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by  
(Name of First Writer)

(Based on, If Any)

Revisions by  
(Names of Subsequent Writers,  
in Order of Work Performed)

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Name (of company, if applicable)  
Address  
Phone Number

## aftermath.

FADE IN:

INT. SMALL OFFICE - DAY

We FADE IN on a rather unorganized and stuffy office which has not one habitant. As we scroll around we see pictures of a man with his family, several trophies ranging from sports to literature, and a framed diploma.

Mountains of paper lie piled on the desk. The text is blurred so much that it looks like lines without words. A woman in her mid-fourties ushers in HOMER [Peter Krause], a man in his late thirties. He sits down at the one other chair in the room, aside from the desk chair.

WOMAN

(As she closes the door)

Mr. Richardson is finishing up a meeting. He'll be in momentarily.

HOMER

OK, thanks.

The WOMAN closes the door behind her. We get our first long look at HOMER, a gruff looking man with a light beard and short hair. His fingers bounce up and down on the handles of the chair, an obvious nervous habit.

A balding older man walks in, dressed in a suit and tie. This is MR. RICHARDSON. HOMER stands up quickly, grabbing MR. RICHARDSON'S hand and shaking it vigorously

HOMER

Nice to meet you Sir.

RICHARDSON

Take a seat and we'll begin in a moment.

RICHARDSON looks drained, covered in sweat and breathing hard as he takes a few steps to his desk and sits. As he sits a loud breath of pleasure can be heard from him. HOMER straightens his posture quickly, trying to be very serious.

RICHARDSON

(Rummaging through papers)

Well, we'll just wing this. I can't recall what job you were looking to get with our company.

HOMER

I was hoping to become your custodian.

RICHARDSON

Ahh. What is it that you believe you could contribute to our company?

HOMER

(Smiles)

Well, I think I'm a great worker. I've had a decade of experience doing this job for several different establishments from schools to bars. I can work the late shifts and the early shifts, whatever it is that you need. And uh, I don't know, I'll just do whatever it is you need. You won't hear any complaints from me.

RICHARDSON

(Continues to look through random papers)

Well... You certainly seem up for the job.

(Picks up a paper)

Here it is. Your application. Just let me look it over for a moment.

HOMER nods and stays quiet as RICHARDSON looks over the

dirty, and coffee-stained paper. RICHARDSON finds something interesting and squints his eyes to give a closer look.

RICHARDSON

(cont'd)

It says here you've been incarcerated. Twice. What did these run-ins involve?

HOMER

(Smiles nervously)

The ahh... the first was for robbery in '92. I was in prison for a two year stretch. The second was a parole violation. I spent another six months in prison after that. Haven't been incarcerated for nine years, so I put that period behind me.

RICHARDSON

What did the parole violation involve?

HOMER

(Scratches his head and half-smiles)

It was, uh, assault. I got into a scuffle that went a little too far. Not that big of a deal, really.

RICHARDSON

We consider every violent offense a big deal in our workplace.

HOMER

(Sits up)

I know, I know. I didn't intend to... um...

RICHARDSON

You didn't intend to what?

HOMER

I didn't intend to sound like an assault is not a big deal. I agree totally. It is a very big deal. But I've really worked to move myself forward since you know, the incident , and I think I have.

RICHARDSON

(Glances at his watch)

That's good to hear. What was your last place of employment?

HOMER

I worked at an elementary school. Riverside was the name.

RICHARDSON

Were you fired or did you resign?

HOMER

I was laid off. I worked in the offices of a software company. They had to cut back on spending, and decided they only really needed one custodian. I was the unlucky one.

RICHARDSON

It appears so. How long have you been out of work?

HOMER  
About a year now.

RICHARDSON  
Are you married?

HOMER  
I was formerly, but not now.

RICHARDSON  
Divorce?

HOMER  
No...my wife...my wife passed away.

RICHARDSON  
I'm sorry to hear that. Children?

HOMER  
I have a son named Toby. He's  
fourteen years old. Beat.

RICHARDSON  
(Groans)  
That's about all I have to ask.  
Frankly, I am sympathetic to your  
situation. People in your  
predicament have some trouble  
getting work. But quite honestly, I  
really doubt my colleagues will  
hire you.

HOMER  
(Quietly)  
Well, thanks anyway.

RICHARDSON  
(Stands up)  
Keep at it.

HOMER  
(Smirks)  
Yeah, keep at it. HOMER nods  
politely and leaves the room.

CUT TO:

SOUNDTRACK: SEBASTIEN TELLIER - FANTINO

## INT. HOTEL ROOM

We see a large bed first, with a frame the size of a car. The blankets are a smooth and pretty silk, and nothing about the room indicates that it could be a hotel.

We scroll around the room, seeing a very large television set that is playing a porno, a painting that is extremely diverse and has no place in a hotel room, and a large bathroom with the bath tub looking more like a jacuzzi. Inside the tub is a white man with black hair, seemingly asleep.

CUT TO:

## SUIT ON THE BED

We see a nametag which says "Hello, my name is..." with Kevin scrolled on sloppy at the bottom.

CUT TO:

## INT. BATHROOM

The man, KEVIN [Billy Crudup], soaks in the bath with his eyes now open. He stares at the ceiling, with a look of utter bore on his face. He sighs loudly and sinks further into the bath, covering his head and body in the hot water.

## LATER ON

## INT. HOTEL ROOM

KEVIN sits, on the bed, in a bathrobe. He is flicking through the channels on the TV, looking for something interesting. With every click he seems to get angrier.

KEVIN

(Changes channel)

Nothing.

(Changes channel)

Nothing.

KEVIN half-heartedly throws the remote against the wall. There is a knock at the door.

KEVIN

(Sighs)

Who is it?

JANIS  
 (O.S.)  
 It's me.

KEVIN  
 What do you want?

JANIS  
 (O.S.)  
 I just want to talk to you.

KEVIN  
 (Turns off the TV)  
 About what?

JANIS  
 (Opens up the door)  
 You gave me a key, remember?

KEVIN  
 I don't feel like talking to you  
 right now.

JANIS  
 (Sits down on a chair)  
 Don't make me to be a psychiatrist  
 right now. I'm not in the mood.

KEVIN  
 Good, I don't need a psychiatrist.  
 I need another drink.

JANIS [Helena Bonham Carter] looks over to a small counter,  
 where several small liquor bottles are emptied out.

JANIS  
 Jesues Kevin. Why are you doing  
 this today? I really thought you  
 would handle this a little bit  
 better.

KEVIN  
 Well, I'm not, so just deal with  
 it. I remember your little freak  
 out over toilet cleaner boy So  
 don't you dare tell me I don't get  
 one free freak-out after enduring  
 that.

JANIS  
 You're an asshole.

KEVIN  
I agree with you there.

Beat.

JANIS  
We're supposed to be five doors  
down having a meeting with Newson.

KEVIN  
(Chuckles)  
That guy. He sure is a straight  
shooter when he wants to be.

JANIS  
What are you talking about?

KEVIN  
I had a private meeting with him  
last night in the bar downstairs.  
Well, I actually just ran in to him  
and we started talking. I asked  
him, point blank, "will we still  
have a place in this company?" He  
said "No, we don't intend to  
continue releasing products under  
the name of your company." Asshole.  
This was a buyout. Nothing more,  
Nothing less. He just decided to  
give us both a bit false hope.

Beat.

KEVIN  
(CONT'D)  
Now, were you expecting that?

JANIS  
No.

KEVIN  
Well, you should've. It's the  
nature of this world that we're  
living in. I've been sitting here  
thinking about it all night.  
Thinking of what would have been,  
what could have been. But I've come  
to the realization that it is, in  
fact, all fucked up. I spent years  
of my life dedicated to this one  
venture, and for once, it worked.  
It all finally clicked. It was  
perfect.

(MORE)

KEVIN(cont'd)

Only for it all to come tumbling down. Which, like I said, is the nature of the world. No matter how much we build and build, it will all fall apart. It will all wither away. No matter how much we make the right choices, and live life right, we will all die. And our existences will all have meant absolutely nothing to the world. Isn't that a pleasant thought?

JANIS

Are you telling me the truth?

KEVIN

(Turns the TV back on)

Yes.

JANIS

(Angered)

Look at me!

KEVIN

(Leans forward and looks

JANIS square in the eyes)

I'm telling you the absolute truth.

JANIS

(Sighs and slouches in to her chair)

I need a drink.

CUT TO:

INT. MAYBERRY FUNERAL HOME

A plethora of pine caskets fill a eerily dark room. The caskets range from normal wooden box to a pretty, colorful metal casket.

The small bit of light that comes through the room's high windows gives the caskets a beautiful yet chilling importance.

In walks MARIA [Nicole Kidman], dressed in black. Her blue eyes hide behind brown locks of hair, but her most noticeable trait is the sadness that one can see for only a split seconds in her eyes before her hair falls over them again. Hiding her from the world.

She walks quietly and elegantly through the room, studying every casket. MARIA stops at a certain black wooden casket, and looks it over for a moment.

BOB

(O.S.)

Ah, I see you are favoring that one.

BOB walks in to the picture, trying to establish his salesman presence.

MARIA

(Quietly)

Yes, it's nice.

BOB

Is there anything extra in particular that you were looking to add?

MARIA

Not really, I'm not very good at this stuff.

BOB

Well, this would be ideal for all ages as it can be customized for free. How old was the deceased?

MARIA

Eleven.

BOB'S salesman attitude immediately turns to a rather sad expression.

BOB

(Smiles)

I think we can take care of the rest for you.

MARIA

Thank you.

BOB nods politely as MARIA leaves the store.

CUT TO:

EXT. OUTSIDE MAYBERRY FUNERAL HOME

MARIA approaches her car with a cell phone in hand.

MARIA  
 (Talking on the phone)  
 No, I'm fine. I'll see you at the  
 funeral.

MARIA hangs up the phone. She then turns on the car and tries, unsuccessfully, to put the car in neutral. MARIA takes a deep breath and then tries again, without success. MARIA then violently does it over and over, still without success.

MARIA  
 (Talking to herself  
 quietly)  
 Come on Maria, just put the car in  
 reverse. You can't do this to  
 yourself. Just calm down, and put  
 the car in reverse.

MARIA starts up the car. She then softly grabs the stick shift and puts it in neutral, without a problem.

MARIA  
 (cont'd)  
 There you go.

MARIA drives away with a half-smile on her face.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. QUICKIE MART - DAY

We see the muggy, cold weather outside as MIKE [Jamie Foxx] sits behind the service counter of a small quickie mart. MIKE is a thin African-American man with a big sweatshirt on and a beanie on his head. MIKE is watching a small TV set that is next to his register.

He sits on a small black stool that has been duct-taped in several spots. It makes a annoying squishy sound with every move MIKE makes. Another African-American man walks in, with a big winter coat on along with a white beanie. This is NATHAN [Larenz Tate].

MIKE  
 Hey son, how you been?

NATHAN

I've been good, what about you?

MIKE

Same as always, same as always.

NATHAN

When do you close tonight?

MIKE

Eight.

NATHAN

You want to go out and get something to eat? My girl's got some old friends in town. Some of 'em are fine, you know?

MIKE

(Chuckles)

Sure, sounds good.

NATHAN hops up onto the counter, the only other place to sit in the place.

MIKE

(cont'd)

Take it easy, man. Don't want this shit to break. Got enough bills and other shit to worry 'bout.

NATHAN

Come on Mike, you know my ass ain't fat enough to break this counter. You got people called you Big Mike and I'm the one that's gonna break the counter.

MIKE

I heard about enough people calling my ass Big Mike. Why the hell would I be Big Mike? I'm the skinniest mother fucker on this block! Makes no damn sense. Shit, no nicknames make sense.

NATHAN

Whatever, man. Can I take a piece of candy off your hands?

MIKE

You ain't got 50 cents?

NATHAN

Sure I got 50 cents, but I don't want to spend two quarters on candy..

MIKE

What the hell else are you gonna buy with 50 cents?

NATHAN

(Glares at MIKE)

Fine.

(Gets down from the counter)

Turn something good on the tube, man.

MIKE

Anyone with half a brain knows there ain't shit to watch during the day.

NATHAN

(O.S.)

Then why the hell you watching it!

CUT TO:

INT. QUICKIE MART - LATER

NATHAN has got himself a snickers bar, while MIKE has lit up a cigarette. Both men are watching a soap opera, not interested in the least.

NATHAN

I thought you weren't allowed to smoke in a place like this?

MIKE

A place like what?

NATHAN

A place like this!

MIKE

Just because you don't see people doing it doesn't mean they don't. It just means that you haven't witnessed it. Plus, I own this place, you know that. Ain't nobody gonna come in here and tell me what's what in my own store.

NATHAN

So you're saying if a cop brings his ass in here, and tells you to stop smoking, you'd say, "Fuck you, this is my place." That's what you're telling me?

MIKE

No, I'm just saying that without a complaint, I see no reason to stop. If someone asks nicely, I'll oblige. But I'm not going to stop smoking out of fear that a cop will walk in and ask me to stop. Beat.

MIKE

And why would he come in and ask me to stop any fucking way?

NATHAN

Just forget about it.

MIKE

Good, I'm done the damn thing anyway.

MIKE puts out his cigarette in an ashtray.

NATHAN

(Referring to the soap opera)

What do you think's about to happen here?

MIKE

Either someone will fuck or someone will die.

MIKE changes the channel.

NATHAN

What are you doing?

MIKE

Turning on that Judge show. I've seen enough soap opera today.

NATHAN

(Sighs)

This must be nice.

MIKE

What must be nice?

NATHAN

Working here. Sit and watch TV all day and then go home.

MIKE

Believe it or not, there is some amount of work involved. I come here an hour before opening and stock all this shit. And let's not forget about the run-ins with those damn criminals. I've been robbed five times, Nate. Five times! In two years! Shit man, I even got shot last year.

NATHAN

You should get one of those bulletproof type deals that some of these stores around here have.

MIKE

Not worth the cash. Plus, what's to stop some little fucker from coming in and taking what he wants? I wouldn't be able to run down thieves. And that's the best part of this job.

NATHAN

(Chuckles)

Fuck yeah, man.

MIKE

What time is it?

NATHAN glances at his gold watch for a moment, then looks back up at MIKE blankly.

MIKE

Well?

NATHAN

I can't figure out the fuckin' I's and the V's.

MIKE grabs NATHAN'S hand and looks at the watch himself.

MIKE

It's 12:36.

(Sighs)

Shit, I have a meeting with Nicole.

NATHAN  
And her friendly suit-wearing  
companions.

MIKE  
Hey, I'll give you fifty bucks to  
be the clerk for a few hours.

NATHAN  
I'll do it for sixty.

MIKE  
(Rolls his eyes)  
Whatever, just don't do anything  
stupid, okay?

MIKE walks out from behind the counter and puts on his  
jacket.

NATHAN  
(Grins)  
I'll try.

CUT TO:

INT. BOARD ROOM - AFTERNOON

Two men dressed in black suits sit on either sides of NICOLE,  
a beautiful black woman who, despite being dressed well,  
looks very stressed and unfocused. On the other side of the  
long table sits ROBERTO, MIKE'S lawyer.

SUIT #1  
We're going to need to start soon.

ROBERTO  
(Sighs)  
He's never late like this, there  
must be something wrong.

SUIT #1  
Well, then Mr. Downey picked an  
excellent time to start making a  
habit of being tardy.

ROBERTO  
Let's not be childish now, all  
right?

SUIT #2  
We'll wait another ten minutes.

ROBERTO

Thanks.

The door to the room swings open and MIKE speedily approaches ROBERTO. MIKE nods in recognition to the two men and NICOLE. NICOLE smiles very briefly at MIKE.

SUIT #2

We can begin now, then?

ROBERTO

(To MIKE, whispering)

You're a very lucky man.

MIKE

(Sits down)

Yeah? I guess my outlook on this whole thing is wrong then. I should be happy about it.

ROBERTO

I covered you. Just stay there and be quiet.

(To SUIT #2)

We're all ready now.

SUIT #1

Okay, then let's start with custody.

ROBERTO

My client believes, in the interest of fairness, that custody of the two children should be shared.

SUIT #1

Our client wants full custody.

ROBERTO

My client is a fine father, and should be allowed more than the occasional visit with his children.

SUIT #1

Your client lives in a rough neighborhood and has a history of alcoholism.

MIKE

Can I say something?

ROBERTO  
(Disapprovingly)  
Mike...

SUIT #2  
Let him talk.

MIKE  
First, I want to apologize for  
being late. It won't happen again.

SUIT #1  
I know it won't- this is the last  
meeting we're having.

ROBERTO  
What?

SUIT #1  
You heard me. If your client has  
any gripes with the setup after  
this meeting ends, we'll just have  
to go to court.

MIKE  
Please, I just want a fair  
settlement here.

SUIT #1  
How is this not fair? My client  
made the money, raised the kids,  
and dealt with your drinking  
problem. She believes she is  
entitled to these things.

MIKE  
(To NICOLE)  
Why are you being so nasty about  
this?

ROBERTO  
Mike, let me handle this.  
(To SUIT #1)  
Let me tell you something, pal...

ROBERTO'S voice fades out, and we see MIKE now, a frustrated  
look on his face. He looks over to NICOLE, who nearly has  
tears in her eyes.

ROBERTO  
(Voice fades in)  
... And don't even get me started-

MIKE  
(Interrupts)  
No, stop. I'll agree to give Nicole  
full custody of the children.

ROBERTO  
Mike-

MIKE  
What do I need to sign?

Beat. SUIT #1 scrambles in to a file folder and pulls out a  
stack of forms.

ROBERTO  
(Whispers To MIKE)  
Don't do this, I can get you full  
custody.

MIKE  
(To ROBERTO, sternly)  
I'm not going to court. SUIT #1  
passes the papers across the table  
to MIKE.

FADE OUT.

BLACK SCREEN.

CAPTION: BEFORE.

The sound of groups of wheels turning in unison can be heard.  
The sound of worn down car engines racing down the road can  
be heard.

TIM  
(O.S.)  
Hey. Hey Jimmy.

FADE IN:

INT. INSIDE CAR - NIGHT

We see a man in his 30s driving down the highway, with his 10  
year old son sitting on the passenger's side. TIM [Peter  
Sarsgaard] keeps close eye on the road as he attempts to get  
the attention of his sleeping child.

TIM  
(Shakes JIMMY a bit)  
Are you all right?

JIMMY  
(Quietly)  
Where are we?

TIM  
We're a few miles from home.

JIMMY  
(Yawns)  
Finally.

TIM  
How are you feeling?

JIMMY  
I'm OK. I feel better than before.

TIM  
Before what?

JIMMY  
Before we went to the doctor. Beat.

TIM  
Listen. If this gets to be too  
much, just let me know. This is for  
you, son. If it doesn't help, then  
you don't have to do it. If you  
have anything to say - about  
anything - just let me know.

JIMMY  
I know, Dad. I'm fine, don't worry  
so much.

There is a loud beep up ahead.

JIMMY  
What was that?

TIM  
Just someone looking for trouble.  
Don't worry about it.

We now hear the shriek of tires stopping quickly and more  
beeping horns.

JIMMY  
What's that?

TIM quickly turns the wheel in a quick and physical flash.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. MARIA'S APARTMENT, BEDROOM - LATE NIGHT

The phone in a darkened room begins to ring. MARIA, in her sleep attire, pops up quickly. She picks up the phone, which was sitting on a nearby end table.

MARIA

Hello?

GRUFF OLDER VOICE

I'm calling for Maria Beckett.

MARIA

Who is this?

GRUFF OLDER VOICE

I am a police officer, ma'am. Your husband was in a car crash tonight, he's being transported to the hospital.

MARIA

(Sits up)

What?

GRUFF OLDER VOICE

Timothy Beckett, ma'am. He's been taken to a hospital, would you like the address?

MARIA

What about-?

GRUFF OLDER VOICE

The boy is fine. He's speaking with us, and there doesn't appear to be a scratch on him.

MARIA

What happened, I don't understand?

GRUFF OLDER VOICE

Mrs. Beckett, I suggest you head over to Providence. Do you need directions? A ride?

MARIA

No, no. I know where it is. I can make it. Oh, God, will Jimmy be there?

GRUFF OLDER VOICE  
He's getting into a car now.

MARIA  
OK, OK, I'm leaving now, thank you.

MARIA hangs up the phone, mostly in a state of shock. She sits for a moment, trying to comprehend the situation. MARIA gets up from the bed, and bolts out of the room.

JUMP CUT TO:

INT. PROVIDENCE HOSPITAL

The white walls of a crowded hospital are the first thing we see. The white all around makes the place look strangely heavenly. But the voices that soon overtake the color send the thought of heavenly warmth away.

MARIA Emerges from two big doors, walking quickly. She reaches the service desk, and tries to get the attention of one of the working doctors.

MARIA  
Excuse me?

WORKER  
(With his back to MARIA)  
Just a moment.

A not exactly comfortable silence passes, as the man does something on a computer.

MARIA  
I just-

WORKER  
One moment.

MARIA  
(Sighs)  
Could you just please look up a patient for me?

WORKER  
(Looks MARIA over,  
annoyed)  
Name?

MARIA  
Timothy Beckett.

The WORKER types in the name as two nurses look at MARIA with compassionate looks on their faces.

WORKER  
Mr. Beckett is in room 109. He will  
be going in to surgery very soon,  
so-

The WORKER looks up to see no MARIA.

CUT TO:

INT. HOSPITAL HALLWAYS

MARIA runs down the halls as several patients and doctors give her strange looks. She begins to look at the numbers on the doors as she passes, saying them aloud.

MARIA  
(Running)  
115... 114... 113... 112... 111...  
110... 109.

MARIA stops running to catch her breath, and observes TIM from a small crack in the door. She regains her composure and enters the room.

CUT TO:

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM

As MARIA walks in, we see TIM lying on a hospital bed with several people surrounding him. TIM lies on the bed a mess, with all sorts of bandages covering his body. His body is in horrible condition, limp and frail.

MARIA  
Excuse me.

DOCTOR MEYERS  
(From the doorway)  
Are you Maria?

MARIA  
Yes, what has happened to him? Is  
he going to be all right?

DOCTOR MEYERS  
Let's have a talk in the hall, OK?

INT. HOSPITAL HALLWAY

MEYERS guides MARIA to a small bench, where she sits down. MEYERS stays standing, pacing back and forth as random people walk the halls behind him.

MARIA

Well?

DOCTOR MEYERS

He'll go into surgery... with your OK, in a few minutes.

MARIA

Yes, please, do whatever you can to help him.

DOCTOR MEYERS

There is one thing I'm worried about.

(Kneels down to MARIA)

There is a 70/30 chance he'll suffer from brain damage for the remainder of his life. You see, the initial crash didn't cause him any life-threatening injuries. But in a pileup like this, that's not surprising. It wasn't one car, but two, that did this to your husband. The surgery is not a safe option, I'll tell you right now. But it is the only way to attempt to ensure his survival.

MARIA

You're telling me that he'll die if he doesn't get the surgery and he might die if he does? Jesus, just do it.

DOCTOR MEYERS

I'm just trying to inform you of the possibility.

MARIA

Well I'm sure your superiors appreciate you following protocol, but for god's sake, we're talking about my husband. I can't let him die, if there is any chance, anything, just do it, god damn it.

DOCTOR MEYERS

Good, we'll bring him in to surgery  
then. If you'd like to see him  
before you best do it now.

DOCTOR MEYERS disappears down the hall. We now see JIMMY,  
walking with an officer. He lets go of the officers hand and  
runs to his mother. MARIA hugs him as he approaches her, and  
begins to cry softly as she holds him.

MARIA

Oh, sweetie are you okay?

JIMMY

Yes. Where's Daddy?

MARIA

Are you sure, baby?

JIMMY

Yes.

MARIA looks JIMMY over a few times, looking for scratches or  
wounds that anyone might have missed. She then looks up at  
JIMMY, and for the first time, fully realizes the reality of  
the situation.

MARIA

(Stands up)

Let's go see Daddy.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. RANDOM BEDROOM - MORNING

The first thing we see is MARIA, looking lovely as she sleeps  
on a big bed. She is halfway covered with the blankets, the  
upper half not covered, and topless lying on her stomach. The  
opening of a door can be heard, and quiet footsteps.

The footsteps grow louder, but still not waking MARIA. We see  
the door to the bedroom open, and TIM walking in. He takes a  
look at MARIA as she sleeps. TIM takes a walk to her side of  
the bed, and sits at the end of it.

TIM sighs and rubs his hands through his hair, this motion  
waking MARIA. Tired and out of it, MARIA looks up and sees  
TIM. She makes not a move, but makes sure TIM knows she is  
awake.

TIM

How long has this been going on?

MARIA doesn't respond.

TIM  
(cont'd)  
You don't want to talk about it.

MARIA again doesn't respond.

TIM  
(cont'd)  
Gather your things today. When I return with Jimmy, you'll be gone. We don't need a divorce now. You can take as much time as you need, just make sure you're out of our house.

MARIA closes her eyes.

TIM  
(cont'd)  
I'm... I don't know. I'm sorry, that's all. I wish I could have loved you better.

TIM walks out of the room slowly, his footsteps quiet as a whisper.

CUT TO:

INT. TIM'S HOSPITAL ROOM - LATE NIGHT

We see MARIA'S face first, realizing she was thinking about what happened earlier that day. TIM is lying down in his bed unconscious, breathing with the aid of a machine.

JIMMY is sleeping on the floor with only a blanket and pillow, looking very exhausted. MARIA looks over to the door, where DOCTOR MEYERS stands as he did before. With light black circles under his eyes he smiles kindly and approaches MARIA. He takes a seat on the ground.

MARIA  
(Whispering)  
What should I think?

DOCTOR MEYERS  
(Whispering)  
It went better than we thought, but only time will tell. His heart can't survive on it's own. He may need a transplant.

(MORE)

DOCTOR MEYERS(cont'd)

We're lucky we got those results before surgery, because things could have gone wrong if we hadn't.

MARIA

I never asked before, how are the others doing? How many were involved?

DOCTOR MEYERS

There were five cars involved, but only one other serious injury.

MARIA

How are they doing?

DOCTOR MEYERS

She'll be okay. No internal injuries, no head injuries. She's lucky.

Beat.

MARIA

I'm just glad Jimmy is fine. He's so young, I don't know what I'd do if he was hurt.

DOCTOR MEYERS

Yeah... I don't know what to make of that.

MARIA

What do you mean?

DOCTOR MEYERS

I don't know if you want to hear this, it might not be what you want to hear right now. You've got enough to worry about.

MARIA

No, go ahead.

DOCTOR MEYERS

I don't really know how to put this. In so many words, Jimmy should have been seriously injured. He was on the passenger's side, which in the event of a crash is extremely dangerous due to the airbag. But it didn't open. His seatbelt broke.

(MORE)

DOCTOR MEYERS(cont'd)

It ripped as the car crashed, which should've been... a very, very horrible thing. But there was no result. Jimmy got up and left the car. The first thing the woman did when she came to was ask about your child. She saw him wandering around after the wreck.

MARIA

You're trying to tell me it could've been worse.

DOCTOR MEYERS

No, I don't mean... sorry. I'm not thinking clear, I was just thinking out loud. I need to get out of here for a few hours.

MARIA

How long have you been working?

DOCTOR MEYERS

About 36 hours. It's not the longest I've ever been awake. It's just been a very unusual night.

MARIA

(Sighs)

Yes, yes it has.

DOCTOR MEYERS

Does he need anything?

MARIA

He's fine now, thanks. He wouldn't go and stay with his grandmother, so I just decided to let him stay. I couldn't tell him that it was wrong for him to want to be by his father.

Beat.

DOCTOR MEYERS

(Stands up)

Well... try and get some sleep. You'll be the first to know on any developments, you have my word.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. HOSPITAL HALLWAY - EARLY MORNING

Surrounded by vending machines MARIA sits on a bench, fading in and out of consciousness. JIMMY is asleep with his head lying softly on her thigh. Three hospital employees speed past and disappear in to TIM'S room. MARIA'S eyes open up wide. She delicately sets JIMMY down, trying not to disturb his sleep.

CUT TO:

INT. TIM'S HOSPITAL ROOM

MARIA enters the room to see a identical scene to the night she first saw TIM after the crash. Several doctors and nurses surround him as he breathes hard, grimacing and moving in utter pain.

MARIA is silent; she doesn't bother to ask what the problem is. For the first time since the accident, TIM opens his eyes. With tubes down his throat and in his veins he does not speak, but stares forward at MARIA. A slight, faint smile comes across his face, the only emotion he can show. His eyes close shut once again and his heart stops.

A sound strangely familiar to the sound of an alarm clock begins to go off. The doctors and nurses around him work frantically with little to no result. MARIA looks hard at TIM one more time, then leaves the room.

FADE OUT.

BLACK SCREEN.

The sound of someone knocking hard on a door can be heard.

HOMER

(O.S.)

Frank!

HOMER knocks on the door again.

HOMER

(O.S.)

It's 2 o'clock Frank! It's time to wake up.

HOMER knocks on the door even harder now.

FADE IN:

INT. APARTMENT COMPLEX HALLWAY - AFTERNOON

HOMER is dressed nice, in a suit and tie, even if it is a rather obvious knock-off suit and tie. His hair is combed conservatively as well, showing he's obviously not planning on staying in on this very day. HOMER goes to knock on the door again, but he hears a man stumble to the door.

FRANK  
(O.S.)  
Just a minute!

FRANK, a tired man in his 50s, opens the door wearing a dirty, old blue bath robe.

FRANK  
(cont'd)  
What is it?

HOMER  
Toby needs to be taken to school in an hour.

FRANK  
So?

HOMER  
By you.

FRANK  
(Sighs)  
I need some sleep, Homer.

HOMER  
You've been sleeping since midnight. I know, because that was when I heard the loud bang of a man falling out of his chair. If you're hung over, drink some goddamn coffee. If I find out Toby had to walk to school, I'll be at your door. Do you understand?

FRANK  
Yeah, yeah. Calm down.

HOMER  
This is a big day for me, I just want to make sure everything is all right.

FRANK  
 (Smiles awkwardly)  
 It's fine. I'll give the kid a  
 ride, don't worry about it.

HOMER  
 OK. Thanks, buddy.

HOMER walks a few steps across the hallway and in to his  
 apartment.

CUT TO:

INT. HOMER'S APARTMENT

HOMER rushes into a small apartment that is pretty normal and  
 clean. There are a few old couches, a table to eat at, and a  
 television set along with several other odd objects. HOMER  
 rushes around, picking up folders and pieces of mail off the  
 floor.

HOMER  
 (Yelling)  
 Toby!

TOBY  
 (O.S.)  
 What?

HOMER  
 Ten minutes!

TOBY  
 (O.S.)  
 I know!

HOMER walks into the KITCHEN, which is filled with dirty  
 dishes and several boxes of cereal are out. HOMER puts the  
 boxes away, and continues to look for something.

HOMER  
 Come on, come on.

HOMER rummages through a small box that is filled with pieces  
 of mail and bills. HOMER takes out a Ziplock bag, which has  
 about a dozen things in it.

HOMER  
 Here we are.  
 (Yelling)  
 I'm out of here, do we need  
 anything?

TOBY, a fourteen year old kid, walks into the kitchen. He has short hair and is wearing a pair of ripped jeans and a Zero skateboarding T-Shirt.

TOBY  
 (Takes out a small piece  
 of paper)  
 Toilet paper, shampoo, milk, and  
 butter. We need all of that. TOBY  
 hands HOMER the list.

HOMER  
 All right, I'll grab this stuff on  
 my way home. See you soon.

TOBY  
 Good luck.

HOMER  
 (Chuckles)  
 Yeah.

CUT TO:

INT. APARTMENT COMPLEX HALLWAY - AFTERNOON

HOMER leaves his room as a chubby man walks towards him. HOMER turns and sees the man, which immediately causes him to sigh in annoyance.

HOMER  
 I know, I'll have it to you as soon  
 as I can get it.

CHUBBY MAN  
 What kind of a guarantee is that?  
 The owner of the building has  
 informed me that it is my  
 responsibility to kick you out of  
 the building.

HOMER  
 Just wait-

CHUBBY MAN  
 No, you wait. You have one week to  
 get me the money. I realize that  
 you have been running around trying  
 to get a job, I realize that if you  
 had money you would pay me, and I  
 most of all realize that you are  
 not trying to disrespect me.

(MORE)

CHUBBY MAN(cont'd)

But this has to be done. It is my job to get rid of people who can't pay rent. If I was to let everyone stay free, I wouldn't be doing my job very well, now would I?

HOMER

A week?

CHUBBY MAN

A week. That is more than I've ever given someone in your situation. You are more past due than I've ever allowed a renter to be. I am giving you one last chance. Please don't let me down.

HOMER

Thank you. I've got to get going.

CHUBBY MAN

One week. In seven days, men will come and take you and your things out of the apartment, do you understand what I am telling you?

HOMER

One week, I understand.

CHUBBY MAN

Good, get going.

CUT TO:

INT. INSIDE A CAR - MORNING

HOMER glances at his watch, looking nervous. Outside the car, we see the traffic is jammed for what seems like miles. Back in the car, HOMER breaths heavily, the sun shining straight on him.

HOMER

(To himself)

How many miles? What time is it?  
9:15. I could walk it. HOMER looks for a way out of the crowd.

CUT TO:

EXT. CITY STREET

HOMER is lightly jogging, looking at his watch every few moments. HOMER stops hard.

HOMER

Wait.

HOMER studies the few buildings around him.

HOMER

(cont'd)

Where the hell am I?

CUT TO:

INT. SMALL OFFICE - DAY

HOMER has taken a seat in an office similar to the one we saw earlier. A younger man with glasses on and an overly geeky style sits across from him.

HOMER

I'm sorry I was a few minutes late.

GEEKY MAN

Not a problem.

HOMER

Um, what can I call you?

GEEKY MAN

(Smiles)

Yeah, that would be something I should let you know. The name is Brian Carney.

HOMER

Nice to meet you, Brian.

BRIAN

(Picks up a piece of paper)

This is your résumé, I assume?

HOMER

It should be. If it has the name Homer Jonathan Fields on it, anyway.

BRIAN

Well Homer, I'm going to toss this little piece of paper aside and talk to you man to man. BRIAN crumbles up the resume.

BRIAN

(CONT'D)

You've had some time in the prison system, I know this. Quite frankly, I don't see it as an issue as long as I can look at you and see an honest, hardworking man. Would you consider yourself these things?

HOMER

Yes Sir, I would.

BRIAN

I was hoping you'd say that. How much time have you spent doing this job?

HOMER

I've held this job at one place or another for around a decade. You'll find that all my former employers have good things to say about me.

BRIAN

All right. How much time have you spent in prison?

HOMER

Two years for robbery, six months for a parole violation. I've been out of trouble for quite some time now.

BRIAN

Good to hear. These next few questions may be a little bit personal, and you don't have to answer if you don't feel up to it.

HOMER

(Smiles)

I'll answer anything you ask me as honestly as I can.

BRIAN

Are you married?

HOMER

No.

BRIAN

Have you ever been?

HOMER

Yes. For three years. My wife died five years ago.

BRIAN

Any children?

HOMER

One, yes. His name is Toby and he's fourteen years old.

BRIAN

(Chuckles)

Watch out.

HOMER

Yeah, that's what they tell me.

BRIAN

OK... What else is there? Well, I guess I'll give you some further information on the job. You would be responsible for cleaning the school after hours. The pay is minimum wage, with the possibility of raises further down the road.

HOMER

Sounds good.

BRIAN

That'll be about it. I'm trying to get all of these interviews done today, as quickly as fucking possible. So sorry if the interview has been rather brief.

HOMER

I understand. I just wanted to get my name out there. I hope we can meet again.

BRIAN

Good. We'll see you soon, Homer.  
HOMER stands up and shakes BRIAN's hand.

HOMER  
Thank you.

SOUNDTRACK: RADIOHEAD - NICE DREAM

HOMER leaves the room. BRIAN smirks, then gets back to work.

CUT TO:

EXT. OUTSIDE LINCOLN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - AFTERNOON

Standing beside a beat-up Chevy is MIKE, who looks equally beat-up. The school bell rings, and the sounds of footsteps running down the halls can be heard loudly. Suddenly we see children of all sizes exiting the front doors of the school, generally aging from seven to twelve years old.

We see two children leave the school together, the young NICK (7) and the older ELLIOTT (13). They see MIKE standing by his car and become esthetic, sprinting to the car where he is standing.

ELLIOTT  
(Yelling)  
What are you doing here?

MIKE  
(Laughs softly)  
I figured you boys could use a  
ride.  
(Brief pause)  
And a bite to eat?

NICK  
I want pizza hut!

MIKE  
(Smiles)  
We can do that. But first I need a  
hug.

MIKE kneels down and hugs both of his boys at the same time, the look on his face being of total relief.

NICK  
Shotgun!

MIKE  
(Chuckles)  
I need to stop by and see your Mom  
first.

NICK and ELLIOTT's smiles quickly turn to frowns.

ELLIOTT

I don't think she wants to talk to you, Dad.

MIKE

I know, Elliott. I just don't want her to worry about you guys.

ELLIOTT

Okay.

MIKE

All right, let's get going.

CUT TO:

EXT. OUTSIDE NICOLE'S HOUSE

MIKE knocks three times and looks back to his car, making sure his children are fine. He's very obviously nervous, tapping his foot against the ground repeatedly and sweating quite a bit. The door opens, and NICOLE looks at MIKE with a confused anger.

NICOLE

(Frustrated)

What are you doing here?

MIKE

I was wondering if it would be okay for me to take the boys out for some pizza and a few games.

NICOLE turns her head in annoyance and looks past MIKE to the car.

NICOLE

Why are you doing this?

MIKE

(Wipes the sweat from his forehead)

They're still my children, Nicole. I didn't ask for this, but I've complied with your every wish. Now all you want to do is leave me and never see me again. All I want to do is see my kids first.

NICOLE

It's only going to make it harder on them.

MIKE

Yeah? Well, that's not my fault. You've made this choice. I didn't beat you, I wasn't a drunk, I didn't do drugs, I had a job. I'm the most dependable person you know, so don't do this right now. In a week they'll be all yours, and you'll never have to deal with them seeing me again. I just want this one day.

NICOLE

(Sighs)

Fine. Bring them back by 9 o'clock.

MIKE

(Exhaustively smiles)

Thank you.

NICOLE

(Nods)

Thank you.

MIKE nods again in appreciation and NICOLE flashes an unlikely smile and waves to the boys.

CUT TO:

INT. INSIDE MIKE'S CAR

NICK and ELLIOTT play 'thumb war' as MIKE enters the car and sits down.

ELLIOTT

What did she say?

MIKE

We have until nine.

ELLIOTT

Cool!

MIKE

What do you say we go on over to the arcade after we eat?

NICK

Yeah!

CUT TO:

EXT. OUTSIDE NICOLE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

NICK and ELLIOTT walk into the house as MIKE walks away from it, smiling. NICOLE emerges from the house slowly, standing on the porch watching MIKE walk away. MIKE reaches his car and gets in, still not noticing that NICOLE is watching. From the outside we see him start the car and shift it in to drive. He stops for a moment instead of driving away and his head begins to tilt downwards.

SOUNDTRACK: IRON & WINE - LION'S MANE

MIKE softly smacks his head against the steering wheel a few times and then looks back to the porch, where he sees NICOLE. She waves 'goodbye' to him and then goes back in to the house.

CUT TO:

INT. SHOPPING MALL - EARLY MORNING

The mall has just opened and there are little to no people shopping. We see KEVIN wandering around with no particular location in mind. There are two levels to the massive shopping mall and KEVIN is on the top.

He looks down to the few people below him, most of them being old married couples. Amongst them we see a blonde-haired woman wandering around, just as KEVIN, with no location in mind. We see a brief glimpse of her face; it is MARIA. KEVIN pulls away from the rail and begins to walk in the other direction.

CUT TO:

INT. HOMER'S MOTHER'S HOUSE - MORNING

An older woman with shoulder-length white hair opens her front door to see HOMER smiling back at her with flowers in his hand.

HOMER

Hello Mommy.

BONNIE (OLDER WOMAN)  
Hello darling, come on in.

BONNIE steps aside and allows HOMER to walk past, a smile permanently on her face. She takes the flowers from HOMER and disappears into the kitchen. HOMER takes a seat in the living room of the old-fashioned looking house.

BONNIE  
(O.S.)  
Where is that beautiful child of yours?

HOMER  
He's at school, he picked out the flowers just for you.

BONNIE  
(O.S.)  
He's a sweet kid. Just like his daddy.

BONNIE enters the living room with the flowers and a vase. She sets them down on a small table and sits next to HOMER.

HOMER  
So how are you doing these days, Mom?

BONNIE  
I'm doing very well. That young cutie Jenny has been driving me around. She even comes with me to play bingo. I told her about you.

HOMER  
(Smiles)  
Oh yeah? I don't think I have much time to be dating, Mom. I've been running around a lot looking for a job.

BONNIE  
How is that going?

HOMER  
Not very well so far, but I know I'll find something. My landlord has been on my about rent money for the last few weeks.

BONNIE

You know I would help you if I had the money.

HOMER

Oh, of course Mom, don't you worry about it one bit. It'll work out.

BONNIE

What grade is Toby in?

HOMER

He's in Seventh grade. Middle School.

BONNIE

That's nice. Seems like he's growing up so fast.

HOMER

Yeah, he really is. He's so smart. So much smarter than I ever was. He's really got a great future ahead of him.

Beat.

BONNIE

You've heard about your brother, I assume?

HOMER

Yes, he's getting out in a few days.

BONNIE

Are you picking him up?

HOMER

Yeah, of course.

BONNIE

Don't let him do anything wrong, Homer. At least while he's with you. I don't want you in any trouble because of him. He's always doing something he shouldn't, you know? You're in a good place. Don't let him get you in to anything.

HOMER

I appreciate your concern, but I think he's going to be fine.

(MORE)

HOMER(cont'd)

I think he finally learned his lesson.

BONNIE

I sure hope so.

HOMER

Well, are you ready to go shopping?

BONNIE

Of course. Just let me get my coat.

BONNIE gets up slowly and leaves the room. HOMER looks over to a side table where several pictures of his deceased father sit. He picks up one in particular and smiles. The picture is of his younger parents in Hawaii, soaking up the sun. He chuckles for a moment, then puts it back.

BONNIE

(O.S.)

Ready!

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

FLASHBACK:

INT. EMPTY OFFICE - NIGHT

We first see HOMER, sweeping up an empty office clean. Another older man with a grey hair empties out small trash bin into a large trash can that is on a large cart he is rolling around. We will know him as PHIL. Both men are wearing street clothes, their appearance obviously not a big deal in their line of work.

HOMER

Did you enjoy yourself tonight?

PHIL

(Let's out a quiet sigh)

We don't belong at an occasion like this. I ain't never worked this job and been invited to a office party. We're nocturnal, we shouldn't be around all these day people.

HOMER

I thought it was a nice gesture.

PHIL

That it was. But why now?

HOMER  
What are you talking about?

PHIL  
I just find it odd that we're coming to office parties and hanging out with people making triple what we make on the job.

HOMER  
You think something's going on?

PHIL  
I personally have found, throughout the years, that people like to shake your hand before they cut it off.

HOMER  
Huh?

PHIL  
I think you understand what I'm saying.

HOMER  
They're not going to fire us. They've been doing this since the beginning. Every so often they have a little office party, they invite everyone.

PHIL walks away from his cart and sits down next to HOMER, who has taken a seat on a bench.

PHIL  
Sure was an eventful night.

HOMER  
Yep.

DISSOLVE TO:

CAPTION: THE OFFICE PARTY

INT. THE OFFICE - EVENING

The office from before is now filled with people chatting it up about everything imaginable. We see PHIL, who is sitting at a table with seven other workers, and listening to every moronic word that comes out of their mouths.

JANIS and HOMER are in one of the four corners of the small office, sitting on the hard ground with spiked punch drinks in hand. Neither of them seem effected at all by the drinks.

JANIS

What department did you say you worked in?

HOMER

(Nervously chuckles)

I'm actually one of the custodians around here. Phil, at the end of the table over there, he's the other. We thought we'd try to mask our identities for the first few hours of the party.

JANIS

I've never seen you working during the day...

HOMER

We do most of the cleaning at night.

JANIS

Well, I'll try to refrain from making too big of a mess.

HOMER

Don't worry about it. What about you?

JANIS

What about me?

HOMER

What's your job here?

JANIS

Oh, I'm the third part of the three headed monster. I don't know much about computers, I just invested.

HOMER

Then why are you here so much?

JANIS

Tim brought me in as a supervisor. But my job isn't really that interesting.

HOMER

Oh, you fire people!

JANIS  
How did you know that?

HOMER  
You always do it at the end of the day, that's when I usually come in. I've seen lots of teary-eyed people leaving your office.

JANIS  
Well, someone has to do it.

HOMER  
How is that not interesting?

JANIS  
I guess certain people might find it to be an interesting or maybe even important job. Me? I know the truth.

HOMER  
And the truth is?

JANIS  
They're just too weak willed to do it themselves. That's the only reason I'm here.

HOMER  
Tim and... I forgot the other head's name...

JANIS  
Kevin.

CUT TO:

INT. TIM'S OFFICE

We hear the distant voices of people talking outside the door, but their words are too quiet to understand. TIM sits on his desk, no shoes, and drinks from his spiked punch. KEVIN has set up two chairs so that it allows him to lie down. He seems to have had one too many drinks.

TIM  
Sorry kid, I didn't realize it was that strong.

KEVIN

(Rubs his forehead)

No, don't worry about it. I just have bad reactions to alcohol.

(Beat)

And stop calling me kid. I'm a year younger than you are.

TIM

(Chuckles)

So what do you think?

KEVIN

About what?

TIM

About the company. You're the businessman here, how are we doing?

KEVIN

(Sits up)

We're doing great, really. With you around there's never a shortage of ideas either. I never thought we'd be making this much money.

TIM

If you guys are having trouble figuring out what to spend the money on, I'm always up for another raise.

KEVIN

I'll keep that in mind.

TIM

(Smiles)

Sure thing, boss.

KEVIN

Don't call me that either.

TIM

Then what do I call you?

KEVIN

As you can see on the front door of my office, my first name is Kevin.

TIM

I'll try and remember that. Beat.

TIM  
So, Kevin, how are you doing these days?

KEVIN  
Just fine. Why do you ask?

TIM  
Just curious.

KEVIN sighs.

KEVIN  
What?

TIM  
Why is it that you're the rich man, and I'm the one that's happy?

KEVIN  
When did I say I wasn't happy? I really would like to know where you get this information.

TIM  
You didn't, but I know you.

KEVIN  
Everytime you have a few drinks you start to act like you've got the answers to everyone's existential problems. Give it a rest.

TIM  
You need to start enjoying this. You're young, live all this up.

KEVIN  
I'm as old as you are!

TIM  
But I'm an older soul.

KEVIN  
You always get on me about the same shit. Aren't you the guy that's in front of the computer all day? First guy in, last guy out. You have a wife that's pregnant and a child that's been on the earth a month. Shouldn't you be somewhere else?

TIM  
So you're trying to lecture me now?

KEVIN  
Weren't you just trying to do the  
same to me?

Beat.

TIM  
I've never been much of a family  
man, Kevin. I've known you longer  
than I have her, so you should know  
that. I just feel more alive here.  
That's the truth, OK? You caught  
me. I have more fun here than I do  
at home.

KEVIN  
You need to sit down and re-think  
what you're doing, Tim. Your  
priorities are all out of whack.

TIM  
I'm giving my family a future.

KEVIN  
Maybe, but you're sure not giving  
them happiness.

TIM  
Maria is fine.

KEVIN  
She should be better than fine,  
Tim.

TIM  
(Sighs)  
I don't know what to say to that,  
Kevin. I don't want to talk about  
this right now.

KEVIN  
You can dish it out but you can't  
take it, can you?

TIM  
(Smirks and shakes his  
head)  
Fuck you.

KEVIN  
(Chuckles)  
Yeah, you too.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

PRESENT DAY.

INT. CLASSY PUB - EVENING

We glide through a full pub that has only the most upscale of guests, all of whom seem to be wearing a expensive designer suit. In a quiet corner of the bar, KEVIN sits alone with a beer in front of him. He is dressed in a suit, his tie is on the table. KEVIN seems rather out of it, staring at his half full beer. A figure comes and sits across to him. It's JANIS. KEVIN looks up, surprised to see her.

KEVIN  
This is the last place I'd expect  
to see you.

JANIS  
(Smiles)  
Is that why you're here?

KEVIN  
Maybe.

JANIS  
So the company is now in Wayne  
Newson's hands.

KEVIN  
(Holds up his beer)  
Cheers to that. KEVIN takes a  
drink.

JANIS  
Why don't you get me a drink?

KEVIN  
Yeah, sure. What would you like?  
Water, milk, or soda?

JANIS  
Don't be a smart ass.

KEVIN gets up with a grin on his face and walks to the bar. JANIS takes out a pack of cigarettes. KEVIN returns with two beers, he gives one to JANIS.

KEVIN

There you go.

JANIS

You haven't even finished your first, why did you get another?

KEVIN

Just in case I'm man enough to drink a whole bottle of beer, I'm going to celebrate with another. If not, you can have it.

JANIS

(Lights up a cigarette)  
So Kevin, are you seeing anyone?

KEVIN

(Smiles)  
I'm looking at you right now.

JANIS

Come on.

KEVIN

No, I'm not currently dating anyone. And I'd actually rather keep it that way. How about you?

JANIS

Same. Although I do try.

KEVIN

Going for an A for effort, eh?

JANIS

At least I try.

KEVIN

It's funny, dating. There is one thing that turns me off about it, and that is enough. Enough to keep me from going on any dates whatsoever.

JANIS

What is it?

KEVIN

I feel like I'm out in a club, or a bar, or a restaurant, or any other social gathering place and I'm talking to the same person every time. They aren't literally the same person, but every girl has the same likes and dislikes as the one before. "I like to dance, I want to be an actor, I want to be a model, did I say I like to dance?" That's the typical woman talking about herself. It gives me the most intense headache.

JANIS

Well, on behalf of my sex, thanks for the compliment.

KEVIN

You know I'm not talking about you. Beat.

KEVIN

(cont'd)  
How about you?

JANIS

There isn't much to tell.

KEVIN

Come on, I told you plenty. You've got to have something for me.

JANIS

OK. I've met lots of men lately, and none have done anything for me. Just hasn't clicked.

KEVIN

What are you looking for? What would make it click?

JANIS

A smart, sensitive, and good looking man who has his head in the right place.

KEVIN

And where would that be?

JANIS

On work and family.

KEVIN  
Work before family?

JANIS  
Family before work.

KEVIN  
So having a great job is not that  
big of a deal for you?

JANIS  
No, not really.

KEVIN  
You dated the janitor, didn't you?

JANIS  
What are you talking about?

KEVIN  
I knew it! I knew you were with the  
janitor.

JANIS  
Oh, stop it. It didn't escalate  
past a few talks and a few drinks.  
He was a nice guy.

KEVIN  
You know he was an ex-con?

JANIS  
Are you serious?

KEVIN  
Very.

JANIS  
Well, that would have been a more  
informative thing to tell me a few  
months ago, Kevin.

KEVIN  
I didn't know that sort of thing  
turned you off.

JANIS chuckles and takes a drink. Her eyes wander to the bar,  
where she sees MARIA talking with the BARTENDER.

JANIS  
Maria.

KEVIN

What?

JANIS

Tim's wife, she's over by the bar.

KEVIN

Please don't-

JANIS

(Yelling)

Maria! It's me, Janis!

MARIA shows only a forced half smile when she sees JANIS. MARIA walks over to the table slowly as KEVIN attempts to act casual. She stops as she approaches the edge of the table.

KEVIN

(Smiles nervously)

Hi Maria.

MARIA

Hi.

Beat.

JANIS

Out for a drink?

MARIA

No, my father owns this place. I'm just here to talk with him. He's not here yet, though.

JANIS

Do you want to join us?

MARIA

Um...

(Looks at KEVIN)

Sure...

MARIA takes a seat next to JANIS, who is sitting across from KEVIN. KEVIN gives JANIS an annoyed look while MARIA is looking away.

JANIS

So how are you doing, Maria?

MARIA

I'm in a bit of a fog. I'm not really all that sure how I feel, you know?

JANIS  
I know exactly what you mean. JANIS  
looks at KEVIN.

KEVIN  
What?

JANIS  
How are you doing?

KEVIN  
(Scratches his head)  
I'm doing fine.

JANIS  
(To MARIA)  
Did you hear about the sale?

MARIA  
Yes. It was sad to hear.

KEVIN  
Tim was the only thing that kept  
that company going. We could never  
find another guy like him. Beat.

MARIA  
So... What are you guys going to do  
now?

KEVIN  
Pfft... Well... I'll find  
something. I've been looking for a  
few months. You ever feel like you  
need something new? Like what you  
have just... isn't doing it for  
you?

MARIA  
Heh, I know exactly what you mean.

KEVIN  
So how about you, Janis? You  
haven't told me what you're going  
to do after all this is over.

JANIS  
(Takes a long drink from  
her beer)  
Is it not over already?

KEVIN  
Not until the fat lady sings.

JANIS

Well, the fat lady is Wayne Newson,  
and trust me, he's singing.

KEVIN

(Raises his beer)  
To Wayne Newson being an overweight  
female!

JANIS

(Raises her beer)  
To Wayne Newson!

JANIS and KEVIN take drinks of their beers as MARIA chuckles  
at them.

MARIA

So losing the company hasn't had an  
effect on you yet, then?

KEVIN

Well, to be honest, I was going to  
go and shoot myself in the face  
after this little get-together.

JANIS

Come on now, Kevin. You've got  
money, what are you going to dabble  
in next? Can we get the scoop  
straight from the man himself?

KEVIN

I didn't know you were that excited  
about it.

JANIS

Well, I am, so tell us.

KEVIN

(Sighs)  
I told the truth earlier. I have no  
idea. We had a good thing going. It  
was too bad it had to end. MARIA  
looks over at the bar.

MARIA

That is my father.

KEVIN

Well, give him hell for being late.

MARIA  
(Smiles)  
I'll be sure to.

JANIS  
Hopefully we'll run into each other  
again one of these days.

MARIA  
I hope so too.

MARIA shakes JANIS' hand. She then eyes KEVIN, who puts out his hand. MARIA shakes it, and begins to stare KEVIN straight in the eye. She lets go slowly.

MARIA  
Well then, goodbye.

MARIA walks away from the two. JANIS gives KEVIN a look of suspicion.

JANIS  
What was that all about?

KEVIN  
(Takes out a pack of  
cigarettes)  
What do you mean?

JANIS  
She looked like she had a thing for  
you.

KEVIN  
(Lights up a cigarette)  
What, a present?

JANIS  
Could you stop being a smartass?

KEVIN  
(Chuckles)  
OK, look.

JANIS  
Look at what?

KEVIN  
At me.

JANIS  
(Staring at KEVIN)  
And what am I looking for?

KEVIN

Why do you find it so hard to believe a woman would like me like that?

JANIS

I don't, actually. I just find it strange that a woman who's husband and son have died in the past year would be looking at a man like that.

KEVIN

Yeah?

JANIS

Yeah.

KEVIN

Well, maybe some people need comfort and some need to be left alone.

JANIS

I guess so.

KEVIN lets his eyes wander as JANIS speaks to him, the words fading to nothing. He looks over to the other side of the room, where MARIA and her FATHER sit talking. MARIA looks back at KEVIN, smiling. KEVIN slowly lets half smile come to his face, along with a look of defeat.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. OUTSIDE MIKE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

MIKE sits alone on the porch of his house, reading a book. A car pulls into his driveway and out walks SOPHIE, a woman in her late 20s. She walks over to the porch and sits next to MIKE, who doesn't say a word to her, but nods at her in recognition.

MIKE

(Shuts his book)

So, what are you doing way over here on my side of town?

SOPHIE

Why don't you call me anymore?

MIKE  
I haven't had the time, I guess.  
I'm not making a point of it.

SOPHIE  
Then why don't you pick up your  
phone when I call?

MIKE  
I'm not trying to avoid you,  
Sophie.

SOPHIE  
Yes you are.

Beat.

MIKE  
Then I am.

SOPHIE  
I found out about the divorce.

MIKE  
I figured that was why you came all  
the way over here.

SOPHIE  
(Caring)  
What happened?

MIKE  
You're the last person on the earth  
I want to talk to about this.

SOPHIE  
Why?

MIKE  
She was your friend. You wouldn't  
understand how a divorce could  
happen if it wasn't my fault.

SOPHIE  
I'm not passing judgement on you,  
Mike, I just want to know.

MIKE  
Like I said, I don't want to talk  
about this.

MIKE stands up.

SOPHIE  
Do you blame her for what happened?

MIKE  
(Whispering angrily)  
No! She blames me for what happened, if you can believe that. I don't care anymore, Sophie. I was beginning to get on with my life, and then you came around here looking for satisfying answers for your naive questions. I'm not in the mood, Sophie. In fact, scratch that, I'll never be in the mood.

SOPHIE  
I'm just trying to help.

MIKE  
(Turns to his front door)  
I can't think of one thing you could say or do that would help anything. It's over, and that's that.  
(Quietly as he enters his house)  
I'll see you in another year.

SOPHIE sits on the porch for a moment after MIKE slams his door shut. She shakes her head with a concerned look on her face.

FADE OUT.

BLACK SCREEN.

We hear a car stop. Someone gets out and begins to walk. They walk into some sort of building, we can hear an assortment of chatter going on as he enters, which stops immediately.

FADE IN:

FLASHBACK:

INT. OFFICE BUILDING - MORNING

We see now that KEVIN is the one we've been following, and he has a rather grim look on his face as several workers stare him down as he passes. He walks into an office.

CUT TO:

INT. KEVIN'S OFFICE

KEVIN sits at his desk, his hands on his face, on the verge of tears. There is a knock at his door.

JANIS  
(O.S.)  
I'm coming in.

JANIS walks into KEVIN'S OFFICE. She sits at the nearest chair.

KEVIN  
Yeah?

JANIS  
I need to know how we are going to go about handling this situation.

KEVIN  
(Loudly)  
This situation? He's fucking dead, Janis. This is a little more than the average situation. JANIS pulls her chair closer.

JANIS  
(Quietly)  
If you don't mind, I came in here to have a private conversation with you. These people outside of this door have been working here for a long time and they deserve to know what is happening.

KEVIN  
OK, I'm sorry, I know. It's just...

JANIS  
Really fucked up, I know.

KEVIN  
What are we going to do, Janis?

JANIS  
First we need to talk to everyone. Can you handle that, or do you need me to do it?

KEVIN  
(Quietly)  
No.  
(MORE)

KEVIN(cont'd)

(Louder)

No, wait, yes. I mean yes.

JANIS

Okay, I'll get everyone together.

KEVIN

Okay.

JANIS stands up and walks to the door.

JANIS

Are you sure you can handle this?

KEVIN

I'm sure.

CUT TO:

INT. SMALL OFFICE GATHERING AREA

The whole of the workers at the small software company have gathered at some tables, and are so quiet you could hear a pin drop. KEVIN is standing in front of them, looking like he'd rather be somewhere else.

KEVIN

Are most of you here?

WORKER #1

We're all here.

KEVIN

Good, good. I don't know how to tell this to you, so I'll just come out and say it. For those of you who haven't been informed, the lead programmer of our company, Tim, died last night in a car crash. He was one of the founder's of this company, and put everything he had into it. But we love him for who he was. And we will always remember him. No matter how much we miss him, we must move on. The search for a new programmer begins now, and if we get someone with a tenth of what Tim had, that should be more than enough.

(Beat)

Do any of you have any questions whatsoever?

The crowd stays silent.

KEVIN

(CONT'D)

OK. If any of you need time off, or would rather talk about anything in private, both Janis and I will be glad to answer any questions. Thank you.

CUT TO:

INT. KEVIN'S OFFICE

KEVIN and JANIS are sitting very formally in KEVIN'S office.

JANIS

Why are you so convinced that the company is done, Kevin? I'd really like to know.

KEVIN

You know how sometimes people say you need several elements to create success? Well we only needed- and for that matter only had- one.

JANIS

So you think this is it?

KEVIN

No, but I know that we can't last long where we are. We've got companies waiting for software that will never be finished. We have a lot of shit to worry about.

JANIS

As well as the loss of a friend, Kevin.

KEVIN

I loved Tim more than any friend I've ever had. But I'm in a shit situation, and I've got things to sort out. Grieving isn't one of them. Maybe later, but not now.

FADE TO BLACK.

CAPTION: ONE MONTH LATER

FADE IN:

INT. EMPTY OFFICE - NIGHT

PHIL sits by an office alone in the near dark as HOMER comes walking into the room.

PHIL  
Where have you been?

HOMER  
I'm late?

PHIL  
No.

HOMER  
Then why do you ask?

PHIL  
Just wondering.

HOMER  
I'll be back in a second, Janis  
said she wanted to speak with me on  
my way in.

PHIL  
I'll be waitin'.

HOMER nods and walks away. PHIL'S eyes wander around the room for a bit, then they begin to close. A door slams shut as PHIL'S eyes do the same. Footsteps approach him.

HOMER  
Let's get started.

PHIL  
(Opens his eyes)  
What did she want?

HOMER  
She wanted to... uh... fire me,  
actually.

PHIL  
Are you serious?

HOMER

Yes. She said I could finish the day and that's it.

(Beat)

That's it.

CUT TO:

EXT. CITY PARK - EARLY MORNING

In a rainy, dirty park we see MARIA, sitting on an old bench. She has a large coat on, and every time we see her breath, or anyone else's for that matter, a white fog comes out. MARIA glances at her watch once, looking like she'd rather be somewhere else. Just as she is getting up to leave, KEVIN comes forth. He and MARIA share a long silence, which is broken by the two shaking hands.

KEVIN

Hey.

MARIA

Hey.

KEVIN sits down next to MARIA.

KEVIN

How are you?

MARIA

I don't know. Stuck, maybe. Jimmy has taken it really hard. I'm starting to worry about him.

(Pulls out a pack of cigarettes)

"God spared his life," he says. And then he asks me, "Why?" Aside from the fact that our little thing here would definitely send me to hell if there is a God, I also like to think that he doesn't exist because of how cruel he would be. MARIA searches through her purse for something.

KEVIN

(Pulls out a lighter)

Light?

MARIA

Yeah, thank you.

KEVIN kneels forward and lights MARIA'S cigarette, forcing the two to maintain eye contact for the first time. They both quickly shrug off each other.

KEVIN  
Why are we here?

MARIA  
We need to sort some things out.

KEVIN  
Like?

MARIA  
You and I. I'm forfeiting what little Software that he owned. I don't want anything to do with it. That means you too.

KEVIN  
Don't you think you're overreacting?

MARIA  
No, I don't. This shouldn't have happened, Kevin. I betrayed him, Kevin. Do you know what that means?

KEVIN  
It was bound to happen sooner or later. You didn't love him.

MARIA  
(Whispering angrily)  
Yes I did!

Beat.

KEVIN  
Then why did you do it? Why did this ever happen if you never had any feelings for me?

MARIA  
It was an affair, not a marriage.

KEVIN  
How often did we have sex?

MARIA  
Not very often. Why does that even matter?

(MORE)

MARIA(cont'd)

How does that figure in to the fact that I want you out of my life?

KEVIN

It figures in because all we did was talk. And kiss. All we did was be together. It wasn't about sex and it wasn't about Tim, and you know it.

MARIA

What do you want me to say?

KEVIN

I want you to tell me the truth.

MARIA

What's the truth, Kevin?

KEVIN

We fell in love. MARIA shakes her head and stands up.

MARIA

I don't want to be involved with you anymore, and I'm not going to try and defend that.

KEVIN

(Stands up)

If this is the way you want it, I can't change your mind.

MARIA

That's right.

There is a long silence as the two stare at each other.

KEVIN

Don't feel guilty about it. He married you and then chose work over family. It wasn't your fault that you aren't as numb as he was to feeling.

MARIA

I'm leaving now.

KEVIN

(Nods)

If you ever change your mind-

MARIA

I won't.

MARIA turns and walks away from KEVIN.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

PRESENT DAY.

INT. CLASSY PUB - EVENING

We see that we are back in the pub from before. KEVIN, JANIS, and MARIA are in mid-conversation.

JANIS

(To MARIA)

Did you hear about the sale?

MARIA

Yes. It was sad to hear.

KEVIN

Tim was the only thing that kept that company going. We could never find a guy like him to keep it going.

We pull away quickly to the bar, where a rough looking skinny man sits alone with a beer. This is JEFF [Josh Lucas]. HOMER enters the picture and sits next to JEFF.

JEFF

(Looks at HOMER and smiles)

Look what the wind blew in.

HOMER

So that's it.

JEFF

Yes indeed, that is it.

HOMER

It must feel great to be out, man. How are you feeling?

JEFF

(Takes a sip of his beer)

I couldn't be better.

HOMER

Aren't you on probation?

JEFF

Yep.

HOMER

I'm guessing that means you're violating it by being here.

JEFF

Who fucking cares? I doubt alcohol is going to drive me to rob another

HOMER

Which reminds me, I never got to tell you how great of an idea that was.

JEFF

Oh shut up. Get a beer.

HOMER

Even if I had the money, I don't drink anymore.

JEFF

Why?

HOMER

Why drink?

JEFF

Whatever, man. I need some money, Homer. Some asshole named Johnny Bondi says I owe him five thousand dollars.

HOMER

Well, do you?

JEFF

I don't know! It's been eight years since I've been out, why would I remember some bookie from Queens?

HOMER

I would remember someone I owed that kind of money.

JEFF

Well I'm not you, so there. The asshole has the nerve to meet me outside that gates.

(MORE)

JEFF(cont'd)

Literally the first thing I see after being released from hell is Satan himself. That, brother, is fucked.

HOMER

I thought you didn't remember him...

JEFF

I... sort of remember him.

HOMER

What's the plan?

JEFF

I don't know. I'll just try and negotiate with the guy. Either that or I'll just get the hell out of here. I was able to get him to allow me to make payments. But 400 bucks every two weeks? I don't have a job, man.

HOMER

You'll get arrested if you do that.

JEFF

Do what?

HOMER

Leave the city.

JEFF

Yeah? Well this guy might kill me.

HOMER

We'll figure out something.

JEFF

Is that kid still running around your house?

HOMER

He's calmer now, but yeah.

JEFF

That's crazy. I never thought you'd have a kid.

HOMER

(Smiles)

And I never thought you'd do a seven year stretch.

JEFF  
But shit happens.

HOMER  
How was that anyway?

JEFF  
What?

HOMER  
Doing that much time.

JEFF  
You get used to it. Some days are better than others, believe it or not. There are some good people in there, you just have to look hard for them.

HOMER  
Sorry I didn't visit that much, it was hard to get the cash to drive out there.

JEFF  
No problem, man. That shit's done. You talk to Mom lately?

HOMER  
Yeah, I was over at her house a few days ago.

JEFF  
She hates me.

HOMER  
No, she doesn't hate you. She was just disappointed.

JEFF  
How is she doing?

HOMER  
She's fine. I think she's a little more lonely than she says she is, though. After Dad died she's been alone in that house. She won't move closer to me, she won't even sell that house.

JEFF  
Do you think she'll talk to me?

HOMER  
(Chuckles)  
She's your mother, Jeff. Of course  
she'll talk to you. Beat.

JEFF  
Did you not get any sleep last  
night? You look pretty tired.

HOMER  
No, I'm just in a fucked up spot. I  
need money, just like you. Though  
mine is for rent, not gambling  
debts.

JEFF  
How much do you owe?

HOMER  
Six fifty.

JEFF  
Are they kicking you out?

HOMER  
I don't know how much longer  
they'll let me stay.

JEFF  
I thought you had a job at the  
Software place?

HOMER  
No, they closed down.

JEFF  
Damn, I feel for you. Is it me or  
does it seem like you have to do  
something really awful to get by  
these days?

HOMER  
What do you mean, "something  
awful?"

JEFF  
Like sticking up somebody.

HOMER  
(Shakes his head)  
It's just the way things are.

JEFF

It shouldn't be that way, though.

HOMER

No, it shouldn't.

JEFF

I sure as hell don't want to serve another seven but the idea of robbing somebody is becoming more and more inevitable.

HOMER

You've been out 12 hours, it'll pass.

JEFF

I have a feeling that a certain bookie from Queens won't let it pass.

HOMER sighs.

HOMER

You need a place to stay?

JEFF

Yeah. You got an extra bed?

HOMER

For you I do.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. GRAVEYARD - DAY

In a new looking graveyard MARIA stands at the foot of a certain grave with two people. On her right side is EVAN, a balding man with a sad look on his face who is her father and FRANK, her younger brother. The three people all study the grave intensely, staring at it as if something is bound to happen sooner or later. MARIA kneels down slowly and puts a beautiful red rose down on the grave-marker. She stands up now, and flashes a smile at her father that seems less forced than we've seen before.

MARIA

Frank can take me home, Dad.

EVAN

(Smiles)

Are you sure I'm no longer needed?

MARIA  
You've done more than enough.

EVAN gives MARIA a loving hug and then walks away from the two, waving as he does so.

MARIA  
(Quietly)  
Coffee?

FRANK  
Sure.

CUT TO:

INT. CLASSY PUB - EVENING

A third time around we find ourselves in the same CLASSY PUB as before. The camera takes a small tour of the action. We see KEVIN and JANIS laughing at a table alone, and further forward we see HOMER and JEFF talking.

We continue on to the entrance of the pub. MIKE and NATHAN enter, both with defeated looks on their faces. MIKE waves to HOMER and continues walking. We now see JANIS and KEVIN leave the pub behind MIKE and NATHAN. MIKE and NATHAN take a seat where JANIS and KEVIN sitting before.

MIKE  
What is this place?

NATHAN  
It's a bar.

MIKE  
I've never been here before.

NATHAN  
Neither have I. Theresa told me about it yesterday.

MIKE  
(Sighs)  
As good a place as any to drink off this shitty night.

NATHAN  
How in the hell did we get burned this bad? Did you see this shit coming?

MIKE

You set it up, friend.

NATHAN

And you fucked it up, friend.

MIKE

You knew I didn't have a car. The walk was short, they should've fucking waited for us. Especially your girly friend.

NATHAN

Whatever, whatever. I'm going to get a beer, you want one?

MIKE

No thanks.

NATHAN

You're in a bar, Mike.

MIKE

Whatever, just get me a beer.

NATHAN

There you go.

NATHAN gets up and walks to the bar. MIKE looks across the room at the group of people in the bar. He stops at MARIA, who is sitting at the bar alone. He suddenly tightens up and attempts to casually cover his face.

By now, however, MARIA has seen him. She stares at MIKE with neither anger or happiness, she just stares blankly. NATHAN puts down a beer next to MIKE as he sits back down.

MIKE

Oh, thanks.

NATHAN

No problem. Five dollars for a beer, it better taste like fucking gold.

MIKE

(Still agitated)

Yeah, heh, uh, I think I need to head out soon.

NATHAN

We just got here!

MIKE  
I'll stay for the drink, but after  
that I'm leaving.

NATHAN  
(Sighs)  
OK, whatever.

NATHAN and MIKE both take drinks from their beers.

MIKE  
I think I'm going to sell the  
market.

NATHAN  
Yeah, why's that?

MIKE  
Aside from constant robberies and  
shit profits, I just don't feel  
like waking up at six AM anymore.  
I'm just fucking sick of doing the  
same thing over and over. I don't  
want to be that old guy who runs  
the small mini-market his whole  
life and then just fucking dies of  
boredom.

NATHAN  
I didn't know you could die of  
boredom.

MIKE  
Well, shit, you can. And I'm a few  
months away from it.

NATHAN  
If it ain't worth it, it ain't  
worth it. You can always do  
something else.

MIKE  
Exactly. I think I'll buy a sign on  
the way home.

NATHAN  
You think you'll move away?

MIKE  
Probably. I hate that neighborhood.  
Just a bunch of fucking drug  
dealers, crackheads, and old folks  
turning the blind eye to it.

(MORE)

MIKE(cont'd)

And the police. They actually think that I'm running a drug operation through the store. It's bullshit, I'm associated with all these dumb fucks just because I live next door to them. I'm fucking fed up.

NATHAN

Big Mike is not happy.

MIKE

Damn right.

NATHAN

You know you can always call your cousin Nate if you need someone to sleep on your couch, right?

MIKE

Nothing I appreciate more, my man. MIKE downs the rest of his beer.

MIKE

(Stands up)

I'm leaving.

NATHAN

OK, catch up with you sometime soon.

MIKE

Keep it real, kid.

NATHAN

You know I will.

MIKE

Later.

MIKE walks away from the table, eyeing MARIA as he approaches the door. He leaves slowly, looking back as he opens the door, contemplating speaking to her. He turns away though, and leaves.

FADE OUT.

BLACK SCREEN.

KEVIN

(O.S.)

Tss... Tsss... Tssss... Milk,  
bread, ketchup, hamburger...

FADE IN:

INT. GROCERY STORE - LATE NIGHT

In a typical grocery store KEVIN stands in an isle looking over his grocery list. The store is florescent lit, giving everything a strange shine, and making KEVIN look very pale. For the first time he is dressed in casual attire, with a simple shirt and pair of jeans.

KEVIN walks to the right side of the isle and takes a bag of potato chips off a display case. The cart is filled with several odd items, mostly junk food and soda. Another cart approaches KEVIN, who is right in the middle of the isle, unknowingly denying anyone a chance to pass him. The cart stops moving just behind KEVIN.

WOMAN'S VOICE

(O.S.)

Excuse me?

KEVIN

(Looking over his list)

Yeah?

WOMAN'S VOICE

Can I get by?

KEVIN

Oh, sorry.

KEVIN finally glances at the woman, and sees that it is actually MARIA.

KEVIN

(Smiles)

Hey! What are you doing here?

MARIA

Shopping.

Beat.

KEVIN

I meant I've never seen you here-

MARIA

(Sighs and shakes her  
head)

I'm sorry, that was mean.

KEVIN

Don't worry about it. It's about 2  
AM, I don't think I'll remember  
anything you say. Or that we even  
saw each other here tonight.

MARIA

That's reassuring.

KEVIN

Do you usually come here during the  
zombie hours?

MARIA

No, this is the first time I've  
been here in a year or so. I've  
been living off of McDonalds and  
Chinese food for a while.

KEVIN

I always come here with a list.  
(Shows MARIA the list)  
I always ending up getting a bunch  
of stuff I don't need and only  
about half the stuff on the list.  
I'm trying to break the habit  
tonight.

MARIA

(Smiles)  
Good luck with that.

KEVIN

Would it be all right if I join  
you?

MARIA

Um... yeah, sure.

CUT TO:

SOUNDTRACK: ELLIOTT SMITH - THE LAST HOUR

INT. GROCERY STORE - LATER

MARIA and KEVIN ride through the dairy aisle silently, every so often picking up things off shelves.

KEVIN

Do you still live down at 34th street?

MARIA

Yeah, haven't moved yet.

KEVIN

Yet? You're moving?

MARIA

Yeah, I feel like a change. I don't feel like being in that house will keep me alive. It's just a house, you know? It's not a body part.

KEVIN

I moved last month.

MARIA

(Picks up a gallon of milk)

Oh yeah, where?

KEVIN

Let me get one of those.

KEVIN picks up a gallon of milk and places it in his cart.

KEVIN

(CONT'D)

Yeah, I moved into a real house. Three rooms and two bathrooms. A lot of space I don't need. I live in a family neighborhood too. Lots of arguing at all hours of the night, lots of invitations to get together. I think I should move, I feel like I'm robbing some middle class family of their first home.

MARIA

What do you use the two rooms for?

KEVIN

One has a bunch of boxes in it, the other is like an office.

(MORE)

KEVIN(cont'd)

Though I don't use it, I have a computer downstairs.

MARIA

Just a lot of empty space then?

KEVIN

Exactly. I might move back to New Jersey. I set up a theater in my hometown two months ago, it's starting to do good business. So how about you?

MARIA

I'll just be happy to not have to see the same sad faces. Anywhere would be better than here. I feel like I'm in limbo or something, like I'm between what I was and what I'm going to be. I don't want to keep reliving the same tragedies over and over, I just want to... leave it all behind. 'Cause lord knows I don't need it anymore.

KEVIN

My father moved us here when I was seven years old. Same sort of thing, I guess. His mother and father had died in the span of one year. He just couldn't stand being there anymore. So he came here and made himself a fortune. Maybe the same is in store for you.

MARIA

Yeah, maybe. I could invent something.

KEVIN

That's one way to go. You could create a telepathic light switch. Those would sell like hotcakes.

MARIA

Thanks for the advice.

CUT TO:

EXT. GROCERY STORE PARKING LOT

KEVIN helps MARIA load her things into the trunk of her car. As he puts in the final bag, they both flash a smile at each other.

KEVIN  
I guess that's it.

MARIA  
(Closes her trunk)  
Maybe we can do this again  
sometime.

KEVIN  
It would be my pleasure.

MARIA  
Bye.

KEVIN  
Bye.

KEVIN pushes his cart away slowly, looking back at MARIA'S car as he does so. MARIA backs out, and drives away as KEVIN begins to load his groceries into the back of his car. He stops loading his groceries for a moment and smiles brightly. He chuckles quietly for a moment and then gets back to loading his car.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. HOMER'S APARTMENT - LATE NIGHT

The lights are out in the house, the only bit of shine coming from the television set, which is on mute. JEFF is lying down on the couch, falling asleep, as HOMER silently walks into the room and takes a seat on a recliner.

HOMER  
(Whispering)  
Hey, you awake?

JEFF  
(Opens his eyes)  
Yeah.

HOMER  
Do you think you could help me with  
something?

JEFF  
(Yawns)  
Yeah, sure.

HOMER  
(Nods)  
I'm going to do something...  
something awful, I guess.

JEFF  
(Sits up)  
Wait- I wasn't trying to say-

HOMER  
(Interrupts)  
No, it wasn't anything you said.

JEFF  
Then why?

HOMER  
I have rent due, Jeff. I have rent  
due in two days.

JEFF  
We can't just rush in to this, man.  
This kind of shit takes a lot of  
fucking planning.

HOMER  
I know, and I have.

JEFF  
You have what?

HOMER  
I've planned. For the last two  
weeks I've passed by a market, at  
all times of the day. It's one guy,  
and he's been robbed three times in  
the last year.

JEFF  
For how much?

HOMER  
The first guy got seven hundred,  
the second guy got something like  
six hundred, and the last guy to do  
it got six fifty.

JEFF

That would only be enough for you,  
Homer.

HOMER

And I would give you a place to  
stay. I know I just need one month,  
Jeff, just one more month and I can  
get over this hump. This streak of  
bad luck has to end sometime, man.  
I'd return the favour, if need be.

JEFF

(Frustrated)

No, you don't need to do that.

HOMER

It's like you said in the bar, man.  
Sometimes you have to do something  
awful to get by. And I think this  
thing to really turn things around  
for me, man.

JEFF

Just stop, okay? HOMER nods.

HOMER

If you don't want to, that's fine.

JEFF

I'll do it.

HOMER

(Smiles)

Okay.

JEFF

Wipe that goofy smile off your face  
and tell me you have everything  
handled.

HOMER

I have two guns and a few ski  
masks.

JEFF

Okay, then we'll do it.

HOMER

Okay.

JEFF  
Go back to sleep, Homer.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. INSIDE A CAR - MORNING

JEFF and HOMER sit outside a small mini-market in the early morning hours, taking a look at the place.

JEFF  
No.

HOMER  
Come on, it's an easy job.

JEFF  
I said no.

HOMER  
I need your help with this, Jeff. I can't do this alone.

JEFF  
I can't help you this time, Homer. I'm not going to take this chance again.

HOMER  
(Quietly)  
Okay.

JEFF  
There are better ways to get the money, Homer.

HOMER  
Yeah? Well none of those are available to me at the present time.

JEFF  
I'm sorry, Homer.

HOMER  
No, don't be. You just got out, it was stupid for me to drag you into this.

JEFF  
Just don't do it, Homer.

HOMER  
Okay, I won't do it. HOMER pulls  
out a gun and puts it on the dash.

JEFF  
Is that Dad's gun?

HOMER  
Yeah.

Beat.

JEFF  
Look at us. He's probably so  
disappointed in us.

HOMER  
(Sighs)  
Yeah? Then maybe he should put in a  
good word for us, maybe do us a  
favor or two.

JEFF  
I need to go see the bookie. Could  
you drop me off?

HOMER  
Yeah, sure.

CUT TO:

INT. KEVIN'S HOUSE - NIGHT

A wide-awake KEVIN sits on his couch, drinking a pepsi and watching television. He takes the last drink from the can, and then tosses on to the ground.

As he puts his arms in the air, stretching and yawning, he takes a look at his watch. KEVIN stands up and walks into the kitchen, we stay in the living room.

There is a few clanking noises as KEVIN rummages through the refrigerator. After a few moments, he shuts it. He comes back into view, taking another look at his watch.

KEVIN  
Fuck it.

KEVIN picks his keys up off a table and leaves the house.

DISSOLVE TO:

MONTAGE  
SEQUENCE:

1. KEVIN stops at a small market. He approaches the door. As he does, the neon open sign is turned off.
2. KEVIN stops at a grocery store. He walks to the door, and attempts to push it open, it's locked.
3. KEVIN, now looking annoyed, stops the car at a last market, now the furthest away from his home as can be. It's closed.
4. KEVIN stops the car in a rough looking neighborhood. He pulls into the parking lot of MIKE'S mini-market.

CUT TO:

SOUNDTRACK: ELLIOTT SMITH - NEEDLE IN THE HAY

INT. HOMER'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

As TOBY watches television silently in the next room, HOMER sits alone at a small coffee table, his father's .32 caliber pistol in his hand. He puts the pistol into his jacket, along with a black ski mask. HOMER stands up, picks up his keys, and walks to the door. TOBY walks into the room.

                  TOBY  
Where are you going?

                  HOMER  
The store.

                  TOBY  
Can you get some milk?

                  HOMER  
Yeah, sure.

                  TOBY  
Thanks.

                  HOMER  
Bye.

HOMER leaves the house, leaving TOBY with a confused look on his face.

CUT TO:

INT. INSIDE HOMER'S CAR

HOMER enters the car swiftly and sits down in the driver's seat. He takes the pistol out of his coat and puts it on the passenger's seat. HOMER studies the pistol for a moment, thinking over his options. He looks over to the apartment building where he lives and sighs.

Several voices HOMER has heard at one time or another begin to echo through his head.

VOICE

(O.S.)

It looks like you were in some trouble here a few years ago.

VOICE #2

(O.S.)

What did you learn from that experience?

VOICE #3

(O.S.)

We'd like to know exactly what happened. In detail.

HOMER

Fuck it.

HOMER starts up the car and drives away.

CUT TO:

INT. QUICKIE MART - NIGHT

MIKE has his feet propped up on to the counter as KEVIN walks in. MIKE is reading a magazine, and never pays much attention to KEVIN.

MIKE

We're closing in three minutes.

KEVIN

OK.

KEVIN walks to the back of the store, where the beverages are located. There he is surprised to find MARIA, filling up a small cup with coffee.

KEVIN  
Maria?

MARIA  
(Turns around)  
You again?

KEVIN  
(Smiles)  
Yeah, me again.

MARIA  
What are you doing here?

KEVIN  
I went a few places closer to my house first, they were all closed. I remembered this place, my father owned a apartment complex around here a while back. What are you doing here?

MARIA  
I was just...  
(Looks over to MIKE)  
My brother lives over here. He didn't have any coffee.

KEVIN  
Well, it's good to see you again, anyway.

MARIA  
Yeah, same here. I'm not sure if I thanked you the other night for helping with my groceries. That was nice of you.

KEVIN  
I was just happy to see you again.

MARIA  
I think I was happy to see you as well. After all that happened... I was surprised you didn't hate me.

KEVIN

I tried, it didn't work out.  
Another anonymous MAN walks into  
the store.

MIKE

Please get your stuff quick, I want  
to get out of here.

MAN

No problem, man.

CUT TO:

EXT. OUTSIDE THE QUICKIE MART

HOMER'S car slowly pulls in to the front of the store. Inside the car, HOMER bobs his head up and down, the lingering feeling of fear getting to him. He pulls the ski mask out of his jacket and puts it on. HOMER sits for a few moments, his hand on the handle, trying to get himself to leave the car.

HOMER

Come on. What are you doing? You  
fucking idiot. You're a grown man,  
what are you doing?

Beat.

HOMER

(cont'd)

What am I doing?

HOMER violently hits the steering wheel. He then pulls off the ski mask, and tosses it on to the passenger's seat. He turns the car back on, and backs out. As he pulls into the street, he stops.

HOMER

(Disgusted)

Milk.

HOMER pulls the car back in, and parks it. He exits the car, his shoulders down and a look of disappointment on his face. As he reaches for the handle of the entrance, a gunshot blast rings throughout and HOMER goes flying a few feet and on to the black pavement.

JUMP CUT TO:

INT. QUICKIE MART - AFTERNOON

We now see the anonymous MAN with a gun pointed at MIKE, as KEVIN and MARIA lie on the ground together in the back, their hands on their heads.

MAN

Fuck! You see what you did?

MIKE

(Nervously)

It's OK, it's OK, I'll give you the money, just don't-

A loud gunshot is heard again, this time it is of a bullet piecing through the MAN'S head. The gunshot causes the MAN'S unsteady trigger finger to squeeze, and he shoots MIKE in the chest.

The MAN and MIKE fall to the ground in unison. HOMER sprints into the store, his ski mask now on, and takes every dollar from the opened cash register. MARIA and KEVIN stay put, not knowing if the standoff has ended. HOMER runs out the door, stepping on the broken glass as he does so. The car's engine can be heard revving up and speeding away.

SOUNDTRACK: BRIAN ENO - AN ENDING (ASCENT)

MARIA

(Whispering)

What should we do?

KEVIN

I'm going to go over there, stay here.

KEVIN rises as slowly and silently as possible. He tiptoes out of the small isle, and into the open, where he sees the MAN bleeding from his shot jaw, and MIKE behind the counter, unconscious and bleeding profusely from his chest.

KEVIN

(To MIKE)

Are you OK?

MIKE grunts loudly and opens his eyes. KEVIN looks back to the MAN, who is now wide awake and sitting up with his gun pointed at KEVIN.

KEVIN  
 (Freezes up)  
 No, don't do that.

MAN  
 (Coughs)  
 Get me the money.

KEVIN  
 He took it.

MAN  
 Who took it?

KEVIN  
 The man who shot you.

The MAN keeps his pistol trained on KEVIN. A devilish grin comes across his face, knowing he still has power over the situation.

KEVIN  
 (Breathing hard)  
 Please.

The MAN smirks. He drops the pistol, lies down, and closes his eyes. KEVIN picks up the pistol immediately after the MAN drops it.

MIKE  
 What the fuck are you doing?

KEVIN  
 (Looks at the gun he's  
 holding)  
 Oh, no, I'm not-

MIKE  
 (Woozy)  
 I need to get to a hospital, man. I  
 think I'm in a little trouble here  
 if I don't.

CUT TO:

EXT. OUTSIDE THE QUICKIE MART

KEVIN loads MIKE into the back of his car with MARIA, who tries her best to comfort him as they drive away.

CUT TO:

INT. INSIDE CAR

KEVIN weaves down an empty street as MIKE moans loudly in the back seat, incoherent ramblings coming from his mouth.

KEVIN  
We'll be there in one minute, stay  
awake back there.

MIKE  
(Staring out a car window)  
Just hurry up, man.

MARIA  
(Quietly)  
It's going to be okay. We'll be at  
the hospital soon enough.

MIKE'S breathing becomes heavier and heavier as he jolts uncomfortably and yells. He suddenly stops moving, and moans softly. MARIA kisses him on his forehead and smiles. CU of his face, looking out the window.

CUT TO:

FLASHBACK:

INT. INSIDE MIKE'S CAR - NIGHT

MIKE is at the wheel, and NICOLE sits in the passengers seat. She stares out the window as MIKE was before, looking at passing cars and the inhabitants of those automobiles.

MIKE  
(Yawns)  
Are you awake?

WOMAN  
Yeah. Do you need me to drive?

MIKE  
We only have a few minutes left to  
go, I can handle it.

WOMAN  
OK.

MIKE  
(Rubs his eyes)  
What's that up there?

WOMAN

What?

The car bashes into another, both of the people inside hit the dash with their heads, it knocks out NICOLE. The car stops, and MIKE'S eyes open. In an outright daze, he watches JIMMY climb out of his father's car, unscathed.

CUT TO:

BACK TO PRESENT  
DAY.

INT. INSIDE CAR

Back inside the car again, KEVIN pulls into the hospital parking lot, and stops at the entrance, where several nurses and orderlies wait. They open the back door, and pull out MIKE quickly. MARIA gets out and accompanies them. They put him on a stretcher, and disappear into the hospital, except for one NURSE.

NURSE

Sir, what happened?

KEVIN

Me?

NURSE

Yes.

KEVIN

I uh... we uh... I think he got robbed. And shot. We were on the ground, we couldn't see.

NURSE

What happened to the shooter?

KEVIN

He uh... he got shot in the face. I think he's dead.

NURSE

Where is he?

KEVIN

We left him.

NURSE

OK, come inside.

KEVIN

Could I have a minute, please?

NURSE

Of course.

The NURSE walks away. KEVIN walks back and forth from left to right a few times, whispering to himself and scratching his head. He stops.

KEVIN drops to his knees, and sits on the cold pavement. He puts his hands in his face, and begins to sob. MARIA'S car arrives. She jumps out and runs to KEVIN, who is still on the pavement. She stops, and looks at him, tears in his eyes. After a moment, she continues on to the hospital.

FADE OUT.

SOUNDTRACK: WILCO - JESUS, ECT.

FADE IN:

EXT. PARKING LOT

As the music blares, we get a CU of KEVIN, who is sitting on a small bench waiting. He glances at his watch every so often, his demeanor calm and reserved. He stands up and looks off camera.

CUT TO:

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM

MIKE sits on a large hospital bed, staring at the ceiling of his room. At his side is NICOLE, who holds his hand now lovingly. He looks to her and smiles. His words are muted. The WOMAN walks away from the bed, and everything turns into SLOW MOTION. As we get a CU of MIKE'S still smiling face, lights flash inside the room. We pull back, and see a mob of reporters and photographers approach the bed in SLOW MOTION.

CUT TO:

INT. JANIS' OFFICE

JANIS sits across from a man wearing glasses, talking to him in a reassuring way. The MAN takes off his glasses slowly and begins to sob like a newborn.

JANIS stands up and walks across her desk and lovingly hugs the MAN, rubbing his back softly as she does so.

CUT TO:

INT. APARTMENT COMPLEX HALLWAY

HOMER and TOBY exit their apartment with suitcases in hand, talking it up with happy expressions on their faces. They arrive at the end of the hallway, where the CHUBBY MAN (Landlord) stands. They walk past, not even giving him a second look.

CUT TO:

INT. GROCERY STORE - NIGHT

In the distance we see KEVIN walking beside MARIA.

CUT TO:

INT. INSIDE CAR

HOMER is at the wheel, driving on a back road without another car in sight. TOBY sits on the passenger's side, asleep with his head up against the glass of the window.

HOMER looks over to TOBY and smiles. The camera turns to HOMER'S rough face, his expression of happiness changing his image dramatically. He looks forward now, to the road ahead, and continues to drive further and further from home.

FADE TO BLACK.

BLACK SCREEN.

KEVIN  
(O.S.)  
Is that everything?

INT. INSIDE KEVIN'S CAR - EARLY MORNING

KEVIN sits in the driver's seat of a small car that is packed with suitcases and boxes. MARIA sits beside him on the passenger's side, smiling.

MARIA  
Yes.

KEVIN  
(Smiles)  
Okay.

SOUNDTRACK: ELLIOTT SMITH - A FOND FAREWELL

KEVIN starts the car and puts on his seatbelt, as does MARIA.  
He then turns to her and watches her for a moment as she  
looks through old photographs of her and her family.

KEVIN  
You ready?

MARIA  
Yeah.

FADE OUT.

Directed by STEPHEN frears

Produced by pink MOON

Executive Producers  
DOMINATIN & ZERO

Creative Work by  
ZERO

Edited by  
eric M.

Starring (In Order Of Appearance)

PETER krause.....HOMER  
billy CRUDUP.....KEVIN  
HELENA bonham CARTER.....JANIS  
nicole KIDMAN.....MARIA  
JAMIE foxx.....MIKE  
lorenz TATE.....NATHAN  
JADA pinkett SMITH.....NICOLE  
peter SARSGAARD.....TIM  
JOSH lucas.....JEFF