INT. MEDIA NEWS, DISTRIBUTION WING - NIGHT

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.

INT. GOLDEN AGE PRODUCTIONS, OFFICE - DUSK

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!

INT. MEDIA NEWS, DISTRIBUTION WING - NIGHT

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

They stand at a large “Quipp stacker-machine” attached to a
conveyor 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.

INT. GOLDEN AGE PRODUCTIONS, OFFICE - DUSK

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!

INT. MEDIA NEWS, DISTRIBUTION WING - NIGHT

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
Toche.

6 INT. DALEN’S HOUSE, BEDROOM - NIGHT

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

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?

EXT. MEDIA NEWS, REAR PARKING LOT - MOMENTS LATER

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)
Pfffff! 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!”
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 accordance. The group disperses, heading to
their individual stations. Production continues.

INT. MEDIA NEWS, BOILER ROOM - LATER

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)
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:

INT. GOLDEN AGE PRODUCTIONS, BREAK ROOM - FLASHBACK

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 elses 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:
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.

INT. MEDIA NEWS, HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

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!

INT. MEDIA NEWS, DISTRIBUTION WING - CONTINUOUS

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)
DALEN
Because that, will make all the difference.

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

EXT. MEDIA NEWS, REAR PARKING LOT - LATER

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.

EXT. ELLIE’S APARTMENT - MOMENTS LATER
Dalen’s car rolls up, remaining idle.

INT. DALEN’S CAR - CONTINUOUS
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

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.

INT. ELLIE’S APARTMENT, BEDROOM – DAY

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.
Establishing shot of building.

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.

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.

INT. MEDIA NEWS, DISTRIBUTION WING - NIGHT

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

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

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 --

INT. MEDIA NEWS, CONNECTING HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

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

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

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

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

Ellie (CONT’D)

You been avoiding me?

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
Mmmmm. 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
-- 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!

EXT. RESIDENTIAL STREET - DAY

A thickly settled area.

Dalen’s car rounds a corner and makes a turn onto a side street.
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!
EXT. VFW HALL, PARKING LOT - CONTINUOUS

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:

INSERT TITLE CARD: 20 MINUTES LATER

CUT TO:

EXT. VFW HALL, PARKING LOT - DAY

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

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

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 fiancee you’re talkin’ about.

Dalen
Yeah well I need to have a few words with your fiancee 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.
Yeah, good. Well, I’m glad someone can fill in the blanks.

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?

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.

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.

INT. DALEN’S CAR - MOMENTS LATER

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.

EXT. ELLIE’S APARTMENT - LATER

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.

INT. PRIVATE RESIDENCE, RIOT GIRLS PARTY - NIGHT

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
Lemmie 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)
PHOTOGRAFER (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?

PHOTOGRAFER
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?

PHOTOGRAFER
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.

PHOTOGRAFER
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!

INT. PRIVATE RESIDENCE, LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

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.

EXT. PRIVATE RESIDENCE, RIOT GIRLS PARTY -- LATER

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.

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

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:

EXT. ABANDONED PARKING LOT - NIGHT

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:
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)
They’re going completely digital at the end of the month.

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

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.

I’ll be okay.

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.

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

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

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

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.

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.

**INT. MEDIA NEWS, HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER**

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.

**INT. MEDIA NEWS, BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER**

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.

EXT. MEDIA NEWS, REAR PARKING LOT - NIGHT

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

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!


---

**INT. GOLDEN AGE PRODUCTIONS, OFFICE - DAY**

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.

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)
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.

I really appreciate you taking the time to read it.

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.

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.

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.

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

Yeah of course.

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.

INT. LOUIE’S HOUSE, BASEMENT - NIGHT

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)
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.

INT. MEDIA NEWS, DISTRIBUTION WING - NIGHT

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.