild pitches. The second  
time was questionable. Sox kept  
their cool though. So then Workman  
comes in next inning, launches at  
Longoria's head, just barely missed  
him and immediately gets ejected.  
Farrell came out and had some  
words.

DALEN  
And they kept Price in the game?

RICH  
Oh yeah, of course.

DALEN  
Sorta glad I missed it. I probably  
woulda lost my shit.

RICH  
Yeah I hear yah. Thank god Beth  
isn't home. She hates it when I get  
all vocal over the games.

DALEN

But when it's a bullshit call, it's a bullshit call!

RICH

Exactly! She doesn't get it though. It's all just a stupid game to her.

DALEN

Don't need to tell me twice. I was tellin' Ellie the other day about the game with Tampa Bay, when Pierzynski slammed it into deep center, shoulda been an easy flyout to end the game, but we ended up capitalizing and bringing in 2 runs to win in the 9th because of that head on collision with Jennings and Myers.

RICH

Oh my god! That was such a crazy ending to a heated game! I swear I like the rival between the Sox and the Rays more and more everyday. It's gettin' better than the Yankees. Especially this season.

DALEN

Yeah, tell me about it! And she just didn't get how monumental it actually was. I was freakin' out, giving her the play by play and she just nodded and smiled like it was no big deal. I could tell I was boring the shit out of her.

RICH

Wait, so back up a few steps. Who's this Ellie chick?

DALEN

Yeah, shit, that's right! I haven't gotten a chance to fill you in yet. It's the new girl at work. I've been hanging with her lately. She's really cool.

RICH

Wait, you've been what?

DALEN

You know, like the, the little cute  
brunette that just started there a  
week ago or something.

RICH

Yeah no, I gotch yah. I know who  
you're talkin' about. You've been  
hanging out with her?

Dalen gives Rich a searching look.

DALEN

What's the issue? Am I missin'  
something? You look a little ah, I  
dunno. Distraught.

RICH

You can't be hanging out with her,  
Dal.

DALEN

What the hell you talkin' about?

RICH

Just please trust me when I say,  
yah just --  
(beat, hesitates)  
-- just please stop hangin' out  
with her.

DALEN

Alright, whoa, whoa whoa. Pump the  
brakes. How do you know Ellie?

RICH

I don't know her personally. I just  
know of her. And you can't be  
hangin' out with her.

DALEN

Who the fuck are you to tell me who  
I can and can't hang out with? What  
the fuck's this all about?

Rich exhales a large breath, ruffling his fingers through his  
hair. He tilts his beer back.

A beat. He meet's Dalen's gaze.

RICH

It's Arkin's ex-girlfriend, dude.

Dalen stares in disbelief at Rich for a moment.

DALEN

Arkin?!

RICH

Yeah, Arkin.

DALEN

As in Bethany's older brother,  
Arkin?!

RICH

Do you know any other Arkins?

DALEN

Well ain't this just fuckin' grand.

(beat)

So she's the one that, that Beth  
was always venting about, and how  
Arkin was supposed to have a kid  
with and --

RICH

Yeah. That's Ellie.

DALEN

Fuckin' small world.

Dalen swigs his beer.

DALEN (CONT'D)

They don't secretly have a kid  
tucked away that I don't know about  
do they?

RICH

She got an abortion. That's why the  
relationship went south. And you  
know how much Beth is against that  
whole thing so that's why she  
despises Ellie and what she did to  
Arkin.

Dalen continues to sip his beer, very distressed.

DALEN

Yah know, you coulda gave me a  
heads up a little sooner before I  
started getting involved!

RICH

How the fuck was I supposed to know  
you were gonna start chasing after  
this psycho? You're not usually the  
type to do that.

(MORE)

RICH (CONT'D)

In fact this is completely out of character for you.

DALEN

Okay, first off, she's not psycho.

RICH

Dal, I think I would know.

DALEN

You just said you didn't know her personally!

RICH

Beth has told me enough stories about her to last a lifetime. Trust me she's a fucking crumbly cookie.

DALEN

Oh jeeze, so if it comes out of Beth's mouth it must be true, huh?

RICH

Just don't turn this into something it doesn't need to be.

DALEN

Oh no, no, no. This has already turned into something. There's two sides to every story Rich, and Bethany isn't exactly famous for keeping the peace. In fact, she bends the truth a little too much sometimes.

RICH

Take it easy, that's my fiancée you're talkin' about.

DALEN

Yeah well I need to have a few words with your fiancée when she gets home because I asked Ellie to be my date to the wedding.

RICH

You what?!

DALEN

You heard me.

RICH

You can't bring her to the wedding, Dal. I'm sorry.

(MORE)

RICH (CONT'D)

Bethany fucking hates her. She'll never allow it, no matter what you say to her. I'm saving you the time.

DALEN

Oh so it's just all about what Bethany wants now?

RICH

Well it is her wedding.

DALEN

I love it how you say "her" and not "ours." Is this even what you want Rich?! It just seems like you've continually let her drag you down for years. You'll do whatever she says.

Rich rises from the couch. Slams his beer down.

RICH

Being dragged down, huh? Yeah let's talk about that. How'd that interview go the other day?

Dalen flashes a look of irritation.

DALEN

Oh here we fuckin' go.

RICH

I'm waiting. Tell me how it went.

DALEN

Not so great.

RICH

And why is that?

Dalen sighs heavily.

DALEN

Because I never made it.

RICH

Yeah I know. Louie told me you got caught up with Ellie. Right after he filled me in on why you were missing from the wedding shower.

Dalen rolls his eyes, swigging his beer simultaneously.

DALEN

Yeah, good. Well, I'm glad someone can fill in the blanks.

RICH

You know, it just absolutely baffles me how you're given golden opportunity after golden opportunity and you always seem to find a way to fuck it all up. You're one of the fuckin' luckiest guys I know Dal and you take it all for granted. Your parents pay your way through school, you score a great internship, you're offered a job, I give you the title of "best man" at my wedding and you just always find a way to screw it up. What's your fuckin' encore?

DALEN

(exploding)

You know what? Fuck you, Rich! You don't just hand someone the title of best man at a wedding. The best man earns the right to be best man.

Dalen gets up, and heads to the door. He turns around and continues the verbal onslaught.

DALEN (CONT'D)

Who was there to help you get your license at the age of fucking twenty-one and drive you to your test not once, not twice, but three fucking times when no one else would? And speaking on the subject of driving, how about that time freshman year of high school when we snuck out with your dad's Porche and I had to drive you home because you got too drunk, just so you wouldn't get caught, let alone wreck your dad's pride and joy?! Or the time in fucking second grade, when I told everyone you had a rollercoaster in your backyard just so they would stop picking on you and think you were the coolest thing since sliced bread?! Should I keep going? Because I'm pretty sure I could think of a thousand things starting from day one when we met in the first grade!

Rich stares and listens, speechless and astonished.

DALEN (CONT'D)

If anyone has been there and has  
stuck around for the long haul,  
through thick and through thin,  
it's been me! I'm pretty sure I'm  
more than just a title at your big  
fucking important wedding day you  
fucking prick!

Before Rich can retaliate -- Dalen makes a hasty exit,  
slamming the door behind him.

Rich plops back down on the couch, defeated.

35 INT. DALEN'S CAR - MOMENTS LATER

35

Dalen slams his car door, frustrated. He stares out the front  
windshield, brooding in silence, thinking.

He digs in his pocket and pulls out his cellphone. He dials.  
We hear only his side of the conversation.

DALEN

(into phone)

Hey, it's me. Have you left for  
that party yet?

(beat)

Yeah no, I know, but my plans have  
changed. Can I hitch a ride with  
you?

(beat)

No, no, I really wanna go.

(beat)

Awesome. Hey uh, is it cool if I  
bring Louie too? I sorta owe him a  
favor. Plus he loves this type of  
stuff, you know him.

(beat)

Cool, great. Cya in a few.

36 EXT. ELLIE'S APARTMENT - LATER

36

Dalen and Louie emerge from Dalen's parked car.

LOUIE

I can't believe this is happening!

DALEN

Just try not to make a big deal of  
it, alright?

LOUIE

How can I not? This is a fuckin' Riot Girls party! I never pictured you goin' to one of these things in a million years. This girl really has you by the balls, huh?!

Dalen turns, stopping Louie in mid-stride.

DALEN

(stern)

Listen. I'm going because I want to go. I'm doing this of my own volition. Ellie didn't coerce me in the slightest. Let's get that straight, got it?

LOUIE

Volition? What have I told you about using those big college words with me man? Not all of us are fuckin' Leonardo Da Vinci's like you, alright?

DALEN

I'm doing it because I wanna do it. Nothing more, nothing less.

LOUIE

This just seems so random.

DALEN

I told you I'd go to one of your fetish clubs, so I figured this would be a suitable replacement for me to fulfill my promise.

LOUIE

Oh, oh, oh so that's what this is all about.

DALEN

Are you okay with that?

LOUIE

Oh, I'm more than okay with it, but uh, dude -- I really don't think you have any idea just how, well, uh, crazy these things can get.

DALEN

Well I'm trying to keep an open mind. Plus, that's sorta why I asked you to come. I'd feel more --

Dalen stops, hesitating.

LOUIE  
Feel more what?

DALEN  
Just nevermind. Let's go grab  
Ellie.

LOUIE  
(teasing)  
Awww, that's cute. You do still  
need me! I was gettin' worried that  
I had been replaced!

Dalen rolls his eyes. They both step up to Ellie's door and  
knock. The door swings open.

ELLIE  
Oh hey, it's Thing One and Thing  
Two. Didn't think you guys were  
gonna show.

DALEN  
Waiting on you now.

ELLIE  
Whoa, excuse me, let's not hold up  
the one man rock band over here!

LOUIE  
Yeah, without the instruments.

Louie and Ellie brush past Dalen laughing.

DALEN  
Hey, my instruments work just fine,  
alright? Or, uh, instrument.  
Singular is what I meant.

ELLIE  
(over-shoulder)  
Whoa, don't start gettin' cute with  
me yet.  
(winks)  
Way too early for that.

Ellie leads Dalen and Louie into a dimly lit foyer. They hang  
their coats on a nearby rack.

Louie steps ahead, rubbing his hands together and licking his lips, excited.

LOUIE  
Fuckin' turn up!

Louie disappears into an adjoining room.

CLOSE ON Dalen, hesitant.

Ellie meets Dalen's gaze.

ELLIE  
You alright?

DALEN  
Yeah, no, no, I'm good. Why, uh,  
why are you asking?

ELLIE  
You look a little uncomfortable.

DALEN  
Nah, nah, I'll be fine. I'm good.  
Promise. This is just, all new for  
me.

Ellie rubs his shoulders, erotically.

ELLIE  
Think of it like pre-gaming for a  
Hollywood party. I mean, if you  
can't handle a couple of naked  
chicks and dudes in here, how the  
hell you ever gonna be able to  
handle those big dicks in suits  
that you're gonna have to  
inevitably get on your hands and  
knees and suck up to, to score big  
deals? Only difference is, in here,  
it's the best of both worlds, so  
you'll be fully prepared once  
you're out west only dealin' with  
half of it. Yah know, the macho  
bullshit.

DALEN  
That's an interesting perspective.

ELLIE  
Hey man, I'm just gettin' you ready  
for the big dogs. I'm like your  
training wheels.

DALEN

What if I want you to be more than just training wheels though?

ELLIE

I'd say it's not too far outta reach. I mean, you know, you already proved the other night you can handle a good ride, well and at the waterfalls and then at the --

DALEN

(interrupts)

Alright stop. You're doin' that thing again.

ELLIE

That thing again? You mean -- this.

Without warning, Ellie shoves her hands down Dalen's pants.

ELLIE (CONT'D)

Oh my god, he's ready!

DALEN

He's always ready when your hands are all over him.

(beat)

Fuck, now you have me referring to my dick in the third person.

ELLIE

Let's go find the bathroom!

Ellie begins to un-buckle Dalen's pants.

DALEN

Ellie!

ELLIE

Relax Dal, they're not gonna care here. If anything it's a photo op!

A PHOTOGRAPHER, late twenties, creeps up behind Ellie, about to snap a picture.

DALEN

Whoa, whoa, whoa!

Dalen quickly pulls Ellie's hands out of his pants. He fiddles with his belt, approaching the photographer.

DALEN (CONT'D)

(to Ellie)

Wow, you were not kidding!

(to photographer)

What the fuck do you think you're doin' man?

PHOTOGRAPHER

Since when are people fuckin' shy in here?

ELLIE

Sorry, this is his first time at one of --

DALEN

(interrupts)

I don't want you takin' any pictures of me and my girl without my permission. Not now, not ever. Got it?

The photographer lowers his camera, smirking.

PHOTOGRAPHER

Lemme ask you something. Would you be willing to take an inch off your dick if I paid you 143 grand?

Dalen stares at the photographer for a moment, bewildered and a little taken aback.

DALEN

Uh, excuse me?

PHOTOGRAPHER

I chop an inch off your dick, you get an automatic 143 grand for your cooperation. Would you do it?

DALEN

I can't say that I would ever wanna do that for any amount of money, so no. Definitely not. Not a chance.

PHOTOGRAPHER

Yeah well yah see, I have this buddy who was gettin' sucked off by his girl. Fuckin' metal mouth, braces, tongue pierced, the works you know? In the process, something got a little caught, ripped him to shreds and he ended up getting an operation to save his manhood.

(MORE)

PHOTOGRAPHER (CONT'D)

Unfortunately, the operation didn't go as planned and he ended up losing an inch off his penis. So you know what he did?

DALEN

Paid 143 grand to get the inch back?

PHOTOGRAPHER

He sued those doctors for 143 grand for losing that inch off his penis that he'll never get back! And the only reason he sued for that much was because he wasn't very comfortable with what he was packin' to begin with. But now that he lost that much needed inch, it was even worse. Sex life absolutely in the shitter.

DALEN

(facetious)

Riveting tale, brethren! Should we raise our goblets of wine and toast?

PHOTOGRAPHER

I'm willing to bet you're exactly like him. You need every measly little inch that you were ungraciously given at birth to make it count. Hence, you're not willing to give a little up for six figures.

DALEN

I'm pretty sure no man, even the ones with half a brain, would ever give up any amount even if they had an 11 inch cock for any sum of money.

PHOTOGRAPHER

Hell, you'd probably end up with a fuckin' innie if you gave up an inch. I guess that sorta wouldn't be worth money. I mean no sex for the rest of your life? Yah, that would suck.

The photographer raises his camera, shaking it back and forth in Dalen's face.

PHOTOGRAPHER (CONT'D)  
 So in other words, your one inch  
 baby dick ain't good enough to take  
 a snapshot of anyway, yah fuckin'  
 prude.

The photographer smirks at Ellie.

PHOTOGRAPHER (CONT'D)  
 I can see who wears the pants in  
 that relationship!

ELLIE  
 Fuck off!

The photographer turns, disappearing into the party.

DALEN  
 (shouting)  
 Coulda just said I had a small dick  
 instead of giving me your life  
 story! Maybe a Powerpoint  
 presentation next time, yah?

Ellie cups Dalen's mouth with her hand.

ELLIE  
 Relax! That guy's an idiot. I have  
 no problem with what you're  
 packin'.

DALEN  
 (sarcastic)  
 Great party.

ELLIE  
 Chill out. It was one creep. The  
 photographers aren't usually like  
 that. I promise.

Ellie takes Dalen's hand and pulls him in her direction.

ELLIE (CONT'D)  
 C'mon. Come meet some of my girls!

38

INT. PRIVATE RESIDENCE, LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

38

The pneumatic beat of industrial music pumps throughout the  
 residence.

A mob of GOTHs, TOPLESS GIRLS, and NIGHT CRAWLERS of various  
 sorts inhabit the space.

All of them dressed in eccentric attire. PHOTOGRAPHERS weave their way through groups of people, snapping pictures.

CLOSE ON a long table in the center of the room, an abundance of sex toys strewn across the polished ebony. A few topless girls congregate around the table, contemplating their options.

Dalen sticks out like a sore thumb as all the eccentric people he passes shoot him questionable glares. They whisper back and forth to each other as he passes.

CLOSE ON the Photographer who spoke with Dalen in the foyer. He and a few buddies glower at Dalen. They all lift their hands, making a "small dick" gesture with their thumb and index finger.

Ellie leads Dalen to a short girl with long, flowing black hair. Her back's to us.

Ellie spins her around. A gas mask covers the girl's face. She tilts her head to the side, and yanks the mask off. They both shout in excitement and hug. This is MISTRESS LACEY.

MISTRESS LACEY

Oh my god! Is this real life?! Thee  
Ellie Fletcher in the flesh?!

ELLIE

The always kinky Miss Lacey!

MISTRESS LACEY

How long has it been since you've  
shown your face around one of  
these?!

ELLIE

Too long.

MISTRESS LACEY

Ummm, yeah. No shit. You forget how  
these get-togethers work? I don't  
think I've ever seen you this, uh,  
covered?

Mistress Lacey looks Ellie up and down.

CLOSE ON Ellie, fully clothed and dressed normally in comparison to the rest of the crowd.

DALEN

(to Ellie)

Wait, you used to be uh, um, ah --

MISTRESS LACEY

(to Dalen)

-- Riot Girl? Oh Ellie used to be more than just that and she was the fucking best at it!

(to Ellie)

Such a shame you crossed over to the Dark Side, girl. We miss you.

Mistress Lacey rubs Ellie's arm erotically.

Ellie's cheeks turn crimson. She pulls her arm away, quickly hooking it under Dalen's.

ELLIE

(joking)

Yeah well, yah know. They serve cookies on the Dark Side. Couldn't pass it up!

MISTRESS LACEY

Yeah, yeah, yeah. Save the excuses! So who's the mystery man?

Mistress Lacey eyes Dalen.

Ellie pulls Dalen in close.

ELLIE

Yeah, yeah, my bad! This is my man, Dalen. Everyone just calls him Dal though.

MISTRESS LACEY

Mmmm. Grabbed yourself a handsome one! Definitely a lot different than the others.

(to Dalen)

I'm Mistress Lacey.

Mistress Lacey extends her hand.

DALEN

(shakes hand)

Love the name.

MISTRESS LACEY

Thanks! We all have "Riot Girl" names.

DALEN

So who are the others that you just mentioned?

MISTRESS LACEY  
 (smiles apologetically)  
 Sorry. I just think it's nice that  
 Ellie found someone who will keep  
 her in line instead of the other  
 way around!

Mistress Lacey bites her bottom lip, seductively, eyeing  
 Ellie.

Dalen eyes Ellie suspiciously.

DALEN  
 If only that were actually true.

Ellie hits Dalen playfully.

MISTRESS LACEY  
 Oh, okay, okay! I catch your drift.  
 (winks)  
 Looks can be deceiving.

Dalen looks confused, realizing that Lacey took his comment  
 wrong.

DALEN  
 Oh no, um what I meant was uh --

MISTRESS LACEY  
 (interrupts)  
 You guys need drinks!

ELLIE  
 Thank God! I'm dying here.  
 (to Dalen)  
 You want a beer, babe?

Dalen lifts his eyebrows, surprised.

DALEN  
 A former Riot Girl, huh?

Ellie avoids the question, turning to Mistress Lacey.

ELLIE  
 Yupp, he definitely wants a beer!

DALEN  
 (to Lacey)  
 No, I'm all set, actually. None for  
 me. Thank you though.

ELLIE  
 Come on, it's just a beer!

DALEN

Yeah, we all know what happened last time when it was only just a beer.

ELLIE

Well, you don't care if I, yah know?

DALEN

No, no, no. Please. By all means. Have some fun. Don't deprive yourself just because I'm not in the mood to indulge.

(extends hand)

Just toss over the keys there, Mistress uh -- what was your Riot Girl name?

ELLIE

Don't start.

DALEN

Ah, so now you're gonna answer me.

ELLIE

You're not mad are you?

DALEN

No of course not, but what else haven't you told me?

ELLIE

There will be plenty of time for that.

DALEN

I'm sure there will. Toss over the keys.

ELLIE

You promise you're not mad?

DALEN

I'm not mad, Ellie.

Ellie grabs his chin, staring intensely into his eyes.

ELLIE

Promise me.

DALEN

I promise.

Ellie grins, giving Dalen her car keys. She leans in for a kiss.

ELLIE

You're the best, you know that?

BEGIN SERIES OF SHOTS:

-- WIDE SHOT, establishing the party. Many eccentric night crawlers dance to the beat of the music. Lights flicker spastically.

-- ZERO IN on quick shots of their faces, fading in and out from the flickering lights -- pierced, tainted with make-up, crazy hairdos.

-- Dalen moves to a corner, silently watching the action by himself. He looks out of place.

-- CLOSE ON Ellie, letting loose, taking shots of alcohol with Mistress Lacey. They dance and grind on each other hard, getting too close for comfort.

-- Dalen finds his way into an adjoining room, the same eccentric behavior ensues. He scans his surroundings, looking for something.

-- CLOSE ON Louie, sprawled on a couch, shirtless, with a girl performing a body shot. Salt lines Louie's stomach. The girl licks the salt off Louie slowly and sexually. She quickly tilts back a shot of tequila and leans over, eating a lime out of Louie's mouth.

-- Dalen weaves his way through the sea of eccentric dancers, entering the kitchen. He opens the fridge, grabs a bottle of water, and takes a sip. He leans against the counter, defeated.

-- PULL BACK slowly from Dalen in the kitchen, by himself. The music slowly fades down.

END SERIES OF SHOTS.

39

EXT. PRIVATE RESIDENCE, RIOT GIRLS PARTY -- LATER

39

A dark and starless sky hangs over the house.

Dalen assists Ellie out the front door. Ellie's arm is draped over Dalen's neck. She drags her feet, slurring her words, very drunk.

ELLIE

Whoa, whoa, we can't leave without your, little, what the fuck is he? Your little fuckin' service dog, guy person thing-a-mah-bobber. Where is he? Woof woof.

Ellie's head wobbles all over the place. She makes it exceptionally difficult for Dalen to drag her to the car.

DALEN

You're very drunk.

ELLIE

And you're very, you. Oh look at you, being you! Yah little horny little devil, you.

Dalen struggles to open the passenger side door of the car.

ELLIE (CONT'D)

We can't leave without your little friend! Your homeslice, yo --

Ellie stumbles to the ground, giggling uncontrollably. She starts forming gang signs with her hands.

ELLIE (CONT'D)

East coast! West Coast!

She flips the "W" that she's made with her hand upside down to make an "M."

ELLIE (CONT'D)

McDonalds!

Dalen lifts her up and sets her down as gently as possible in the passenger's seat.

DALEN

It's just you and me. Louie split earlier. He went home with one of your girls.

Ellie flips her hair back and forth.

ELLIE

What's all this bullshit about you and your girls? You a fuckin' little man-whore now? You a playa, yo?!

DALEN  
 (enunciating)  
 Louie. Not me. Louie. Remember him?  
 He's gone. Me and you now. That's  
 it.

Ellie thrusts toward Dalen, grabbing the collar of his shirt,  
 pulling him close.

ELLIE  
 You're my fuckin' pimp daddy.

Ellie rubs her crotch.

ELLIE (CONT'D)  
 That's right, baby. Only you got  
 the free pussy pass.

Dalen buckles Ellie in.

ELLIE (CONT'D)  
 I'm driving!

DALEN  
 (facetious)  
 Yeah. Wonderful idea.

Dalen carefully closes the door, circling around to the  
 driver's side. He hops in, firing up the ignition.

40 INT. ELLIE'S CAR (IN MOTION) -- MOMENTS LATER

40

Dalen drives down a dark and deserted road.

ELLIE  
 Pull the fuck over!

DALEN  
 Ellie, calm down. We're almost  
 back, alright?

ELLIE  
 I said pull it over, fucker!

DALEN  
 Are you gonna be sick?

ELLIE  
 You're not driving my car anymore,  
 you reckless fuck.

DALEN

Ellie. Listen to me. You're very drunk. Just sit back and relax. We're almost home.

ELLIE

I don't want you driving my car!

Ellie thrusts her arm toward the wheel. Dalen immediately swats her away.

DALEN

Jesus Christ! You tryin' to kill us?!

ELLIE

Say Jesus Christ one more fuckin' time. Do it. See what happens.

Dalen looks over at Ellie, taking his eyes off the road momentarily.

DALEN

Oh good so you're sober enough to understand that, huh?

ELLIE

(shouting)  
Look out!

CUT TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

41 EXT. ABANDONED PARKING LOT - NIGHT

41

The car rounds a corner. One headlight pierces the darkness. It slowly rolls to a stop.

Ellie emerges from the car, stumbling to the front leaning over, staring intently at the damage that's never shown.

Dalen hops out quickly, jogging to the front.

ELLIE

Oh my fucking God! You completely took my headlight out! It's fuckin' shattered!

DALEN

You sure you're alright?

ELLIE

Look at my fucking car!

DALEN

I'm sorry, I'm sorry! That deer literally came out of nowhere. There's no way I could have avoided it!

ELLIE

Oh good! Fuckin' good! There's fuckin' blood too!

DALEN

Ellie we'll get it fixed, I promise.

Ellie turns, facing Dalen. She throws her arms up in the air, acting dramatically.

ELLIE

(mocking Dalen)

Hand over your keys! I'll drive, I'll drive, I'm sober enough to drive! Yah, good call you fuckin' idiot. That's karma right there! How does it feel?

DALEN

(annoyed)

Yah and if you drove, we probably woulda ended up like that deer, only in a ditch somewhere.

Ellie bursts into laughter.

ELLIE

Well fuck me running sideways, right?! Livin' life on the edge dude!

Ellie stumbles into Dalen, throwing her arms around his neck.

ELLIE (CONT'D)

That's actually a really fuckin' good idea. But I can't run right now.

Ellie attempts to shove her tongue down Dalen's throat. Dalen stands there, not kissing her back.

ELLIE (CONT'D)

Mmmmm, make it up to me, baby. Take advantage of me.

Ellie continues to sloppily kiss Dalen, not even realizing he's not kissing her back.

ELLIE (CONT'D)  
(whispering seductively)  
Just. Like. That.

She takes her index finger and slides it down Dalen's lips. She slowly steps back until her butt leans against the hood of the car.

Ellie stares intensely at Dalen for a long, silent moment.

Dalen gives Ellie a withering look.

Ellie drops her pants instantaneously. She turns, leaning on her belly on the side of the hood. She slowly shakes her ass back and forth, sliding her thong down her bare legs simultaneously.

ELLIE (CONT'D)  
Come on, Dal. Come over here and  
take advantage of me.

DALEN  
Ellie what the hell are you doing?

ELLIE  
Come on baby I want you to pound  
that pussy.

Ellie reaches downward, moving her arm in a fluid motion -- moaning to herself.

ELLIE (CONT'D)  
Come on Dal, come on! She's so  
fuckin' wet. She's ready! She wants  
him bad!

DALEN  
Ellie, pull your pants back up  
before someone comes.

ELLIE  
There's no one here! It's like  
fuckin' 4 in the morning! Come fuck  
me on the hood of my car! I'm  
beggin' you! It'll be so fuckin'  
hot!

A beat.

DALEN  
No.

ELLIE

What the fuck did you just say to me?

DALEN

No. I said no. I'm not going to do it. Pull your pants back up and let's go.

(stern)

Now!

Ellie flashes a look of irritation.

ELLIE

(livid)

Are you fuckin' kiddin' me? What kinda guy doesn't fuck his girlfriend on the fuckin' hood of her car in the middle of the night when she is begging for it?!

DALEN

A respectful one!

Ellie stands, pulling up her pants.

ELLIE

You're a pansie ass little bitch.

Dalen approaches Ellie. He turns her around gently and she grabs his cheeks, pinching both sides.

ELLIE (CONT'D)

But a cute little panda. My little panda bear. Mine, mine, mine, mine.

Dalen opens the car door, assisting Ellie inside, not saying a word. He scoops her up, cradling her head in his arms and leans her down slowly in the back seat, closing the door.

ELLIE (CONT'D)

Mine, mine, mine, mine! You're all mine!

Dalen opens the driver's side door, slides in, starts the engine, and drives off into the nighttime shadows.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

42 INT. MEDIA NEWS, ROBBIE'S OFFICE - NIGHT

42

Robbie hammers away at the computer, plugging in the numbers for the night.

Dalen enters.

DALEN

What's up Robbie? You wanted to see me?

Robbie shifts his focus from the computer to Dalen.

ROBBIE

Broski! Take a seat.

Dalen situates himself in the chair across from Robbie's desk.

ROBBIE (CONT'D)

So, I'm sure you've heard some people talking out on the floor about it, and if you have, I apologize in advance.

Dalen stares at Robbie, bewildered.

DALEN

Um, not quite sure I know what you're gettin' at. Is everything cool?

ROBBIE

Ah, alright. Well I guess I'm glad you're hearing it from me first then.

Dalen waits patiently in silence.

ROBBIE (CONT'D)

We're gettin' shut down, Dal.

A beat.

DALEN

This soon? I mean, yah, it was inevitable, but I figured we had a good five years left before things start to get really bad.

ROBBIE

People just don't wanna read the newspaper anymore, kid.

(MORE)

ROBBIE (CONT'D)

They're going completely digital at the end of the month.

DALEN

Wow, this is like, surreal right now. I've been here since I was in high school.

ROBBIE

I hear yah. It kinda took me off guard as well. I called a staff meeting on Monday and broke the news and since you only work a few nights at the end of the week, that's why you're the last to find out. I figured it'd be better to sit you down in person rather than call over the phone. I'm sorry, broski.

DALEN

I'll be okay.

ROBBIE

Yeah, I'm not worried about you or Rich. You both have good heads on your shoulders. I'm more worried about guys like Louie and Terrell. Guys who have no back-up plan. And that's between you and I.

DALEN

I think their acutely aware of their situation. Problem is they have no ambition to do anything about it.

ROBBIE

Well, I hope it all works out for em'.

DALEN

So this is really it, huh? When's the final day?

ROBBIE

We'll be closing the doors on the 29th. So, you got a couple weeks. I know it's not much but it's better than no heads up at all.

DALEN

How did the guys take the news? Yah know, Louie, Terrell, and Rich?

Robbie leans forward, pulling out a cigarette from his pack. He tucks it behind his ear and rises from his chair.

ROBBIE

As much as it pains them to own up to it, I know they're gonna miss this shit-hole. And you know what, so will I.

A smile inches across Dalen's face.

43

INT. MEDIA NEWS, HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

43

Dalen advances toward the distribution wing. Ellie rounds the corner, blocking Dalen's path. A malevolence radiates from her eyes.

ELLIE

So what, you don't know how to pick up your phone?

DALEN

Listen Ellie, I think after what happened the other --

ELLIE

(interrupts)

Nah, I'm done listening. It's your fuckin' turn to listen. So pay real close attention.

DALEN

Ellie, I was only givin' us some space after the whole --

ELLIE

(interrupts)

Shut the fuck up. You hear me? Just shut. The Fuck. Up. You're gonna have to get it through that thick ass skull of yours that no one fucks with me. No one. Especially not a little fuckin' boy like you.

DALEN

Little fuckin' boy? That's not what you were sayin' when you were face down and ass up, if I recall.

Ellie bursts into laughter.

ELLIE

Please, hunny. I wear heels bigger than your dick.

Dalen gestures toward his shoes.

DALEN

And I wear high-tops that are cleaner than your pussy.

Ellie smacks Dalen in the face with brute force. She grabs his shirt collar, pulling him in close.

ELLIE

Glad you feel that way because you're never gonna get a taste of this again.

DALEN

Listen, I didn't mean to say that. I apologize.

ELLIE

Yeah well I meant every word I said. And if you think you're gettin' off scot-free, you better think again. You're paying me every fuckin' dime for the damage to my car. Don't you even think for a second I forgot or don't remember about the weekend. I remember every fuckin' little detail you little prick.

DALEN

Relax. Of course I'm gonna pay you for the damage. I'm not a total douche. I realize it was my fault. I take full responsibility. I already took out some money.

Dalen digs in his pocket, unveiling a wad of cash.

DALEN (CONT'D)

Here's \$250. I'll give you more once we get paid, okay? I'm sure it's gonna be a hefty bill.

Ellie grabs the money, counting silently in front of Dalen.

DALEN (CONT'D)

I'm really sorry about what happened. I don't know what else to say.

Ellie sticks the money in her pocket.

ELLIE

Wow, you really are a dumb little piece of shit. Thanks for the free cash. You're lucky I don't take you to court and get even more. In fact, that actually sounds like a good idea.

DALEN

Really? That's really how you're gonna handle this whole situation. After I just graciously gave you money out of my pocket? Who the hell are you?

ELLIE

I told you no one fucks with me! And now, you're on my bad side.

DALEN

Is this really how we're gonna end this Ellie?

ELLIE

How the fuck did you expect it to end, Dalen?! Huh?! Life ain't a fuckin' happy ending sundae with sprinkles on top! And this is exactly why you're a little fuckin' boy. You can't handle me. You never could handle me. Because deep down, you were always the one gettin' fucked.

DALEN

Ellie just stop, you're better than this.

Dalen reaches for Ellie's arm. She jerks it away.

ELLIE

Don't fuckin' touch me. Ever again. And you're right. I am better than this.

Ellie takes her finger, circling it around, gesturing toward the building and everyone in it.

ELLIE (CONT'D)

I'm better than all this.

Ellie turns on her heel, heading for the doorway. She stops, glaring back at Dalen.

ELLIE (CONT'D)

And do me favor. When you're jerkin' off over me, go extra hard on him. Give him that reminder of how you'll never get a tighter and wetter pussy than this.

Ellie takes her two fingers and makes a fingering gesture toward her crotch, while simultaneously clicking her tongue on the roof of her mouth.

Ellie turns into the distribution wing.

Dalen stares at the empty doorway, incredulous.

DALEN

(to himself)

Jesus could this night get any worse?

Dalen heads in the opposite direction, toward the bathroom.

44

INT. MEDIA NEWS, BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER

44

The audible flushing of a urinal. Dalen approaches the sink. He washes his hands and splashes water on his face.

The door to the bathroom swings open, revealing Terrell, out of breath.

TERRELL

God damn baby boy! I been lookin' all over for you!

DALEN

Not now, Master Rells. I'm not havin' the best of nights.

TERRELL

Oh shit. Well, brace yourself, son.

Dalen turns the faucet off, shifting his focus to Terrell.

DALEN

What now?

TERRELL

Yo dat chick is goin' ape-shit on your hot wheels outside!

DALEN

Ellie?!

TERRELL

Yeah brah! I was just out smokin'.  
From the little bit I saw, whatever  
she's doin' to your car right now,  
it's similar to how Anakin killed  
Count Dooku! Slice N' dice! Get the  
fuck out there!

Dalen dashes for the door, making a hasty exit.

45 EXT. MEDIA NEWS, REAR PARKING LOT - NIGHT

45

The back doors to the factory swing open.

Dalen rushes out frantically. He scans the parking lot,  
searching for Ellie, to no avail. She has all but vanished.

WIDE SHOT of the parking lot -- a few cars sitting in the  
spaces. None of them appear to be damaged.

Dalen approaches his car, circling around it.

Suddenly -- an outburst.

DALEN

Oh my fucking God! This psycho  
bitch! I can't even believe this!

Dalen pounds the roof of the car in pure frustration.

He drags his feet back toward the building. He leans against  
the brick siding, sliding down until he hits the pavement,  
burying his face in his hands.

Audible footsteps tap the concrete and stop at Dalen.

Dalen peers up -- Rich.

RICH

(smiles warmly)  
You need a ride?

Rich extends his arm downward. Dalen momentarily reluctant,  
grabs Rich's arm and Rich hoists him up.

DALEN

That would be, uh, yeah -- that'd  
be great.

46 INT. RICH'S CAR (IN MOTION) -- MOMENTS LATER

46

Rich and Dalen drive down the dark and desolate roads of the industrial park.

DALEN

How'd you know I was out there?

RICH

Terrell told me Ellie was slashing your tires. Went right to Robbie's office and asked him if I could drive you home. From the looks of it, you've been havin' a pretty rough night.

DALEN

Well you didn't have to. It's not like I deserve any special treatment.

RICH

Oh trust me, I know I didn't have to. But I wanted to.

Dalen tries a smile, but it emerges crooked and small.

DALEN

Listen Rich, I'm really sorry about the way I acted the other night. I was completely out of line.

RICH

I appreciate the apology, but you don't have to apologize for some stupid and petty argument that we had, Dal. We were both in the wrong.

DALEN

Well, I gotta give credit where credit is due -- you were right about Ellie. Guess I just had to find out the hard way, huh?

RICH

Can't really fault you there. God knows how many times I've found out the hard way.

DALEN

I really am happy for you and Beth man. I really am. And I'm beyond stoked for the wedding.

(MORE)

DALEN (CONT'D)

All those things I said, it was just the heat of the moment.

RICH

So does this mean Terrell's gonna be your date, now?

DALEN

Are you shittin' me? I probably couldn't even score with Terrell. You know him, he probably already has a fish on the line.

RICH

Please. He never just settles for one. He's always taggin' --

Rich looks over at Dalen, waiting. Dalen smiles.

DALEN

-- and baggin'.

RICH

Big things poppin' --

DALEN

-- and them little things stoppin'.

RICH

God damn! We fuckin' blacker than him!

Rich and Dalen exchange laughs.

DALEN

I don't stress it enough, Rich but you're a really good friend. Love you, man. No homo.

RICH

I'm only doin' what you've done for me in the past. And right back at yah. Got nothin' but love for yah. Even when you're led astray by a world fetish queen hoe.

DALEN

Yeah well I'm not the only one. Louie got swept off his feet by one the other night too.

RICH

He told me about that. He wants to make it up to you for ditching.

(MORE)

RICH (CONT'D)  
 Billiards and brews at his place  
 tomorrow night? I checked the  
 schedule, we're all off.

DALEN  
 Jesus. Robbie is already starting  
 to cut back hours, huh?

RICH  
 Unfortunately.

DALEN  
 Louie's it is then!

Dalen pulls his seat back, resting. Rich drives onward.

47

INT. GOLDEN AGE PRODUCTIONS, OFFICE - DAY

47

Dalen flips through a script, jotting down several notes  
 simultaneously at a desk in the corner of the office.

Athena emerges from her office, advancing toward Dalen.

ATHENA  
 Hey you.

Dalen peers up from the script, meeting Athena's gaze.

DALEN  
 Hey Athena. How are you?

ATHENA  
 Respectable. You?

DALEN  
 Respectable, huh? That's a new one  
 I don't think I've ever heard.  
 Different. I can dig it.

ATHENA  
 I figured you would. Can add that  
 one to your repertoire. Thank me  
 later of course.

Athena winks. Dalen grins.

DALEN  
 Duly noted. So, what's up? More  
 scripts that need coverage?

ATHENA

Not right now. Actually I was wondering if we could discuss yours in my office real quick.

DALEN

Oh awesome, you read through it already?!

ATHENA

Sure did. Come on in.

Athena extends her hand, inviting Dalen into her office. Dalen rises from his chair, approaching the open door.

48 INT. GOLDEN AGE PRODUCTIONS, ATHENA'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS 48

Athena takes a seat behind her desk, pulling out Dalen's script.

ATHENA

You can close my door.

Dalen steps back, closing the door. He finds the empty chair opposite Athena's desk.

ATHENA (CONT'D)

So, I'm gonna be totally honest here.

DALEN

Wouldn't want it any other way.

Dalen laces his fingers, placing them in his lap.

ATHENA

I thought it was really, really good. Granted there's some areas that could be fleshed out, yah know trim the fat here and there but overall, it read very well.

DALEN

Seriously?

ATHENA

Yeah. I mean I gotta say right off the bat that your action descriptors were masterfully crafted. Everything was extremely easy to visualize.

(MORE)

ATHENA (CONT'D)

And for such complicated subject matter, it truly is remarkable that you were able to convey what was going on so succinctly. In the grand scheme of things, the action descriptors were much better than your dialogue, but that's not to say that the dialogue was bad. I think it will really come to you over time. Nevertheless, it has a lot of potential.

DALEN

I really appreciate you taking the time to read it.

ATHENA

Hey, this is what I do. In fact, I elaborate much more in the coverage I wrote for you.

Athena hands a piece of paper to Dalen. Dalen picks it up, scanning over it quickly.

DALEN

Wow Athena. This is definitely above and beyond the call of duty. I'm grateful you even took the time to read it. Thank you so much.

ATHENA

Well what you've been doing here throughout your internship has been above and beyond the call of duty, so I wanted to show my appreciation. In fact, I called you in here for a different reason entirely.

Dalen lifts his eyebrows, curious.

ATHENA (CONT'D)

Remember when I told you I was interested in heading back west and pursuing my degree in photography?

DALEN

Yeah of course.

ATHENA

Well, I decided it's time to shit or get off the pot. So I gave Mike my notice yesterday.

DALEN

Oh my god, Athena that's awesome! I'm so happy for you. I mean your photography is beautiful to begin with. I'm actually surprised that's not what you initially went to school for.

ATHENA

Yeah I know it. I mean when I was where you are now, I didn't know what the hell I wanted. Granted, it was only about five years ago but I was clueless. My parents always call me a nomad with how much I travel and wander aimlessly. But after working for a few different companies and getting my feet wet with different things, I think I know where my heart is now.

DALEN

Well I would wish you luck, but you're not the type that needs it.

Athena grins wide.

ATHENA

Thank you. I'm gonna miss your wisdom, passion, and humor. But the rest of the office won't have to.

Dalen gives Athena a searching look.

DALEN

Well, it's been great but I'm only here for another couple of weeks.

ATHENA

It'll be a little longer than that actually. In fact, I hope it's a lot longer, or until you become a big famous screenwriter. You can use this as a way to pay the bills in the meantime.

DALEN

You're giving me your job?!

ATHENA

I recommended you for my position. And Mike said he's elated to start working with you.

Without saying a word, Dalen hops out of his chair, rounds Athena's desk and wraps his arms around her, squeezing her tight.

Athena laughs.

ATHENA (CONT'D)

You earned it, kid.

DALEN

I'm not gonna let you down. I promise.

ATHENA

Don't be a stranger, alright? You have my email and number. I wanna hear where your skills end up taking you. I'm certain very far.

Athena gives Dalen a hug of her own.

49

INT. LOUIE'S HOUSE, BASEMENT - NIGHT

49

A man-cave of sorts. A large pool table rests in the center of the room. Rich lounges on the sofa at the far end of the room, sipping a beer.

Dalen enters as Louie racks up the balls on the pool table, setting up a game. They make eye contact. Louie approaches Dalen with a cold beer.

LOUIE

Hey man, the drinks are on me tonight. Didn't mean to ditch yah the other night at the Riot Girls party. Things sorta got a little out of control.

DALEN

In all fairness, you did warn me how bad it could get at those things before we picked Ellie up.

LOUIE

Yeah but it was still messed up. I can't be leavin' my brotha hangin' like that.

Louie hands the beer to Dalen. Dalen pops it open.

DALEN

Yah know, as weird as this may sound, I'm sorta glad you did man.  
(MORE)

DALEN (CONT'D)

The shit that ended up happening with me and Ellie, well, I think it was meant to happen and it woulda never happened if you were there with me.

LOUIE

Step on over, dude. You can tell me all about it while I open up a can of whoop ass on you.

Louie grabs two pool sticks from the rack on the wall. He hands one to Dalen.

Footsteps become audible, trudging down the stairs. A pair of feet hop to the basement floor -- Terrell.

TERRELL

Yo boys, I did it! I really did it!

Rich leans up from the sofa.

RICH

You score that security job you were tellin' us about the other night?!

TERRELL

Ah, hell no!

Terrell holds up a plastic card, waving it around, excited.

TERRELL (CONT'D)

I finally racked up enough points on my Subway card to score a free footlong! Started from the bottom, now we here!

Dalen, Rich, and Louie laugh at Terrell, handing him a pool stick.

LOUIE

Alright boys, let's tag team it! Me and Dal against you two clowns.

Rich lifts himself from the couch, approaching the table.

RICH

(to Terrell)

So you really haven't gotten word yet?

TERRELL

Nah, not yet. But my uncle got the hook-up there. I know he'll get me in. And dat job dishes out the moolah kid. Like, I'mma wake up every morning thinking about that green, dawg.

DALEN

Yeah, you're gonna be thinking about the green alright. You're gonna be lightin' it up too.

Terrell emits a soft evil laugh. He points to Dalen.

TERRELL

That boy already know what time it is! All day, everyday baby! You know how I do!

RICH

Well, I've got some good news of my own.

TERRELL

(to Rich)

Say it loud, say it proud, kid!

DALEN

(to Rich)

Yeah, what's the good word, man?

RICH

(points to himself)

This guy right here has finally scrounged up enough change to head back to school and finish what he started.

DALEN

Gettin' that degree in CJ?

RICH

Yessir! And then once Beth and I are finally married, her dad is hooking me up with a position down at the correctional facility he works at.

DALEN

Now that's something to toast to!

The guys pick up their beers.

LOUIE

Whoa, whoa, whoa. Hold the phone.  
Rich isn't the only one with news.

TERRELL

Oh snap! We on auto-pilot right  
now, son!

RICH

(to Louie)  
You did not do it?!

DALEN

(to Louie)  
Tell us you finally did it!

Louie lifts his beer in the air.

LOUIE

I finally did it.

All three guys cheer audibly, jumping on Louie, giving him  
noogies.

DALEN

Man, how fuckin' long have we been  
tellin' this guy to go get his CDL  
license?!

RICH

Years!

DALEN

Fuckin' eons!

TERRELL

God damn, Lou, that's a wrap!

LOUIE

Been drivin' those box trucks at  
work for long enough. Time to  
upgrade to the big boys.

RICH

Yeah and now, you'll have a much  
easier time finding a job with that  
under your belt too.

DALEN

Job well done, brotha.

LOUIE

Thanks guys. Yah know, I think the ole shit-hole gettin' shut down was exactly the kick in the ass I needed.

RICH

Atta boy!

A beat.

DALEN

But uh, since everyone else is spillin' the beans...

TERRELL

You sold one of your scripts! The Extraction one!

RICH

Dude...

LOUIE

Dude!

Dalen swats the air with his hand up and down continuously, gesturing for the guys to calm down.

DALEN

That will happen in due time, boys. I assure you. Payday is coming.

LOUIE

Well than what the hell is it?

RICH

Yeah, spit it out over there!

DALEN

Well, in just a few short days once everything is finalized, I will no longer be an intern at Golden Age Productions, but I will in fact be a full-time employee at Golden. Age. Productions.

TERRELL

Ladies and gentlemen, the next Steven Spielberg!

LOUIE

God damn, Dal!

RICH  
Congratulations, man! Full-time in  
the movie industry!

LOUIE  
Man, that is really cool shit. This  
is what you've always wanted since  
you were a little kid!

DALEN  
Well, I'm still working on that  
part. I'll become a screenwriter.  
But for now, this'll look good on  
the resume and as Terrell always  
says, get my pockets a little  
fatter.

The group cheers loudly.

TERRELL  
Alright boys, we ain't gonna be the  
graveyard gang for too much longer.  
We all gettin' day jobs now! Let's  
make the most of it!

The group raises their beers, clanking them in unison.

BEGIN SERIES OF SHOTS:

-- CLOSE ON Dalen and Louie chalking their cue sticks.

-- CLOSE ON Terrell, leaning down, concentrating. He makes  
the break.

-- CLOSE ON the break at the opposite end of the table. The  
balls disperse across the pool table as the cue ball makes  
contact.

-- Various shots of the guys taking shots on the pool table,  
progressing through their game. They call pockets. Some of  
them nail their shots. Some of them miss.

-- CLOSE ON Louie, taking a shot, hitting the eight ball into  
a pocket, losing the game. Dalen attacks him playfully.  
Terrell and Rich chest bump and dance in celebration.

-- Various shots of the guys drinking beers together,  
laughing, enjoying themselves.

-- Various shots of the guys wrestling. Louie puts Dalen in a  
headlock. Dalen reverses it into a hammerlock and swings  
around to put a headlock of his own on Louie.

-- Terrell and Rich shotgun beers, racing each other to the finish.

-- Louie, Dalen, Rich, and Terrell congregate outside of Louie's house, smoking big fat stogies, laughing together.

END SERIES OF SHOTS.

50

INT. MEDIA NEWS, DISTRIBUTION WING - NIGHT

50

Dalen enters through the double doors in the back.

Terrell runs over to him quickly.

TERRELL

Jedi knight! I have been patiently awaiting your arrival this evening!

Dalen bows to Terrell, symbolizing respect.

DALEN

Master Rells. I shall don my robes for the evening.

TERRELL

Hold the phone, kid! Seriously, you have got to come see this playa! It's gonna make your night. Nah, scratch that. It's gonna make your damn year! C'mon, c'mon!

Terrell Grabs Dalen's arm, yanking him in the direction toward one of the stacker machines.

Rich and Louie stand at the stacker machine, grabbing the bundles of paper that emerge fresh off the press. They go about their normal routine -- jogging the papers and placing them down on a pallet.

TERRELL (CONT'D)

(to Louie and Rich)

He's here!

Louie turns to Dalen. Rich grabs the next bundle to spit out of the machine.

LOUIE

I cannot wait to see your fuckin' face after you read this.

DALEN

Read what?

Rich takes the first paper off the top of his bundle and hands it to Dalen.

RICH  
Tonight's main headline.

Dalen takes the paper, gazing down at the front page. His eyes pop in horror. His jaw drops.

TERRELL  
Alright baby boy, out loud for everyone to hear!

Dalen clears his throat, reading the front page that's never shown.

DALEN  
Local Ayer resident, Ellie Fletcher, 27 years of age, was arrested Wednesday night after allegedly burglarizing her ex-boyfriend's home. The ex-boyfriend, Arkin Thomas, reported to police immediately after he noticed his wallet and various items were missing throughout his home. According to authorities, Miss Ellie Fletcher decided to check her facebook during the midst of the chaos and neglected to log off her account before leaving with thousands of dollars worth of stolen property. Chief of Police, Charlie Irons said, "if she wouldn't have done the facebook thing, we would have never caught her."

Dalen looks up, meeting the gaze of Louie, Rich, and Terrell. They all burst into uncontrollable laughter.

Terrell lifts his arms in the air.

TERRELL  
(shouting)  
Darwin award!

RICH  
Dude, the Darwin award is given to people who self-select themselves out of the gene pool via death, not just from doing something stupid.

Terrell arches his eyebrows, skeptical.

Louie wipes tears of laughter from his eyes, catching his breath.

LOUIE

Hey, what goes around comes around,  
right?

DALEN

(smiling)

It sure does, it sure does.

Robbie emerges from the doorway leading to the office.

ROBBIE

Alright boys, I know this is your  
last night, but could you sorta  
pretend like you give a shit about  
getting some work done for the next  
few hours?

TERRELL

Come on Robbie! Look who you  
talkin' to dawg! I got my PhD in  
newspapers! I'm the Doc-tah baby  
boy!

Robbie approaches Terrell, putting his hands on his  
shoulders.

ROBBIE

Well how about I direct the Doctor  
to the operating table.

Robbie directs Terrell to the inserting machine. They engage  
in small, indistinct chatter as they walk out of frame.

Rich and Louie give a head nod to Dalen, getting back to  
work, jogging and stacking the bundles coming off the press  
from the adjoining room.

Dalen leans on a large paper bin, looking at the front  
headline one more time, smiling to himself.

He peers up, gazing around the distribution wing, taking it  
all in.

CLOSE ON Dalen tossing the newspaper into the empty bin. He  
turns on his heel, never looking back.

FADE TO BLACK.

