

Pilot Writing in Various Forms.

By Tony Paletta

E01 - "A Very Honors Thesis"

THE SUMMERTIME (64 pgs.)

Ten years ago a notorious crime lord stashed millions of dollars in a secret location somewhere in Southwest America.

For ten years Ulysses Moss has kept himself and his family safe by remaining "in hiding" of sorts. "Hiding" in a maximum-security penitentiary. And he thought he was doing just fine until the whereabouts of his wife and child were stumbled upon by an old friend. Now the world's pretty much after him.

Welcome to **THE SUMMERTIME, A BAD MAN'S ODYSSEY**, a 24-episode, hour-long miniseries that puts a dark and contemporary spin on Homer's epic poem.

This is an idea that took a tremendous amount of outlining before I was able to get anything down on paper initially, aside from the first few pages. I would pitch it as a modern-day *Odyssey*, but revolving more around "bad guys".

It's a very serious piece, not much like anything else I've written, but I think combining elements of humor with a very dark atmosphere can really add depth to the world I've attempted to put together.

As a whole, I tried to represent virtually all the main characters seen in the original epic poem. I chose to replace the actual Gods by incorporating the media as a character that runs throughout the series. They will advance the plot, alert characters of important events, and inspire the story in a number of other ways as well.

Without a doubt, the narrative structure on this is the most complicated I have attempted to date. The use of four different storylines in the first episode provides for not only more tension for the audience, but I believe that it was also the best way to illustrate the idea of *The Odyssey* coming to life in an entirely different way.

THE SUMMERTIME

Book I

by Tony Paletta

FADE IN:

EXT. DESERT ROAD - MORNING

Hot and dry in the Arizona desert. A beat up white NEWS VAN rambles down the middle of nowhere.

INT. NEWS VAN

At the wheel,

PETER KANE (40s)

True artist. Pop-culture idol. Not afraid to wear a beret out in public. He'd also tell you he's a homosexual, but at this point in his life Peter Kane transcends sexuality.

He pulls out a pair of oversized, thick-framed glasses; puts them on and turns to:

THERESA TORRES (mid-20s)

His sidekick. Former pageant winner, prom queen, weather girl, etc.; a beautiful and talented up-and-comer.

She fidgets with her blazer, looks a little uncomfortable.

KANE

This feels good for you, yes?

THERESA

(looks at him; confused)

I'm not sure. What that means.

KANE

My look. Does it set the right tone. I've been thinking of taking a very "angular" approach with this piece.

(looks in rearview mirror)

Of course it's appropriate, Peter. Don't be an idiot.

THERESA

Uh-huh.

(beat)

So you're planning on being on camera, then?

KANE

Well, the thing is-

BOOM! A tire blows as the van hits a random pothole and starts fishtailing. Theresa shrieks as Kane

JERKS THE WHEEL in either direction. Equipment in back flies everywhere. A microcosm of what's to come.

KANE (CONT'D)

Oh shit!

They spin out. It's complete chaos; screeching of tires, screaming. Raw fear.

Then in a heartbeat it's all over. They come to a stop on the side of the road. Order is restored.

Kane gives a little chuckle after a tense quiet.

KANE (CONT'D)

Well that was something.

He gets right back to business.

KANE (CONT'D)

I am not planning on being in front of the camera Theresa, no. But see, it's "planning" that ruins these kinds of experiments in the first place. We are producing "progressive" journalism.

Since she's still too in shock to move, Theresa can't really respond. He puts a hand on her shoulder.

KANE (CONT'D)

What's wrong?

(beat)

Theresa, if you can't do angular, I'm sure we can figure out something-

She finally snaps back to reality. Turns toward the desert.

THERESA

No, no, it's not that. Angular's-
Fine. It's good.

She shrugs. Couldn't define "angular" to save her life.

THERESA (CONT'D)

I just have this weird feeling.
That we might be killed. Or badly hurt. Or something...

A condescending nod from Kane.

KANE

True journalists live for that feeling, Theresa. I wake up with that feeling every single day of my life. Do you know what I call something like-

(epiphany)

Wait. This wasn't your first near-death experience, was it?

She shakes her head. Not sure if there's an appropriate answer. Kane only smiles and unbuckles his seat belt.

KANE (CONT'D)

Brilliant. This is just going to be a weird day. I feel it coming on a mile away.

He squeezes his passenger's shoulder. Looks her in the eye.

KANE (CONT'D)

Theresa. I love weird days.

He gets out to check the flat. From his open door, Theresa sees their ultimate destination; a blurry, grey set of buildings reasonably far down the road...

KANE (O.S.) (CONT'D)

And I'm telling you, there's no reason to be afraid about what we're going to see today! It's just raw humanity! Frankly, I couldn't be more excited. Think about it, Theresa...rapists, murderers, and thieves all thrown into a pit together and taught how to survive. Truly a marvel of mankind...

She gets out of the car and walks around to Kane's side, sees that he's practically salivating over the thought.

Also, she sees the tire has been completely blown out.

KANE (CONT'D)

...Just grab the handhelds, would you. I don't mind the walk. Only five or six miles.

Although she can't believe what she's hearing, she obediently opens the trunk and starts digging for the cameras.

EXT. ARIZONA STATE PRISON COMPLEX

A closer look at the concrete fortress surrounded by fences and sniper towers.

PRISONERS on the yard play basketball, lift weights. Guards patrol on foot. Not many smiles. It's prison.

INT. WARDEN'S OFFICE

WARDEN JOEL BLAGG(50s)

A barrel-chested disciplinarian. Snakeskin cowboy hat atop his wrinkled head. Sifts through a file at a cluttered desk.

Across from him:

ULYSSES MOSS(40s)

A rugged S.O.B if there's ever been one. Salt-and-pepper hair, full set of teeth; looks pretty damn good for a guy carrying a life sentence, if you discount the fact that he appears to have very recently had the shit kicked out of him.

He bites at a nagging hangnail and looks around the office.

Eventually the warden closes his file and looks up.

WARDEN BLAGG

How was your holiday, Uly?

ULY

(biting nail)

Oh, you know. Did some shopping. Turkey. Presents. Most wonderful time of the year, they say.

Success. He spits the nail onto the floor.

ULY (CONT'D)

You know. Cause of the song.

Warden decides to play along.

WARDEN BLAGG

Mmmmm. Very good. That's how you spend your Fourth of July's out east, then? Gift exchange and a big turkey?

Uly starts scratching his greasy hair.

ULY
Hell, is that what month it is?
Guess I got my calender all screwed
up again.

INTERCUT FLASHBACK:

THE HOLE

A GUARD looks down with pleasure in the dark concrete cell.

Has a FOOT FIRM ON ULY'S BLOODY FACE while two colleagues
work at his body with a night stick.

END FLASHBACK

WARDEN'S OFFICE

Uly casually rubs the same area the foot occupied.

ULY
I get migraines, ya know?
Blackouts sometimes.

WARDEN BLAGG
Those can be tough, I've heard...

ULY
Oh they're alright. We all got our
problems, warden. Just look at
homosexuals. They've got it pretty
terrible, all things considered.

The warden can only shake his head at Uly's insolence.

WARDEN BLAGG
Now how do you figure that.

ULY
Oh, I dunno. What with all the
viruses and discrimination.

He sits up straighter, looks kind of happy to be somewhere
with natural light.

ULY (CONT'D)
So what's up, warden? You call me
up here just to crack open a beer
and commemorate our nation's
independence?

The warden stands up and sighs. His smile is gone.

WARDEN BLAGG

Just please. Tell me, Uly. Buddy. You've been here long enough to know that dickin' me around can't do you any good...

ULY

Well, that's not entirely the case...

WARDEN BLAGG

I just need to know. if you maybe heard anything a guy like me'd be interested in? Got any plans for anything? Maybe something that might disrupt the order around here that I'm so obliged to maintain? Particularly anything relating to violence of any kind?

ULY

You know I'm not much for violence, warden.

Blagg nods, but doesn't like it.

ULY (CONT'D)

So what would make you think I'm up to no good? Just passing time and that. No agendas here.

WARDEN BLAGG

For some reason I don't believe you.

ULY

Is that right?

A pack of Marlboros land in Uly's lap. He removes one and puts it in his mouth.

WARDEN BLAGG

Anything now?

The inmate leans far back in the seat. Yawns.

ULY

God honest truth be told, I haven't heard much of anything in particular lately, warden.

He returns the cigarettes to Blagg. Real gracious-like.

ULY (CONT'D)

Unless, of course, you're interested in the sound of my shit falling into a tin pail, in which case you might consider clearing your afternoon schedule.

(eyeing warden's desk)

Got a match around here?

The warden stays calm. He lights him, but still expects some kind of elaboration from his prisoner.

ULY (CONT'D)

(off Warden's look)

I've been locked down in the hole for months, man! What do you expect me to tell you?

WARDEN BLAGG

You tell me what the Hell you're up to.

Uly shines a toothy smile.

ULY

If you ask me, somebody's been watching too many of those prison rape show documentaries.

He blows a cloud of smoke into Blagg's face. The warden slowly starts to roll up his sleeves.

WARDEN BLAGG

I'm not an idiot, you know. I keep you locked away from people for four months and there's not a sign of violence or disorder anywhere. Everybody's happy. But as soon as you come up again I know something terrible might happen at any moment.

ULY

You're blaming me for the fights, warden? In a prison?

He has a hearty laugh.

ULY (CONT'D)

Pardon my language, but that doesn't make a lick of sense.

(yawns again)

I'm just trying to stay protected.

Warden Blagg has now begun stretching. Empties his pockets.

WARDEN BLAGG

What the do you mean, "protected"?

ULY

Got lots of enemies out there. You probably wouldn't understand if I told you the real story.

WARDEN BLAGG

You're a bad man, Ulysses. A bad man with a life to think about what you've done. Why can't you just admit that and talk to me like a normal person for one second.

Uly seems to be in his own world. Blagg wants a response, but is pretty positive he won't get one.

He waits. Uly finally goes for it.

ULY

If there's not anything else, I really should be getting back. There's actually this little old shank I've been meaning to sharpen, and-

Blagg snatches the cigarette out of Uly's mouth,

ULY (CONT'D)

Hey! That was-

BASHES HIM REPEATEDLY IN THE SIDE OF THE HEAD with a stapler.

The warden needs to take a drag of the smoke himself to calm down. Then he politely hands it back.

By his reaction you'd think Uly was just hit with a snowball. Blagg leans close and examines the wounds.

WARDEN BLAGG

They dinged you up pretty good down there, huh?

Uly spits out a front tooth onto the floor.

Blood pours from the new gap when he smiles again. It's a different smile now. Whole different kind of handsome. The ugly kind.

He continues:

ULY

See warden, the thing about shanks is: when they're dull, what good are they, ya know?

(chuckles)

I mean, might as well use a stick of butter at that point, am I right? But I guess I'm not the one who would know, really, since -

The warden stays expressionless as Uly goes on and on; eventually he picks up the stapler, cocks back his arm, and -

EXT. BALL FIELD - DAY

CRACK! Louisville slugger meets hanging curveball, crushes it into right field as PRE-TEEN PLAYERS scramble all over.

In the bleachers, PARENTS cheer the BATTER and RUNNERS on.

UNDER THE STANDS

GROVER MOSS(17)

Shaggy hair, bloodshot eyes, hasn't slept in a while.

Hands a dime bag over to a NERDY TEEN.

GROVER

Fifty.

NERD

What? Chris told me it'd be thirty on the phone!

Grover's annoyed.

GROVER

Why don't you go holler at Chris then? I don't have any time for your Jew haggle shit, friend. I'm busy.

He reaches for the bag but the nerd pulls it away. Pockets the drugs and forks over the cash.

GROVER (CONT'D)

Way to think clearly.

As he shoos the nerd away, a TALL RENT-A-COP emerges, grabs him by the collar.

RENT-A-COP
Something going on over here?

He panics, same as any good nerd would. Grover smirks.

GROVER
Nothing unusual. Officer.

RENT-A-COP
Oh yeah?

He searches the nerd's pockets, pulls out the bag.

GROVER
(faux-shocked)
Aww damn. Busted. Too bad. Bet
you're in for it now.
(beat)
Uh-oh. Wait a minute, officer. He
looks like a minor to me.

Grover pats the nerd on the shoulder, begins to walk away until the rent-a-cop gets a hold of him in a similar fashion.

RENT-A-COP
Just a minute. Let's have a look
at what you've got on you.

Grover turns out every pocket. Even goes as far to remove his jacket and turn it inside-out.

RENT-A-COP (CONT'D)
Backpack.

He promptly unzips his bag and dumps everything out. Just a book, some pens, and gym shorts.

GROVER
All in order.
(clears throat)
Officer. Now if you'll excuse me,
I'm late for play rehearsal.

He gathers his things, walks away a second time. The ret-a-cop turns his attention back to the trembling nerd.

FOLLOW Grover as he makes his way through the gates to-

EXT. SUBURBAN STREET

He turns a corner, just out of sight from the ball field. A car is waiting for him.

INT. CHRIS' CAR

CHRIS LOWRY (18)

A good-timer. At least 350 lbs in his XXXL Hawaiiin shirt. Maybe a little neurotic. Maybe more than a little sometimes.

Smoking a cig behind the wheel. Grover looks pissed.

GROVER

Why'd you tell him it'd be thirty?

CHRIS

Um. because it is usually thirty, isn't it?

GROVER

It's not usually anything. Think about inflation Chris. Tough market out there. We need to make adjustments and shit.

CHRIS

(nodding)

Adjustments. Word.

As Grover buckles up, the Rent-a-Cop taps on the window.

GROVER

(rolling down window)

Way to sell it, bro.

The Rent A Cop hands the nerd's weed bag to Grover in exchange for a twenty.

RENT-A-COP

Can't you kids just make your money by selling drugs the real way? Like everyone else your age? A lot of people around here are starting to not like you.

GROVER

Just being economical, boss. If you don't want to deal with it we can just go down to the shore and cut you out of the whole thing.

(smug)

But hey, you're a cop, right? Why don't you just start an investigation or something.

The rent-a-cop puts the money in his pocket, seems disappointed in himself.

GROVER (CONT'D)
Take care now, bro.

Grover rolls up his window.

CHRIS
Why are you being mean to Gordon?
He's T-T-T-True G.

GROVER
He extorts us.

CHRIS
He gives us the bud back after he
busts the kids! And we are
breaking the law, you realize...
(settling down)
Just sayin'.
(beat)
It's not very nice to make fun of
him just because he couldn't make
it through police school. Are you
having a bad day or something?

Deep breath.

GROVER
Just a little on edge, is all.
You're right, though. I'm cool.
Thanks, buddy.

A blank stare from Chris.

They drive off.

INT. PENNY'S HOUSE - DAY

CLOSE ON the leathery, make-up caked face of

PENNY MOSS (late 40s)

A cigarettes and hard liquor kind of gal. Probably has tried
crack at some point, but recently she's doing her best at
being an acceptable member of society.

PENNY
I don't have any God damn
information. If I did, I would
relay it to you. First thing I'd
do. Every single time you ask. I
can't help him being quiet, can I?-

A HAND sporting several golden rings suddenly

LATCHES ONTO HER THROAT

silences her. We move up the arm to see the face of

ANTONIO FLOREZ (40s)

a demon-eyed Colombian. He's of a more important stature now than he was ten years ago, when Penny last saw him.

Penny is having none of it, though; smacks him away

PENNY (CONT'D)

Like I told you the first time,
don't your slimy hands on me.

(beat)

Seriously, there's something sticky
on them. Hair gel, or...I dunno.
Something, though.

Antonio sits back in his chair. Wipes his hands on the arm rests. Penny hates it.

ANTONIO

How are you sure he's not *dead*,
even? It's been a decade now!

PENNY

Barely a decade. And let's not
start overthinking. He's alive.
I'd have been told otherwise.

Longing silence.

PENNY (CONT'D)

The only important point to be made
here, whether he's alive or dead is
this: How could I have any idea
what he's doing right now, no
matter what it is? I don't have
magic eyes. For all I know he went
all religious and took some vow of
silence or something.

ANTONIO

I never really considered him much
of a religious guy. Always was
more of an instigator...

PENNY

Yeah, well you'd be surprised.
He's a complicated man.

ANTONIO

This, I do know.

Antonio looks around the room like he's just realizing something.

ANTONIO (CONT'D)
 You know it's rude of you to not offer a guest coffee. Or at least something to drink.

Penny gets up and moves toward the kitchen without a word. Antonio looks around her filthy, almost unlivable house.

For the first time notices the broken front window.

ANTONIO (CONT'D)
 And you ought to get some people in here to clean this place up.

PENNY (O.S.)
 That would be something, huh?

ANTONIO
 I have many friends in that business. I could call in a favor. Maybe bring in a decorator even.

She returns, mug in hand. Hands it over.

PENNY
 Who the Hell are you, Mr. Antonio?

ANTONIO
 You know you have a lovely new accent?

Penny Moss is not the woman who likes to be put on.

PENNY
 I do know that, yes. And you sir have a very mediocre new moustache.

The Colombian instinctively touches his face.

EXT. DESERT ROAD - DAY

Theresa carries both cameras while Kane looks over his shooting schedule.

KANE
 It's even more exciting on foot, I swear. Can you even believe this? We can tell everyone that to make the film we had to wander the deserts alone.

Although exhausted, Theresa still takes comfort in the idea.

THERESA

So who are we meeting here again?
Some friend of yours?

KANE

Don't know yet. I talked to a PR person through email, and she set up something with a staff member who gives tours to anybody trying to get an interview or make a movie or whatever.

THERESA

Sounds pretty cookie-cutter. Do you think you'll get the energy you want?

KANE

It's prison, sweetie. There is no cookie-cutter here. Cookie-cutter here involves raping.

She shudders at the thought. Kane takes one of the cameras from her and turns it on.

POV CAMERA

Looking out at the desert and the gigantic structure they're heading towards. Off to the right,

A LONG LINE OF BIKERS comes into view from over the horizon. Single file, all dressed alike.

KANE (O.S.) (CONT'D)

(behind camera)
Whoa! Check it out!

We JUMP UP AND DOWN WITH KANE.

KANE (CONT'D)

(yelling to bikers)
What's up Easy Riders! Woooo!

Just as quickly as they're coming, they're going. And gone. Back over a hill and out of sight. Theresa enters the frame. Looks into the camera. Sounds of Kane catching his breath.

THERESA

Have you ever been to a place like this before?

KANE (O.S.)

Only in my imagination, I'm afraid.
But now it's really happening!

(giddy)

All of the evil minds in the
universe just brewing together.
Writing books that will never be
published. Hatching schemes that
could doom humanity. But here they
are, all sealed away.

He turns the camera toward his own face.

KANE (CONT'D)

Have you ever even thought about
it?

(Australian accent)

It's a known fact that the
criminal is one of the smartest
creatures on the planet...

Examples:

INT. CHRIS' CAR - DAY

Grover thumbs through a wad of bills in the passenger seat.

CHRIS

...and that shit made me *and* Eddie
both barf, so I've been telling
everybody not to go there for
seafood anymore.

Grover has no interest in any kind of positive small-talk.

GROVER

Wow. Go figure.

CHRIS

How much did we make today?

GROVER

Not as much as we normally do.

(beat)

And it's about time for a re-up,
you know. Last crop went faster
than ever. We're pretty popular in
this area now.

CHRIS

I'll make a call, t-tonight then...hey I'm not trying to be weird or anything here, but how would you feel if I ate dinner at your house tonight? I can bring my own dinner if that's an issue, but I'd really just think the best way for us to sit down and figure out how we're going to-

Chris's rambling has got Grover nervous.

GROVER

Chris! Slow down. You can eat dinner at my house. And I don't even give a shit about why you would just out of the blue make some kind of ridiculous request like that, so you don't have to explain it to me...and you don't have to bring your own dinner. Obviously.

(beat)

Damn you're messed up, man.

Relief flows from Chris like a river.

CHRIS

Thank you, Grover.

INT. PENNY'S HOUSE

Silence aside from Antonio's gratuitous coffee slurps. Penny's on the sofa.

ANTONIO

(looking up, smiling)

I usually make the person who served the drink take the first sip, you know.

PENNY

You really got the whole criminal boss thing nailed, don't you?

He chuckles. She doesn't.

PENNY (CONT'D)

Look are you almost finished with whatever it is you came here for, Antonio? I'd like to get on with my day if you don't mind.

He abruptly sets down his cup and stands.

ANTONIO

Sure, sure. I'm going. I'm gone.
You just remember to call me when
you might happen to hear something,
huh? We look out for each other,
you and I.

He pats her on the leg, a little too intimately, and she pushes him away with force once more. After a hard stare down, Antonio eventually turns away.

ANTONIO (CONT'D)

(back turned)

And who knows, maybe he'll get in
touch with you very soon.

He intentionally knocks his mug to the floor on his way out. Coffee spills everywhere.

PENNY

Yeah, maybe.

EXT. SUBURBAN STREET - DAY

Chris and Grover on their way back to Chris's house.

CHRIS

And seriously, I just kept barfing
and barfing until-

Grover stops walking.

GROVER

Chris! Cut it out right now, do
you hear me? You will not tell one
more story about puking tonight, is
that clear?

This hurts.

CHRIS

(bad stutter)

Aw, are you k-k-kidding me. G-
Grover? My pukes are my b-bread
and b-, b-, b-,

(beat)

butter. You know that.

Grover grabs him by the collar.

GROVER

I don't care. I'm sick of hearing about it and I don't want my mother thinking that I'm spending all of my time with some kind of retard!

Chris is stung hard. Probably harder than a normal eighteen year old kid should be when he's told not to talk about puking. He closes his eyes.

CHRIS

(frantic, under breath)
Sticks and stones. Sticks and stones. Sticks and stones...

His attempt to keep from crying is barely working.

GROVER

Hey! Come on now.
(pats shoulder)
You're alright, Chris. You're alright now buddy.

Grover has to steady Chris to keep his panic attack from consuming him. Luckily, the big man is able to come back down to earth. Now Grover's the relieved one.

ANTONIO (O.S.)

Ah, it must be little Grover! How great to see you, my friend!

Grover turns around to see Antonio walking out of his house.

ANTONIO (CONT'D)

I was just talking some business with your mother.

Grover's look suggests that this man is no family friend.

GROVER

Uh-huh. And who are you again, sir?

ANTONIO

(big Colombian smile)
Ah, my boy. I remember watching you run around everywhere in your baby shoes and asking me to throw you up in the air! Did you know that?

Chris steps into the spotlight and extends a hand to Antonio.

CHRIS

Chris Lowry, buddy of Grover's.
 (rehearsed line)
 I helped him be better at math in
 school and he got me my lifelong
 crush to become my g-g-g-
 girlfriend.

Antonio nods like it makes sense.

They keep shaking hands until Antonio has to pull away.

ANTONIO

(rubbing wrist)
 So listen, Chris.
 (beat)
 You know a couple pals of mine have
 been asking me about you.

GROVER

Oh yeah? What're they asking?

ANTONIO

(serious)
 Maybe you better drop by sometime.
 Find out for yourself.

Grover tries hard to be a tough guy. It seems like Chris wants to be Antonio's friend until he sees Grover's angry, then he immediately gets mad, too.

GROVER

You know what, Antonio, why don't
 you tell your pals that you saw me,
 and that I had nothing to say.
 (beat)
 Because you and your pals are
 that insignificant to me.

They head inside. Antonio calls after him.

ANTONIO

You know I think I don't think it's
 really a good idea to brush me off
 so quickly. Maybe they might come
 and talk to you on their own
 sometime.

Grover slams the door as he enters the house. Chris listens to everything. Seems a tad uneasy.

INT. PENNY'S HOUSE

Penny's scrubbing the stain. Smiles when Grover enters.

PENNY
How was school, babe?

GROVER
Fine.

He turns and looks out the window, makes sure it's clear.

GROVER (CONT'D)
Who was that guy? And what was he
doing here?

Penny stops working; stands up.

PENNY
Oh the usual. Trying to screw me.

The thought makes Grover wince.

PENNY (CONT'D)
Hey you have any squares left?

He hands a cigarette to his mother, still reeling from the last comment.

GROVER
You don't have to be disgusting,
you know.

PENNY
(accepting cig)
I know.
(beat)
He's just an old friend of your
fathers. Found my name in the
church directory, he said.

GROVER
Mmhmm.

Penny notices Chris for the first time.

PENNY
(lighting up)
And you are?

CHRIS
(extends a hand)
Chris Lowry, a friend of Grover's.
(rehearsed line)
(MORE)

CHRIS (CONT'D)
 We're doing a stand-up comedy act
 together.

PENNY
 Uh-huh. Well, I hope ya brought
 dinner!

He turns to Grover, horrified.

CHRIS
 What the Hell, man!

GROVER
 She's just kidding, Chris. Go
 upstairs for a minute, would ya?
 I'll meet you.

Chris heads upstairs. A judgemental look from Penny.

PENNY
 What kind of car he driving?

GROVER
 That's not the point, ma.
 (lowers voice)
 The point is he's a fine driver.
 And he's loyal. Now that's a best
 friend if I've ever heard of one.

PENNY
 Sure, sure. Always a fine driver
 in any friendship.

Grover heads upstairs after Chris.

EXT. ARIZONA STATE PRISON COMPLEX - AFTERNOON

THE YARD

Prisoners entertain themselves in the open courtyard.
 Weightlifting, chess, basketball, etc.

Kane and Theresa each carry a camera, stand behind the
 anxious and all-too enthusiastic

GUIDE (21)

trying hard to sound like a good company man.

GUIDE
 Here is our recreational area.
 You'll notice it's very organized.
 (MORE)

GUIDE (CONT'D)

Our inmates spend about 4 hours a day out here and-

Kane's not into it.

KANE

Uh yeah, quick two-part question. How often do inmates get in fights here and what kind of fights are they usually? Race wars?

GUIDE

(shaking head)

No, no I'd say it's generally a positive atmosphere, really. We actually haven't had the slightest sign of violence in this area for a solid four months now. All the inmates here want to get better.

All of Kane's hopes for this trip take a pretty steep dive.

THERESA

Do you think maybe there a chance we could take a deeper look *inside* the prison complex? Perhaps some more "private" areas? If you know what I'm referring to?

She flashes a cool smile, and it suddenly seems that the guide would go out of his way to do anything she asks. This is a power she's learned to harness over time.

GUIDE

I'll have to get permission from the warden, but I don't imagine it being a problem. He's actually my second cousin. But more importantl, publicity's never a bad thing, he likes to say.

Kane's proud of his protege. Sees her eyes drift to something going on off-screen.

THERESA

What's that happening over there?

She points to a group of men in the center of the yard, all different ethnicities. They appear to be answering questions from an assembly of other assorted inmates.

It looks like things are getting pretty heated.

GUIDE

Some of our inmates are elected into the positions of "spokespeople" for different intra-prison groups. Almost like a tribal council. Are you familiar with the show *Survivor*?

She doesn't answer, instead has pulled out a notebook and begun writing everything down. Kane glares in her direction for not following through with the guide's question.

KANE

She is. We both are.

THERESA

(eyes on group)

Are these meetings always so tense?

The guide tries to cover with a corporate answer.

GUIDE

They're just expressing their feelings. Just because they're in prison doesn't mean they don't have opinions.

Constant professional that she is, Theresa chugs right along.

THERESA

Intra-prison groups? Can you elaborate on that please?

Kane's turn.

KANE

There's thousands of convicts locked up in this place, Theresa. And not too many guards. Think about it. There has to be some kind of order kept by the members of the asylum or else all Hell could break loose when two different races decide they want to start a war with one another. Think about world politics.

He's proud of his explanation, looks to the guide for approval. Thumbs up. Kane silently thanks him as they walk.

INT. PENNY'S HOUSE - AFTERNOON

GROVER'S ROOM

Grover counts several wads of bills, then places them into a shoebox on his desk. Chris stands over him.

There's a knock at the door. Penny enters. Chris raises his hands like the jig is up.

CHRIS

(panic)

Oh my G-G-G-G--.

(hard swallow)

Hello, Mrs. Mo-Moss. We were just-

Grover runs over to Chris to calm him down.

GROVER

Hey! Snap out of it, buddy it's alright. She's fine. She knows. She's okay.

Chris has to sit down on Grover's bed. He's okay.

Penny waits for him to recover then gets back to business.

PENNY

So how was the haul today?

GROVER

Nothing special. Maybe a little less than usual. Chris here's gonna pickup tonight and we'll be back on the horn tomorrow.

Penny may not think Chris is the right guy for the job.

PENNY

You sure about that now? Grover?

GROVER

Sure about what?

PENNY

You sure you shouldn't be the one going? You know. Maybe both of you even. Narcotics is notorious for being a dangerous industry.

CHRIS

She's right, you know.

Grover doesn't like being double-teamed.

GROVER

That's enough from you, then Mom.
Since you aren't really involved in
this operation whatsoever.

PENNY

Oh is that so? Well maybe I'll
just call the police and let em
know I got criminals in my house.

GROVER

And you're one of them, idiot!

PENNY

Don't talk to your mother like that
boy.

Chris agrees.

CHRIS

She's right, Grover. Don't call
people n-n-names.

A silence after Chris's words. Penny cools off.

PENNY

Are you sure you're okay?

GROVER

Yeah, yeah. I'm fine. Just give
us some privacy for a little while
please, alright? I'll take care of
everything.

She stops. Now looks even more concerned, but leaves anyway.

INT. ARIZONA STATE PRISON COMPLEX

CAFETERIA

Kane and Theresa stand behind a bulletproof glass barrier
separating them from the convicts in the crowded eatery.
Things look good, but almost too orderly for a prison.

The guide keeps on.

GUIDE (O.S.)

Our cafeteria is another reason why
we are considered the most
efficient rehabilitation center in
all of the Western United States.
Always clean, in every capacity.

Kane's a sad puppy looking through the glass. He raises his camera up to his face, recording as he speaks.

POV CAMERA

Turned toward the inmates.

KANE (O.S.)
 Could we get in there, maybe? Talk
 to a few people, see what the
 action is?

We turn to the guide, who immediately turns to two guards by the door, who promptly shake their heads "No".

Kane turns off the camera.

KANE (CONT'D)
 (under breath)
 Damn.

Contrary to Kane, Theresa appears genuinely interested.

THERESA
 What's the menu like?

GUIDE
 Well, we have a tremendous
 selection of balanced...

Kane groans.

INT. GROVER'S ROOM

Chris sits on the bed. Suddenly Grover gets up from his desk and goes to his closet. he has an idea.

GROVER
 Chris I got something for you to
 take to the deal tonight.

Removes an object wrapped in a cloth. His breathing nearly stops as he slowly unravels it, revealing

A SILVER MAGNUM PISTOL

Chris's eyes twinkle.

The handle is carved with a strange insignia. He puts it into his friend's hand.

GROVER (CONT'D)
 You ever shot one before?

Chris is frightened.

EXT. PRISON - TOPIARY

The guide leads Kane and Theresa through a large area of greenery.

GUIDE
And here we have-

KANE
Are you fucking kidding me?

He kicks over a pot. Screams.

KANE (CONT'D)
A Fucking *TOPIARY*?!

INT. PENNY'S HOUSE

Penny's sucked into the television. Grover and Chris appear.

GROVER
I'll be back later?

PENNY
(without looking)
Go nuts.

GROVER
Should I be back by any particular time?

She doesn't hear.

GROVER (CONT'D)
(louder)
Do you need me for anything?

PENNY
(annoyed)
Don't need anything, Grover. Off you go, now.

He grumbles to himself. Penny finally turns to him just as he's about to walk out.

PENNY (CONT'D)
Actually, we do need something...

She has to think about it. Pulls some singles from her pocket and throws them in Grover's direction.

PENNY (CONT'D)
 Cigarettes.
 (beat)
 Where you going, anyway?

GROVER
 Got some errands to run.

PENNY
 Together?

GROVER
 That's right.

Chris gives a hearty wave.

CHRIS
 It was nice meeting you Miss Moss.

Penny's eye has caught the TV again. Back in the trance.

PENNY
 Uh-huh. Bye then.

He doesn't pick up the money when they leave.

INT. ARIZONA STATE PRISON COMPLEX

A SECURE ELEVATOR

Is going down as the guide yammers on with fun facts.

Kane holds his camera by his side, looking like he's about to die of boredom. Theresa does her best to take exceptional notes.

GUIDE
 ...now, me personally, will only come to the facility about once or twice a week, for public relations and things like that. But say if I were a guard or somebody working on maintenance you'd see me at least 35 hours, so-

THERESA
 It sure is a long ride on this thing. It's been fifteen minutes almost.

GUIDE

Yes, that's true. See this is an armored security elevator, so it travels at a slightly slower speed than the ones you're probably used to. And we are also going *pretty* far underground, so-

Too much for the bold director.

KANE

Look. Man. I'm not trying to say that what you're telling us isn't interesting at all, but we are trying to make a *film* here. Can you *please* give us something exciting? Something sexy. It's a prison for Christ's sake.

A wry smile appears on the guide's face.

GUIDE

Well, sir. It just so happens that I was getting to that. This next spot on the tour is usually off-limits, but it just so happens I have a few powerful buddies.

He wants this to impress Theresa; she forgets to care.

The elevator doors open. They step out to:

THE HOLE

A musty, dark row of solitary confinement cells. Some of them are occupied.

They head into the exact cell we saw Uly beaten in earlier.

GUIDE (CONT'D)

(patronizing)

This area is known as "The Hole". It's a solitary confinement area where-

KANE

(unimpressed)

With all due respect, bro. It's 2010. I think by now everybody's familiar with the concept of "the hole".

(beat)

God, I hate it here.

GUIDE

Well I'd like to take this time to point out that we've actually only been authorized to come down here today is because the state of Arizona mandates a very well-regulated solitary confinement quarter.

(beat)

You wouldn't believe how humane a place like this *really* is.

INTERCUT FLASHBACK:

In the exact spot the guide was standing,

ULY'S PUMMELED BY GUARDS until he collapses to his knees.

END FLASHBACK

Theresa has begun to examine one particular cell.

THERESA

What's this? Blood?

Kane and the guard go over for a better look. Theresa's bent down, looking at some kind of dried up liquid on the floor.

KANE

Wicked...

GUIDE

No, it's probably not blood. Although these places do tend to attract our more disruptive criminals, they're usually leveled out or unconscious by the time we get them down here, anyways...

INTERCUT FLASHBACK:

CLOSE ON ULY'S BLOODY HEAD as it's repeatedly bashed into the exact spot on the floor the tour is now looking at.

END FLASHBACK

GUIDE (CONT'D)

More likely that it's just some spilled food. Ketchup or something. We have ketchup here, you know. This way, please.

Kane is once again bummed. They exit the cell.

THERESA

How many people are locked up down here right now?

GUIDE

Not sure.

(eyes guard)

Let's see if we can find out, shall we?

They mosey over to an unkempt and half-asleep FAT GUARD, also in a daze watching a tiny TV.

GUIDE (CONT'D)

Excuse me, sir. We were just wondering how many people you've got in solitary today?

The guard turns up his television. Keeps his eyes on it.

FAT GUARD

Just one. Our old resident.

(chuckles)

And he ain't even down here right now. Seeing the warden.

Kane's having a terrible time. Theresa's writing.

KANE

This place is the worst.

(looks at TV)

Hey, what are you watching?

Theresa lets him go, as she's much more interested in exploiting the guide.

THERESA

Meeting with the warden. Is that common among prisoners? Does he meet with a lot of people?

GUIDE

Oh yeah. Warden Blagg's a very "hands on" kind of guy. He'll talk to inmates, guards, the press...even employees!

THERESA

(wry smile)

Family?

GUIDE

(blushing)

Maybe.

That prom queen/weather girl has shown up again. Twirls her hair in that sexy way dumb guys haven't figured out yet.

THERESA

Do you think he might be able to take some time out of his schedule to talk with us?

The guide quivers, firmly under Theresa's spell.

In the background Kane tries to stay cool.

KANE

I was getting a little hungry, but okay, sure, whatever...

EXT. FIELD - AFTERNOON

Grover, aims his magnum at something off-screen.

FIRES THREE SHOTS followed by the sound of breaking glass, He gives the smoking barrel a satisfied blow.

REVEAL his target, an abandoned warehouse. It's got about 50 windows, and about 48 of them are completely busted.

CHRIS

You did it!

He extends the gun, handle first, toward Chris.

GROVER

It's easy.

Chris is reluctant, but Grover insists. Extends more.

CHRIS

Why do I need to do this again?

He pushes the magnum into his partner's chest.

GROVER

In our line of work, we are going to inevitably be dealing with some narrow-minded individuals, Chris! Just take it, okay? I can't have you getting killed on me!

These words have an effect on Chris, but Grover's not sure if it's the one he intended. He accepts the gun and nods, deep in thought.

GROVER (CONT'D)

Hey. You alright? I'm just trying to be your friend here, man. You're valuable. And it's important that you have protection.

Chris keeps nodding; he's not even listening to Grover, though. It's as if he's just had an epiphany.

CHRIS

Protection. Word.

GROVER

(checks watch)

So you're going to meet him now, then, I guess?

CHRIS

Uh-huh.

GROVER

Okay. Good then.

INT. WARDEN'S OFFICE - AFTERNOON

CLOSE ON Uly, unconscious on his back. Blood is caked in his hair, on his shirt, and all around him.

He comes to and starts coughing when A BROWN LIQUID suddenly splashes all over his face.

REVEAL Warden Blagg, coffee mug upside-down, looking pissed.

When Uly regains his bearings, Blagg flips up the bird.

WARDEN BLAGG

How many fingers am I holding up?

ULY

There's no need for a medical evaluation, warden. I'm okay.

He receives a hard kick to the ribs.

WARDEN BLAGG

My ass there isn't. It looked like a butcher's back room in here. I had to spend the entire morning cleaning up after you.

ULY

I apologize.

He feels for new bumps on his head.

WARDEN BLAGG

You been out for a good five hours.

ULY

That all?

WARDEN BLAGG

My Lord, Uly. What are we gonna do with your stubborn ass? No matter how many times your head gets stomped you still manage to go out of your way to bother everyone.

ULY

Now you know that's not true warden. I've always felt that you and I have always had a special connection of sorts.

INTERCUT FLASHBACK

Six hours earlier...

Blagg pounds an already passed out Uly with a stapler.

END FLASHBACK

Uly smirks at the fond memory.

WARDEN BLAGG

How do you do it? I thought I'd seen guys like you a million times before. Sassy talkers. Firm resolve and all that. Always givin' it to everybody straight and catching an ass whoopin' for their effort.

Rising to his feet, Uly dusts off the front of his uniform and takes a slight bow.

WARDEN BLAGG (CONT'D)

But they all break at some point. Turn violent. Throw tantrums. The system eventually breaks everybody.

A nostalgic smile on both their faces.

WARDEN BLAGG (CONT'D)

Fact is, we all expected you to go crazy a long time ago.

(MORE)

WARDEN BLAGG (CONT'D)

But here it's been ten years now.
Ten years and you don't give up.

ULY

I don't know what you may have
heard about me, warden but-

The warden PUNCHES ULY hard in the face, breaking his nose.
Right back to calm.

WARDEN BLAGG

Did you know I've been researching
you, Uly? Old-fashioned detective
work and the like.

The prisoner starts hacking up blood onto the floor. Warden
hands him a handkerchief, which he holds to his gushing nose.

ULY

(tilting head back)
And what'd ya learn, Prune Face?

WARDEN BLAGG

I learned that even though you've
pretty much spent a good portion of
every week in solitary for the past
ten years, *every single* act of
group violence- Not most of them,
not a high percentage -but *every
single* violence report over the
past ten years has your God damn
name in it! Right there in the
stats.

ULY

(heavy panting)
Well... I'll be...danged.

WARDEN BLAGG

But that isn't even the strange
thing, Uly. The strange thing is
the reports we make the inmates
file. They got your name in them
for some weird shit. Not for
fighting, cause shit, Ulysses Moss
don't fight. He's a real
pacifisting motherfucker, ain't he?
Whoop his ass all you want and he
won't do a damn thing! Isn't that
you, Uly! A little tiny pacifist
bitch!

Still gasping for air, Uly nods to this question. Gets kicked again. Blagg straightens up. Picks up some papers from his desk.

WARDEN BLAGG (CONT'D)
Look at what the others write down.

His fury crescendos each time he mentions Uly's name.

WARDEN BLAGG (CONT'D)
(flipping through pages)
*I Hate Uly Moss; I did it because
of Uly Moss; get me away from Uly
Moss. Uly Moss. Uly Moss. Uly
God Damn Moss!*

ULY
Some people...like me.

The warden throws the papers on the ground. Losing it.

WARDEN BLAGG
Nobody likes you! Why are you
doing this? Just a funny bad guy,
are you! Just tell what to Uly and
we can work something out! Just
stop acting like a damn baby!

Be kicks him again.

Uly rolls onto his side, takes a few huge breaths as if he's contemplating the warden's words.

Then:

ULY
Goo...goo...ga...-

Before the final "ga" Blagg kicks him in the side of the head. And he's out.

Blagg's boots click as he heads to his desk.

WARDEN BLAGG
(buzzes intercom)
Somebody take this man back down
where he belongs please?

He shakes his head at Uly's still form. A damn shame.

INT. ARIZONA STATE PRISON COMPLEX - OFFICES - AFTERNOON

Theresa and Kane sit in a waiting area.

THERESA
 (looking around)
 Not really getting a lot of
 positive energy in here.

KANE
 It's the corporate end of a prison.
 Go figure.

She gets it. Smiles.

KANE (CONT'D)
 It's good to see you're more
 confident now that you've managed
 to get our PR guide to fall in love
 with you. Although I could've done
 that too if I wanted to.

THERESA
 I didn't get him to do anything!
 Have you considered I'm a good and
 likable person?
 (beat)
 Although he has been in the
 bathroom for a while now...

KANE
 (sighs)
 Don't be crass.

He sees the door opening.

KANE (CONT'D)
 Okay this might be the warden.
 Turn on the bullshit.

She gives Kane an angry look before turning on the bullshit.

When the door opens, though, rather than the warden, we watch
 as TWO GUARDS carry a PUNCH-DRUNK ULY away.

He leaves a trail of blood dripping behind him

ULY
 (to guards; slurring)
 I like you guys. You can be
 anything you want to be.

Kane practically jumps with excitement when they pass.

KANE
 Oh my God. Look at him. Beaten to
 a pulp.
 (hypnotized)
 (MORE)

KANE (CONT'D)
 It's beautiful. Tough. Raw.
 Never give up. That's it.

THERESA
 How do you know that?

KANE
 Only a guy who doesn't give up can
 get beaten that bad.

INTERCUT

Extremely fast cuts of all Uly's beatings.

RETURN TO

THERESA
 He must be the resident that fat
 guard was talking about.

KANE
 Ooh, yes, that *s him*. Looks like a
 real stick, doesn't he?

Theresa has never heard the term "stick" in that context
 before, but she nods anyway. Peter Kane says what he wants.

He takes her close, turns her towards the door and points.

KANE (CONT'D)
 That is who we need, Theresa. That
 is what's going to get us to the
 next level.

She believes every word.

KANE (CONT'D)
 Screw the plan. New plan. From
 here out, we focus on that
 beautiful big ugly monster of a
 man.

They both straighten up as somebody emerges from the rest
 room. Maybe a little more out of breath than he ought be.

GUIDE
 (big smile)
 Okay, we all set, then?

Awkward.

INT. PENNY'S HOUSE - DINNER

Grover and Penny sit next to one another on the couch, eating frozen macaroni and cheese. Their eyes are glued to the TV. *Deal or No Deal* blasts over their silence for a good while.

Grover finishes his meal. Goes to the kitchen with plate.

PENNY
(on TV)
Should've taken the deal.

The sound of the sink running. Grover reappears with a soda.

GROVER
I gave Chris dad's gun.

Penny's gaze goes to him only for a moment. But then right back to the TV.

PENNY
20! 20!
(beat)
Dang it!

GROVER
Did you hear me?

PENNY
Yeah, I heard you Grover.
(eyes him again)
You could've got me a soda, you know.

It takes a moment for the boy to process his mother's words.

GROVER
Do you have anything to say?

PENNY
About what?

GROVER
The gun!

PENNY
You know how I feel about guns, Grover.

GROVER
You carry a gun.

PENNY
You know how I feel about myself.

He does.

GROVER
(reassuring)
Dad would think it was the right
thing to do. Chris is a loyal
friend. He'll be okay.

He knows he's only talking to himself at this point, but Penny feels obligated to chime in, anyhow.

PENNY
I'm sure.
(beat)
But it's dinner time. You know the
rules.
(to TV)
15! You idiot!

She laughs at the losing contestant. Just when Grover's completely given up, she looks back to him.

PENNY (CONT'D)
Your father isn't a superhero,
Grover. He did abandon us, don't
forget. That's an important part
of a person's character.
Reliability.

She notices her blunt reality is bringing her son down.

PENNY (CONT'D)
Guns don't have much to do with
anything.

Penny's words are not helping Grover. Instead he looks more worried than ever.

In one movement, he grabs the keys from a back table.

PENNY (CONT'D)
Hey you aren't supposed to be
driving!

He leaves out the front door.

Penny's absorbed back into the TV.

CLOSE ON Howie Mandel, about to deliver his timeless quote:

HOWIE (V.O. TV)
Deal?

INT. WARDEN'S OFFICE

CLOSE ON Blagg, head in hands.

KANE (O.S.)

Or no d-

Blagg raises a hand.

WARDEN BLAGG

Absolutely not a deal.

REVEAL Kane and Theresa, looking at first very hopeful, then very quickly disappointed.

KANE

Listen pal, I'm offering you the opportunity of a lifetime here. Just six months is all we need and I swear to God I can turn this prison into the Neverland Ranch. In terms of media popularity. Not. Other stuff-

He cuts himself off when he realizes who he's speaking to.

KANE (CONT'D)

Sorry.

(beat)

But seriously, it will be good for this place's publicity. You have my word on that.

WARDEN BLAGG

I don't know what that idiot told you on that bullshit tour he gives, but that's not the kind of publicity we are interested in. I'm trying to get local funding for my staff and residents, sir. Not turn this place into some kind of...Ozzy Osbourne house.

Kane and Theresa cringe at the poor reference.

WARDEN BLAGG (CONT'D)

And besides, I'm gonna go ahead and say right now that we got all the publicity we need over here.

INTERCUT

OUTSIDE THE WALLS

The biker gang from before have reappeared. Something's up.

KANE (V.O.)

Could we at least get an interview with him today, then? An hour or so is all we need.

BACK TO WARDEN'S OFFICE

Blagg gets dramatic. He's sweating. Sounds almost like begging at this point.

WARDEN BLAGG

I'm telling you. In all seriousness, you don't want to talk to him, you don't want to go near him. You don't want anything to do with him...

INTERCUT - ULY'S CELL

The guards carrying him throw him back into his solitary cell and slam the door.

He falls to the ground upon entering.

WARDEN BLAGG (V.O.) (CONT'D)

You should just forget that you saw him. I wish that you hadn't. The last thing the world needs is to be introduced to something as dangerous as Ulysses Moss.

BACK TO WARDEN'S OFFICE

The warnings only seem to make Kane want him more.

KANE

Listen warden. I didn't want it to come to this, but when I saw that man I noticed two things.

(beat)

Number one: He's a celebrity. Whether any of us like it or not. Number two: he had fresh cuts on him, and we were waiting out there a pretty long time. To be more specific, longer than it takes for blood to clot.

(very quickly)

Number three you're quite sweaty.

THERESA
 (also very quickly)
 Four: we've got camera footage!

She shines her camera on the sweaty Blagg.

POV CAMERA

Sweaty Blagg.

CAMERA OFF

A quick wink from Kane to thank her for the reinforcement.

INTERCUT

- OUTSIDE THE PRISON WALLS

A bunch of bikers are circling the prison. Most hold some kind of melee weapon. Looks like they're on a mission.

Over the horizon we see more of them. A lot more. Flowing toward the big metal structure like ants. Angry, angry ants.

KANE (O.S.)
 So what it comes down to, I guess,
 is the fact that all the footage I
 have now would only make for a
 piece on how you beat up people.
 Which could get ugly.

(beat)

But all I really want to do is a
 simple character piece on some
 regular old inmate. Like those
 cable shows do all the time.

BACK TO WARDEN'S OFFICE

THERESA
 I just watched a special on a
 prison in Guatemala where a man and
 his prison family had to eat other
 prisoner's garbage.

Kane's expression this time let's her know she's missed.

Blagg stands up.

WARDEN BLAGG
 You're trying to threaten me now,
 Mr. Kane? Is that correct?

INTERCUT - ULY'S CELL

The collapsed Uly raises his head.

CLICK CLICK CLICK CLICK. A sound is coming from just beyond his wall. It's subtle, but he hears it. And he knows it's not going to be good.

He crawls over to get a better listen.

BACK TO WARDEN'S OFFICE

Kane's leaning on Warden Blagg's desk. Smug.

KANE

Oh, don't act so shocked, warden. It's a prison! Frankly I'm surprised I didn't see more of this kind of behavior when I first got here. Maybe it's hidden by all the time greenhouses and vegetable gardens and whatever the Hell else it is I saw today.

WARDEN BLAGG

(shaking head)

I don't know what's wrong with people today.

Kane pats him on the shoulder. He sympathizes.

KANE

Nobody knows, friend.

There's a long stare between them. Blagg's pleading eyes can't match the crippling gaze of the almighty Kane.

He knows it's over. Tries to salvage some dignity.

WARDEN BLAGG

I can give you ten minutes with him.

Theresa is about to object but the more knowledgeable Kane quickly silences her with a hand. He takes over.

KANE

We might only need five, warden.

Kane winks as his counterpart. Lesson learned.

WARDEN BLAGG

And you will of course need surveillance. This place is nothing without order.

KANE

Of course.

Kane's happy.

INT. ULY'S CELL - CONTINUOUS

Uly's got his ear to the concrete. The CLICKING continues.

He works himself up to his feet and heads to the door.

FROM OUTSIDE THE DOOR

ULY (O.S.)

Guard? I got some kind of sound coming from my wall. Seems a little off to me. Might want to check her out.

The fat guard from earlier makes his way to the door.

FAT GUARD

What's that, Moss?

IN THE CELL

Uly's actually nervous. His eyes drift towards the sound.

CLICK CLICK CLICK.

ULY

Something happening, sir. I don't mean to brag, but I sat in this hole a long time. I know when things ain't supposed to sound.

(beat)

I truthfully think it'd be a good idea for one of you to have a look.

The guard slides open a small panel on the door.

FAT GUARD

(not interested)

Uh-huh. Truthfully, ya say?

(beat)

Maybe you ought to rest a little, first, Uly. Doesn't seem to me like a man should be beaten so much in one day.

He closes the panel. Uly's worried.

ULY

It can't be. Now? No, not now.

It's go time. He goes to the door of his cell again. Cracks his knuckles.

ULY (CONT'D)

(warming up)

Guard! I'd really just feel better if you'd check this for one second, please!

Footsteps coming towards him. The CREAK of a cell opening.

FAT GUARD (O.S.)

You just never get tired, do ya Uly?

Looks like Uly's just about getting his second wind.

EXT. PENNY'S CAR - EVENING

Ever the determined driver, Grover speeds towards an unknown destination. He dials a cell phone, waits for an answer.

GROVER

(into phone)

Hey dude, it's me. Wanted to know if you could maybe meet up real quick before the deal, just wanted to say...

(beat)

Wait, what?

INT. ARIZONA STATE PRISON COMPLEX

Theresa and Kane step into

SECURE ELEVATOR

where our great GUIDE is waiting for them. Kane's not happy.

GUIDE

Pretty exciting stuff. If you don't mind I actually have a few questions of my own.

(off their blank looks)

You know. For PR reasons.

No response from Theresa.

KANE

This could have been a huge
mistake.

DING! The door closes.

If he only knew.

BEGIN ACTION CUT-UP

EXT. STREETS - EVENING

Grover parks his car, then takes off running down a pouring
suburban street.

INT. PENNY'S HOUSE - BATHROOM

Penny gives herself a hard look in the mirror. Opens the
medicine cabinet.

EXT. PRISON WALLS

As the sun lowers in the sky, almost an army of bikers have
assembled. They wear bandanas and trench coats. Some carry
large aluminum cases.

EXT. SNIPER TOWER

Through binoculars, a guard sees what's going on in the
distance. Picks up his radio.

GUARD 1

(binoculars to face)

Yeah this is station 3, just
putting word out there that.

KABOOM!

His tower is completely destroyed before he can even finish.

PENNY'S HOUSE

Penny cuts a line onto a mirror.

ELEVATOR

DING! Elevator reaches sublevel 2. Theresa starts to feel a
light rumbling.

THERESA
What's going on?

The guide can't feel it yet.

GUIDE
Excuse me?

PRISON WALLS

A group of bandana-wearing BIKERS nod to one another after the first sniper tower goes up. More buttons are pressed, and nearly half of the entire prison is blown to smithereens.

A LEADER steps forward.

BIKER LEADER
Find him or kill all of them!

They charge the gates like an army from Middle Earth. They're looking for only one person.

ULY'S CELL

Uly's huddled in a corner. He rocks back in forth, covered in blood again, but not his this time.

REVEAL the remains of the fat guard. Literally beaten to a bloody pulp. Been a while since Ulysses Moss got violent. He's in a dark place, momentarily.

PENNY'S HOUSE

Penny lies on the couch, spaced out, TV on.

STREETS

Grover is out of his car now. He's getting soaked, but doesn't seem to mind. He keeps dialing his cell phone, but not getting any answer.

He moves down a random road.

DING!

INT. WARDEN'S OFFICE

Blagg's at his desk when he hears the first explosion. He rushes over to a window.

WARDEN BLAGG
What in the world?

Blagg's POV

Literally hundreds of men are coming over walls and through holes they've created with explosives.

Complete disorder as men are blowing themselves up, tossing grenades, launching missiles, while convicts and guards are all involved in massive close combat.

The warden gets under his desk. Takes a rosary from his drawer and begins to pray.

PRISON

Inmates join in one massive brawl with the invaders. Nobody's really on a side, just trying to make it out.

From the looks of it, none of them were able to so far. Even the invading men are being cut down by savage inmates.

ELEVATOR

DING! Sublevel 5.

The shaking's pretty crazy now.

KANE

What's happening out there?

The guide braces himself in the corner of the elevator. Still trying to cover everything up.

GUIDE

This happens now and then. Since the prison's run almost entirely on solar energy, we do experience the occasional turbulent elevator ride. It's worth it, I think. Carbon foot prints and that.

ULY'S CELL

Uly's not crying anymore. He stands over the lifeless guard, says a prayer and mumbles something to himself. He seems to be battling some real anxiety at the moment.

DING!

STREETS

Chris is trembling, drenched from the rain. He has a backpack over one shoulder and Grover's pistol in his right hand. He stares ahead vacantly.

Grover approaches him, takes the gun and puts an arm around the wet friend. He can't take his eyes away from something off-screen.

Chris breaks down crying almost immediately.

PENNY'S HOUSE

CLOSE ON FRONT WINDOW

CRASH! A brick flies through the front of the house, right at the foot of the couch where we just saw Penny.

STREETS

Grover holds Chris, who can barely breathe through the tears.

CHRIS

I didn't know what to do. He knew my name.

(beat; sobs harder)

I thought he was gonna kill me, Grover!

Grover has no idea what to do.

GROVER

It's okay. It's okay, buddy. Just go home. Go home and take a nap.

(eyes off-screen)

It's not your fault.

REVEAL the body of a RIVAL COLOMBIAN TEEN DEALER, lying face-up in a puddle nearby. Soaked from the downpour.

GROVER (CONT'D)

Do you have the drugs?

Chris doesn't understand how that's appropriate.

CHRIS

Do I what-?

GROVER

Chris, listen to me. You gotta give me the weed. Right now.

Grover rips Chris' backpack from him.

GROVER (CONT'D)

Papers?

CHRIS

Yes.

By now Chris is ready for all of Grover's instructions. Pulls a pack of rolling papers from his pocket.

GROVER
(deep breath)
Okay. Now please tell me you have the gun still.

CHRIS
I do. It's right-

GROVER
Just go home. Get the Hell out of here. Hide it somewhere that nobody but you could ever find it. Act normal about everything. I'll call you later.

Before Chris can even respond:

GROVER (CONT'D)
Go! Now!

He takes off running. Grover walks with the drugs in the opposite direction. Takes one last look at the dead body.

Notices for the first time what appears to be a puddle of puke, next to the corpse.

GROVER (CONT'D)
Shit.

PENNY'S HOUSE

She's passed out. Wind blows through from the busted window.

PRISON

Things have settled down. Except now nearly 2/3 of the prison has collapsed and pretty much everyone is dead.

The few surviving invaders roll out as quickly as they came. Almost like they were never there at all.

They seem a little disappointed. Like they shouldn't be leaving empty handed.

STREETS

The rain has stopped. It's been an hour or so.

Grover's got a joint rolled. Puffs casually as he walks down the street with a backpack full of weed over his shoulder.

He looks far more exhausted now. Running on fumes.
 When the sirens roll up behind him he almost feels at peace.

END TENSE ACTION CUT-UP

ELEVATOR

CLOSE ON Kane; silly look on his face. It's all quiet.
 Eventually:

KANE

...Yeah, gun violence would
definitely be at the top of my
 list...then drugs, probably...

Behind him, his colleague crosses her arms knowingly.

DING! Bottom floor. No sign of the chaos we just witnessed.
 The door starts to slide open.

GUIDE

(turning around)

Seriously, you two. I don't know
 where you've been doing your prison
 research, but I can assure you that
 contrary to popular belief, drug
 use is *not* running rampant through
 the prison systems. And as far as
 guns go, I'll just say that there's
 absolutely *no* way that any of our
 prisoners are carrying-

HALF OF HIS FACE is blown into oblivion by a GUNSHOT; it and
 splatters all over Theresa. She screams.

REVEAL ULY behind him, holding a handgun. He's worked
 through his demons for the moment.

Smiles at Kane as he points the gun at him.

BUT IT'S JAMMED. Uly curses his luck, but moves on from it
 rather quickly.

Theresa and Kane are both paralyzed with fear.

ULY

Lucky this ain't my gun, I suppose.
 (beat)
 That's fate though, huh?

He fiddles with it to try and get it working, points it at Kane and pulls the trigger again. No good.

ULY (CONT'D)

Yep. It's a sign from the good Lord, alright.

He drops it onto the fallen. Looks down.

ULY (CONT'D)

Sorry if that one was a buddy of yours.

KANE

He wasn't. No worries.
(under breath)
Jesus, he's absolutely perfect.

ULY

Hey, you two got an automobile by any chance?

Kane nods so fast it's impossible to tell whether he's afraid at all anymore or just way too excited.

Uly brushes Kane's face lightly with the gun barrel. Makes him quiver.

ULY (CONT'D)

I'm gonna need your keys then, you do realize.

He feels around for the keys. Then remembers something.

Kane points upward.

KANE

(stammering)
I...had to...it's...with guards.

Theresa decides it's best to speak for him.

THERESA

We had to leave all of our personal stuff up front.

ULY

Well shit.

Theresa, who's still unsure as to what's going on, tries to slow the pace down a bit.

THERESA

Wait. Whatever exactly is going on
right now. Up there.

(beat)

You're saying it's happening
because of you?

He pushes them back in the elevator, guide at their feet.

ULY

(fiddling with gun again)

They must've of found something to
use against me. Thought I had a
perfect hiding place figured out.

(beat; sudden smile)

No matter, though. Best to not
dwell, ya know? That's a lesson
only experience can teach you.

BANG!

Uly smiles at his new comrades.

ULY (CONT'D)

There she goes.

DING!

INT. COP CAR - EVENING

Grover, in back of the cop car hunched forward. Calm.

Up front TWO COPS are having a ball with him.

COP 1

Real James Dean of you, kid.
Carrying a big bag of weed out of
the rain.

COP 2

Poetic almost. Did you expect us
to not find you? We aren't idiots,
you know.

Just then, the POLICE RADIO comes on.

Grover gets his smile from someone we've met before. He's
not afraid anymore for some reason.

COP 2 (CONT'D)

You think it's funny to be be
smoking weed wherever you damn well
please? Not today, buddy. Not in
my town.

COP 1

You kids think you can get away
with anything these days.

The boy's attention turns to the rain hitting the window.
The cops don't like it one bit.

INT. VISITOR CHECK-IN

This room is just as ruined as everywhere else. Uly guards
the door, Kane searches under a dead receptionist.

THERESA

I don't understand...

ULY

Not much to understand.

(beat)

They must not have known to check
the hole.

KANE

(searching)

Classic mistake.

ULY

Hurry up over there, will ya!
Don't have all day, I dunno if
you've realized.

A JINGLE sound, then Kane tosses the keys to a grinning Uly.

ULY (CONT'D)

Okay, I'm ready now.

Only takes Kane a moment to realize that he fucked up.

INT. HOLDING CELL - EVENING

Grover's tossed into a holding cell alongside some junkies.
He looks dazed, as though he doesn't know what's going on.

GUARD

There ya go, tough guy. You're
lucky the transport bus already
came tonight.

(MORE)

GUARD (CONT'D)

Maybe you'll find a new supplier in here.

(snicker)

Sleep well, now.

He knows that he will.

INT. VISITOR CHECK-IN

Uly's got Kane in a tight sleeper hold. He's about to lose consciousness.

KANE

(choking)

Please...please wait-

ULY

Ain't nothing personal, partner. Just don't need both of you to show me where your car is. It's for practicaly sake, really.

Changes his grip a little. Gets a conversation kind of grip.

ULY (CONT'D)

You know I've actually been trying the whole non-violence thing. Thought it was working, too. And Hell you'd think that after ten years they'd give up on a guy like me. Maybe even forget about all the wrong things I've done. I seen it happen before.

He looks at Theresa, as well as the all around him, silently noting the fact that everything has been destroyed.

ULY (CONT'D)

Suppose that ain't the case now though.

(beat)

Shit, I just as well should've gone for a music career. Wasted a bunch of time in this shit farm.

Kane's just about done for.

THERESA

Please don't kill him! I'm begging you. He only wants to help you!

Uly's surprised she's finally speaking at a coherent rate.

THERESA (CONT'D)

Really. Don't kill him. It'll be made worth your while. I promise you that.

It occurs to her that he might not be the guy who wants help. Uly still *slightly* lowers the pressure on his hold, though.

And there's that hideous smile again.

ULY

I'm not entirely sure you know how much my while is already worth.

She's so terrified that she talks to Uly like he's a caveman.

THERESA

(points to Kane)

He just wants to...make you famous.

(alternates between Kane and herself)

We. Want to make you famous. And he can. We can. We're powerful.

(gaining steam)

Maybe get to work on that music career?

Uly's not affected by her moves like other people are. Too many years in the hole. But he lets go of the hold, anyway.

THUMP.

Kane's body falls to the ground in a heap.

ULY

Famous you say?

He falls into deep thought. Considers his options.

Then he kicks up some dirt, looking a little frustrated.

ULY (CONT'D)

Aw, Hell. I'm not ready for this just yet. It was easy on that guard, all things considered. He's beaten me enough to deserve it. But it takes some nerve to work back up to the innocent young people killin'...

(beat)

Maybe fame is the answer.

The girl's marginally disturbed by this revelation.

THERESA
 (looks down at Kane)
 He's not dead, is he?

Uly nudges him lightly with his boot to ensure he's alive.
 Looks up at the girl.

ULY
 He's good.
 (beat)
 Alright new plan.

She's barely able to nod. Uly extends a hand.

THERESA
 I'm...Theresa. Torres.
 (beat)
 That's Peter Kane.
 (trailing off)
 We were here making a film and just
 looking for-

ULY
 Great. Ulysses Moss. You can call
 me an entrepreneur of sorts. But
 not now. Now we gotta go. Fast.

He slings Kane over his shoulder like a bag of soil. Motions
 for Theresa to follow him. She does so.

ULY (CONT'D)
 Your car nearby, then?

THERESA
 Not too far...

She winces. Doesn't think it's the right time to bring up
 that the car is miles away. And has a flat.

ELEVATOR

DING! Top floor. Kane's still unconscious over Uly's
 shoulder.

They're about to head right, but Uly suddenly stops.

He drops Kane to the ground again. Turns to the girl.

ULY
 You're actually gonna have to wait
 here for just a minute. I just
 gotta check on an old buddy of mine
 real quick.
 (cracks knuckles)
 (MORE)

ULY (CONT'D)
 Wouldn't want him to sleep through
 something like this, ya know what I
 mean?

He winks. Turns and runs the other way.

Theresa finds herself in a full-fledged panic, as she really
 could be murdered at any given moment.

Hysterical tears run down her face as she attempts to find an
 adequate hiding place for herself and Kane's body.

INT. HOLDING CELL - THE NEXT MORNING

CLOSE ON GROVER, sound asleep. As happy as we've seen him.

 MAN'S VOICE (O.S.)
 Moss. Grover moss. Grover Moss.

He slowly opens his eyes and looks around him. An OFFICER
 stands by the open cell door.

 OFFICER
 Let's go, Moss. You're out of
 here. I haven't got all day.

 GROVER
 (rubbing eyes)
 Right.

CUE MUSIC - *JANIS JOPLIN - "SUMMERTIME"*

Grover's world slows down. He's being led down a hallway.

They reach the front of the station, where an old 16" box
 television has gathered the attention of nearly every member
 on the police force.

Headline reads: "DEADLY REVOLT IN ARIZONA STATE PRISON" as a
 NEWSCASTER gives the details over the music.

Listening in,

 NEWSCASTER (V.O. TV)
 -with what initial reports are
 calling perhaps the most violent
 terrorist attack in American
 history. And it happened to a
 prison...

A few OFFICERS standing nearby weigh in.

OFFICER 1
Well Ho-ly Shit!

OFFICER 2
They're saying emergency crews are just arriving to the scene now!

OFFICER 3
Bet it's a real picnic for the guys in Arizona...

Back to the TV.

NEWSCASTER (V.O. TV)
There are still few details as to what started the riot, but we've received word of over 750 confirmed deaths so far, and these numbers are climbing by the minute. Sources tell us this all began when earlier today, the maximum security Complex was first attacked from the *outside*, followed by members of an currently unidentified terrorist group invading the prison, engaging in a huge melee with the survivors inside.

(beat)
For those watching with young people at home, we apologize for the graphic nature of what we're about to show.

CLOSE ON the TV as the broadcast continues. Fire, dead bodies, just outright carnage.

BEGIN ENDING CUT-UP

- PENNY'S HOUSE

She watches the broadcast. Trashbag over the broken window. She's afraid.

- ARIZONA STATE PRISON COMPLEX

CLOSE ON Theresa, daintily walking over piles of bodies.

- CHRIS' CAR

Chris giggles and smokes a joint in an empty parking lot, listens over the radio.

NEWSCASTER (V.O. TV) (CONT'D)

And again, residents of Southwestern Arizona are advised to take all necessary precautions, as it is highly likely at least a few convicts were able to escape this massacre.

- **STREETS - THE NIGHT BEFORE**

Grover, covered in filth, trudges through the rain with a body over his shoulder.

- **ARIZONA STATE PRISON COMPLEX**

Uly, covered in blood and adorned in brand-new cowboy boots, with a body similarly slung over his shoulder.

- **GANG HIDEOUTS**

Various gangs, mobs, and crime syndicates tune into the news to hear about the riot. Some gangs are overcome with excitement, others like it might be the end of the world.

- **STREETS**

Grover loads the body into the trunk of Penny's car.

- **JUST OUTSIDE OF PRISON**

Uly and co. continue to walk through the mess. Debris, fire, and bodies every which way.

One INMATE is not quite dead, yet, Theresa notices. He's nearly blown in half, but still tries to army crawl his way away from the once impenetrable jail.

She bends down to try and help.

DYING INMATE

Please...please...

Uly comes over puts him down right away. Theresa merely looks on in terror, but Kane may as well have a hard-on.

- **STREETS**

Rain. Grover pulls the car into the garage. Takes his backpack from the passenger's seat and locks it up.

He closes the garage behind him as he turns and begins walking out onto the dark street.

Lights up.

- EXT. DESERT

The badly cut up and snaggle-toothed Ulysses Moss smokes a cigarette in the darkness. He's illuminated by the prison just miles behind him, almost consumed in flames.

He flashes what by now is his trademark smile. He's enjoying freedom for the first time in ten years. But he's haunted.

And at least know now that it takes more than an army of troublemakers to knock him off.

ON KANE

Rubbing his hands, overflowing with great vision.

Theresa thumbs through her notebook, tries to get the drying bits of the guide's brains out of her hair.

NEWSCASTER (V.O. TV)

Please, try not to leave your homes if possible. These men are to be considered *extremely* dangerous.

END CUT-UP

BACK TO GROVER

Still watching pictures of damage at the prison.

ANTONIO (O.S.)

So he definitely is not dead then!
How joyous!

Grover's things are handed to him by none other than the jewelry-laden Colombian himself. He has no time to be surprised because of what's on the TV.

Antonio joins him in watching.

ANTONIO (CONT'D)

You know you shouldn't walk around with so much pot, Grover.

It seems Antonio knows a little too much. Grover's quiet.

ANTONIO (CONT'D)

That dad of yours is just one constant surprise after another, isn't he?

He steps in a little tighter.

GROVER

Listen. It's time we had a talk,
friend. I like to say that we are
"friends" now, huh?

Grover goes back to the TV one last time, his eyes widen at
the last image:

ON TV

A white wall. The words GO NOW SON smeared in red, next to
an INSIGNIA identical to the one on Grover's handgun.

Above the letters hangs a familiar snakeskin cowboy hat.
Pinned there with a knife still dripping red.

ON GROVER

Definitely his father's smile.

His eyes turn to Antonio. The music cuts off.

TO BLACK

Or better yet, off. Like a TV.

ANTONIO (V.O.)

(laughing)

And now the real fun begins, eh?

THE END

HERE COME THE SHINE BOYS (28 pgs.)

Sean Sherman and his only two friends are stuck in a rut. Coaching Little League sucks. If only there were a better team coming their way...

Well, there isn't. In fact, there isn't even Little League anymore. That gets taken, too.

But LORD, HERE COME THE SHINE BOYS, and they're part of Southern Florida's proud tradition of Senior Citizen competitive softball. No steroid or corked bat issues with them, no sir. Their only problem might be having too much heart!

Seriously, some of them might have enlarged hearts. They're old.

The idea of elderly people playing softball just appealed to me. It almost came in a weird kind of vision. When I was writing, *Hope*, actually, is when I first thought of the idea, and this is just what came of it.

I liked the idea because I think that the possibilities for a "Little Rascals"-type organized group of 9 interchangeable old people is pretty much endless. I didn't think baseball or softball really had to be the root of the show at all; I considered a softball league a good way to get a finite of characters onto the page, so that the audience would eventually develop an affinity for them all.

At it's core, this show is a comedy, but I imagine some elements of love and friendship shining through. I would not say it's in the same category really as my last two scripts, which go much more out of their way to stretch the limits of reality.

HERE COME THE SHINE BOYS

Written By
Anthony Paletta

207 S Neville Street
Pittsburgh, PA, 15044

FADE IN:

EXT. BALL FIELD - MORNING

CLOSE ON

SEAN SHERMAN (30), head coach, in deep concentration.

He observes his SUNNYDALE RAYS from the dugout. Scoreboard shows bottom of the seventh, Rays up one, two outs.

SHERMAN

Alright, Bobby! Get it done now!

CLOSE ON the golden boy of the opposing team, a barrel-chested 10-year old, as he steps into the batter's box.

UMPIRE (O.S.)

Time!

The home-plate UMPIRE runs to the mound. He removes his mask, reveals the handsome face of

GABE PORTER (26). The conniving, heartthrob type.

Leans close to a teenage PITCHER.

GABE

(whisper)

Feelin' okay, are ya?

PITCHER

Think I still got a couple left-

GABE

Uh-huh. Uh-huh.

Gabe's eyes turn to the kid up to bat, then back to pitcher.

GABE (CONT'D)

Okay let's break down the batter for a minute. He's a naturally a beautiful young man. Probably has a personal trainer. He got dropped off in a Benzo this morning. 4-for-4 on the day. Everybody in attendance today knows he's gonna crush whatever trash you throw at him, probably win it for his team and be carried off the field.

Looks back to pitcher.

GABE (CONT'D)

You, on the other hand? Look like shit. I'm gonna go ahead and predict that this could be the biggest moment of your life to date. If you don't make a move soon then those days are probably never going to come. So the way I see it, right here and now you have two options.

He puts his hand on the pitcher's shoulder.

GABE (CONT'D)

You can try to play fair and throw one over the plate, so this kid can inevitably take a piss on everything you and this team have worked for today...

The pitcher's getting nervous. Gabe's practically drooling.

GABE (CONT'D)

Or you can make something of yourself right here and now. You can be a hero. You can hit that son of a bitch so with the ball so hard he will never want to get back up again, let alone play sports.

(beat)

Also, check out the wiener on deck.

He points to a FRAIL KID in glasses, barely able to hold a bat.

GABE (CONT'D)

Think about it, junior. All I'm saying.

The pitcher looks determined. By now, Sherman has made it over to the mound.

SHERMAN

You gotta quit stopping the game, Gabe! It's suspicious.

GABE

Got it covered, dude. No worries.

REVEAL **DEAN PORTER (27)** at the opposing dugout.

He's Gabe's equally handsome, but far less professional older brother. Also a convenient 3rd base umpire.

He's in the middle of settling down the upset OPPOSING COACH.

DEAN

Part of our job description is to ensure safety of these kids, coach! Pitcher's mom told us he's had issues with low blood sugar.

OPPOSING COACH

I just don't think it should be taking this long, is all.

(thinks)

And aren't three umpires supposed to be calling the game?

Their heads turn to the outfield, where

KENNARD (34), a vagrant, is passed out face-down.

Dean takes a moment to assess the situation.

DEAN

Low blood sugar.

OPPOSING COACH

(looking behind Dean)

What's he doing now?!

Dean turns to Gabe on the mound, in the middle of trying to smear pine tar on the back of the pitcher's hand unnoticed.

DEAN

Alright, I'll take care of this, coach. Be easy now.

As Dean starts toward the mound, wiener kid approaches coach.

FRAIL KID

What's happening? Is the game over?

VISITING COACH

I don't know, I guess there's just some problem with one of their-

He looks to the mound once more:

Gabe's showing an effective pitching motion, Dean demonstrates the proper way to dip tobacco.

Sherman can only shrug toward the visiting dugout.

VISITING COACH (CONT'D)

(sighs)

...let's start loading up the bus.

The sound of a dull thud off-screen, followed by jeers from the crowd.

EXT. BALL FIELD PARKING LOT - MORNING

Gabe and Dean load their equipment into Sherman's car.

Sherman, in a silent rage, approaches and throws two huge Gatorade jugs in the trunk. Dean seems not to notice.

DEAN

Way to want it more out there today, big guy.

GABE

It seems stupid to drive that far if they're just gonna forfeit in the end, anyway. I'd start looking for more professional competition for these kids.

Sherman slams the trunk closed.

SHERMAN

I'd wager that you guys played a substantial part in their forfeit.

DEAN

I disagree.

SHERMAN

(annoyed; turns around)

They said that little boy is probably going to need stitches.

DEAN

Hey man if the sport was easy everybody'd be playin' it..

Gabe puts a hand on Sherman's shoulder.

GABE

Listen, with all due respect, you do seem to be taking this a little too hard. All we did was lock you up for the championship on Sunday.

(smirks)

Which we will also happen to be calling.

The bros slap five. Sherman shakes his head.

SHERMAN
It's truly a dark day for baseball.

DEAN
Hasn't been too bright in baseball
for a while now, buddy. Get real.

They start getting into the car.

SHERMAN
Just...no cheating in the
championship, alright? The kids
deserve a fair game.

GABE
Yeah. And a fair game they'll
receive.

DEAN
Fair as Hell.

TITLE SEQUENCE: "**HERE COME THE SHINE BOYS**"

EXT. BALL FIELD - MORNING

3 days until championship...

Sherman's team has taken a knee around him in the outfield;
Kennard still lay unconscious in the same position.

Sherman's wrapping up his big motivational speech.

SHERMAN
*...and the most important thing to
remember is this: just play with
confidence and have fun out there.
You can beat these guys if you just-*

Out of nowhere, a BEAT-UP JEEP CRASHES THROUGH THE BACKSTOP,
SCREECHES to a halt right in front of Sherman's team.

Dean and Gabe step out of the vehicle.

DEAN
Well Sherman, we finally did it
this time.

SHERMAN
We're in the middle of practice,
guys, can it wait?

GABE

Uhh. No, obviously. We drove our car onto the field.

Dean nods his agreement.

SHERMAN

What are you talking about?

DEAN

Buckle up boys and girls. Because it's time to meet-

SHERMAN

There aren't any girls on this team.

DEAN

(opens back door)

The new pitcher of the *Sunnydale Rays*!

Out steps REYNALDO LOPEZ (20)

He's greasy, Cuban, and wearing a fast food uniform.

SHERMAN

Jesus Christ.

GABE

(to children)

Now I know what you're all asking yourselves. Do we really need a new star pitcher at this point in the season? Will this have a negative affect on our chemistry?

DEAN

The answer to both questions, I'm afraid, is yes. Bobby just wasn't getting it done. But Reynaldo here is a true winner. And frankly, none of you are any good at all. In fact if it wasn't for my brother and I, you'd be lucky to reach double-digits in the wins column.

GABE

More like single digits, you mean.

Sherman's livid.

DEAN

That's true, kids. Single digits.
But we help because we care about
this team.

Sherman attempts to conceal his rage in front of the kids.

SHERMAN

Can I talk to you two in private
for a moment please?

He motions Gabe and Dean to follow him.

GABE

Sure. Kids, we'll be right back.
Get acquainted. Reynaldo, loosen
up, cuz.

(looks to former pitcher)

Bobby you can take a lap or
something. You're obviously no
longer relevant to what's going on
here.

SHERMAN

(authoritative)

Bobby, you stay right there.

The three men move out of earshot of the kids.

SHERMAN (CONT'D)

What part of "no cheating" confused
you idiots!

GABE

You said no "conventional"
cheating. This is different

SHERMAN

Why in the Hell would I use the
word convention-

(looks at Reynaldo)

How old is he anyway?

DEAN

Who knows? English isn't his first
language. Nobody's gonna be able to
tell, though. He fits right in.

SHOT OF Reynaldo, a good foot taller than any of the kids.
They stand around him in awe as he lights up a cig.

REYNALDO

(angry)

Que?!

Back to Sherman, speechless.

DEAN

He's Cuban, Sherman! Give the guy a chance is all I'm asking. If you don't like him just...

(thinks it over)

I dunno. Leave him somewhere where you see a bunch of Cuban people.

Gabe stops when he notices Kennard's body, motionless nearby.

GABE

Oh my God, Kennard? Jesus, how long have you been out here?

Gabe leans down and hoists him up. Kennard slowly comes-to.

KENNARD

(incoherent grumbling)

GABE

Take it easy, man. I'm gonna get you back to the shelter.

(turns to Dean)

You dudes alright here for a while?

SHERMAN

I really think you guys need to-

DEAN

We'll be fine. God speed.

Gabe puts Kennard in the car and drives away.

Dean grabs the baseball glove from Sherman's hand.

DEAN (CONT'D)

(to Reynaldo)

Hey, chico! Toss one over here!

A ball flies ten feet over Dean's head.

DEAN (CONT'D)

(nodding to Sherman)

Eh?

INT. GABE'S CAR - DAY

Gabe constantly looks over at his barely conscious cargo.

GABE
Stay with me, buddy. You're gonna
make it!

KENNARD
(eyes suddenly wide)
I seen a murder!

This concerns Gabe.

GABE
Okay, you probably should just keep
that to yourself for the time
being. For now let's just enjoy
some FM radio!

Kennard tries to open the door handle.

KENNARD
Lemme out! I can't go back!

GABE
Relax, friend. Everyting's fine.
You're just suffering from an
unspecified mental illness.
(beat)
Ya know I hate to say this,
Kennard, but maybe it's time we
have a little talk about your
"substance abuse" if you wanna be
an umpire-

Suddenly Kennard gets the door open and dives out of the
moving vehicle.

Gabe just continues driving.

GABE (CONT'D)
Hmm...

EXT. BALL FIELD - AFTERNOON

Dean's playing catcher, Reynaldo's on the mound. The rest of
the team is either on the field or sitting in the dugout.

Reynaldo throws another wild pitch. Since the backstop's
been ruined the ball rolls out onto the busy road.

SHERMAN
Oh come on! That was our last one!

DEAN

Give him a chance, Sherm, he's just getting warmed up.

SHERMAN

We've been watching him throw wild pitches for well over an hour!

DEAN

Yeah, well. It takes him a little while.

SHERMAN

How could you possibly know how long it takes him? Also, I'm beginning to think he's not even Cuban. Or at least he's one of the few Cubans unfamiliar with the game of baseball.

DEAN

Just wait until you see him on offense.

EXT. BALL FIELD-LATER

CLOSE ON Dean, standing on the mound.

A few seconds after he tosses a ball, we see a bat go flying over his head, into the outfield.

DEAN

Solid effort, ese.

Sherman steps out onto the field.

SHERMAN

Alright, he's had his chance. Can you get him out of here so we can get back to practice, please?!

DEAN

He's a human being, Sherman! I can't just dump him somewhere. And I haven't mentioned this yet, but his *real* strength is fielding.

SHERMAN

He can't catch or throw!

DEAN

(defensive)

Alright, alright, take it easy!

(MORE)

DEAN (CONT'D)

It's not like any of these pukes
can even hit to the outfield...
(thinks about statement)
Which I suppose means that
Reynaldo's stellar fielding
abilities wouldn't really matter...

SHERMAN

He's not a stellar fielder, Dean!

Their argument interrupted as Gabe drives his jeep onto the field again. Another car pulls up directly behind him.

A plainclothes Cuban-looking guy steps out from car 2.

Meet OFFICER HERNANDEZ (35), all business.

SHERMAN (CONT'D)

Christ, not another one.
(to Gabe)
Please, just take your ringers back
where you got them before this get
any worse.

Hernandez, not amused, shows Sherman his badge.

OFFICER HERNANDEZ

Officer Ken Hernandez. We found
your friend over here trying to
bribe homeless people to stand-in
as umpires. Which is just one of
many complaints we've been getting
about this particular operation...

Sherman glares at Gabe, who gives an innocent shrug.

OFFICER HERNANDEZ (CONT'D)

So we're shutting you down pending
further notice. We have some
questions for you, as well.

SHERMAN

(being cuffed)
Shit. Wait, what do you mean
"shutting me down"? Why am I the
one being cuffed? Hey!

Dean shakes his head as Hernandez' doors slam.

Everyone stands in silence until the car is long gone:

DEAN

So what happened to Kennard?

GABE
Yeah, we probably aren't gonna see
much more of him.

DEAN
Mm. Gotta find a new umpire, then
I guess.

GABE
Looks like it.

Dean nods. More silence.

GABE (CONT'D)
This is no reason to let a good day
of practice go to waste, right?

Dean, suddenly enthused, picks up a glove off the ground.

DEAN
We're gonna need balls, though.
(walks out onto field)
Okay kids! Line up on the curb!

INT. INTERROGATION BASEMENT - AFTERNOON

Smoke hangs in the underground concrete room.

A BURLY OFFICER stands in the corner as Hernandez adjusts the
only light; points it directly at Sherman's face.

OFFICER HERNANDEZ
So you're a physical education
teacher, are you Mr. Sherman?

SHERMAN
Yes, that's right.
(looking around)
Is this just somebody's basement?
This place doesn't seem up to code.

His question is paid no mind.

OFFICER HERNANDEZ
Down at Sunnydale public? That's a
nice place.

The cops smirk.

OFFICER HERNANDEZ (CONT'D)
Gotta ask...do you make your kids
shower after class, Mr. Sherman?

SHERMAN
(shocked)
Excuse me?

The burly guy puts his hands on the table.

BURLY OFFICER
You heard him, bitch.

SHERMAN
Look, this all seems like a little
much. I'm not really sure-

A FIST slamming hard in front of Sherman shuts him up.

BURLY OFFICER
A little much?! You think this is
a game, do ya?!

A tense silence.

BURLY OFFICER (CONT'D)
DO YA?!

SHERMAN
(panicked)
I'm not really- Are you talking
about baseball still? Or-

The Burly Officer starts shaking him hard.

BURLY OFFICER
I'll break your neck you little
shit!

Hernandez calms the brute down. Separates the two men.

OFFICER HERNANDEZ
Alright take it easy, take it easy.
Mr. Sherman we just want to know
one thing.

He pulls out two black and white photos of Dean and Gabe.

OFFICER HERNANDEZ (CONT'D)
How do you know these two?

SHERMAN
(confused)
Uhh, those are just some old
fraternity brothers of mine. We
hang out from time to time, I
guess.

BURLY OFFICER

You guess?! I'll break your God damn neck!

He makes a lunge toward Sherman, but Hernandez stops him.

OFFICER HERNANDEZ

Alright that's just about enough with the neck breaking threats, Ted. Go get some coffee will ya?

Ted, the burly officer, slowly exits the room. His eyes never leave Sherman.

OFFICER HERNANDEZ (CONT'D)

Alright look, Mr. Sherman. I'm gonna make this easy for you. We know you're in collusion with these men. Fixing the little league games. Easy money and all that. So it's time to pay the piper...

Sherman doesn't get it. He leans in, seductively close.

OFFICER HERNANDEZ (CONT'D)

...I want in.

Still doesn't get it.

SHERMAN

In what?

OFFICER HERNANDEZ

Don't make this difficult, Sherman.

SHERMAN

Listen, I honestly don't know what you're talking about. I'm just trying to coach a little baseball in my free time.

(points to pictures)

I'm sure any wrongdoing can be traced solely back to these two, so you should probably talk to them. Not me. Sorry.

He tries to get up, but Hernandez pushes him back down.

OFFICER HERNANDEZ

Now. I'm going to ask again, because I'm not sure you understood the first time. We can either do this the easy way, and all walk out of here big winners, or...

On cue, Ted KICKS OPEN THE DOOR, growls like a starving dog.
Sherman's eyes widen in horror.

END OF ACT I

ACT II

EXT. BALL FIELD - THE NEXT DAY

2 days until championship...

Gabe, Dean, Reynaldo, and Sherman watch over practice.

GABE

So wait. What does this mean for us, then?

SHERMAN

I don't know. I told them they could get "in" on whatever it was we are doing.

GABE

Mhmm, sure.

Dean scratches his head.

DEAN

I'm lost.

SHERMAN

For some reason they think the three of us are somehow making money by not calling the games fair. I tried to tell them you two were dumb, but they wouldn't believe me. Now they want a percentage of that money.

DEAN

Wait, *could* we be making money? Gabe said the only way is by holding one of the kids for ransom.

GABE

And I stand by that.

Sherman sighs.

SHERMAN

So what we need to do now is find a way to actually make money, or else I'm going to end up going to jail. Or having to pay a fine. Or something along those lines.

(stares off in distance)

It was a pretty vague explanation...

He starts squinting, sees something out there.

SHERMAN (CONT'D)
What the heck is that?

They all look.

REVERSE to A BEAT UP SHUTTLE BUS coming over the horizon.

GABE
I thought you had the field all
week?

SHERMAN
I do.

DEAN
Uh-oh. I don't like the looks of
this one bit.

He picks up a bat; hands it to Reynaldo.

DEAN (CONT'D)
It's go time, youngin. Your first
taste of good ol' American
terrorism.

SHERMAN
You're an idiot.

Back to the van as it CRASHES THROUGH the makeshift backstop. Dean chucks his bat at the vehicle; does no damage. Reynaldo follows suit and achieves the same results.

As the dust settles, two WHITE LEATHER BOOTS hit the ground.

COMMISSIONER RODNEY McCORMICK (55), known only as **COMMISH**, holds a smoldering cigar in his hand and a pair of red suspenders over his shoulders. He's classic Texas.

Takes in the sights a moment before sizing up Sherman.

SHERMAN (CONT'D)
Can I help you, sir?

Commish takes a big puff.

COMMISH
You in charge of this field here,
son?

SHERMAN
No, I'm not. Sorry. I'm just coach
of the local pony team.

COMMISH

Pony team, eh? I'm gonna be honest with you friend, I never cared much for kids. Never had any myself.

Commish's eyes drift into thought. Everyone else is kind of creeped out, the kids included.

He shakes off his daze eventually, extends a hand to Sherman.

COMMISH (CONT'D)

Name's Rodney McCormick. Just took over the nursing home about a block from here. Now I'm trying to secure some land for my boys.

SHERMAN

Sean Sherman. These are two friends of mine, Gabe and Dean Porter.

DEAN

(shakes hands)
We're brothers.

SHERMAN

(motioning to Little Leaguers)
And these are the one and only Sunnydale Ray-

Commish silences Sherman with a hand raise.

COMMISH

Not interested, friend. I believe I mentioned a moment ago that I don't care much for kids.

SHERMAN

Okay...look Mr. McCormick-

COMMISH

Call me "Commissioner".

Sherman's getting more uncomfortable.

SHERMAN

Okay. Commissioner. I really can't provide any information on your problem, here. You'll probably have to talk to the county or something...we're just trying to get ready for our championship coming up, so-

He's silenced once again by Commish's palm.

COMMISH

Wait a minute. You say
championship? What day's that?

SHERMAN

Um. It's on Sunday.

COMMISH

Sunday? Like this coming Sunday?
(off Sherman's nod)
Boy howdy wait until they hear
about this!

GABE

Wait until who hears about this?

COMMISH

You watch your mouth, young man.

It's obvious through this brief exchange that the Commish
inexplicably hates Gabe.

COMMISH (CONT'D)

Alright, Mr. Sherman. I'm going to
get out of your way here. Let you
get back to what you're doing.

He smiles at Sherman.

COMMISH (CONT'D)

Good luck in that big game, now!

Without another word he gets in his shuttle and drives off.

Dean moves closer behind the somewhat suspicious Sherman.

SHERMAN

There's something off about that
guy...

DEAN

Are you serious? I thought he was
quite friendly.

EXT. BALL FIELD - THE NEXT DAY

1 day until championship...

Sherman arrives to find the entire field being bulldozed.

A sign reads "Property of Sunnylegde Retirement Village".

EXT. DUMP - DAY

Sherman's holding practice among a sea of garbage.

Dean hits a grounder to some kids; it gets lost in the filth.

SHERMAN

Well this was a terrible idea.

GABE

Yeah we could've thought it through
a little more.

A kid pukes in the distance.

SHERMAN

I can't believe that wily old man
just stole our field.

GABE

Old people, man. They suck the
life out of everything they touch.

Dean comes over.

DEAN

Hey, we can't find any of our
balls. I did see some old fruit of
a similar shape, though...

SHERMAN

Alright, That's it. I'm getting to
the bottom of this. You guys stay
with the kids.

He trudges back to his car.

EXT. SUNNYLEDGE PARKING LOT

Sherman pulls his car into the lot.

CUE SOME KIND OF PUMP-UP MUSIC AS HE WALKS IN WITH AUTHORITY.

INT. SUNNYLEDGE LOBBY

CUT PUMP-UP MUSIC IMMEDIATELY, REPLACE WITH LOFTY MUZAK.

Old people walk and wheel around, almost in slow-motion.

Sherman approaches the front desk. A CHUBBY CLERK greets him.

SHERMAN
I'd like to see Commissioner
McCormick, please.

CLERK
Alrighty...do you have an
appointment?

SHERMAN
No, I do not. I'm just here to
talk about how he stole my field.

Clerk's face turns sour.

CLERK
Mnhmm. You'll have to wait in line
with the rest of them then, sir.

She points over to a sitting area, where several other men,
all dressed like coaches, wait angrily.

EXT. ROAD - DAY

Dean and Gabe walk on the side of the road with the rest of
the *Sunnydale Rays*.

KID 1
Where are we going?

DEAN
I said no talking.

KID 2
I'm tired!

DEAN
(turning around)
Christ, do you losers ever get
tired of complaining? Consider
this your biggest test before the
championship tomorrow.

KID 1
How are we going to be able to
practice without a field?

DEAN
There'll be a field, kids. You let
your uncle Dean worry about that.

GABE
(whisper)
You aren't their uncle.

DEAN

They don't know that.

Gabe sighs.

INT. SUNNYLEDGE LOBBY - LATER

The waiting room is slightly emptier than before. A guy sitting next to Sherman leans over.

COACH 1

What happened to you?

SHERMAN

My practice field got bulldozed and our league championship is tomorrow.

COACH 1

That's a toughie. We lost about 75% of our football field.

Another coach, covered in paint, chimes in.

COACH 2

Our entire paint ball course was torn up this morning.

Sherman begins to wonder what the Hell's going on.

COACH 3

You think that's bad? My entire funeral parlor was detonated this morning without a word of notice.

COACH 2

Damn.

(beat)

Wait, are you sure that wasn't just some sort of crime being committed?

SHERMAN

And why are you *dressed* like a coach?

Coach 3 suddenly gets up and runs away.

EXT. DUMP - LATER

The team is back at the dump; it's virtually identical to the original scene.

KID 3
We're never going to win now.

He plops down on the trash. Some of teammates follow suit.

GABE
Hey now! That's not a winner's attitude. Do you think the other team would be giving up if their field were...

Gabe's suddenly got an idea. He turns and starts walking.

KID 3
If their field got what?

GABE
(preoccupied)
Huh? Nothing. Shut up.

He goes over to Dean, who has been hitting rotten fruit with a bat.

GABE (CONT'D)
Bro. Come with me. Just had a brilliant plan.

DEAN
Okay.
(starts to go)
Wait, what about the kids?

GABE
Whatever. They're fine.

Dean shrugs.

END OF ACT II

ACT III

INT. SUNNYLEDGE LOBBY - DAY

Sherman now sits alone in the waiting room. After a moment he gets up and goes over to the clerk.

SHERMAN

Excuse me, but I saw the last guy
come out at least half an hour ago.
What's going on?

CLERK

Please have a seat, sir. The
Commissioner will see you when he's
ready.

SHERMAN

But-!

CLERK

Sir. Please.

He grunts out his fury and storms back to his seat.

EXT. OTHER BALL FIELD - DAY

It's like the climactic home run scene from *The Natural*,
except now a Little League baseball field is being burned
down.

The COACH of the other championship team arrives on the
scene, falls to his knees upon seeing his field up in flames.

Dean, Sherman, and Reynaldo load empty cans of gasoline into
a car some ways away.

DEAN

That went pretty smoothly, all
things considered.

GABE

At least now the game will be fair
tomorrow.

(turns to Reynaldo)

You done good, holmes.

DEAN

You guys wanna go get some food?

REYNALDO

Si.

GABE

There's a *Denny's* just around the corner.

They walk away.

INT. COMMISSIONER MCCORMICK'S OFFICE

A steer head hangs on the wall, along with several baseball trophies. Commish, behind his desk, thumbs through a file.

Sherman enters.

COMMISH

Sean Sherman! What can I do ya for?

SHERMAN

You had no right to take our field, Commissioner.

COMMISH

Is that right?

(smiles)

Have a seat, son. Let's talk this out.

Sherman sits.

SHERMAN

And you even knew it was our championship tomorrow.

COMMISH

Listen, Sean. I don't know if you know this, but you're in some kind of hot water with the local law enforcement around here. See, I was looking into that property last night, and since you're pretty much the only one to ever use that field, I did a little check-up on you as well.

SHERMAN

What? What are you talking about.

The Commish gets his business face on.

COMMISH

Son, let me tell you somethin'. I've been around this block before.

(MORE)

COMMISH (CONT'D)

I've been around this block in a turbo-charged 911 Carrera. Tinted windows. Special Edition. With a thirty-six dollar set of wiper blades and a 5000 watt woofer system. I'd blow smoke circles around your ass before you could even get your radio tuned properly.

Sherman's baffled.

SHERMAN

What the Hell does that have to do with-?

COMMISH

Let me finish, now. Look around this office, boy. Fact of the matter is that I know a thing or two about playin' ball. And I know talent when I see it.

Commish leans back in his chair.

SHERMAN

Those kids are 10 years old, sir. I don't know what you could possibly see.

COMMISH

I ain't talking about the kids.

SHERMAN

What? What do you want then? Just to takeover my field so you can put a bunch of senile old people out to pasture? Old people certainly aren't talented...

Commish stands up; heads over to his window.

COMMISH

Sean, I'm a simple man at the end of the day. I got a wife at home. A plasma screen. A car so fast you could-

SHERMAN

Please, just tell me what it is you want.

COMMISH

I want you, Sean. No, in fact. I need you. I need you on my side.

(MORE)

COMMISH (CONT'D)
 Because something big is happening
 around here.

He turns back to Sherman, smiles.

COMMISH (CONT'D)
 So what I am about to do is offer
 you the opportunity of a life time.
 A real shot at the big leagues.

SHERMAN
 Big leagues? Are you serious?

COMMISH
 (eyes narrowed)
 Son, I'm the most God Damn serious
 man you'll ever meet in your entire
 life. Now c'mere. I need to show
 you something.

EXT. OLD MAN FIELD - AFTERNOON

Sean stands slack-jawed next to a proud Commish.

REVERSE to reveal roughly 25 senior citizens, all adorned in
 old-fashioned baseball uniforms, getting warmed up.

COMMISH
 Well, it's a big-er league. And
 it's a paying gig!
 (whispers in Sherman's
 ear)
 You'll be paid even better when you
 start winning...

Sherman sighs.

SHERMAN
 Commissioner, with all due respect,
 I think I'd rather just coach my
 old team.

A devious smile from the Commish.

COMMISH
 Would ya now?

CUE MUSIC - LED ZEPPELIN - KASHMIR

EXT. OTHER BALL FIELD - DAY

Gabe, Dean, and Reynaldo are all smiles until they reach their car. Everything slows down.

REVEAL Officer Ken Hernandez, in full cop attire, leaning on the trunk with a smirk on his face.

The boys' shoulders slump.

SHOT OF THE ASHEN REMAINS of the recently burned opposing field.

EXT. OLD MAN FIELD - CONTINUOUS

Commish cackles like an evil maniac as he holds his cell phone to his ear. Sherman looks more disappointed than ever.

CLOSE ON the old people, displaying their terrible athleticism.

Back to Sherman's eyes, welling with tears.

EXT. BALL FIELD - CONTINUOUS

The field is still being renovated, only now a new sign has been hung up, much larger than the first one.

READS: "WELCOME TO SUNNYLEDGE FIELD. FUTURE HOME OF THE SHINE BOYS"

THE END

HOPE (31 pgs.)

Hope's just been promoted to event coordinator at the Sunnylegde nursing home. A once proud establishment, now it's simply a box to get people ready for their coffins.

With very little help from her friends, family, and even co-workers, it's pretty much just up to her and her alone to turn Sunnylegde into something more than a black void of imminent death.

The odds may not be too good, but at least there's always *Hope*.

The idea for this show was presented to me by two men who actually wanted to develop it into a show. They wanted a *Wonder Years* kind of feel on a contemporary show about a woman working in a nursing home, and who better to go to than a 21-year old collegiate male?

Unfortunately, they had to drop out of the project just a week or so after giving it to me, but I went on to eventually write what would be *Hope* anyway.

It's the middle-ground, really, between the more serious pieces I've written and the very far out humor. I think it was a good exercise for me to try and find a line between the two and work a story out of it. At the same time, I did aim to make it a *little bit* corny by intention, as I believed a *Wonder Years* feel could only really work in a modern-day story if you add a little tongue-in-cheek jabbing here and there.

Hope is what also led to the idea behind *Here Come The Shine Boys*, and was really a worthwhile experience. It's my biggest attempt at drawing out a female character (which I don't think I was entirely successful at), and one of my first experiences with writing on a premise that was entirely made up by me alone.

HOPE

"Pilot"

Written By
Tony Paletta

HOPE E01 - "PILOT"

FADE IN:

EXT. CEMETERY - MORNING

CUE ELVIS - "PEACE IN THE VALLEY"

The Florida sun beams down on an enormous crowd of elderly people, all dressed in black and seated in front of a preacher. With their heads bowed, they listen to his final words of peace, and make the sign of the cross in unison as a casket is slowly lowered into the ground.

CLOSE ON the individuals in their seats; some are in good health, others are hunched over in wheelchairs and breathing through oxygen machines.

As the sermon ends, the old people get up and head towards the exit in a slow, single-file line, staring vacantly.

EXT. CEMETERY ENTRANCE - MORNING

HOPE JAMES stands among a dozen large white vans and does her best to look professional, though she is the youngest face we've encountered thus far. The sides of the vehicles read: "*Sunnylegde Retirement Village*", just beneath a cartoon graphic of a geriatric sun, complete with liver spots and bifocals.

She takes note of all the gloominess around her.

HOPE

This is so sad.

REVEAL CLARK PALMER, a young hipster-type cool guy, leaning on one of the vans. He slowly chews an enormous bite of the half-eaten corn dog that he's holding. Hope shakes her head, disgusted by the sight of him.

CLARK

(mouthful)

Yeah. It really is.

(beat; swallows)

Wait, are you talking about me?

She ignores him, sees the gates opening in the distance.

CLARK (CONT'D)

Sorry if my life in the fast lane bothers you, Hope.

He takes another bite and tosses the stick on the ground.
Hope glares back at him. More fierce this time.

HOPE
Do you seriously not care at all
that we're at a funeral?
(suddenly puzzled)
And what does that mean, *fast lane-*

Hope notices something off-screen.

HOPE (CONT'D)
Okay, be quiet, here she comes.

MS. MADELINE CROSS, the fiery matriarch of *Sunnylegde*,
dressed in a form-fitting number not often seen on a woman in
her mid-fifties, appears in the distance, the pack of seniors
following behind.

MS. CROSS
Alright people, let's go! Into the
same vans you came in, and remember
to stay with your *assigned* buddy!
I am serious about enforcing a zero-
tolerance buddy switching policy!

She turns back for a final chat with the preacher from
earlier. Hope does her best to greet several pairs of
unenthusiastic buddies walking by; Clark is mildly concerned.

CLARK
What's the matter with you?

HOPE
Nothing.
(beat)
Except Ms. Cross hates me, and I
really can't screw up again because-

He holds up hand, not interested.

CLARK
Alright, just forget it.

Ms. Cross finally makes her way over to where Hope and Clark
are standing, while the old people continue to board the
vans. One old man punches a nerdy-looking man in the arm.

MS. CROSS
(ambivalent to the
seniors)
How are you two holdin' up?

Hope seems like she's about to say something when Clark interrupts her.

CLARK
Hope's havin' a real tough time,
Ms. Cross.

Clark receives an elbow for his comment; he begins to cough as Hope turns to Ms. Cross.

HOPE
(frantic)
No, I'm not. Not at all. I'm
fine. Really. He's joking. I'm
great.

She fakes a smile. Ms. Cross gives her a suspicious once-over.

MS. CROSS
You're *great*.

On cue, a hearse speeds up to the curb. Pall-bearers emerge, pull out a coffin, and carry it past them.

MS. CROSS (CONT'D)
I believe it.

Clark shakes his head at Hope in faux-disappointment. Ms. Cross smiles, turns to him.

MS. CROSS (CONT'D)
And how about you?

CLARK
(ambivalent)
Eh, I'm cool.

Her expression lightens.

MS. CROSS
Yes, you certainly are.

Hope notices her affinity for Clark and stamps her feet in frustration. Ms. Cross turns to leave.

HOPE
He was just eating a corn dog!

She stops in her tracks and turns to Clark, then looks him over once more.

MS. CROSS
(nodding)
Life in the fast lane, eh Palmer?

He's somehow even less interested than a moment ago.

CLARK
Yeah, I guess.

Hope stomps her feet as Ms. Cross exits.

HOPE
Dammit!

We ZOOM OUT as the music picks up and the vans begin to pull away.

TITLE SEQUENCE: HOPE

EXT. SUNNYLEDGE RETIRMENT COMMUNITY - ENTRANCE - MORNING

The convoy moves through rusty steel gates with matching grandfatherly-sun symbols and up a hill to reveal the *Sunnyledge Retirement Community*.

Shots of a few people working in private gardens, playing board games, napping, etc. It looks like a summer camp in very slow-motion.

EXT. SUNNYLEDGE - MAIN BUILDING - CONTINUOUS

Hope and Clark emerge from a van, move to the rear and quickly unload their passengers. As Hope gets her fair share out, they smile at her in accordance and head inside.

Clark, however, is having a particularly hard time with MS. MADDY NELSON, a larger, very boisterous woman in a wheelchair, who is adamantly refusing his assistance. She holds onto the van like a cat afraid of water.

CLARK
(two-handing the chair)
Ms. Nelson please, you don't have to struggle like this!

MADDY NELSON
I told you to keep your hands off of me, you pervert! You stink like meat!

CLARK

Ms. Nelson, I can assure you that I am not a pervert. I can explain the smell, but-

MADDY NELSON

Get outta here, I say! I don't need you!

Clark stands up to wipe his forehead.

CLARK

Let's be honest here. You clearly need me, so I think the best thing to do right now would be to-

She smacks him in the face with her purse.

MADDY NELSON

(screaming)

This man's a deviant! This man is a lowlife creep!

Clark groans and walks away, all the while rubbing his face. Hope watches with enjoyment. We follow him as an elderly man, BUDDY STANTZ, adorned in a ball cap and fishing vest, approaches him. He is followed by some other shady old men.

BUDDY

(discreet)

Hey, Clark my main man! jive with me for a minute. I'm trying to make a big score. Lots of lettuce!

He pulls out a wad of money. Clark looks over his outfit and his posse, completely baffled.

CLARK

I can't "jive" with you right now, Mr. Stantz, I'm busy. Maybe later.

He plops himself down on a bench, kicks up some dirt. Stantz puts his money away, writes his number down on the wrapper of a hard candy, and sets it on Clark's lap as he turns away.

BUDDY

Give me a jingle when you're up to it, bro!!

Clark sighs.

CLARK

And again, I've known you for several years. You don't have to keep giving me your phone number every time we come in contact.

BUDDY

Suit yourself!

Buddy retrieves the wrapper and puts it into one of his vest pockets. On his way back towards the home he pulls out a cellular phone and places it to his ear as he passes Hope, who is on her way up.

BUDDY (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Operator? Eddie Lowry, please....

Hope approaches Clark, who is staring downward.

HOPE

Why was Buddy Stantz talking to you?

CLARK

What? I dunno, he's weird-
(looks up to Hope)
Wait aren't you even concerned about my well-being at all? I was just physically attacked by a crazed woman! You've really changed.

HOPE

I don't really know if crazed is the appropriate term for-
(noticing Clark's anger)
I mean I *am* concerned! I'm *so* concerned. I just thought that...
(prods him)
...you know. This whole *thing*....about you...that I wasn't supposed to talk about that stuff...

CLARK

Wait, what? What thing?
(realization)
Oh my God, how dare you call it a thing.

Clark stands up, apparently very upset. Hope tries to amend the situation.

HOPE

I didn't mean it like that. I just thought...it wasn't the type of question that should be asked to a guy who's...that way...like...you are, since it's...

(beat)

Nevermind.

Clark narrows his eyes and scowls.

CLARK

Mmhmm.

In the background, Maddy Nelson is still screaming gibberish. Clark rolls up his sleeves.

CLARK (CONT'D)

Alright, enough is enough.

He heads down towards the van. We stay with Hope, who watches Clark with a worried eye.

CLARK (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Let's go, woman!

MADDY NELSON (O.S.)

AIIEEE!!!

Sounds of disaster. Clanging metal, breaking glass, etc. Hope grimaces.

INT. MS. CROSS' OFFICE - SUNNYLEDGE - MORNING

Dead silence as a nervous Hope now finds herself in front of a large desk. Ms. Cross paces behind her, holding a rolled up newspaper in one hand. Every so often she pauses to look out the window.

MS. CROSS

It's happening, Hope.

(beat)

All of our worst nightmares are now a reality.

Hope really has no idea how to interpret the statement. She just nods when Ms. Cross looks over.

MS. CROSS (CONT'D)

Can you hear it?

Complete silence.

MS. CROSS (CONT'D)
 (cryptic)
 People are dying here.
 (beat)
 All of them.
 (beat)
 Dying everywhere. Everywhere all
 the time.

Hope is lost.

HOPE
 (eyes narrowed in
 confusion)
 Are we talking about what happened
 with Clark and Ms. Nelson? Because
 I'm not sure what you heard...

Ms. Cross startles Hope by slamming down her newspaper onto the desk. Headline reads: *Seniors Have Time of Their Life at Crescent Oaks*. Beneath it is a color picture of old people atop some kind of gargantuan steel roller-coaster.

MS. CROSS
 Look at the press these jerks are
 getting! And do you know how many
 funerals we've been to just this
 month? Six! All we seem to do
 here is go to funerals!

HOPE
 (defensive)
 Hey, that's not fair! We go to the
 park, too!

Ms. Cross picks up the newspaper again, turns to a page way in the back. Shows headline: *Record deaths at Sunnyledge*.

Beneath the headline is an overwrought black-and-white photo of the *Sunnyledge* staff smiling among catatonic seniors on a busted-looking Merry Go-Round. Clark can be seen in the background, double-fisting corn dogs.

MS. CROSS
 Yeah, a lot of good that's doing.
 (beat)
 And for me personally, today was
 the worst funeral yet.

She quickly flips through a bunch of papers before finding the correct one.

MS. CROSS (CONT'D)
 (reading)
 Ernie...was a wonderful man!

She looks up.

MS. CROSS (CONT'D)
 A wonderful man, who is *dead*. And I was thinking, what does he have to show for himself around here? Nothing! We're all just sitting around waiting for the next funeral. Well not anymore. Stand up, Hope. Enough is enough.

Hope tentatively stands up.

MS. CROSS (CONT'D)
 I saw you at the funeral today. I saw how much it affected you!

Hope's eyes brighten.

MS. CROSS (CONT'D)
 You're the event coordinator here. Starting right now, I'm putting you in charge of a new initiative...

Now Hope is practically bursting with excitement.

MS. CROSS (CONT'D)
 You, Hope, are going to...

It becomes apparent she's having a tough time coming up with something.

MS. CROSS (CONT'D)
 ...all I can think of right now is amusement park.

CUT TO:

INT. KITCHEN - SUNNYLEDGE - MORNING

Clark, now sporting a large bruise on his face, does his best to keep to himself while he peels potatoes alongside CURTIS UNGER, a mid-thirties, greasy-type with a high-and-tight crew cut. After a long tension Curtis can't take it anymore.

CURTIS
 How'd you get that bruise?

Clark turns a shoulder.

CLARK
Just leave me alone, Curtis.

There's a tense moment of silence.

CURTIS
(quietly)
It's pretty badass lookin'.

Clark is reassured by this statement.

CLARK
...Thanks, man.

DENNY, a burly man in a chef's hat, interrupts the peeling.

DENNY
Palmer, the boss wants to see you
for something.

He groans.

INT. MS. CROSS' OFFICE - LATER

Hope and Ms. Cross sit with notebooks in their laps.

MS. CROSS
So we have narrowed it down to the
Orange Picking Jamboree or the
Bucket List-type wish-granting
deal.

HOPE
(looking over notes)
I really think the *Bucket List*
thing is the way to go here. We
had over one-hundred positive
responses when we showed the movie
last week. The only other movie
with close to that many is
Caligula!

Ms. Cross nods, seems to agree.

MS. CROSS
(to herself)
I thought it'd be educational...

They both shake their heads.

MS. CROSS (CONT'D)
Okay, *Bucket List* it is! Only we
can't call it that exactly...
(MORE)

MS. CROSS (CONT'D)
 (writes something down)
 How about some kind of *Bucket*
Jamboree...

HOPE
 How about, the *First Annual*
Sunnyledge Wishing Well Project.

Ms. Cross thinks it over. Writes something else down and holds it up in order to give a better look.

MS. CROSS
 First Annual Sunnyledge Wishing
 Well *Operandum.*

They share a smile, which is promptly interrupted by Clark.

CLARK
 Uh, yeah, I've been told I'm not actually supposed to say anything until my attorney gets here, so-

MS. CROSS
 That's enough, Palmer. You're on special assignment for the time being. For your "indiscretions".

She winks at him, then motions toward Hope, who is kind of freaked out.

MS. CROSS (CONT'D)
 You're gonna help Ms. James here carry out our new *Operandum.*

She opens a drawer on her desk and begins thumbing through files.

CLARK
 I'm not entirely sure what you mean by that, but again, I'm just going to keep quiet until my attorney gets here as I don't want to incriminate myself any further-

Ms. Cross sets a folder onto her desk. Looks to Hope.

MS. CROSS
 She'll explain, won't you Hope.
 It'll be great.
 (beat)
 Get out of here now, both of you.

Clark really wants to know what's going on. Hope smiles at him nervously as she stands up. They exit.

After they're gone, CLOSE ON Ms. Cross looking around, then pulling out a DVD of *Caligula* and shaking her head.

EXT. SUNNYLEDGE - DAY

Hope and Clark walk outside while Hope examines her new assignment folder.

CLARK

I really don't see the need for me to be involved in this.

HOPE

Consider it a bargain to avoid the sexual harassment charges hanging over your head from this morning.

CLARK

Hey, I was just a victim!

HOPE

(beat)

Our person is Ralph Moats. He's 97 and lives on the corner of the assisted living block. We will go meet with him after lunch and be done with this thing by the afternoon.

For the moment, Clark is displeased.

CLARK

What are we gonna do right now, then?

HOPE

I'm meeting my grandma for lunch. You can come if you want. I guess.

CLARK

Don't be rude. You know you want me to come.

(beat)

Plus, you owe me.

HOPE

Owe you for what? I don't owe you anything.

They turn the corner walking, Hope sighs.

CLARK

If it weren't for Ms. Cross weird attraction to me keeping her in a good mood, you'd have it a lot rougher around here...

EXT. SUNNYLEDGE TOWNHOUSES - CONTINUOUS

Hope and Clark now walk on the sidewalk in front of dozens of similar looking town homes. Elderly people all around them participate in various old-fashioned activities. Two men can even be seen shooting a leather ball into a peach basket.

HOPE

Ew, yeah what's up with that? Don't you think you should tell her? It's kind of weird for everyone.

CLARK

(trailing off)
What? It's not weird. It's cool...

HOPE

(trailing off)
It's weird.

CUT TO:

INT. NATALIE JAMES' HOUSE - DAY

Hope and Clark sit around a table in the comfortably furnished apartment of Hope's grandmother NATALIE JAMES, eating sandwiches, still arguing.

CLARK

...all I'm saying is, if she ever found out, this place would turn into some kind of Nazi labor camp.

HOPE

That's ridiculous.

Natalie enters, wearing a sundress and reading glasses around her neck. She holds a coffee cup in both hands.

CLARK

And with a secret identity like this it's almost like I'm hiding some kind of super power, ya know?

Hope scoffs.

HOPE
Being gay is not a super power!

CLARK
(offended)
Do not treat me like a second-class citizen!

Hope puts her head in her hands.

NATALIE
What are you two fighting about?

HOPE
Clark thinks that because he's gay he can get mad at me for whatever he wants and turn it into some kind of big civil rights ordeal.

NATALIE
(skeptical)
Clark? He isn't gay.
(to Clark)
Wait, are you?

CLARK
(proudly)
The gayest.

NATALIE
Hmm.

She nods; turns to go back into the kitchen. Clark stops here.

CLARK
What do you mean, "Hmm"?

NATALIE
Nothing.
(beat)
It's just that you don't...really seem like a...

Hope sees where this is going, goes back to head in hands.

HOPE
(under her breath)
God, not again.

CLARK
 (trailing off)
 Okay, *first* of all, the fact that
 you think we are supposed to "*seem*"
 a certain way is just offensive...

JUMP CUT TO:

INT. NATALIE JAMES' HOUSE - LATER

Clark is still dishing out a hard-core brow-beating to Hope
 and her grandmother, who just wait for him to finish.

CLARK
 ...And just because I am a unique
 individual doesn't mean my
 homosexuality is any different from
 somebody else's!

Hope perks up.

HOPE
 What are you talking about? Last
 week you said your kind of gay was
 completely different from everybody
 else. You were calling yourself
 "Gay 2".

CLARK
 Now you listen here-!

Natalie's calming hand cuts him off.

NATALIE
 Eh, I don't blame Clark for being
 low key around here.

CLARK AND HOPE
 (shocked; in unison)
 You don't?!

NATALIE
 Sure! Some of these people are old-
 fashioned. They might cause some
 stupid fuss over him. He should be
 able to carry out his business in
 whatever manner he pleases.

Clark sends a look of superiority to his diminished friend.

CLARK
 Thank you, Mrs. James.

NATALIE
 (patting Hope on back)
 Sorry, dear.

She gathers some dishes and exits the room. Hope tries to not look up.

HOPE
 Alright enough of this. I'm going to grant an old man's wish. Alone. You can just meet me outside his house in half an hour and do what I tell you. Since I'm your boss and all.

Finally she looks up to Clark, who is still gloating. She realizes her words had no effect.

HOPE (CONT'D)
 You know you can be gay and still show a little humility now and then.

CLARK
 Pff. You've obviously never watched those DVD's of *The Wire* I loaned you.

HOPE
 I'm leaving.

END OF ACT I

ACT II

EXT. RALPH MOATS' HOUSE - AFTERNOON

Hope stands outside the door of a townhouse that resembles all of the others that surround it, preparing for the task at hand by reciting a speech from a card.

HOPE
 (frantic; to herself)
 Hello, Mr. Ralph Moats. I would like to congratulate you on behalf of the *Sunnylegde* community as currently holding the prestigious title of *Oldest Resident!*
 (looks up)
 Oldest? Really?

The door suddenly jolts open; Hope lets out a quick shriek as RALPH MOATS, a beyond-grizzled 97 year-old war vet scoots out on a *Rascal*, wielding a pair of oversized wire cutters.

MOATS
Whaddaya want?! Get away from here!

He spits out a big hawker at Hope's feet.

HOPE
(frantic)
Mr. Moats! Oh my god, I'm so sorry. I was just here to-

He snips his wire cutters together as a means of silencing her.

MOATS
Who sent ya?
(beat)
Democrats?

HOPE
Uh...no?

He lowers his weapon; cracks a smile.

MOATS
A whig then, are yeh?

Hope's eyes narrow in thought.

INT. BATHROOM - SUNNYLEDGE

Clark dials his phone, haphazardly looks around to make sure he is the only one in the bathroom, then puts it to his ear.

CLARK
Hello? Hey, what's up, Mr. Stantz it's Palmer.
(chatter over the other line)
Yes, Clark Palmer. Yes, I'm the one who works here. We talked earlier.
(more chatter)
Yes, Mr. Stantz. Yes, the same guy...uh-huh...okay great.

A surprised expression comes over Clark's face.

CLARK (CONT'D)

(impressed)

Really? That much, huh?

(chatter)

Yes, that's quite impressive...no Mr. Stantz, it isn't the most I've ever dealt...what? I don't know...it was a lot more than that, though, I'll tell you what...Mr. Stantz I don't what you mean by "darby"...uh-huh...

More chatter on the other end. Clark rolls his eyes, realizing what he may have gotten himself into.

INT. RALPH MOATS' HOUSE - LATER

Hope sits on a lawn chair, virtually the only piece of furniture in the apartment that isn't homemade and also carved out of wood. She looks as if she is about to fall asleep as Moats, smoking a big wooden pipe, finishes up an anecdote.

MOATS

-and I tell ya it was the biggest gourd I've ever held in my hands to date. Here's the photograph of it!

He hands her a photo. She promptly sets it aside and leans forward, shaking off her fatigue.

HOPE

Mnhmm...So you say you like to whittle a lot, Mr. Moats? Maybe we could grant you a wish related to that?

Moats spits another gross loogie on the floor; Hope nearly throws up.

MOATS

I'll be damned if I need any help from you to do *my* whittling!

HOPE

Fair enough...is there *anything* at all you could tell me to help me out here?

The old coot thinks it over.

SHORTY (CONT'D)

Yeah, I didn't think so.

(beat)

No. No. That isn't true, I wasn't the one who said- Well, I don't know what to tell you.

(beat)

Uh-huh. Fine.

(beat)

Good! It wasn't even true. You could never be famous in your life.

(beat)

What? What's that supposed to mean.

(beat)

That's not true, she had other qualities. I'm sure birthing eight kids at the same time helped, but-

(beat)

I don't know. Probably some kind of chemical or something.

(beat)

Uh-huh, yeah, well, you know what? If you birthed 10 kids at the same time it wouldn't make you famous. They'd put you in jail for it. And your kids would be put in jail with you.

(beat)

Well, juvenile hall then. Yeah, Same to you. I will. Screw off.

Hangs up.

ENTER REGGIE AND CHASE.

Shorty's lightens up right away.

SHORTY (CONT'D)

What's up friends! Have a seat. Let's talk expansion for a minute. And here's a bomb for you. Think about this:

(build-up pause)

Adding a tough to your group.

CHASE

What? We already have a tough.

REGGIE

Yeah.

They both think they are the tough. Get mad at each other. Shorty notices, tries to move forward.

SHORTY

Uhh...yeah. Well...I think it's a good idea, is all I'm saying. A lot of groups are sending three guys, now. It's 2010. Think evolution.

(beat)

And there's recession, keep in mind. We could play our part.

CHASE

I've always said we should get a computer hacker kind of guy, ya know? So we could steal ATM codes and stuff.

SHORTY

That ain't our line of work, Chase.

(serious)

And once you cross over into the world of high technology there ain't no going back. You're gonna remember what you see there forever.

(beat)

Unless you've got one of those memory erasing pens from the movies.

(trouble thinking)

What was that one called again? You guys have seen it. The one with aliens. Will Smith, Sean Penn...

Chase tries to help him think. Reggie exhales.

REGGIE

Anyways. I'm just gonna point out that we saw a pretty tough twosome earlier today when we went to scare that old teacher.

SHORTY

How'd that go, by the way?

REGGIE

It was alright. We've been working on some new stuff, recently. Changed it up a bit. How much does that guy owe you, anyway?

SHORTY
 (condescending)
 Afraid that's not in your jurisdiction yet, Reggie. Gotta work your way up for that kind of information. Maybe next year.

He winks.

Reggie doesn't care for Shorty much.

REGGIE
 Alright, what's up next then?

SHORTY
 Well, I hate to say this boys, but I don't have much else for you to do today.

From the looks on our heroes faces, this isn't anything new.

SHORTY (CONT'D)
 Unless you'd like to stick around here and help wash towels.
 (beat)
 I can pay you fifteen cents a towel.

CHASE
 What kind of towels are they?

Reggie cuts his uncle off before he gets them trapped.

REGGIE
 Sorry, SHORTY. Uncle Chase promised he'd help me with something. We're going to the outlet malls this afternoon.

This get a laugh out of Shorty.

SHORTY
 Outlet mall? That's a little queer for my taste, but okay. Have a good time.

They turn to the exit when the boss remembers something.

SHORTY (CONT'D)
 Hey! I actually do have a quick job for you guys now that I think about it. I missed the delivery truck today, and need to get this package delivered, P.D.Q.

CHASE
(accepting package)
You got it, sir.

REGGIE
Where are we taking it to? Is it
on the way to the outlet malls?

SHORTY
No, I'm afraid it's not. Quite the
opposite direction actually. And
fairly far away. A couple hours.

REGGIE
Then why would you say it was
quick?

SHORTY
Hey, my apologies if we aren't
exactly sneaking crates of corn
liquor over the border. But this
is how you get to the big time.
You do well down here, they'll see
you and before you know it. BAM!
You got a tommy gun in one hand,
sack of money in the other.

Just like Shorty, Chase is lost in the old-fashioned dream.

REGGIE
You're thinking of minor league
baseball.

Shorty doesn't hear him, as he's trying to slip a few bills
to Chase without Reggie seeing.

SHORTY
(whispering)
And if you could a few sodas on the
way back...

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - AFTERNOON

No houses in sight, just farmland and trees.

The Chevy's pretty much the only car on the road.

INSIDE THE CAR

Reggie drives. Chase reads a map.

REGGIE
I can't believe this took up the whole day.

CHASE
It's fine.

REGGIE
Can't we be goons for a better boss? Don't get me wrong, being a goon is as close the dream as it gets. But Shorty isn't even cool!
(beat)
Shorty hasn't been a cool nickname for many years.

CHASE
He's giving you a hard time because you're the rookie. He's putting you through the ringer. Same thing happened to me when I started.

REGGIE
Then why are you still doing these stupid errands with me? If this is "the ringer", shouldn't you be doing more important stuff?

CHASE
I do more important stuff. You just haven't seen it.

BEGIN FLASHBACK:

SHORTY'S HIDEOUT

A HALF-EATEN PLATE OF DINNER sits on a table.

Chase, wearing gloves and an apron, picks it up.

CHASE (CONT'D)
(calling off-screen)
Hey boss! Do you want me to throw away this plate of old corncobs and gristle!

SHORTY (O.S.)
(sarcastic)
No, Chase I want you to eat it!

CLOSE ON Chase, staring at the plate, wide-eyed.

SOUND OF WHITE NOISE

END FLASHBACK

BACK IN THE CAR

CLOSE ON CHASE, identical expression on his face.

REGGIE (O.S.)
Uncle Chase! Uncle Chase!
(beat)
UNCLE CHASE LOOKOUT!

THE HORN OF A SEMI-TRUCK brings Chase back to the present.

REVEAL that it is now much later in the day, Chase is driving the car, and he is in the wrong lane.

And there's a giant truck coming at him.

HE QUICKLY SWERVES OUT of the semi-trucks way. Narrowly escaping death. Reggie collapses back into his seat, heart pounding.

CHASE
My God, how long have I been
driving the car?

REGGIE
Only forty minutes, so you gotta do
at least twenty more.

CHASE
Hmm.

REGGIE
What's the matter?

CHASE
Have we been talking a lot?

REGGIE
Huh? I dunno. Whatever.

Whatever. Chase is wacky.

EXT. FARM HOUSE - EVENING

The Chevy's parked outside a dilapidated crap farm house.

Reggie and Chase knock on a big wooden door, holding Shorty's package.

EXT. RALPH MOATS HOUSE - AFTERNOON

Hope leads herself out the door to find Clark, still on the phone, standing outside Moats' house.

CLARK
 Okay...yes, alright Mr. Stantz,
 that's fine!
 (under his breath)
 Jesus Christ.

More noise from the other end of the phone. Clark is trembling with rage.

CLARK (CONT'D)
 Mr. Stantz I have to get off the
 phone now! No, Mr. Stantz!
 Goodbye!
 (beat; settles down)
 Yes, I'll see you soon.

He hangs up, still infuriated. Turning to Hope, he tries very hard to conceal his anger.

CLARK (CONT'D)
 Hey there!
 (phony enthusiasm)
 Pal!

Hope sees right through him.

HOPE
 (wary)
 Why are you talking to Buddy Stantz
 again?

CLARK
 We're just...friends. Anyways, I
 need you to cover for me for the
 next few hours. And also not ask
 where I'm going or what I'm doing.

Hope looks very unhappy. After considering it for a moment, though, she seems to change her mind.

HOPE
 Maybe I will. But you're gonna
 have to help me. Right now.
 (beat)
 Moats said he wants to be taken off
 the property.

CLARK
That's it? That sounds simple
 enough-

Clark realizes something.

CLARK (CONT'D)
 Although he is an assisted living
 patient. And is supposed to be
 monitored at all times. And
 really, I could get fired...

He thinks to himself for a moment.

CLARK (CONT'D)
 Eh, whatever, I'll do it. It could
 be fun!
 (beat)
 No, no, it won't be fun at all,
 will it.

HOPE
 Just take him for a ride off the
 property, Clark, It's not that
 difficult.

CLARK
 Right...

END OF ACT II

ACT III

INT. NATALE JAMES' HOUSE - AFTERNOON

Hope sits inside with her grandmother once again, filling out
 various paperwork.

HOPE
 You know, since I've been Event
 Coordinator here, there have been
 over twenty deaths? That's gotta
 be some kind of record.

NATALIE
 (patronizing)
 Yeah, and you know if there's
 somebody to blame for all of the
 old people dying, it's the event
 coordinator.

HOPE

It's funny to you, but not Ms. Cross! She hates me. If I don't get this wish thing right then I'm betting it's all over for me.

NATALIE

You need to relax. You're the most careful and organized person I know. I'm sure you're putting every resource you possess into this task, and everybody will be able to see that.

Hope thinks it over.

CUT TO:

EXT. ROAD - AFTERNOON

Clark drives the *Sunnylegde* van smoking a cig while Curtis sits next to him. Moats is behind them, looking more unkempt and grizzled than ever. Next to him is a large grocery bag.

CURTIS

Hey, thanks again for bringing me.

CLARK

It's fine, Curtis. I told you I just needed you to watch the old man while I ran in to make the purchase.

CURTIS

Can we get some drive-thru?

CLARK

(resigned)

Yes, Curtis we can get drive-thru.

MOATS

How far's the World's Fair from here, did ya say?

CLARK

(calm)

Not very far at all. Just relax now, okay? Everybody just relax

CURTIS

What's he talking about?

CLARK
Nothing. Be quiet.

Moats leans forward to Clark.

MOATS
What's this Chinaman doing here? I
don't like it one bit.

CLARK
Aw Jesus, Christ.

Curtis, possibly the whitest man ever, turns to him politely.

CURTIS
(awkward)
Name's Curtis Unger sir, pleased to
meet you.

He extends a hand to Moats, who promptly hawks it away and
leans back into his seat.

CLARK
Several times I told you not to get
near him or try to touch him!

CURTIS
(ashamed)
Sorry.

MOATS
I hate this car!

Clark screams.

INT. MS. CROSS' OFFICE - AFTERNOON

Ms. Cross sits in her office, watching a DVD on her laptop we
are unable to see. Presumably, it's the one we saw her with
earlier.

An ORDERLY bursts through the doors, startling Ms. Cross and
causing her to slam her laptop shut and quickly shuffle
around some papers, attempting to look busy.

ORDERLY
Ms. Cross, Code Brown! One of our
assisted living residents is
missing.

MS. CROSS
Who?

ORDERLY
 (checking paperwork)
 Ralph Moats.

Her expression darkens.

INT. VAN - AFTERNOON

Clark's eyes meet with Moats' in the rearview mirror. The old man eyes a giant shopping bag next to him, then attempts to take a peak inside.

CLARK
 (still eyeing him)
 Keep away from that, old man.

Moats stops.

MOATS
 Why? What's in there? Something terrible, I bet.

Clark laughs it off.

CLARK
 Terrible? No way, man...those are just some...cookies...for later.

MOATS
 Cookies, eh?

The old man strokes his chin and squints off into the distance as he blows out a huge puff of smoke from his freshly-lit pipe.

We shift to outside of the car, where we see the driver's side window slightly rolled down and Moats' huge cloud of smoke billowing outward, along with the sound of Curits coughing.

CLARK (O.S.)
 You gotta quit it with that pipe, bro.

INT. SUNNYLEDGE MAIN LOBBY - AFTERNOON

Ms. Cross storms through the lobby, followed by a few orderlies, with a determined expression. A NURSE approaches her.

MS CROSS
 Any sign of her?

NURSE
Haven't seen her since this
morning, Ms. Cross.

MS. CROSS
(to herself)
Where are you, Hope...

INT. VAN - AFTERNOON

A rattled Clark does his best to drive onward.

MOATS
Just pull over anywhere around
here, I'm begging you. I want to
smell some new air, is all. It's
just tiring, having to sniff around
that nursing home all the time...

Clark looks back to see a somber Moats looking off into the distance. He is touched by the inherent sadness of the old man's plea.

CLARK
(sigh)
You got it, pal.

CURTIS
Maybe we could get some drive-thru
or something on the way
back....wait, are you crying?
Kind of gay, dude-

CLARK
(stern)
Curtis, I swear to god, do not ruin
this dying man's final wish.

EXT. MEADOW - LATER

Clark stands between the van and a beautiful meadow of wildflowers. Moats sits on his *Rascal* scooter, still in the back end of the van, as a mechanical ramp slowly raises. Curtis remains in the front seat.

CLARK
Pretty nice, huh Mr. Moats?

MOATS
Yeah, yeah.

Clark turns around after the ramp finishes raising. He moves to help the old man down.

CLARK

Okay, now get your fill, cause we
are only going to be here for a few-
AHHHH!

Clark falls to the ground screaming as Moats blows some concealed sawdust into his face then punches him hard in the groin. In one swift movement, he grabs the "cookie" bag and takes off at a moderate pace through the field and into the woods on his scooter.

CLARK (CONT'D)

(in pain)

Aggh! What the hell?

After he recollects himself, Clark begins looking around.

CLARK (CONT'D)

Where did he go?

The car window rolls down.

CURTIS

He went off into the woods.

CLARK

(incredulous)

Why didn't you stop him?

Curtis stares at Clark for a moment in silence, then continues to do so as he slowly rolls up the window. Clark stands alone, still recovering from the shock.

INT. NATALIE JAMES' HOUSE - KITCHEN - LATER

Natalie cleans up her house while Hope paces about, constantly checking her watch and peeking out the window.

HOPE

They sure have been gone a long
time. I hope everything is okay.

Natalie sets down a neatly arranged tray of cookies in front of Hope.

NATALIE

Clark is a good boy. Probably just
having too much fun!

Hope's phone rings. She promptly answers.

CUT TO:

INT. VAN

Clark sits holding the phone in one hand and a pair of binoculars in the other, while Curtis eats a fast food burger in the seat next to him.

CLARK
(panting)
Moats got away.

He peers through the binoculars.

INT. NATALIE JAMES' HOUSE

HOPE
What? Why are you panting? Did he outrun you?

INT. VAN

Clark stops panting, silently cursing himself for the unnecessary lie.

CLARK
He's gone. Ran away a good twenty minutes ago. Blinded me with some kind of exotic foreign powder, and now we can't find him.

CURTIS
(in the background)
Sawdust, I'm pretty sure it was.

Clark glares at him.

CLARK
(to Hope)
I'm trying to get the drop on him as we speak.

INT. NATALIE JAMES' HOUSE

HOPE
No. Clark that can't happen.
(beat)
(MORE)

HOPE (CONT'D)
How did you let a ninety-seven year
old man escape you? Did he at
least tell you what his wish was?

INT. VAN

CLARK
What do you mean, what his wish
was? I thought you said it was to
go outside...

INT. NATALIE JAMES' HOUSE

HOPE
No, he said we had to take him
outside for him to tell us what
wish he wanted.

INT. VAN

CLARK
That's not fair at all! Some kind
of double wish!
(beat)
And you tricked me!

INT. NATALIE JAMES' HOUSE

HOPE
That's not important right now!
Find him! We could both lose our
jobs because of-

Hope considers her statement.

HOPE (CONT'D)
Just please find him!

A loud static-like sound comes over the line.

HOPE (CONT'D)
What is that sound?

INT. VAN

Curtis slurps a huge drink loudly.

CLARK
 Curtis, enough!
 (back into phone)
 Listen, I'm really sorry, Hope.
 (beat; thinks it over)
 Eh, I'm pretty sorry...

Clark looks into his binoculars again.

INT. NATALIE JAMES' HOUSE

Hope shakes off her immediate frustration to think about everything that's going on.

HOPE
 Wait, why is Curtis with you?

She looks over to her smiling grandma; suddenly puts her hand to the receiver.

HOPE (CONT'D)
 (angry whisper)
 Oh my god Clark did you take Moats
 on a drug deal!

CLARK (O.S.)
 No!
 (beat)
 Well, yeah. But I gotta go, I
 think I might've found him!

The sound of a catastrophe on Clark's end.

CLARK (O.S.) (CONT'D)
 Curtis, you got Horsie Sauce all
 over the gear shift again!

CURTIS (O.S.)
 (muffled)
 Sorry.

The line goes dead after some more weird sounds.

NATALIE
 What's going on, is everything
 alright?

HOPE
 I'm not sure. At all.

NATALIE
 Mmm, you worry too much for a young
 person.

(MORE)

NATALIE (CONT'D)
Your life's supposed to be a little
crazy sometimes. Live it up!

HOPE
Yeah, I guess...

From outside, Ms. Cross voice can be heard.

MS. CROSS (O.S.)
Hope! You better be saying your
prayers, cause when I find
you...whoo boy!

Hope and her grandmother exchange wary looks. Her phone
starts to ring again.

HOPE
Yeah, Clark...

CLARK (O.S.)
False alarm. Just a couple of
deer.

Hope's look turns to complete bewilderment. She slaps her
hand to her forehead.

INT. VAN - CONTINUOUS

Clark and Curtis look sad.

CLARK
Well, I guess now's the best time
to pack it in. Cut our losses, ya
know?

INT. NATALIE JAMES' HOUSE

HOPE
Clark, you can't just leave him
lost out there-

CLARK (O.S.)
Eh, he could find his way back.
Old people are like cats.
(beat)
Wait, scratch that, it might be the
other way around...but I know it's
some kind of domesticated animal,
actually...

A loud banging on Natalie James' door leads Hope to lower the receiver from her ear as Clark continues on his meaningless rant. Fearing it's Ms. Cross, Hope ducks behind a sofa as Natalie answers.

To Hope's surprised, it's just a NEIGHBOR at the door.

NEIGHBOR

Natalie! Hope! Come quick!
Something crazy you gotta see!

The wretched grunt of an old man hawking a loogie in the distance is music to Hope's ears. Natalie is repulsed by the sound. She picks the phone back up to her ear.

HOPE

Come on home, Clark. He's back.

CLARK (O.S.)

Ha! I was right, it was cats!
(beat; realization)
Oh my god, if you see a big
shopping bag, you have to grab it
before-

Hope hangs up.

Outside, Natalie and Hope watch with the growing crowd of Ralph Moats on his scooter, completely nude aside from being draped in wildflowers. Ms. Cross approaches them from behind, keeping her eyes on the spectacle.

MS. CROSS

Well that's a darn shame.
(to Hope)
Did you have something to do with
this?

HOPE

(nervous)
Me? No, I've been looking for him
just like everybody else.

MS. CROSS

(skeptical)
Mmhm.
(beat)
Well, I guess you can take care of
it tomorrow...after he's
less...nude.

Ms. Cross walks away, shaking her head. Hope and Natalie share another smile and laugh once more until Moats does something uncouth off-screen. Now, the looks they share are those of general disdain.

As we move through the now vibrant mob of elderly people, we once again spot Buddy Stantz, now standing with his "cool" crew, with a mysterious grocery bag at his feet. He picks it up and nonchalantly peeks in, then proceeds to high-five his boy and walk into the horizon.

THE END

TAKEOVER (28 pgs.)

Crime's been slow in the burbs. Not much to do. Gotta stay at the grind, though. That's what Reggie Porter's uncle taught him. They work together. Not quite a family business, but it kind of works out that way.

Their boss's days on the job are numbered. Everyone knows he can't really do the job anymore. Reggie and his uncle can only bide their time until the TAKEOVER happens.

THE FUNK (31 pgs.)

Chase and Reggie got money problems. Big money problems. They can't keep leeching off their friends. They got other problems, too. Like the fact that they're weed fiends.

But that all changes when they get their first taste of THE FUNK. After a drug deal gone awry, the boys wind up with the opportunity for an adventure nobody could ever forget.

Well...we'll say *most* people for now.

I'm talking about these two at the same time because I wrote them sort of as an experiment. Take two scripts with identical first scenes, but write each one utilizing a different screenwriting style and see what happens. The stories themselves wound up completely different, and ultimately two wholly unique concepts were produced.

The style that *Takeover* is written in utilizes a lot of white space, and by result I think tells a much faster and easier to read story. This style was actually introduced to me by a friend of mine a few months into the school year, and I grew fond of it almost immediately.

The second pilot, *The Funk*, is much slower and more exposition heavy. I think the story it tries to tell ends up being much bigger, but I don't think it flows as smoothly from one scene to the next.

TAKEOVER

"Pilot"

by Tony Paletta

FADE IN:

EXT. SCHOOL - AFTERNOON

SOUND OF A BELL RINGING.

Doors fly open and high school children filter out of school, arms waving. It's the start summer vacation. *

Kids everywhere start to make out, bully one another, and blast FM radio, as high school kids often do. Teachers say goodbye to their more prosperous students. The janitorial staff is paid little to no regard.

Some distance from the school, TWO MEN sit parked in a rickety '82 Chevy. Doesn't look like summer over here.

INT. CAR - AFTERNOON

THE DRIVER *

Young adult male. Cool handlebar moustache. Binoculars covering his eyes. He starts up the car with his free hand.

It BACKFIRES a few times; wakes up

THE PASSENGER

Big, older guy in aviator sunglasses. Cool goatee and sideburns combination. His shirt is covered in ash and bits of popcorn, which he doesn't bother to wipe off after coming to his senses. Just lights up a cigarette.

The driver turns to him, we see his eyes for the first time. Fairly handsome. In his own mind, though, he's the most handsome person to have ever walked the earth.

REGGIE

Sleep well?

FREEZE on DRIVER.

LEGEND: **REGGIE PORTER.** 26 years old. 6'0", 180 lbs.

As Reggie starts toward the school, The passenger begins a coughing fit. It's unpleasant. Cigs and popcorn, remember.

Reggie has no reaction.

FREEZE on PASSENGER.

LEGEND: **"UNCLE" CHASE PORTER.** 38 years old. 5'9". 255 lbs.

Not really handsome in any sense. In his own mind he's the most handsome person to have ever walked the earth.

CHASE

(ashes on dashboard)

Sure am seeing a lot of white people over here...

(turns to Reggie)

Think we should phone it in? Something could be up.

REGGIE

(looks at ashes)

You could treat my car with a little more respect, you know. I do try to keep it clean.

(beat)

And you're not allowed to smoke cigarettes on high school property anyways.

Chase gives skeptical SHORTYle.

CHASE

You're crazy, man. There are no rules in high school anymore. You can do anything you want pretty much. Remember that Sean Penn movie?

REGGIE

That came out in the 80's, uncle Chase.

They pull into an empty spot in the high school parking lot. Kids eye them.

CHASE

No, that's not the one I'm thinking of. What's the one he was in recently? The one about the gay guy who's daughter gets killed and he has to join the Army. John Candy's in it. Might've been a musical...

(vacant stare)

Ah, forget it. Hey does your phone tell time? Lemme see it a minute.

He coughs out a cloud of smoke. It makes gaggle of underage kids wander over to the car.

CHASE (CONT'D)

Hey, you guys out?

Without a word from the students, Chase hands out individual cigarettes to them like they're trick-or-treaters.

Reggie lets all this go like it's nothing unusual.

REGGIE
Clock's right in front of you.

CHASE
Oh yeah. Right.
(checks time)
Shouldn't he be coming out by now?
Let's just go in.

REGGIE
We'll give him a few more minutes.
(tries to be cryptic)
Let the man enjoy his last day...

Chase nods, wipes off his shirt a little and flicks the cig butt out the window.

KID (O.S.)
Hey!

CHASE
Sorry, buddy!

Reggie shakes his head and puts up Chase's window.

Chase looks ashamed, knowing he spoiled what could've been a cool moment.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL CLASSROOM - CONTINUOUS

Empty aside from a greying professor at his desk.

PROFESSOR BERNARD ISAAC (60)

is cranky. Wears a sweater vest and fills out student grades. Doesn't look like it's been a terrific year.

A NERVOUS JOCK creeps into the room, holding a present.

JOCK
Professor Isaac?

The teacher's face doesn't brighten when he looks up.

PROFESSOR ISAAC
(head back down)
Yeah what is it, Matthews.

He slides the present onto the desk. Isaac looks up.

PROFESSOR ISAAC (CONT'D)
What's this?

JOCK
Just something from all of us
seniors on the football team.

Isaac smells something. Literally, the box stinks.

PROFESSOR ISAAC
(sniffing)
It smells like feces.

JOCK
(proudly)
I don't know what that is, but we
all took a dump in it.

A long silence.

PROFESSOR ISAAC
...not in my lunch this year, at
least.

JOCK
Have a good summer, you old faggot.

PROFESSOR ISAAC
You do the same.

The jock runs out of the room. The professor gets back to work, box and all.

INT. HALLWAY

Everybody has gone. It's all quiet in the school.

FRONT DOORS

TWO SILHOUETTES resembling Reggie and Chase emerge. The only noise now comes from their footsteps. THEY HEAD TOWARDS

CLASSROOM 207

CLOSE ON a gloved hand turning the door handle.

INSIDE

Isaac looks at the intruders. He's instantly terrified.

PROFESSOR ISAAC
 (stands up; trembling)
 Hello! Hi. Guys. What's up?

Silence. Isaac gets frantic.

PROFESSOR ISAAC (CONT'D)
 Listen, I can't tell you how sorry
 I am for not returning your calls
 these past few days. I've been
 having a lot of trouble with my
 service provider, and haven't
 really been able to-
 (breaks down)
 Please! Please I'm really sorry, I
 just really need a few more days.

REVERSE on TWO LATINO MEN, obviously very intimidating
 gangsters. It's not Reggie and Chase.

The FAT ONE knocks over a bookshelf right into the center of
 the room. Professor shrieks.

PROFESSOR ISAAC (CONT'D)
 Please! Please no! I'm good for
 the money I swear! I just need a
 little. I'll do anything! I'll do
 anything!

He falls to the floor like a little bitch. THIN MAN grabs
 his face.

THIN
 We're here to tell you that you
 have 48 hours to pay up.
 Everything. Plus 10% for the
 bookcase you just ruined.

Professor starts KISSING THE THIN MAN'S FEET. Nodding and
 sobbing, never been more grateful in his life.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL - CONTINUOUS

Reggie and Chase stand in front of the school, tossle caps on
 their heads.

REGGIE
 (noticing Chase)
 You're covered in all kinds of
 crumbs.

CHASE

It's fine. Get your head in the game, kid.

REGGIE

My head's in the game, it's just gross to see you standing there with huge chunks of food stuck to you. Messes up my rhythm.

CHASE

It's fine. Think of it as intimidation.

REGGIE

Stop saying it's fine! It's not-
(quickly calms)
You know what? It is fine, you're right. Let's do this.

They head through the doors.

HALLWAY

Reggie examines a piece of paper as the TWO LATINOS from before walk by them.

REGGIE (CONT'D)

(to fat man)

Hey man, could you tell me where room 207 is?

CLOSE ON the fat man, eyes narrowed and fiery.

JUMP TO:

OUTSIDE ROOM 207

Reggie and Chase are smiling.

REGGIE

Well he was alright, wasn't he?

CHASE

I hope things work out between him and his son.

Without warning,

CHASE KICKS OPEN THE DOOR. Isaac's back at his desk, but there's still a fallen bookcase in the middle of everything.

He gets angry as soon as he sees Chase and Reggie.

PROFESSOR ISAAC
 What are you doing? Get the Hell
 out of my classroom.

CHASE
 School's out, Isaac.
 (cool cryptic)
 And now you're out. Of time.

Reggie thinks this line was cool. Gives a thumbs up and
 takes over the operation.

REGGIE
 That's right, Professor. I'm
 afraid you're getting an "F" for
 this assignment.

PROFESSOR ISAAC
 Tell me what you're doing here this
 instant or I'm calling the police.

Chase picks up some books off the ground and starts throwing
 them at the window. A MAINTENANCE GUY outside looks over.

REGGIE
 (to Chase)
 Cut that out! People can hear you.

Chase stops. Reggie goes back to being tough.

REGGIE (CONT'D)
 You wouldn't wanna call the cops on
 your friend, would you? Your *best*
 friend? A guy downtown named
 Shorty O'Malley?

Professor Isaac looks just as angry as before.

PROFESSOR ISAAC
 Why the Hell does SHORTY O'Malley
 think he can idiots like you down
 here to threaten me? I'll deal
 with Shorty when I'm good and ready
 to. Now get out of here both of
 you.

Reggie smiles. Chase is very offended.

REGGIE
 Let's relax now, Professor. Why
 don't we just-

Chase steps over and PUTS A HANDGUN TO THE PROFESSOR'S
 TEMPLE.

CHASE
 IDIOTS, HUH?! I'll show you a
 thing or two about brains, if you
 want professor.

This is a different side of Chase. A flashbacking War vet
 kind of side. Mel Gibson in *Lethal Weapon*. But he's way
 fat. He's sweating; it starts to scare Isaac.

PROFESSOR ISAAC
 Hey now! I'm sorry. Just be cool,
 now. I didn't mean to call you an
 idiot.

Reggie's recovering from shock just as much as Isaac is.

REGGIE
 Um. Well, professor-
 (clears throat; gets into
 character)
 We're here to tell you that
 O'Malley wants his money. And he
 wants it by Friday.

Isaac says nothing.

CHASE
 What are you, deaf?! Maybe if I
 blasted you a bigger earhole-

PROFESSOR ISAAC
 (startled)
 No! Don't. Please. I'll pay. I
 can pay.

Reggie nods. Chase is still livid. Shoves the gun harder.

CHASE
 And?!

Professor is too scared to say anything.

REGGIE
 (under breath)
 Take it easy over there.

Chase doesn't listen.

CHASE
 And what else old man?!

REGGIE
(angry whisper)
Hey! I seriously don't think
there's anything else!

Chase is in the zone. Can't hear Reggie.

CHASE
And what *else*, old man!

He alternates putting the gun between Isaac's temple and his
own. Completely over the edge now.

REGGIE
(louder)
Hey! Settle down!

CHASE
AHHHH!

Chase wipes everything off of the professor's desk. The gift
is the last thing that hits the floor.

Weird Squish. Everyone's grossed out.

Chase's mouth fills with barf and he has to run out of the
room.

EXT. LOT - MOMENTS LATER

Reggie walks out with Chase, now covered in barf.

REGGIE
You dropped this in the hallway on
the way to the bathroom.

Chase dejectedly takes the gun from him.

REGGIE (CONT'D)
What's the matter with you? I
thought that went pretty well.

CHASE
Pretty well until I ruined it, you
mean.

REGGIE
You were fine. I would've done the
same thing in that position.
(beat)
Nobody could predict a gift box
full of turds. That's unexplored
territory.

CHASE

I guess.

(still bummed)

We should've made him eat one or something.

REGGIE

(sick look)

He said he'd pay us. And he wasn't a bad guy, really. Just a lonely old prof., maybe a little misunder-

BANG! A bullet whizzes by Reggie's head.

At the doors of the highschool stands Professor Isaac, Holds A STILL-SMOKING SHOTGUN.

PROFESSOR ISAAC

(beat)

Why don't you tell Shorty O'Malley I'll see him in Hell!

Panic from Reggie and his uncle. They run into the car and speed away.

INT. CHEVY - DAY

Reggie drives. There's a bullet hole through the rear glass, and evidence of fast food all over the car now.

As Reggie fills his mouth with a huge burger,

CHASE

I wonder what a turd tastes like.

REGGIE

(upset)

Aw come on.

CHASE

What?

REGGIE

(chewing)

I ordered a bacon burger and a chocolate milkshake!

CHASE

Yeah?

Reggie swallows.

REGGIE

Those things can be associated with turds, kind of.

Chase doesn't get it.

REGGIE (CONT'D)

Bacon. Burgers. chocolate. And if you get it stuck in my head I'm gonna think about that smell, and it's gonna make me sick and not able to eat.

(beat)

And I have to eat to work well.

CHASE

That's ridiculous. Don't be a baby now.

He thinks about it as he lights up a cig.

CHASE (CONT'D)

Eh, I get it I guess. Bacon.

(SHORTYles)

But seriously, have you ever wondered? I bet it's gross.

Reggie sets his food down. Sighs.

CHASE (CONT'D)

Sorry.

By the way Reggie moves on, we can see this isn't particularly unusual for Chase.

REGGIE

So I've been thinking. I know we didn't plan for you to whip the gun out and act insane today, but I'm saying it was a good move. We were floundering until then.

Chase agrees.

REGGIE (CONT'D)

So what I'm proposing is, next time you play the cool-tough guy and I'll be the sexy-loose cannon guy.

CHASE

(shaking head, mouth full of meat)

Not gonna work, tiny boy.

(MORE)

CHASE (CONT'D)

Sexy-loose cannon only works if you got years under you. I'm permanent sexy loose cannon.

REGGIE

The sexy suffix only applies when we're talking about me.

REGGIE (CONT'D)

You're...

(stumped)

Weird loose cannon. Or old loose cannon.

(beat)

Old cannon.

CHASE

(nostalgic smile)

Bruce Cannon. Pen name.

Chase takes out a tiny notebook and scribbles something in it.

Reggie turns back to the road.

INT. O'MALLEY HIDEOUT - DAY

It's an attempt to look like Tony Soprano's back room, but looks more like a freshman's dorm.

Sitting in a in a BEANBAG CHAIR,

SHORTY O'MALLEY. (68)

A greaser, dressed in a yellow leisure suit, trapped somewhere in the 1920's black-and-white films. Believes that at any time he's the coolest guy in the room. Any room.

He's on the phone.

SHORTY

I don't know if I told you this, baby. But I can make you famous.

(beat)

Yeah, that's right! That's right! You bet I do.

(beat)

No, I don't have a yacht.

(angry)

Uh, how about because I live in Ohio. Where you gonna take your yacht here, Erie? Good luck with that.

(beat)

(MORE)

CHASE

-that movie where Sean Penn and
Brad Pitt find Sean Penn's wife's
head in a box-

REGGIE

I can't deal with this right now.

The door opens.

They're greeted by a woman,

JANINE FOSTER-O'MALLEY (46)

Shorty's wife. A powerful woman. Fake breasts. Dominates
the relationship.

JANINE

There they are! Hello boys, I've
been wondering where you were.

REGGIE

Hello..Mrs. O'Malley.

JANINE

Foster-O'Malley. But please, I've
told you, Call me Janine.

CHASE

Hello Janine.

JANINE

Not you. If it weren't for laws
I'd chain your sorry ass up in the
backyard. You drunk ass-grabbing
pervert. Don't ever expect an
invitation to a barbeque again.

This comment weirds Reggie out. Chase is acting cool.

CHASE

Whatever, bitch.

JANINE

What did you just say to me?

CHASE

I said relax it out a minute.

JANINE

That's not what you said.

CHASE

What do you know, bitch?

JANINE
 Alright, that's it!

She starts swinging at Chase, who promptly turtles.

CHASE
 (shielding head)
 Hey! Hey! Stop it I got a gun!

JANINE
 Oh, I bet you do.

Reggie steps in to separate them.

REGGIE
 That's enough now.
 (puzzled)
 Janine. Since when did you guys
 move out to the sticks?

JANINE
 Oh, a few months now. Shorty
 didn't like all the violence. It
 was really messing him up. But
 he's all smiles now! Even thinking
 about starting up our own dairy
 farm.

CHASE
 You know funny you should say that,
 I've heard only good things about
 dairy recently.

Reggie thinks everybody around him is stupid.

REGGIE
 (to Chase)
 What?
 (to Janine)
 Wait, do you know his real name?
 (beat)
 Wait, what? What do you mean
 violence messes him up?

He has to sit down, overwhelmed by the weird people.

REGGIE (CONT'D)
 (serene)
 Can we at least see what's in the
 box?
 (introspective beat)
 Which I don't understand why we had
 to bring to Shorty's own house.

JANINE

We can't open the box until he gets here. Sorry.

REGGIE

What? He's coming here? Then why couldn't he just bring it himself?

JANINE

You can ask him yourself, he'll be here any minute.

(beat)

Can I get you boys anything to drink?

CHASE

I'll have anything Diet. No Coke. Or iced tea. Unless it's homemade, because-

JANINE

You can drink out of the dog's bowl over in the side yard if you're thirsty.

CLOSE ON CHASE as a very soft sound of soft WHITE NOISE begins to invade his brain.

CHASE

(quiet; insane)

I am thirsty...

The NOISE GROWS.

REGGIE (O.S.)

Uncle Chase? Uncle Chase? What's going on?

Reggie starts to shake him. He snaps out of it.

BACK TO NORMAL

They turn back to Janine.

REGGIE (CONT'D)

Are you going to let us come inside?

JANINE

You can. He stays out here.

REGGIE

Well I can't just leave my uncle to sit out-

Chase raises a hand.

CHASE
Reginald. Go inside. I'll be
alright out here.

CLOSE ON A rusty brown dog bowl in the side yard.

The sound of a slamming door is heard over WHITE NOISE.

INT. O'MALLEY HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

CROSSES and RELIGIOUS PHOTOS all over the place.

Bibles and stuff.

JANINE
Sorry for all of the religious
bullplop he got everywhere. Some
kind of new hobby for him, I guess.

CHASE
These are all Shorty's?

JANINE
Well no, not all of them. Some of
this stuff is mine.

She picks up a photograph of her and a guy who looks like
Jesus. He clearly wasn't ready for the picture.

REGGIE
Uh-huh. So do you have any guns in
the house? I'm just wondering.

JANINE
Not anymore! Cleaned them out
after some supergroup came after
us. I told him it'd be a good
idea. Thinking about it in a
Ghandi sort of way, you know? Be
easier for everybody.

REGGIE
Everybody except my uncle and I.
His hired support gang. Dammit I
knew this whole thing was a con
since I first got involved.

A smile appears on Janine's face.

JANINE
 (seductive)
 It wasn't all bad, was it?

Reggie immediately sees what's going on and hates it.

REGGIE
 (repulsed)
 Oh God, seriously? Not now.

She gets close to him.

JANINE
 Let's go, tiny boy.

REGGIE
 Why's everybody calling me tiny,
 today?
 (defensive)
 I'm six-foot, you know. I'm
 bigger'n you.

She puts a finger to his lips.

JANINE
 Shh. We have to be quiet. Your
 uncle is right outside.

On cue, CHASE THUMPS ON THE WINDOW in front of them.

CHASE
 Hey, there's a world of dog doo out
 here, Janine. You got any bags?
 I'm gonna take some samples for
 research if you don't mind...

He finally sees she has her arms around Reggie. Loves it.

CHASE (CONT'D)
 Oh my God, Reggie is she seducing
 you?
 (huge cackle)
 That is priceless. What did she
 say Reggie?
 (wipes a tear)
 Oh my. Alright, I'm coming in.

JANINE
 No! You can't-

CHASE
 I think we've seen and heard enough
 out of you today Janine.

He walks away. They stand in silence until

THE SOUND OF A DOOR OPENING

Janine looks disappointed. Quickly turns to shock when

SHORTY steps through the door first. Janine dives into his arms right away. He holds her close. Sniffs her hair. Love.

JANINE

(buried in shoulder)

I'm sorry for fighting today, baby.
I didn't mean it.

SHORTY

I'll never say those things again.

They hold each other in silence.

Chase puts on his sunglasses. Gives Reggie a thumbs up.

Reggie doesn't know how to interpret it.

INT. O'MALLEY HOUSE - LATER

Everyone's gathered in the very religious living room. Box in the center. Chase is in mid-story.

CHASE

So he and Pauly Shore find his wife's head. Inside the dome. Inside the box.

REGGIE

For God's sakes uncle Chase that wasn't-

(turns to center)

Can we just open the box please?

SHORTY

Yes, yes, we can open it. But first I'd just like to say that I'm happy to have my best friends and my family here to open this today.

CHASE

I didn't think it was necessary to trick us into coming, but-

SHORTY

(tearing up)

And let me just say, that...I've
loved you all...and I could not
have asked for a happier time...no
matter what.

He turns to his wife and they cry together. She consoles,

JANINE

It's okay, treasure. You'll be
okay. It's alright. It's the
right thing to do.

Reggie and Chase are baffled.

SHORTY

(wipes face)

Alright, here we go.

He opens the box.

Huge drama.

END OF ACT II

ACT III

O'MALLEY HOUSE - LATER

DOZENS OF TRAVEL BROCHURES for countries all around the world are strewn across the table. An empty box on the ground.

Reggie has his head in his hands. Janine's on the phone in the background.

JANINE

Yes! Yes the whole world.

(beat)

No, not Antarctica.

(beat)

Two years! It's unreal, I know!

Screams from Janine. Reggie looks up.

REGGIE

It was great to be here to learn about your trip, boss. I'm glad we could bring you the brochures. For your trip...driving many hours out of the way from the outlet mall where I wanted to spend a nice afternoon...

Hard stare from Shorty.

SHORTY

Reggie. Chase. That was your final test.

(beat)

It's time you took over the syndicate.

Chase looks like he's about to jump for joy. Until,

CHASE

How come it took me so many more years of work than it took him?

SHORTY

It wasn't until I saw you two working together. Father and son-

REGGIE

He's not my father.

CHASE
I'm his uncle.

SHORTY
That's not important. The point is, I think that it's time you started building up the force. Getting back territories, regular stick-ups and such and such...

Janine rubs her older husbands shoulders.

CHASE
Well thanks a lot, Shorty. But why are you telling us this now? I feel like with more preparation-

SHORTY
Preparation, nothing!
(beat)
You aren't going to be prepared when they show up at your door at 3 AM ready to kill you!

CHASE
(barely audible whisper)
Wrong.

A glimpse of that insane Chase again.

SHORTY
But that's all boys. Tonight was a celebration. Tomorrow you will receive instructions on "The Takeover".
(beat)
The details to follow may surprise you.

Reggie scoffs; he's scared but trying to hide it.

REGGIE
Unlikely.
(beat)
My uncle and I know how to handle ourselves. Isn't that right uncle Chase.

No response.

REGGIE (CONT'D)
Uncle Chase?

Chase is staring at the dog bowl again. Reggie sighs.

EXT. O'MALLEY HOUSE - NIGHT

Reggie and Chase walk out of the house.

CHASE

Some party that was, no food, no
drink. What a bummer. Plus we
have to drive all the way back.

Reggie is smiling.

REGGIE

Eh, it's not so bad. Now we can
get our names out there. Turn this
place into the big time.

CHASE

I dunno about that. Not unless we
get a few hackers on the phone.

REGGIE

Hackers were the last decade Uncle
Chase.

(beat)

We're going to come up with a whole
new kind of strategy.

Chase dreams. Dreams big.

MOVE OUT TO THE suburban city. Not quite a mecca of crime
and wrongdoing yet,

But in the right hands anything is possible.

FADE OUT

THE END

THE FUNK.

Tony Paletta.

E01 - "Pilot"

FADE IN:

EXT. SCHOOL - AFTERNOON

High school children filter out of school for the day and start heading home.

In a parking lot off to the side, our heroes sit in their beat up Chevy. REGGIE PORTER, 26, occupies the driver's seat while his uncle CHASE PORTER, 51, smokes a cigarette next to him.

REGGIE

I don't think you are allowed to smoke cigarettes on high school property.

CHASE

Ehh, I'm pretty sure you can.

He blows a cloud of smoke out the window. A gaggle of obviously underage kids walk by the car, taking note of Chase.

CHASE (CONT'D)

(out window; cool)

Hey, you guys need cigs?

The kids run up and accept individual cigarettes like trick-or-treaters.

Reggie shakes his head; notices something in the distance.

REGGIE

Alright, there he is.

He starts the car. BERNARD "BUZZ" ROBERTS, 26, looking slightly too big for the suit he's got on, walks among a mob of kids coming towards them.

CHASE

Man, it's still weird seeing him dressed like one of those office pricks.

REGGIE

(perplexed)
He's a teacher.

CHASE

I bet this is gonna be some pretty bomb shit. High school kids know the deal.

Chase does a weird nod to some cool high school guys walking by as Buzz opens the back door and throws his coat and briefcase inside. They pull out of the parking lot.

REGGIE

What's up, short necktie.

BUZZ

Hey, thanks for picking me up guys.
Real brutal day today.

CHASE

Hey, thank *you*, Buzzy. For picking
me up.

He turns around and winks at Buzz a bunch of times.

Buzz's expression remains stagnant.

CHASE (CONT'D)

(suddenly serious)
Alright enough already, let's see
it.

BUZZ

(blank)
See what?

Chase gaze narrows.

CHASE

Don't do this Buzz.
(beat)
Not today. Not now.

A smile creeps onto Buzz's face.

BUZZ

Boy, you guys are lucky I'm such a
badass best friend.

He reaches into his briefcase and pulls out a bag of horrible looking bud.

Like, the worst bud.

He discreetly hands it to Chase with a smile. Reggie takes a look in his mirrors to make sure it's safe, then looks at it also.

REGGIE

Oh my god, what is that?

CHASE
 Jesus Christ, Buzz. You've really
 outdone yourself.

He throws the bag onto Reggie's lap in disgust. Reggie
 examines it with his non-driving hand.

BUZZ
 (oblivious)
 What? What's the matter? Let's
 roll a fatty!

CHASE
 (*furious*)
 Whats the matter?!
 (stumbling)
 Are you-?...why would you-?...A
 fatty?!

Chase takes a deep breath to collect himself.

CHASE (CONT'D)
 Buzz, I respect you as a member of
 society, I really do. But honestly
 that could be worst weed I have
 ever seen in my entire life.

Reggie sends Buzz an apologetic nod.

REGGIE
 I think there is a pebble in here.

Buzz looks skeptical; he reaches over and takes the bag from
 his friend. Now he gets angry.

BUZZ
 You guys are assholes, you know
 that? Acting like you're getting
 great weed around here all of the
 time.
 (beat; more emotional)
 I put my teaching career on the
 line today by engaging in a drug
 deal *on school property* with one of
 the less savory students here at
 Rinehart High.
 (beat; more emotional)
 A student who now pretty much has
 the power to extort me for the
 remainder of his tenure there. And
 seriously, he might be there for a
 while.

(MORE)

BUZZ (CONT'D)
(beat; most emotional)
And I don't know if you've noticed,
but my wife now has control over
our only car, even though she isn't
really doing *anything* other than
her *stupid*-

REGGIE
Jesus, alright we'll smoke your
gross weed.

CHASE
Yeah, really man.

Buzz shoves it into Chase's hand with authority. He sits
back in his seat and looks out the window. Chase grimaces as
he looks the contents over.

REGGIE
Wait, before we do this I gotta get
gas first.

CUT TO:

EXT. GAS STATION - MOMENTS LATER

Reggie stands outside the car pumping. Chase and Buzz both
have their windows down.

Chase quietly opens the bag and sniffs. He closes it
immediately.

CHASE
(appalled)
It smells like shrimp.

BUZZ
Can you give it a rest, please?

CHASE
It's damp to the touch...

Buzz thinks.

BUZZ
It's "dank".

CHASE
(sighs)
That's not what dank means.

BUZZ
Actually, dank means unpleasantly
damp or-

CHASE
(loudly)
Ohhhh my god.

Buzz looks out the window; seems a little nervous.

BUZZ
Well, I just hope it isn't laced
with crack or something.

Chase scoffs.

CHASE
Yeah, a lot of dealers are lacing
their weed these days.
(beat)
With crack, especially I heard...
(beat)
Because nobody's buying that
anymore. Idiot.

BUZZ
You're a dick.

CHASE
You're a dick.

BUZZ
You know I'm getting pretty sick of-

REGGIE
Alright, that's enough, both of
you. Uncle Chase, Buzz is right
you are being a dick.
(re:Buzz)
And Buzz, I hope that the weed *is*
laced so hopefully we can blackout
and forget how awful its going to
be.

Chase snickers. Buzz is satisfied enough for the time being.

Suddenly, Chase gets out of the car.

CHASE
Hey, give me the keys, its my turn
to drive.

REGGIE

What do you mean "your turn"?
You're a 51 year old man. There
are no turns.

CHASE

Well whatever. You always drive on
these burn runs. I haven't done it
in a while.
(beat)
And plus I'm a way better driver
than you.

REGGIE

(sullen)
That didn't really seem like a
necessary thing to say.

CHASE

Listen, you're a fine smoker,
Reggie, but, no offense, but you're
only an *average* driver at the end
of the day. Me, I'm a *great*
smoker, and an impeccable driver.
(beat)
So naturally, if I were driving it
would be better for everybody.

Reggie looks to Buzz, who is now taking a whiff at the weed
bag.

REGGIE

How are you a better driver than
me? You got your license two years
ago.

CHASE

(condescending chuckle)
That's not what's important here.
To put it simply, I *understand* the
road. Become one with the mobile.
For me it's more than just getting
from point A to B. It's the way I
have complete control over every
single aspect of-

SMASH CUT TO:

EXT. SIDE OF HIGHWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Reggie rubs his forehead in frustration as he stands next to a mystified Chase, who looks on in wonder as firemen and police attend to their obliterated car, which has gone over the curb, flipped, and erupted into flames.

Directly beside them Buzz sits in the back of an ambulance getting oxygen, a blanket draped over his shoulders.

CHASE

I was just trying not to hit that field mouse.

REGGIE

Unreal.

Buzz takes off his oxygen mask for a second.

BUZZ

I told you that weed was laced.

Reggie and Chase glare at him.

In the distance, two cops emerge from the car with the gross weed bag.

COP

Hey chief, we may have found
somethi-
(beat)
No wait, nevermind.

The cop throws the crap bag on the ground. It blows by our heroes.

FREEZE FRAME

SUPER UP: FUNKBERRY

INT. CHASE'S HOUSE - AFTERNOON

Buzz and Chase are sitting on the couch in Chase's shitty apartment, staring straight ahead.

Reggie comes into view; hands each of them a jar of jelly.

CHASE

(angry)
Is this it?

REGGIE

Yeah. There's like two more jars in there, too, but nothing else.

(beat)

I think the next time we try to make homemade Jell-O we should look for a recipe on the internet.

BUZZ

Isn't there something we can put this on?

Reggie and Chase shake their heads at him as they pop the lids off their jars.

CHASE

(mouthful)

Get off your high horse, businessman.

Buzz sets his jar down. Sighs.

BUZZ

Well, what are you guys gonna do now?

REGGIE

About what?

BUZZ

(sarcastic)

Damn dude, I don't know.

CHASE

Buzz is right. We still don't have any weed.

BUZZ

Jesus, no! I was not talking about weed.

(beat)

Look at yourselves! You're only means of nutrition is...

(motions towards jelly)

You just totaled your car!

REGGIE

Shit, you're right.

(sets jar down; gets up)

How are we going to pick up weed without the car? And burn runs?

Forget it.

CHASE

Damn, I didn't even think of that.

Buzz storms out of the room.

CHASE (CONT'D)

Wait, I think I know a guy.

Reggie looks skeptical for a moment.

REGGIE

What guy?

CUT TO:

INT. BOBBY MALONEY'S HOUSE (BASEMENT)

In a dingy, dark basement, CLOSE ON the ruthless BOBBY MALONEY, 40s, with snow-white hair and piercing blue eyes. He looks suspiciously calm in his expensive black button-down suit.

On the table in front of him sits a huge bowl of candy. Huge enough to look out of place in such foul room.

Bobby begins to laugh.

BOBBY

So what I've been told is the truth, yes?

A crooked grin comes across his face.

REVEAL two nervous twenty-somethings, possibly college guys, sitting across from Bobby, staring down at the floor. All the blood has drained from their faces. They know they're in a terrible place.

The boy on a left wipes his hair out of his eyes and finally nods slightly.

Bobby shakes his head.

BOBBY (CONT'D)

I'm really sorry to hear that, frankly.

Bobby stands up and casually walks around the table. He puts his hands on their shoulders. They instantly shudder.

BOBBY (CONT'D)

But I'm in a pretty good mood, today, boys.

(MORE)

BOBBY (CONT'D)
 Not for any particular reason,
 either. Just one of those mornings,
 you know? A regular day where you
 just feel *at peace*.

Bobby takes a deep breath.

BOBBY (CONT'D)
 Makes you forget all your problems.
 (cryptic beat)
 Well, maybe not *all* of them.

He stares at the two boys for a moment.

BOBBY (CONT'D)
 Why is it kids like you two always
 get in over their heads? You know,
 guys like me, we don't care whether
 you're kids or not. We just want
 paid. You just pay, and then you
 can do whatever you want!

The two boys look nervously at each other. Boy 2 speaks up.

BOY 2
 Look...we can pay you. Soon.
 (gulps)
 Just not today.

Bobby winces.

BOBBY
 That's a tough one to swallow, my
 friend.

He reaches over the boys, into the candy dish. He pulls out
 a hefty handful.

BOBBY (CONT'D)
 You guys want a candy?

Both boys look at him; eyes wide with horror.

BOBBY (CONT'D)
 Suit yourselves.

He methodically begins unwrapping individual candies and
 popping them into his mouth one at a time.

BOBBY (CONT'D)
 (mouthful)
 Delicious.

Bobby motions again towards the candy dish.

BOBBY (CONT'D)
 You sure you don't want one?
 They're really chewy...with just a
hint of sour. The *perfect* amount
 of sour, even.

Boy 1 begins to sob. He falls to the floor.

Bobby seems to feel for him.

BOBBY (CONT'D)
 Aww, come on now.

He walks over to the fallen boy, lifts up his chin and looks him in the eye.

BOBBY (CONT'D)
 (mouth still full of candy)
 Everything's going to be alright.

Bobby punches him hard in the face. He moans on the ground as Bobby looks to the other boy.

BOBBY (CONT'D)
 I promise.

He gets up; dusts off his shirt.

BOBBY (CONT'D)
 Now, I'm just going to bring Bruce
 in here for a second; make sure
 everything's in good order, ya
 know?

He begins to walk off, but just as he reaches the door, he turns back around.

BOBBY (CONT'D)
 And have my money in a week.

Bobby Pops one more candy into his mouth.

BOBBY (CONT'D)
 Or I *will* kill both of you.

On his way out, he walks past BRUCE, a hulking man with greasy, slicked-back hair. He holds a red hot branding iron in his right hand.

BOBBY (CONT'D)
 (re:Bruce)
 Just an old fashioned warning.

He pats Bruce on the shoulder.

We follow Bobby up the stairs; he pauses when he hears a muffled scream. Sounds like somebody who just had their flesh burned with a branding iron.

HE REACHES THE TOP AND HEADS INTO...

INT. BOBBY MALONEY'S HOUSE (LIVING ROOM) - CONTINUOUS

In the living room we watch as five of Bobby's closest underlings sit around a table, playing some kind of card game and drinking from huge beer steins.

Marco, a young latino, sits at the head of the table with the deck in front of him. Contrary to the other men, he looks agitated.

MARCO

(beat)
It's you, Yancy.

YANCY, a plain-clothes middle-aged man, nervously examines his 5-card hand.

YANCY

...I'm all in.

Yancy pushes a pile of bills into the center of the table.

MARCO

Jesus.

He sets his cards down.

MARCO (CONT'D)

For the last time, we are playing draw poker. You can't just keep saying all-in. Just tell me how many cards you want. Or fold.

Yancy takes a moment to examine his cards again. He wipes sweat from his face, obviously baffled.

YANCY

Alright I fold.

He throws his cards into the pot.

MARCO

Okay, now Doug?

DOUG similarly examines his cards nervously for a long time. Finally, he looks up and into Marco's annoyed eyes.

DOUG
(heavy exhale; nods confidently)
All-in.

Before Marco can even reprimand him, another GOON speaks up.

GOON
Call!

Goon throws his cards on the table face-up.

GOON (CONT'D)
Ace.

He reaches in and takes all of the money from the center of the table.

MARCO
What do you mean "ace"? You have
one ace?

DOUG
Beats me.

GOON 2
Yeah, I'm out.

MARCO
(to himself)
Mother of God.

Bobby laughs in the background at the sight of all this.

BOBBY
Alright, Marco, I think it's time
you head out. If you're even five
minutes late, you'll miss
everything. These are a very
punctual people we're dealing with.

Marco's phone starts to ring. He checks the ID, then gets up and grabs his coat.

MARCO
Okay. I should be back in an hour.

BOBBY
(re:phone)
Who's that?

MARCO
Just a friend. I'll see you in a
little while.

Phone buzzes again; Marco takes another look at it.

MARCO (CONT'D)
Maybe two hours, actually.

BOBBY
Be careful.
(beat)
No funny business.

We now follow Marco as he exits the house. A wary Bobby watches him go.

EXT. BOBBY MALONEY'S HOUSE - AFTERNOON

Marco finally answers his phone. We move back and forth to him and Chase as he talks on the phone and starts driving.

MARCO
Hello?

MYSERIOUS VOICE (O.S.)
Marco. This is your father.

MARCO
(beat)
My father's dead.

CUT TO:

INT. CHASE'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Chase, who was holding his hand over the receiver to muffle his voice, takes his hand off the phone and holds it regularly.

CHASE
Hey, so is my Dad!
(realization)
Damn, that's a bummer.

EXT. BOBBY MALONEY'S HOUSE

Marco gets in the car.

MARCO
What do you want Chase?

CHASE (O.S.)
I need to call in that favor.

MARCO

Favor?.

INT. CHASE'S HOUSE

CHASE

Don't be coy with me. I know how you Mexicans work. Promising to do people favors when they help you, then forgetting all about it after you get your green cards.

MARCO'S CAR

MARCO

Is this about that groundhog?

CHASE (O.S.)

You're damn right it's about the groundhog. Out of the goodness of my heart, I killed that groundhog.

CHASE'S HOUSE

CHASE (CONT'D)

The very groundhog that was *ruining* your flower garden. And now I'm calling on you to return the favor.

MARCO'S CAR

MARCO

I didn't even ask you to do it!

CHASE'S HOUSE

CHASE

But I went ahead and did it anyway. Because I knew a time would come, when I would need you like you *needed* me, Marco.

MARCO (O.S.)

(sigh)

...Alright what do you need. And I swear, if you even ask me to front anything to you I'm hanging up.

CHASE

No, no, not that. Not now anyway.
(thinks)
Actually, I did just meet up with a few guys who asked me if I could-

MARCO (O.S.)

Chase.

CHASE

Yeah, so I just don't have a car right now, and it's pretty dry. You think you could make a stop over here when you get a chance?

MARCO'S CAR

Marco takes the phone away from his ear and gives a deep sigh.

MARCO

I'm running an errand right now.
(beat)
I'll call you back in a little while.

He hangs up the phone. Shakes his head.

CHASE'S HOUSE

Chase is satisfied.

CHASE

(re:Reggie)
Look who just saved the day.

Buzz, who was laying down on the couch, sits up.

BUZZ

How are you going to pay for more weed?
(beat)
You guys still haven't paid me for the weed I got.

Chase and Reggie look at Buzz for a moment, but decide to ignore him. They turn back to each other.

CHASE

How much money do you have?

REGGIE

More than you.

CHASE

I don't have any.

REGGIE

(beat)
Yeah, me neither.

Chase thinks for a minute.

CHASE

Buzz.
(beat)
I need to call in that favor.

BUZZ

That groundhog wasn't even
technically on my lawn!

CUT TO:

EXT. CAR LOT - AFTERNOON

Marco sits in his car. Takes a deep breath to recollect himself, then gets out. He leaves the keys in the ignition.

He makes his way through the lot, over to an enormous, brand new-looking RV. It shines in the afternoon sun.

He takes a key from his coat pocket, opens the door and enters.

We linger in the lot as he drives away, moving over to two men sitting inside a car parked a reasonable distance from where Marco just left.

They talk, but we can't hear what they are saying. Eventually, one of the guys gets out and heads towards Marco's abandoned car.

Both cars start to follow him.

EXT. ATM - AFTERNOON

Chase and Reggie stand by as Buzz withdraws money from the ATM.

BUZZ

You guys really have a problem.

REGGIE

Whatever, man. Why don't you worry about your own problems.

CHASE

Yeah. You'll be thanking me when your hands are so *sticky* with nugget you can't even jerkoff.

Buzz looks disgusted.

BUZZ

I don't know how you can trust these shady dealers, anyway.

CHASE

All of my connections are bulletproof.

(beat)

I have a sixth sense for knowing people. Marco works in the big-time bud game. He's like a Wall Street trader.

(beat)

Of bud.

(beat)

I guess.

Nobody knows how to respond, so they don't.

Buzz gets his money and hands it to Chase.

BUZZ

You guys owe me big. But I actually need this too. I'm in a pretty bad place right now.

CHASE

Don't worry Buzz. When the dust settles you'll be paid back. Paid back and then some.

They start walking down the road.

BUZZ

When's this guy coming anyway? We should really get some actual food in us.

EXT. CHASE'S HOUSE - LATER

The three men approach Chase's door; Buzz carries a fast food cup. They pause a ways from the house, as they see that a sour-looking SHEILA ROBERTS, Buzz's wife, dressed in karate garb, is already there, banging on the door and screaming.

Chase's phone rings.

CHASE

Alright, here's Marco. You guys need to handle this.

(answers; walks away)

Sup Marco?

SHEILA

(angry)
I know you're in there, assholes!
I swear to God I'll kick this door
down! You know I can!

We follow Reggie and Buzz as they approach the door. Sheila takes note of them.

REGGIE

What up, Sheila.

SHEILA

(re:Buzz)
There you are. Are you that big of
a baby that you aren't going to
tell me where you are anymore?
(beat)
You're pathetic.

Reggie isn't concerned by her lack of greeting.

REGGIE

I'm just gonna go inside now, then.

He moves off-screen.

BUZZ

I'm sorry.

SHEILA

Don't be. What the hell are you
doing hanging out here all of the
time, anyway? You have a career
now, Buzz. Unlike these idiots,
you matter.

REVEAL Reggie, standing only a few feet behind Sheila, still unlocking the door.

He gives a curt nod and enters the house; not worked up in the least.

SHEILA (CONT'D)

Come on, Buzz. Be a man for once
in your life.

BUZZ

That's enough Sheila. Reggie is my
best friend. And Chase is...

He looks to Chase on the distance, who is on the phone, but also awkwardly staring directly at two attractive teenage girls in the middle of a conversation.

They notice he is staring, but he continues to do it anyway.

BUZZ (CONT'D)

...well, Chase *took in* Reggie, and Reggie is my *best friend*.

SHEILA

That's really great, Buzz. What are you and your *best friend* doing right now? Probably something productive.

(re: Buzz's cup)

Ooh, let me guess, munchies? Then maybe to the corner to buy a couple 40 ounces? A Black & Mild? How grown up of you.

BUZZ

Alright, I don't even know what your problem is. We weren't doing anything wrong, and frankly it's rude of you to be so judgmental.

Chase walks by them.

CHASE

The nuggets are on the way, boys!
Let's get that pussy poppin'!

He gets into Sheila's face.

CHASE (CONT'D)

Hey there, Sheila.
(high-pitched voice)
Nuggggeeeettttssss!
(beat; walks into house)
Bust out the rest of that jelly, boy! We're gonna need it.

He slams the door behind him. Buzz is left standing there, mouth agape. Sheila storms away.

BUZZ

Come on Sheila, wait! Please!

She turns around and throws her car keys as hard as she can into Buzz's chest.

SHEILA
(nearly in tears)
Here's a way for you to get home.
I'm not going to be there when you
get back. Have fun with your life.

She turns and goes.

BUZZ
Sheila!
(realization)
Dammit.

INT. CHASE'S HOUSE - LATER

They are sitting around the table. Chase is super-excited, Reggie looks cool, and Buzz looks like shit.

REGGIE
Settle down there, big guy.

CHASE
Are you kidding? How long has it
been since we took a break this
long? I'm going through
withdrawal.

Chase steads himself.

CHASE (CONT'D)
But no matter. it's about to turn
around.
(beat)
Unless this one keeps tryin' to
bring everybody down.

They look at the forlorned Buzz.

BUZZ
How is *weed* going to make tonight
the greatest night of our lives?
I'm gonna get a really dry mouth
and then fall asleep. That's it.

They shake their heads.

REGGIE
Man, you really just don't get it
do you.

CHASE

Alright Buzz, if you say one more negative thing, *especially* about weed, I'm going to have to ask you to leave.

BUZZ

(sighs)

Sorry.

(beat)

I just don't know what I'm going to do about Sheila. I'm pretty sure she wants to leave me.

CHASE

What? That's ridiculous. Why would she want to do that?

Reggie looks to him, giving him the answer.

CHASE (CONT'D)

Oh.

(beat)

Well, you had a good run.

Buzz, full of despair, puts his head in his hands.

The doorbell rings. Chase is up and at it in an instant.

He opens the door, revealing an anxious-looking Marco.

CHASE (CONT'D)

There he is!

He gives Marco a big hug, which Marco doesn't like. He quickly steps into the house.

MARCO

Alright, I'm here.

He goes to the window and looks outside.

MARCO (CONT'D)

Is it cool if I hang here a minute? I feel like people might be following me.

CHASE

Following you?

(notices something outside)

Holy shit is that your RV? That thing is badass.

Marco turns around, closes the drapes. He pulls a bag of weed from his pocket. Chase immediately slips him the money.

It's the stoner's equivalent to a sack full of diamonds.

Chase sniffs the bag; swoons. Makes the sign of the cross; holds the bag up in all it's glory.

CHASE (CONT'D)

What is this?

Marco smiles.

MARCO

Brand new shipment from God knows where. Got it from some mysterious guys Bobby knows. You'll actually be the first people around here to ever smoke it, probably.

Chase nearly topples over with excitement.

CHASE

Reggie.
(beat)
Prepare the bong.

Reggie heads to the kitchen.

CHASE (CONT'D)

This will truly be remembered as the greatest day of our lives.

He looks over to a sulking Buzz.

CHASE (CONT'D)

Oh right.
(beat)
Sorry.
(re:Marco)
Here, have a seat Marco. Also, Marco this is Buzz. He and his wife are having some real troubles right now.

Buzz looks to Chase, annoyed.

BUZZ

That's a terrible introduction.

CHASE

Relax, Buzz. Marco is like family.

This statement seems to make Marco even more uncomfortable.

Reggie returns with an outlandishly elaborate bong, with a bunch of different bubble-chambers and other frivolities.

MARCO

Wow.

CHASE

Let us begin.

Chase takes the bong and puts some weed into his grinder.

SEXY SMOKING MONTAGE

I dunno. Some cool music and funny smoking stuff. It's easy.

JUMP CUT TO:

INT. CHASE'S HOUSE - 15 MINUTES LATER

Everybody sits in the same positions, only now a substantial amount of smoke hangs in the air. Also, everybody is now smirking, even Buzz, who is happily munching on a jar of a strange-colored jelly.

BUZZ

This.

(beat)

Is the best thing I have ever eaten.

Reggie nods as if this were the gospel.

CHASE

What's this weed called, Marco?

Marco chuckles.

MARCO

Here's a little secret, friends.

(beat)

Those names mean nothing. The guys up top just make them up as they go along.

CHASE

Wooahh...

(beat)

I'd be so good at doing that.

REGGIE

(chuckle)
At what, naming pot? That's
stupid.

CHASE

(angry)
I'm serious. I'd be the bomb at
it. I wonder if I could get
involved with that somehow...

Marco thinks for a moment.

MARCO

Well, they are going to have to
name this whenever I get the
shipment back to them.
(beat)
Did you have something in mind?
I'll try and suggest it.

The group is silent as they all turn to Chase, who looks
stunned.

He composes himself, picks up the bong and takes an enormous
rip.

He holds it in his lungs as the group waits in anticipation.

CLOSE ON Chase; a thick cloud of smoke slowly pouring from
his lips like velvet. He smiles; narrows his eyes.

In a seductive voice; the whole world seems to slow down:

CHASE

Funkberry.

Silence.

After it hits them, Reggie does a nod, Marco smiles. Buzz
has dropped his jaw and his jelly-spoon.

MARCO

Wow.

Chase looks around, feeling more confident by the group's
reaction.

Buzz shakes off his amazement and stands up.

BUZZ

Alright, I really have to go home.
Hopefully Sheila came to her
senses.

REGGIE

Are you sure you're cool to drive,
dude?

BUZZ

Me? I'm cool.

(beat)

In fact you might even say that I
understand the road. Become one
with the mobile. For me, it's more
important than getting from Point A
to Point B-

Chase cuts him off by throwing a pillow at him, and the three
of them start laughing.

Then a giddy Marco grabs a pillow and throws it at Chase.

It's weird at first, but then all four of them start
laughing, even harder.

Marco looks at his watch; suddenly stands up.

MARCO

Oh shit, I have to get going, too.
Can't be late for this dropoff.

Buzz and Marco head toward the exit, with Reggie and Chase
accompanying them out.

EXT. CHASE'S HOUSE - DUSK

The sun sets outside. Buzz stumbles over to the car Sheila
left for him. It is obvious he is having some difficulty.

Marco stands with Chase to say goodbye.

CHASE

We really appreciate you coming by,
Marco. I'll talk to you again
soon.

MARCO

It's no problem. I'll see you
later.

He begins to walk away, but turns around one last time; a
newfound respect in his eyes.

MARCO (CONT'D)

Funkberry.

Marco nods.

Buzz starts his vehicle and slowly begins to pull out.

EXT. ROAD - CONTINUOUS

A familiar car appears on the horizon. A few seconds later, the car Marco left behind also appears. Nobody seems to notice.

One drives by our heroes nonchalantly.

The other stops a few houses down.

Waits.

EXT. CHASE'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Buzz pulls his car up to the end of the intersection, twenty feet or so from Reggie and Chase and stops as a few cars go by.

CHASE

Hey Buzz!

Chase waves his hands behind Buzz's car, trying to get his attention.

CHASE (CONT'D)

Buzz!

Buzz rolls his windows down, looks back to Chase. He seems extremely befuddled.

CHASE (CONT'D)

Your back driver's side tire is a little flat. You might wanna take a look when you get home.

As Chase speaks, Marco has almost arrived at his RV. He fiddles in his pockets for the keys.

EXT. ROAD - CONTINUOUS

The car parked a few houses down has begun accelerating, and the window can be seen being rolled down.

The driver of the car leans out, yells something in foreign, and fires six bullets directly into Marco's chest. Reggie looks on as Marco dies instantly, then throws himself to the ground.

REGGIE

Holy shit!

A look of terror also comes over Chase's face. He runs for cover.

EXT. CHASE'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

The car parked on the other end of the street begins accelerating, appearing like it is about to do a second round of shooting.

A stoned Buzz is startled by the shots as he is still leaning far out of his window at the back tire.

BUZZ

What in the Hell?

Buzz leans out farther, accidentally slams on the gas and sends his car out into the middle of the street.

An extraordinary crash (or one of those intense moments with no noise at all) as Buzz is sandwiched between the two assault vehicles, whose drivers have been flung through their windshields and appear to be dying on the street.

REGGIE

Buzz!

Reggie gets up and runs to the accident.

EXT. ROAD - CONTINUOUS

Chase and Reggie get up and sprint to Buzz's car. They rip open the door to find their friend extremely bloodied; he groans loudly.

CHASE

(examining the scene)

We've got to get him out of here.

Chase grabs Buzz's shoulders in an attempt to examine his injuries. A semi-conscious Buzz reaches an arm out to Reggie. Reggie starts to dry heave.

REGGIE

(heave)

Oh god...

CHASE

Come on Reggie! Grab his other shoulder and let's get him inside.

(MORE)

CHASE (CONT'D)

There might be more of these guys.

Reggie nods; he follows Chase's lead, wipes the panic from his face and begins to help Buzz out of the vehicle.

CHASE (CONT'D)

Damn, he's really losing blood.

Reggie looks down at Buzz in his arms and sees that he too is now covered in blood. He feels disgusting; barely able to take it, he begins gagging harder.

Chase surveys the car situation, all of the cars are destroyed or unusable... except the RV.

CHASE (CONT'D)

Get a hold of yourself! I need you to find the keys to that RV.

(beat)

I'm gonna try to stop the flow.

Chase takes control of Buzz's body. Reggie tentatively runs over to the dead Marco.

REGGIE

Aw...(gag)...so gross. (gag)

It's so much worse than Buzz; he barely gets a hand into the pocket when he has to turn his head away to vomit..

CHASE

Reggie, the keys! Come on!

Buzz groans.

Reggie finds the keys in a different pocket; runs back over to the RV. He opens the door, then helps Chase drag buzz inside.

INT. RV - CONTINUOUS

Reggie attempts to move to the driver's seat. Chase fights for the keys a little until Reggie's look reminds him of earlier.

Deflated, Chase goes to Buzz, who has now completely lost consciousness.

They take off.

REGGIE

So what do we do now?

Beat.

CHASE (O.S.)
We've got to dump him at the
hospital.

Reggie cannot fathom this.

REGGIE
Dump him? I'm not gonna dump my
best friend at the hospital. He
could be dying!

CHASE
Reggie.
(beat)
We have to dump him at the
hospital.

REGGIE
What? What's wrong with you? We
can't just leave him alone!

Reggie quickly glances behind him, intending to give his
uncle a dirty look.

His expression turns to one of shock, though, and he nearly
crashes before he turns back to driving.

He continues to look back and forth between the road and
what's behind him.

REGGIE (CONT'D)
Is that-?

REVEAL Chase in the back of the RV with Buzz's body at his
feet. He stands in glory, among thousands of pounds of
amazing bud.

Funkberry.

CHASE
I think our options here are to
either dump him off at the hospital
or try to wake him up and see how
he feels about holistic medicine.

Reggie is speechless.

CUT TO:

EXT. HOSPITAL - LATER

The RV pulls away from the front of the hospital, leaving behind Buzz's badly injured carcass.

Taped to him is a sign: "REAL HURT."

The RV drives into the sunset.

CREDITS