

SUICIDE PREVENTION

Screenplay by

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## SUICIDE PREVENTION

EXT. GOLDEN GATE BRIDGE DECK - LATE NIGHT

The traffic is light, the fog thick. A single figure stands motionless on the pedestrian walkway.

CLOSER. It's a tall, thin, rigid man in his 40s. ROY THODE is facing the bay, eyeing the black roiling water, watching with great interest as the slow-motion waves gather and approach. Most of his attention is focused on the view straight down, way down where the inky water swirls and beckons.

After taking his sweet time, he looks back to check the roadway. Nearly empty. This is it.

He braces himself, leans forward, and then slowly raises his right foot to the railing. As he does, he looks to the side.

Two eyes are staring back at him from the top of a pile of sleeping bags. Roy freezes, the eyes keep staring. The person is either psychotic or died with his eyes open.

But now is not the time to wonder about psychos invading his space. He breaks the trance, lowers his leg slowly, gathers himself and walks on.

He walks around the first tower, past a chain link fence.

Now a safe distance from prying eyes, he stops and checks over the edge. Work scaffolding.

He continues on, passes a tall light structure and stops. He steps behind the structure into the shade and looks over the edge. No obstructions. The perfect spot.

He checks around. Then, he hoists himself up, swings his leg over the railing and straddles the ledge, steadies himself. He's going to do it. He really is. But as he ponders whether to raise the other leg, he hears a CAR SLOW AND STOP. Then, the familiar red and blue flashers.

A cop car is stopped on the other side of the road, right behind him. The spotlight comes on. He turns and hops down onto the walkway, just as the beam finds him. He looks away from it, pretending not to notice.

The cops pause for a few tense BEATS, then move on.

EXT. LOMBARD ST. - LATER

Roy is walking with his head down past closed businesses, junkies selling and ingesting deadly drugs, over homeless people sleeping in alcoves. He eyes front windows here and there to get ideas for his exit plan. But nothing can shake his internal focus.

EXT. GUN SHOP - LATER

It's closed and items in the front window have been stashed away. Somewhere in the back of the store he can see a case with handguns.

EXT. NOB HILL - LATER

From the hilltop, he has a view of the tall buildings downtown. He looks straight up at the one next to him, studies the top ledges of buildings around him.

EXT. TENDERLOIN - LATER

Traffic is sparse, but the streets are still humming.

Roy is walking head down. A sudden wake of NOISE and dust from a passing garbage truck jars him back to reality. He watches it rattle off down the street, gets an idea.

He skitters into a shadow and crouches in the runner position. Then, he darts into the street and faces an imaginary truck, arms raised. He goes back and tries again. Then, again.

Then, he sees a bus approaching. He gets in position. The bus picks up speed. He crouches. It gets closer. He waits. Closer. It's time. He flies into the street and raises his arms, just as the bus slows and turns a corner.

He flips it off.

INT. BART PLATFORM - LATER

The underground platform is mostly empty. Roy is standing close to the tracks, watching the tunnel. After a moment, he hears the SCREECH of an APPROACHING BART, then the lights. When it flies into the station, he makes note of the speed and position of the train as it comes to a stop.

He walks the length of the train to scope out where he will stand, how he will time his action. He discreetly rehearses a few moves.

The Bart flies off. He steps close to the edge of the platform and plans his final leap. Looks down at the "danger high voltage" signs next to the third rail. So many possibilities! Then, a voice behind him snaps his concentration.

HOPE  
Drop something?

He startles and turns. It's a short plump woman (40s) with a round baby face.

ROY  
No, I'm uh... No.

HOPE  
You don't want to drop anything down there. Believe me.

ROY  
Ok.

Roy tries to ignore her.

HOPE  
I had a whole suitcase fall in once. Yeah. A whole fuckin' suitcase. Believe me, that sucked. Here's a tip. Don't ever do that. Not a good way to make friends. The fucker fell right on the tracks. Right in the middle. This whole SWAT team like stopped all the Barts and a guy had to like jump down there and grab it out. There's like a million volts down there, you know.  
(Makes an electrocution sound)  
Needless to say, I wasn't popular around here that day. It was like, fuuuuck.

Roy is tense. The next Bart enters and stops. Lost his chance.

HOPE (CONT'D)  
Yup. I was persona non grata that day. Whatever that means. You got the time?

ROY  
(Looking at his watch)  
9-45.

HOPE  
Thanks.

She looks up at the digital schedule. Roy steps away from her, hoping she'll lose interest in him. He turns his attention to the high-voltage rails. And there she is...

HOPE (CONT'D)  
Hey, do you know when the Bart to Berkeley is?

ROY  
You missed it.

HOPE  
Missed it?! Oh, shit. When's the next one?

ROY  
9-30 was the last one. I don't think there are anymore.

HOPE  
Fuck.

The Bart leaves. She just stands there staring at the sign with her mouth agape, looking lost.

Roy gives up on Bart and hops on the up escalator, trying to evade the woman.

EXT. EMBARCADERO - CONTINUOUS

He gets off the escalator and checks out the tall buildings, seems drawn to the Transamerica pyramid a few blocks away. And there she is...

HOPE  
Hey, I hate to bother you but I'm kinda fucked. I'm actually from Vegas, you see, but I'm like staying with my mom in Berkeley and I'm trying to figure out this Bart system, you know, and this crazy fucked-up city. Is there like a bus I can take? That you know of? Or something?

ROY  
I don't know about any buses to Berkeley. You can take Bart to Oakland and transfer to the Richmond line.

HOPE  
Ah good. And that goes to Berkeley?

ROY  
Yeah.

HOPE  
Oh good. Thanks.

She steps toward the escalator. Then, just as she's about to get on...

ROY  
(Dropping his head)  
But you don't want to do that.

HOPE  
(Stopping)  
Oh yeah?

ROY  
It's late. And Oakland is... fairly unsafe at this time. Actually, very unsafe. Actually, everything is unsafe. You got Uber?

HOPE  
No.

ROY  
Can you do a taxi?

HOPE  
I don't think so.

ROY  
Well. I don't know.

Heading back toward the escalator...

HOPE  
I'll be fine. Got my lucky mood ring, see? And hey, I'm from Vegas, where the sun never sets, you know, the city that never sleeps, if it happens there it can happen anywhere, or can't happen anywhere...

Just as she's about to step onto the escalator...

ROY

Wait.

She does.

ROY (CONT'D)

(Reluctantly)

I have an extra bed.

HOPE

(Stopping)

Are you?

ROY

If you want. It's nothing special.

HOPE

(Approaches him)

Wow. That's really nice.

ROY

As I say, it's just a little dump  
but it's better than wandering  
around Oakland in the dark.

HOPE

It'll just be one night. I swear.  
Gone tomorrow morning. You won't  
even know I'm there. Seriously.  
Gone.

ROY

Fine.

HOPE

And just so you know, I trust you.

ROY

Thanks.

HOPE

No really. I can tell you're...  
alright. Yeah, you're alright.

ROY

I try.

HOPE

Can I hug you?

ROY

I don't, uh... I guess.

HOPE

If you don't want a hug, you know,  
if you're not that type...  
Actually, I don't think you are,  
and that's cool. I'm the huggin'  
type, man. That's how I cement all  
my deals, you know. I'm not saying  
there's anything wrong with-

ROY

Ok, whatever.

HOPE

Hug?

ROY

Yeah, sure.

She gives him a big bear hug and he eventually reciprocates.

EXT. MISSION DISTRICT - LATER

The two are riding the Bart escalator to street level. It's relatively quiet at this hour. The usual late-night denizens are slithering in the shadows. Neon liquor stores and bars provide what light there is.

Hope enters, oblivious to her surroundings.

HOPE

I actually grew up in Berkeley in  
the same house my mom is in now.  
It's kind of weird, up in the hills  
behind the school. It's like a  
hippy pad, you know? She's an old  
hippy and I was her hippy  
offspring, you know, running around  
in the sun all butt naked. She's  
got the bead doors and little dirt  
paths and a garden with tomatoes  
and beans and shit. She and my dad  
were like anti-war protesters at  
Berkeley and they all did drugs and  
spaced out all the time. And I just  
like danced around with flowers in  
my hair and all their friends  
thought I was cute and laughed.

They are walking down the street, stepping over the homeless,  
passing by hookers and drug dealers. It's all very bleak,  
except for Hope.



HOPE (CONT'D)

Then, Vegas happened. Now, that's weird. Vegas. I don't know. So this is going to work out nice for tomorrow, because I have to like get up early and head over to the hospital. Is there a hospital around here?

ROY

San Francisco General?

HOPE

Yeah, that's it.

ROY

I'll draw you a map.

HOPE

That's ok. I can Google it. Hey, this is where Google is, right?

ROY

Just over the hill.

HOPE

Which one? You got like a million fuckin' hills.

ROY

What time are you up?

HOPE

I don't know. Eight? You need to get up early for work?

ROY

Uh, good question.

INT. ROY'S FLAT - LATER

They enter his tiny second-story apartment, probably a studio converted to a one-bedroom - old furnishings, cheap everything.

He immediately heads to his old answering machine. It's empty. He slumps next to it.

HOPE

Hey, this is nice. Cozy. At least you don't have to drive far if you work in the city. That my couch?

ROY  
It pulls out.

HOPE  
Cool. Lap of luxury. How do you,  
uh...

ROY  
Here, I'll get it.

He removes the cushions and pulls out the old, saggy sofa bed.

HOPE  
So you didn't tell me what you do  
for a living.

ROY  
It's complicated.

HOPE  
That's cool. So if I leave by  
eight, that'll work out for you  
time-wise?

ROY  
I'm sorry.

HOPE  
For what?

ROY  
For being so vague. It's been a  
long day and I'm... I'm...

HOPE  
Hey, long days make me vague too.  
Sometimes I get all vaged out. You  
know?

ROY  
I mean... Don't worry about it.  
I'll get up after you leave and...

She can sense there's a whole story waiting to be heard.

HOPE  
Are you ok?

He gives her a look.

HOPE (CONT'D)  
I know. It's complicated.

ROY

I got juice and some beer in the  
fridge. Help yourself. Night.

She sits on the saggy bed and watches him head to the bedroom  
and close the door behind him. He's a tough nut to crack.

ANGLE ON closed door.

MATCH DISSOLVE  
TO:

INT. ROY'S FLAT - NEXT MORNING

The door opens and Roy enters the room. He's dressed  
casually, expecting to find her there. But she's gone.

Life is back to the way it was before. The sofa bed has been  
put away and everything is in its place. Fresh brew is  
waiting in the Mr. Coffee.

He picks up a note on the kitchen counter, reads it and  
smiles - not too much, just a hint. Then, he pours a cup.  
Makes a face. It's stronger than he'd like, actually much  
stronger. He dumps it in the sink.

His mood downshifts. It's back to work. He looks around the  
room for ideas. The old gas stove.

He opens the oven and checks it out. He takes the racks out,  
kneels down and puts his head in.

He stands and goes into the bathroom. Then, comes back with a  
big towel. He gets in position with his head in the oven and  
drapes the towel over his shoulders to concentrate the gas.  
He reaches up and turns the oven knob all the way on. Gas  
starts flowing. (It's an ancient oven that requires a match  
to light.) He takes deep breaths and lets the gas do its job.

His cell phone RINGS. It RINGS a few more times. He GROANS  
and gets up, BANGING his head on the top of the oven. Turns  
off the gas. Pulls the phone out of his pocket.

ROY

Hi Jon.

JON (V.O.)

(Pitying)

Hey Roy, how's it going?

ROY

Ok.

JON (V.O.)  
Just calling to see how the  
apartment's working out for you.

ROY  
It's, uh, fine.

JON (V.O.)  
Not too small?

ROY  
It's just me, Jon.

JON (V.O.)  
Great. That's great. Say, uh,  
something came up. I'll be working  
in the city in a couple weeks and  
needing to use the flat. Is that  
going to be a problem?

ROY  
No, I'll be gone by then.

JON (V.O.)  
You're sure? I mean, we can share  
it for a few days, if...

ROY  
No, no, I'm uh... I'll be moving  
on.

JON (V.O.)  
Are you sure? I hate to dump this  
on you.

ROY  
It's fine. Really.

JON (V.O.)  
Well, good. If you're sure.

ROY  
I'm sure.

JON  
(BEAT)  
How you doing, anyway?

ROY  
Fine.

JON (V.O.)  
Any word from, uh...

ROY  
Nope.

JON (V.O.)  
The kid?

ROY  
Not a word.

JON (V.O.)  
How's the job search goin'? Any nibbles?

ROY  
I've made a few calls, but... it's up to the attorneys I guess.

JON (V.O.)  
The bloodsucking attorneys.

ROY  
Yeah.

JON (V.O.)  
Anyway, I'll let you get back to it. Just wanted to check in. Call me if you want to talk. I'm serious. Anytime. I'll be here. I'm here for you, man. You know that, right?

ROY  
Yeah. Thanks.

He hangs up.

He gets back in position with his head in the oven, towel over his head. He starts the gas.

After a moment the intercom BUZZES. He doesn't move. It BUZZES again. A few more times. The caller is not going away.

He stands, BANGS his head again on the top, turns off the oven and marches to the door. POUNDS the intercom button.

ROY (CONT'D)  
Yeah?

HOPE (V.O.)  
It's me. Hope. From last night? Did I wake you?

ROY  
No, no.

HOPE (V.O.)  
Listen. I, uh... Can I ask a favor?

EXT. MISSION DISTRICT - MORNING

The two are walking with purpose.

HOPE  
Funny, you'd think I lived in  
Berkeley my whole life I'd be able  
to find my way around the city, but  
it's like one old building after  
another.

ROY  
It's no problem.

HOPE  
What are you up to today?

ROY  
Not much.

HOPE  
You aren't going to stay in that  
old depressing apartment all day,  
are you?

ROY  
No.

HOPE  
I mean, nothing personal, but it's  
pretty awful, actually. You know? I  
mean, I appreciate you letting me  
stay there and everything but it's  
fucking bleak.

ROY  
I won't be there long.

HOPE  
Where you going?

ROY  
Good question.

HOPE  
So?

ROY  
So, what?

HOPE  
Where you going?

He stops. She takes a few more steps and turns back.

ROY  
I have some things I need to take  
care of.

HOPE  
Ok?

ROY  
That's it.

HOPE  
Can you give me a clue?

ROY  
What do you mean?

He starts walking again ahead of her.

HOPE  
I mean... You're this fucking  
enigma. You're kind of, you know,  
down and you never talk and I've  
like reeled off my whole life  
story, and you're just... this  
empty shell. Don't you ever like  
have anything to say?

He stops again.

ROY  
(Giving in)  
You're right.

HOPE  
I know I'm right.

ROY  
What do you want to know?

HOPE  
Oh. Ok. First, why do you live in  
that dump?

ROY  
I needed a place to stay.

HOPE

Well, it's a place to stay,  
alright, I'll give it that. Why  
there?

ROY

It's a friend's place. He's letting  
me stay there while I deal with  
some things.

HOPE

Good. What things?

ROY

My wife, she thought... We're  
having difficulties now. So, that's  
why I'm there. And the job I had...  
I lost it. That's about it.

Hope feels the need to hug him again.

HOPE

See that wasn't so bad.

ROY

It's bad.

She draws closer to him, puts her hands on his arms.

HOPE

I know. I know. Do you mind?

ROY

What?

HOPE

You know.

She hugs him, he reciprocates. But this time they hug longer  
and he closes his eyes. She releases him.

ROY

Your hospital is over there.

She looks where he's pointing - an old brick building across  
the street and down half a block. She turns back and holds  
out her hand.

HOPE

Nice knowing you, Roy.

They shake hands and she's off. And his world is reset to  
zero once again.



INT. GUN SHOP - DAY

Roy is looking over handguns in a glass counter. A rough-looking GUN SALESMAN comes over.

GUN SALESMAN  
Help you?

ROY  
Yeah. How much is that one?

GUN SALESMAN  
The Glock is 5-50. What are you going to use it for?

ROY  
Uh, protection.

GUN SALESMAN  
Live in the city?

ROY  
Yeah.

GUN SALESMAN  
That's the one. Easy to use. Versatile. Lots of ways to customize it. You a collector?

ROY  
Uh, no. I'm just getting ideas.

GUN SALESMAN  
Ah, yeah. Well don't wait too long. Think of it as life insurance. You got insurance on your car, right?

ROY  
Yup.

The gun salesman pulls the gun out and hands it to Roy, who handles it like something evil.

GUN SALESMAN  
Well, this is insurance against intruders, uninvited low-life that invade your home, steal your property, threaten you and your kids and everything you hold near and dear, all that stuff you can't put a price tag on...

ROY  
Can I just buy it? Or is there  
something else?

GUN SALESMAN  
Just need to run a background check  
and it's all yours.

ROY  
Ok.

GUN SALESMAN  
As long as you're not a convicted  
criminal or have a court order out  
on you, you should be good to go.

ROY  
Court order?

GUN SALESMAN  
You know, like a restraining order.

Roy sets the gun down.

ROY  
I see. Well, I'll have to think  
about it.

GUN SALESMAN  
Don't think too long.

EXT. TRANSAMERICA PYRAMID - DAY

Roy is standing on the street looking up at the tower.

INT. TRANSAMERICA PYRAMID LOBBY - DAY

He walks through the lobby to the elevators and notices a  
sign: "No public access to top floors."

EXT. COIT TOWER - DAY

He's standing by the visitors entrance looking up.

INT. COIT TOWER - DAY

He's jammed into a small elevator with a bunch of loud  
tourists, going up.

The door opens and they squeeze out into the crowded viewing area. Roy pushes through to one of the windows. Nice view, but it won't do.

INT. TALL APARTMENT BLDG. - DAY

Roy makes his way to the top of a series of dark stairs and stops, facing a large, solid door with a sign: Roof Access, Authorized Personnel Only. It's got a serious dead bolt and burglar alarm wiring.

He's about to turn away but decides to give it a shot anyway. To his amazement, the door swings right open. He steps out onto the roof.

EXT. TALL APARTMENT BLDG. ROOF - CONTINUOUS

He slides a cinderblock over to keep the door from closing, and walks to the ledge. He passes a few lawn chairs and a picnic table, toys, a ball. There's a small raised-bed garden and the legs of a massive radio antenna.

He looks over the ledge. It's a straight shot down ten or more stories to the hot, inviting pavement of Jones Street. He looks around. There's no one to bother him, the sky is blue, the ledge is just the right height and easy to sit on, everything is perfect. Almost too perfect.

He casually takes a seat, dangles his legs over the edge. Just one quick push and he'll be sailing through the air. But there's no rush. He has time to relax a bit, enjoy his last moments on earth.

He hears the door SQUEAK open. It's an older woman with a small basket of laundry. She makes her way over to a makeshift clothesline. Seeing Roy, she tosses him a quick salute. He waves back.

Roy loosens up. This could almost be considered nice. He's got all the time in the world. He can spend hours sitting there over-thinking - something he loves doing.

A black cat appears on the ledge next to him. It pads over to Roy, PURRING, and rubs against him. This can't be happening! Finally, Roy gives in and pets it.

The mood is gone.

INT. ROY'S FLAT - LATER

Roy enters hot and drained, plops down on the sofa. He slouches and leans his head back. Another disappointing day. Then, he sees something on the end table, picks it up.

It's a prescription bottle for Hope Henderson. He sets it on the coffee table and resumes slouching with his eyes closed. A moment later his eyes pop open. He focuses on the bottle, picks it up and reads it carefully.

It's Fentanyl, in the form of a nasal spray. He shakes the bottle. Seems to be full of liquid. He removes the cap, checks it over, then sets it back down.

Then, he stands and paces. He's excited, but he's torn. He tries to open the bottle, but it's sealed, glued shut. His good side takes over and he sets it back down, paces, hopes it will just go away. But it doesn't. It's still there.

He gets rough with it and manages to break off part of the nasal applicator. Gives up, turns and grabs it again. He pulls and twists it.

He looks through kitchen drawers, pulls out scissors, knives, a little hammer thing, pliers. Then, he sets to mangling the top of the bottle. With the pliers, he's able to crush and twist off the plastic parts, and a knife cuts and pries away the pieces the pliers couldn't destroy.

And there it is. He pours the clear liquid carefully into a cocktail glass. It's not much. He sees a bottle of whiskey and tops off the glass, stirs the contents with a spoon.

He sets the glass on the kitchen table and stares at it. He knows he's got one chance to do this thing, and it has to work. Has to! He pulls his wallet out, riffles through the contents, and pulls out a worn picture. It's a smiling blond woman, holding a small girl. Somehow it gives him strength. He picks up the glass.

QUICK CUT TO:

INT. ROY'S FLAT - LATER

NOISE and confusion. From Roy's perspective lying on the floor, WE get a blurry, crazy picture of high-speed chaos all around. He's COUGHING, GAGGING. Two paramedics are pounding on his chest, jabbing needles in him, flashing lights in his eyes. Behind them, Hope is checking around the room.

PARAMEDIC 1  
His eyes are opening.

PARAMEDIC 2  
Got a weak pulse, low BP.

PARAMEDIC 1  
O2?

PARAMEDIC 2  
Very low.

Hope picks up a note from the kitchen table and reads it.

PARAMEDIC 1  
You think he's stable enough?

PARAMEDIC 2  
Should be. Let's get him in the  
box.

The paramedics check Roy over. There's a mess on and around his head, where he vomited.

PARAMEDIC 1  
Good.  
(To Roy)  
How you doing, bud? You with me?  
What's your name? Can you give me  
your name?

They keep talking to him as they lift him onto a gurney, strap him in and carry him out the door, followed by Hope.

EXT. ROY'S FLAT - CONTINUOUS

They flip the wheels down and roll him to the ambulance.

HOPE  
Is he going to be ok?

PARAMEDIC 1  
Hard to say. Probably.

HOPE  
(To Roy)  
Roy, you're going to be ok. Don't  
worry. They'll take good care of  
you.

His eyes are all over the place.

PARAMEDIC 1  
Did he ingest anything besides the  
fentanyl spray and whiskey that you  
know of?

HOPE

That's it. That I know of.

They push the gurney into the ambulance.

PARAMEDIC 1

Well if you think of anything else that he may have drunk, eaten, smoked, snorted, inhaled... Does he use a needle?

HOPE

I doubt it.

PARAMEDIC 2

I didn't see any tracks.

Paramedic 2 and Hope hop in the back and Paramedic 1 closes the doors.

INT. EMERGENCY ROOM BY ROY - LATER

The emergency room team is finishing up with Roy. The ATTENDING speaks way too close to his face in her most syrupy doctor voice.

ATTENDING

Ok, Mr. Thode, we have you on an IV drip to help flush out your system. And that should make you feel more comfortable. Are you feeling better now?

ROY

My head really hurts.

ATTENDING

Uh huh. That's to be expected. Everything is looking real good. We're just going to need to keep you here for a day or so to check on you and make sure you stay safe. Ok?

(BEAT)

And we're going to have our counselor come in and talk with you about your... episode, to make sure you get the resources you need. Ok?

ROY

Sure.

ATTENDING

Ok, then. You get some rest.

She breezes out. The last nurse picks up some trash left on his stomach, checks the IV, and leaves.

He's not feeling so hot after being prodded and poked, and viewed and lectured to by everybody that passes by. He closes his eyes and takes a deep breath. When he opens them again, there's Hope, watching him intently from the end of the bed. She checks to see if the coast is clear, then sits in a low chair next to him.

She keeps her eyes trained on him with an uncharacteristically serious face. He turns away and closes his eyes. They stay like this for some time, thinking about how to start a conversation... or avoid one.

HOPE

(Unusually quiet)

What were you thinking, Roy?

ROY

I don't know.

HOPE

Maybe if we'd talked about your problems earlier, we could have avoided this. What do you think?

He shrugs.

HOPE (CONT'D)

Imagine how I felt when I went back to your flat to get my nose spray and there you are lying half-dead in a pool of vomit. You drank my fucking nose spray, Roy. I mean, I can get more. That's not a problem. But nose spray? That's got to be a serious cry for... something.

She pulls out his suicide note.

HOPE (CONT'D)

By the way, I found your note. "To whom it may concern. After a great deal of thought and pondering my options..." Roy, I get it. This is your way of telling the world I'm hurting. Your way of crying out for help. And... it's very touching. I'm touched.

He GROANS.

HOPE (CONT'D)

(BEAT)

Anyway, you don't have to say anything. I'm not sure I'd believe you anyway. I'm just glad you're ok. That's all that matters.

A nurse walks by and glances in, and Hope hides her face.

HOPE (CONT'D)

By the way, technically, I'm not supposed to be here since I'm not related. But, FYI, I saw them rifling through your wallet, and I think they may have contacted your wife. Just so you know.

He GROANS and throws his head back.

HOPE (CONT'D)

Was that a mistake?

He doesn't answer.

HOPE (CONT'D)

Groan once for yes, twice for no.

He GROANS.

HOPE (CONT'D)

I thought so.

She takes his hand.

INT. EMERGENCY ROOM BY ROY - LATER

The wife MAEVE and child SKYLA are hovering over him. He's on his side, facing away from them. His wife is more annoyed than helpful.

MAEVE

I'm sorry it came to this.

ROY

Me too.

MAEVE

You should've told me you were feeling this way.



ROY  
I couldn't.

MAEVE  
Don't be ridiculous.

ROY  
How could I talk to you if I'm not allowed to call or come over?

MAEVE  
I'm sure you could've found a way if you'd wanted to.

ROY  
Well, I didn't.

MAEVE  
You didn't want to. Just like you didn't want to be a father to your child or a husband to me.

ROY  
(Faces them)  
I didn't what?! That doesn't make any sense. Of course I wanted to be a father. What does that even mean? You're just digging up cliches from one of your vapid romance novels-

MAEVE  
Well, it's a mood point now, isn't it?

ROY  
Moot.

MAEVE  
Skyla has something for you.

SKYLA  
Here daddy.

Skyla sets an envelope on his stomach. He opens it.

MAEVE  
In the future, if you need to talk to one of us, you can go through my attorney.

ROY  
Attorney?

MAEVE

We need to move on, Roy.

ROY

Why can't we see a therapist or marriage counselor or something?

MAEVE

It's too late for that.

ROY

I don't think it is.

Inside the envelope is a generic, unhumorous get-well card, signed by the daughter.

MAEVE

Anyway, it's not up to you.

ROY

It's not?

MAEVE

You gave up that right when you... did what you did.

Skyla is curious. There's that oblique language again.

ROY

I didn't do anything.

MAEVE

That's not what she said.

SKYLA

Who? Who said?

MAEVE

Do you want to tell her?

ROY

(Shouting now)  
Really?! You're really going to bring this up now?  
Really?! Timing, Maeve! Use your fucking head!

MAEVE (CONT'D)

Go ahead. She's going to find out about it eventually anyway! You should be the one to tell her! She'll find out one way or another!

A NURSE hears them and intervenes.

NURSE

(To Roy)

Mr. Thode, I'm going to need to have you keep your voice down, please.

(MORE)

NURSE (CONT'D)  
 We have a lot of sick patients. Ok?  
 Just calm down. Do you need  
 anything?

ROY  
 Sorry.

MAEVE  
 (Satisfied)  
 Keep it up, Roy. Keep it up.

They head out.

ROY  
 Thank you for the card Skylar. It's  
 very nice.

She's gone. He rolls on his side and closes his eyes.

INT. CLOVESS CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

FLASHBACK SIX MONTHS. Everyday is dress-casual day at this small Silicon Valley venture capital firm, specializing in early stage start-ups. Five or so partners are gathered. Jon is the guy at the head of the table.

The team is conversing happily on caffeine highs, waiting for the meeting to get underway. Then, Roy flies in disheveled, holding folders and a laptop. He hates being late and disorganized.

ROY  
 Sorry I'm late. I was going to hand  
 you a draft of the business plan  
 but my... Allegra, uh, was busy and  
 didn't have time to... get to it.  
 (Shaking off the gloom)  
 Anyway, bottom line. AdLiveo!  
 They've accepted our offer!

They CLAP, HOORAY! Roy takes a seat.

JON  
 That's wonderful, Roy.

ROY  
 Sorry about all the cloak and  
 dagger around this. There were just  
 too many moving parts that had to  
 come together. But we nailed 'em!

JON

In case you don't know, we were competing with the likes of fucking Atwater, HWT, ClearTime and the formidable fucking Puma Tech.

The others can't believe it. Puma! Puma! More CHEERING.

ROY

In case you don't know, AdLiveo has a medical device for stage 4 cancer patients that actually increases life expectancy without pouring more expensive drugs into them. It's fucking magic. There's more in the plan you'll be getting.

JON

What sold them?

ROY

They liked the plan. They liked the investment strategy. They liked us.

JON

They liked Roy.

ROY

Well...

They all CHEER.

JON

What's the next step?

ROY

We're going to fund their FDA approval and seed manufacturing. Hold their hands all the way through. Once we're over the FDA hump, we have recommendations for streamlining. Just between you and me, at least half of the founding executives are redundant. The company is all research now; we need to turn it into a business. Then, we can start generating some money. We got an aging population, with lots of stage 4 cancer on the horizon and just the machine they'll need to prolong their lives.

JON  
You're colorful, Roy.

ROY  
I try.

CHEER.

INT. CLOVESS OPEN OFFICE - LATER

FLASHBACK. Roy is standing at Allegra's desk, upset. She's not there. He turns to CHLOE at the next desk.

ROY  
Chloe. Do you have any idea where  
Allegra is?

She is sympathetic to Roy.

CHLOE  
I don't know. She never came back.  
Probably hiding out in the café.

ROY  
Jesus.

CHLOE  
I'm sorry.

ROY  
Thanks.

He turns and heads for his office, then stops. Thinks. POUNDS the wall and walks straight through the cubicle maze.

Chloe watches, concerned.

INT. CLOVESS CAFÉ - CONTINUOUS

FLASHBACK. A small room with vending machines and a few tables. Roy enters and spots Allegra sitting slouched by herself with her cell phone. She's 20-something, pretty, nothing unusual. He marches over to her.

ROY  
Allegra.

ALLEGRA  
(Surprised)  
Oh, hi.

ROY  
You're fired.

ALLEGRA  
Huh?

He marches right out.

INT. CLOVESS OPEN OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

FLASHBACK. He approaches Chloe.

ROY  
(Shaking)  
Chloe. I know you're busy but can you show me how to use the printer?

CHLOE  
Sure, I guess.

Allegra is approaching him.

ROY  
Thanks. Let me get set up and I'll come grab you.

ALLEGRA  
(For everyone to hear)  
You're firing me?

ROY  
Let's go in my office.

ALLEGRA  
What the hell! I'm on my fucking break and you come in and tell me you're firing me? You can't just do that.

ROY  
In the office, please.

ALLEGRA  
(Escalating anger)  
No. I'm not going in your fucking office. Who knows what perverted shit you'll do to me, you fucking perv.

ROY  
I'm not going to talk to you out here-

ALLEGRA

I was on my break, drinking coffee,  
minding my own business and you  
just fucking came out of nowhere  
and fired me. Fired me? Fired me?  
What the fuck! Tell me this is a  
fucking joke.

He tries to grab her arm and she pulls away forcefully.

ALLEGRA (CONT'D)

No! Don't touch me. Don't you  
fucking touch me. You don't have  
any right to touch me or grab me or  
do whatever perverted shit is in  
your sick head. No right. No  
fucking right!

ROY

Please, in the office. I'll leave  
the door open if you want.

ALLEGRA

No. Hell no. I'm not going in  
there. Hell no. And you can't make  
me.

ROY

Then, leave. Will you leave? You're  
disrupting-

ALLEGRA

I'll leave when I'm damn good and  
ready. We still have some shit to  
talk about first.

By now a crowd has gathered.

ALLEGRA (CONT'D)

(To the crowd)

This man abused me at the office.  
He sexually abused me and thought  
he could get away with it. And now  
he's firing me, because he's afraid  
of what I'll say. Well, now I'm  
saying it. For all to hear. This  
man is a perverted fucking asshole.  
I've been molested by him and  
humiliated and sickened and he took  
advantage of me because he could.  
Because he could. He has a big  
office and a big car and he's using  
his power to take advantage of me  
and who knows how many other women.

She looks around at the faces and the damage she caused, and seems satisfied.

ALLEGRA (CONT'D)

And now the truth is out there.

(Looking at Roy)

And you're going to pay. Oh, you're going to pay.

Chloe tries to take her arm to lead her out, but she shakes it off and starts marching, storming with intensity through the cubicle maze to the front doors and out.

INT. JON'S CLOVESS OFFICE - DAY

FLASHBACK A FEW MONTHS LATER. Roy is sitting across the desk from Jon. They have long faces.

JON

She said you made sexual remarks whenever she was in your office, whatever that means.

ROY

We joked around, laughed. She was just as bawdy as I was, probably more so. She was well-known around here for being loud and making off-color comments. Ask anyone. I didn't think anything of it. No one did. It seemed to fit ok with our open culture.

JON

Did you penetrate her?

ROY

Pene... No. Hell, no. I don't do things like that.

JON

Did she try to, you know, arouse you?

ROY

I think she tried. She was that way. A tease. But I never acted on it. Hell, no.

JON

Did you ever try to come on to her? You know, with your joking and remarks?



ROY

No. It was all talk. There was no ulterior motive, if that's what you mean?

JON

But maybe, it's possible you were doing a little flirting, a little titillation?

ROY

Well, I'm human. But no touching, no verbal abuse.

JON

Well, that's what she's claiming. You made sexual remarks, you penetrated her and then you fired her to shut her up. And you did it in public by coming up to her on her break. Not the best way to handle it. We have procedures.

ROY

I know. I helped write them.

JON

I was there.

ROY

If I wanted to keep her quiet, why would I do something stupid like firing her in the café?

JON

Just asking, repeating what she told her attorney.

(Leaning back)

Well, you know how this goes. I can't let you work in the office until this shit gets settled.

Roy slumps.

ROY

What about AdLiveo? They specifically wanted to work with me.

JON

(Shaking his head)

I know that. You think I don't know that? We're all losers in this.

(MORE)

JON (CONT'D)  
Including Allegra. It's a choice  
between two shitty options.

ROY  
I understand.

JON  
I mean, what if it appeared we took  
your side and, you know, things  
went south?

ROY  
I get it. I get it.

JON  
Regardless of what happens, I want  
you to know we'll always be  
friends. We've known each other  
long enough not to let bullshit  
like this get between us. I've got  
your back - me, personally. I mean  
it. Lets hope this shit gets  
settled fast so we can get back to  
work. That's the best I can do.

INT. HOSPITAL COUNSELOR'S OFFICE - DAY

BACK TO PRESENT DAY. Roy is dressed and meeting with the  
COUNSELOR.

ROY  
And now it's been over two months,  
we're still waiting for some sort  
of action on her part. I'm running  
out of money, running out of  
friends, no job, my wife and  
daughter are... leaving...

COUNSELOR  
And you're feeling...?

ROY  
(Shaking his head)  
I'm feeling...

COUNSELOR  
Like you need to take some  
action...

ROY  
Right.

COUNSELOR

Like the boat's sinking and you're bailing as hard as you can, but...

ROY

(Knows the correct answer)  
The water keeps pouring in.

COUNSELOR

But Roy, suicide's not the answer.  
Is it?

ROY

(Telling her what she  
wants to hear)  
No.

COUNSELOR

Sounds like you have a lot on your plate.

ROY

Yeah.

COUNSELOR

A lot of things to work through.

ROY

Yup.

COUNSELOR

Well, the good news is it's situational, your problems, wouldn't you say? I mean, if you work at it hard enough, these are problems you can solve. Get a couple of lucky breaks and things could improve, will improve.

ROY

I suppose.

COUNSELOR

I mean, I get patients with bipolar disorders, schizophrenia, they're living on the street, hooked on drugs... Not to downplay your situation, but you see what I'm getting at?

ROY

I do.

She waits for more of an answer and he finally obliges.

ROY (CONT'D)

I don't want pity. I don't pretend to be worse off than anyone else. I just... wanted to disappear, not make a big show of it. Just go away and be forgotten. But here I am. I tried to disappear and it backfired and now my life is on display and I'm being judged and lectured to and treated like a serial killer, and it's just making everything worse.

COUNSELOR

I'm not judging you, I'm trying to offer you a different perspective.

Roy thinks about that for a second, realizes she's of no help.

ROY

Can I leave?

COUNSELOR

We don't recommend it, but it's up to you.

ROY

How long do I need to be here?

COUNSELOR

That depends.

INT. HOSPITAL PRIVATE NOOK - DAY

Roy and Hope are speaking SOTTO VOCE in a semi-private area off the main hall.

HOPE

That's what she said?

ROY

Yeah. Depends on whether they think I'm a suicide risk.

HOPE

Are you?

ROY

Good question.

HOPE

Do you know what I think?

ROY

Hey, go for it. Everybody else has an opinion.

HOPE

I think you could harm yourself. And if it were up to me, I wouldn't let you out on the streets. You'd be right back here in a flash - drinking lighter fluid or snorting toxic waste. I think you've got some really fucked up ideas. Sorry. That's what I think. Your only problem is, you're just looking at this all wrong.

ROY

Well, you're entitled to your opinion.

HOPE

Hey, is any of this getting through?

ROY

I hear you.

HOPE

Do you? Do you hear me?

He plops in a chair.

HOPE (CONT'D)

You fired this pond scum for not doing her job, which she wasn't and you had every right to do, and now she's getting back at you by threatening you with a load of bald-face bullshit. I don't see the dilemma.

ROY

You don't?

HOPE

She's lying!

ROY

That doesn't seem to matter anymore when it comes to sexual abuse.

HOPE

Lying always matters. And sexual abuse always matters.

(MORE)

HOPE (CONT'D)

But they're two different things. You can't have both at the same time. When you're lying about sexual abuse it's not sexual abuse, it's lying. She's a liar and she's coming after you with her lies. Sexual abuse has nothing to do with it.

She sits next to him.

ROY

It's weird, but I do see some logic in that.

HOPE

You don't have to prove she wasn't sexually abused. You just have to prove she was a liar.

ROY

I don't know why, but it makes sense.

INT. HALL OUTSIDE COUNSELOR'S OFFICE - LATER

Roy has caught the Counselor outside her office, as she's walking with paperwork down the hall. Hope is tagging along, listening in.

COUNSELOR

Hospital policy doesn't allow us to release you until we assess your suicide risk to make sure we're not legally liable.

ROY

(Being positive)  
What if I promise not to kill myself?

COUNSELOR

(Smiling)  
Sorry, we'll need more than that.

ROY

What?

COUNSELOR

We have to observe you over time to determine your risk factors and your mental health status, then we can-

HOPE  
I'll take him.

Roy and the counselor turn back to Hope.

COUNSELOR  
Well, you can't just... I'm sorry,  
who are you?

HOPE  
A friend. I'm a friend. Hope  
Henderson. We've known each other  
for, gosh, how long, Roy?

ROY  
(Playing along)  
Easily, um, many years. Many.

HOPE  
I don't know why I didn't think of  
this before.

ROY  
Me either.

HOPE  
He can stay with me. I'll watch  
him. I'm not suicidal. I'm  
perfectly normal.

COUNSELOR  
Well, that could-

HOPE  
Done. I live in Berkeley in a nice  
house with a vegetable garden and  
chickens, with my mother, who  
incidentally is a doctor of  
psychiatry. We have an extra room  
he can have. When I'm gone, my mom  
can watch him. He'll be perfectly  
safe, risk-free, it's my risk-free  
offer. What do you think?

COUNSELOR  
Well, alright, that should work.  
Are you ok with this, Roy?

ROY  
I don't know why we didn't think of  
it sooner.

HOPE  
It's perfect.

COUNSELOR

Well, if you're sure, I'll start the paperwork. We have certain guidelines for assuming care of patients...

HOPE

Right on.

COUNSELOR

We'll want to check in at some point to make sure everything's on track.

HOPE

Bring it on.

They smile.

EXT. ROY'S FLAT - DAY

Roy trots down the stairs to Hope, waiting by his Subaru, parked in the street. He loads his suitcases in the back and they hop in and take off.

EXT. BAY BRIDGE - DAY

HIGH ANGLE the Subaru heading across the bay to Oakland.

EXT. BERKELEY STREET - DAY

The Subaru drives by U.C. Berkeley and up into the eastern hills.

EXT. ALICE'S HOUSE - DAY

They park on the street and walk up a long flight of stairs, into a grove of oak trees to a very modest rambler built in the 60s. Lush vegetation encircles the place with plenty of dirt patches for the free-range chickens and goat.

Roy follows her in.

INT. ALICE'S LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

As they enter the front door...



HOPE  
(Shouting)  
Mom!  
(To Roy)  
Take your shoes off and have a  
seat.  
(Shouting)  
Mom! Mom!

ALICE flows in. She's late 60s, retired, relaxed, permanent smile, probably high.

ALICE  
Hello. Who's this?

He stands.

HOPE  
This is Roy. He's going to be  
staying with us awhile.

ALICE  
Oh, that's nice.

She shakes his hand.

ALICE (CONT'D)  
Where did you find him?

HOPE  
At a Bart station in the city. He  
let me stay at his house last night  
when I missed the last Bart.

ALICE  
That's nice.

HOPE  
(Rattles through details)  
This morning he tried to kill  
himself by drinking my nose spray,  
so we spent the day in the  
emergency room. When they wouldn't  
let him out on his own, I told them  
he could stay with us. We just have  
to watch him to make sure he  
doesn't try to commit suicide  
again.

ALICE  
(Unfazed)  
Would you like some tea?

ROY

Sure.

She heads off to the kitchen.

HOPE

How are you feeling, by the way?

ROY

Tired. Very tired.

HOPE

Are you having suicidal thoughts?

ROY

Not now, so much.

HOPE

Good. You just need a change of scenery to get your head together.

Alice brings in a pot of tea and sets it on the coffee table in front of Roy. Then, she squats on a cushion and pulls out a bong.

ALICE

Do you mind?

ROY

Uh, no.

Alice lights up and takes a huge hit, then passes the bong to Roy. He fumbles around with it, never having used one, then manages to ingest a sizeable hit.

He settles back in the overly-puffy sofa and relaxes. Relaaaxesss.

ALICE MONTAGE

SITAR MUSIC takes us away to Alice's wonderland. It's a land of sun and flowers - sunflowers - and little dirt paths that wind through irregularly-shaped, organic vegetable beds, that attract happy pollinators and birds of all sorts.

And there's Roy being led by the hand through acres of magical forest he's never experienced: watching goldfish in a pond, feeding the chickens, eating greens with the others on a rickety wood table under a big oak tree.

At night, they sit cross-legged on cushions and talk, smoke weed and experiment with mushrooms and other mind-bending things.

As he cleanses his body and expands his mind, he loses the rigid wardrobe and corporate style. After maybe a week of expanding and shedding and gaining and cleansing and forgetting, his hair is a bit longer and face more relaxed.

One late night, he mistakenly walks in on Hope undressing. She quickly covers herself, and he turns away, embarrassed. He starts to leave, then turns back. She's smiling.

The cherubic Hope looks radiant in the warm incandescent glow, her exaggerated features blurred and softened. He approaches her slowly, reaches out. They touch, embrace. They tumble back on her bed.

EXT. ALICE'S HOUSE BY POND - DAY

Roy is sitting on a lawn swing with Alice, drinking tea.

ALICE

You're on the spectrum. That's all. It's not unusual in men, I think. Ah hell, that's sexist. But I mean it. Intentional sexism. Sorry. That's never good. Unless it's true. But who knows about truth. Is truth really the best? I don't know. I don't think it is. What do you think?

ROY

What spectrum?

ALICE

Asperger syndrome. Not you necessarily but someone who has it. And maybe you do... maybe you don't. I don't know. What do you think?

ROY

I don't think so.

ALICE

Never mind. That was unfair of me. I have this problem. I can't keep from analyzing people. I'm like a shark in a feeding frenzy, asking personal questions and pissing people off. It's like my heroin. I just get overwhelmed with the smell of it, drunk, giddy with delight. In other words, I can be a real asshole and I don't even care.

(MORE)

ALICE (CONT'D)  
But I should, probably. That ever  
happen to you?

ROY  
Uh, maybe-

ALICE  
I'd make a lousy psychiatrist.

ROY  
I thought you were one.

ALICE  
I am. But I teach it. I don't  
practice it... usually. When I do,  
I always make things worse. Let me  
know if I'm making it worse for  
you.

ROY  
What is Asperger Syndrome?

ALICE  
It means you have trouble  
connecting with people. But it  
could be that you just don't want  
to connect or you don't like  
people. What do you think?

ROY  
Are you analyzing me?

ALICE  
In a way. But it's just for my own  
amusement. I mean, I don't really  
care if you have Aspergers. It just  
interests me. Sorry. I didn't mean  
to offend you. Did I?

ROY  
What do you mean to do?

ALICE  
Amuse myself.

ROY  
Are you?

ALICE  
Oh, yeah. You are full of amusing  
possibilities. The way you set  
about killing yourself. That's very  
amusing.

ROY  
Glad you're having a good time.

ALICE  
Oh, yeah. It was very practical how you did it. The way you over-thought everything and held your focus, your stick-to-itiveness is like, whoa. That's very interesting. Don't you think?

ROY  
If you say so.

ALICE  
Am I upsetting you?

ROY  
No more than anything else.

ALICE  
That's good.

They settle back.

INT. GOLDMAN'S OFFICE LOBBY - DAY

Roy is waiting in the lobby of a fairly expensive attorney, ROGER GOLDMAN. Goldman's assistant JUNE, approaches Roy down a long hallway.

JUNE  
Mr. Thode? I'm June Pleck. Sorry to keep you waiting. Mr. Goldman will see you now.

Roy follows her up the long hallway to his corner office.

INT. GOLDMAN'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Goldman is swung around facing the city out his window, listening on the phone with his legs propped up, squeezing a stress ball. He likes to be that type. June points Roy to a chair in front of his desk, and leaves.

GOLDMAN  
(On phone)  
Good. That's great. Great. Let me see what Mr. Thode has to say and we'll get this case moving. Yeah, me too. I'm sure he'll be glad to hear it.

He swings around to face Roy, smiling. Gives Roy a wink.

GOLDMAN (CONT'D)

(On phone)

I know. I hear you. Glad to hear we finally got your client off the dime, anyway. Yup. Okay then.

He hangs up and extends his hand across the desk to Roy.

GOLDMAN (CONT'D)

How you doing, Mr. Thode? I think we have some good news for you. It's not exactly where we want to be, but it's a start. Need anything? Coffee? Tea?

ROY

No thanks.

GOLDMAN

Ok, then. First, we got, what's her name, Allegra to finally move ahead with her lawsuit. Second, we got her to drop her "sexual remarks" complaint. That's big. That would've gone nowhere and just wasted a ton of time and money. And we got her to agree to a settlement, so no long days sitting on our asses in court, listening to witnesses yammer on about what an upstanding citizen you are or what a fuckhead you are and so on. All really good news. However. We weren't so lucky with the "penetration" complaint. She's holding on to that one. No pun intended. But it's early yet and I'm optimistic. I'd say pretty much very optimistic. We're making excellent progress. We still have penetration, but we're moving ahead with no remarks and no trial.

ROY

Why is she holding on to the penetration...

GOLDMAN

She says it happened and she's very adamant about it. Who knows?

ROY

How can she... it's not true. She made it all up.

GOLDMAN

Hey, it's one of those "he said, she said" things. No witnesses, right? No evidence, like a rape kit. No motive on your part, right?

(BEAT)

Indicate no.

Roy shakes his head.

GOLDMAN (CONT'D)

Good. Granted, women have an edge these days with the "me too" movement, but unless they can show some kind of proof, they don't have a leg to stand on. As long as you say, I didn't do it, we're golden. If she'd really wanted to nail you, she should've run to the hospital after the alleged event and got herself tested. Sounds to me like it wasn't an issue until you fired her. Right?

ROY

Right.

GOLDMAN

I mean, if you really wanted to, we could counter-sue and claim this frivolous lawsuit of hers cost you a job and a marriage and a ton of hardship. Which it is and it did. Something to keep in mind.

ROY

This is good news, right?

GOLDMAN

You bet it is. Reason to celebrate. I suggest you go home and drink something special.

Roy smiles - almost.

INT. DIVORCE ATTORNEY - DAY

HERB SACHS is on a lower floor, facing Roy across a small table.

SACHS

Seems like your wife's only problem, well main problem, is this alleged extra-marital affair or dalliance or indiscretion. Not sure how we want to spin that. But it was enough to make her want to go all the way to the D word. Have you spoken with her since we talked?

ROY

The last time was in the hospital. You told me not too.

SACHS

I did. Thank you. Keep doing that.

ROY

Do you think she'd change her mind if that lawsuit was thrown out?

SACHS

What do you think? You know her better than I do.

ROY

Well, I think the old Maeve would, but I don't know this new person.

SACHS

What changed?

ROY

We used to trust each other. Then, I lost the job... And then all the attorneys and the lawsuit and the words happened. The nasty evil hate talk, the anger. And she stopped trusting me.

SACHS

She thinks you're lying. She's afraid, feels betrayed.

ROY

I told her there was no sex, period. Nothing. But she believes the lawsuit and me getting fired more than me, no matter how long we've been together.

SACHS

Well, if the lawsuit gets thrown out, that should be proof, right?



ROY

I guess.

SACHS

There you go. She would have no reason to suspect you really did have sex with this woman, right?

ROY

I don't know why she would.

Sachs looks in his eyes.

EXT. ROY'S FLAT - DAY

Roy gets out of his car parked on the street, walks up to the front door and uses his key to get in.

INT. ROY'S FLAT HALL - CONTINUOUS

He walks up to the door and tries the key. It's already unlocked. He opens the door tenuously and enters.

INT. ROY'S FLAT - CONTINUOUS

He walks into the living room and immediately looks down, expecting to find a mess where he was lying. Nothing. He crouches down, looks closely, runs his hand over the area. It's immaculate.

Jon enters from the bedroom.

JON

Whoa, Roy.

ROY

Jon, sorry.

JON

Thought you'd moved out. Ha.

ROY (CONT'D)

Didn't think you'd be here.  
Ha.

ROY (CONT'D)

I just came by to drop off the key.

Roy keeps glancing around for any telltale signs.

JON

Oh, great. Thanks. I was actually on my way out.

ROY

I owe you big time, Jon. This was a such a huge help. I hope you found everything where it's supposed to be.

JON

Beautiful. The place is beautiful. Never looked so good.

ROY

I tried to keep it tidy.

JON

Let me know if you need a reference.

CHUCKLE.

JON (CONT'D)

Hey, that reminds me. I found something that might belong to you. Hold on. Let me look.

Jon looks around the kitchen table and counters.

JON (CONT'D)

It's nothing, really. It was just last night. I was sitting on the couch... Where the hell did I put that? Hmm. I know.

He opens the cabinet under the sink and pulls out the trash. There it is. Hope's mood ring. He hands it to Roy. Roy holds it, studies it.

JON (CONT'D)

Does this look familiar? I found it between the cushions. It was probably left there by the people who owned the couch before me. If it's not yours, I'll just-

ROY

It's mine.

JON

Oh good.

Roy is suddenly overwhelmed by a heavy heart. He starts to get a little misty-eyed, has to sit.

JON (CONT'D)

Everything ok?

ROY  
Yeah, I'm fine.

JON  
You sure?

ROY  
It, uh... I'm glad you found it.  
Very glad.

EXT. BERKELEY STREET BART STATION - DAY

Roy is pacing by the escalator, full of energy. Then, Hope appears.

ROY  
Hope.

HOPE  
(Surprised)  
Hey, Roy. What's up?

She looks around.

ROY  
Nothing.

HOPE  
(Leery)  
Well, this is fun. What's the occasion?

ROY  
Just thought I'd pick you up.

HOPE  
That's nice.

She starts walking.

ROY  
Thirsty? Hungry? Want to go shopping? See a movie?

HOPE  
You know, normally I'd be all over the shopping idea but I'm a little fatigued. Can I take a rain check on that?

ROY  
Sure. So you just want to go back to your place?

HOPE

Yeah?

ROY

That's cool.

She takes a few more steps and stops.

HOPE

Ok, wait a minute. Now, I don't want to appear to be looking a gift horse in the mouth but this is uncharacteristically nice. When that happens, I start to worry because nice doesn't just happen. There's always... something. I mean. What's different? Did you get good news from an attorney?

ROY

Actually, I did. Pretty good. But that's not why I'm here.

She starts walking tenuously.

HOPE

(To herself)

Ok, Hope. Just go with it, don't question it. Something happened that's completely out of your control and you just need to allow it to be. Allow it. Breathe. You're ok. Next time you blink, it'll all be gone and everything will go back to the way it was before.

She blinks big. Everything is still the same.

HOPE (CONT'D)

Oh my God-

ROY

Can't I just pick you up for no reason?

HOPE

Well, Roy, I tend to pigeon-hole people, as you know, and I've pigeon-holed you as being somewhat of a dick. No offense.

ROY

No offense taken.

HOPE

Really? You should have been  
offended. This isn't right.

ROY

Well guess what, I pigeon-hole  
people too and I've pigeon-holed  
you as being somewhat of a bitch.

She stops. He smiles. She takes it in.

HOPE

Fair enough.

ROY

This way.

He tries to lead her in a different direction.

HOPE

It's shorter to go through the  
campus.

ROY

I drove. Come on.

She follows him to the Subaru parked on the street in a  
yellow zone.

HOPE

You know you're parked in a loading  
zone.

ROY

You're my load.

HOPE

(BEAT)

There you go.

They get in and he drives off.

INT. ROY'S SUBARU - CONTINUOUS

Roy is driving Hope.

HOPE

Sorry for questioning your  
largesse. That was bitchy of me.  
I'm not used to being driven  
places.

ROY  
Don't you have a car?

HOPE  
I have a beater in Vegas.

ROY  
What about your mom?

HOPE  
She has some tiny, wheeled thing in the garage. It takes gas, so I think it legally qualifies as a car.

ROY  
You could drive that.

HOPE  
Not in this city.

ROY  
I don't like driving much either. In Menlo Park, where I... used to live, I rode a bike to work everyday. That was nice.

HOPE  
That would be nice. How many kids?

ROY  
One. Skyla.

HOPE  
Interesting name.

ROY  
Yeah. Too bad.

HOPE  
Hey, don't go gettin' all bummed on me. You just made a few bad choices. We all do that now and then. You got your whole life ahead of you, unless you do something stupid like kill yourself. You aren't going to try that again, are you?

He's silent.

HOPE (CONT'D)

Hey, I've spent a week pumping your ass full of sunshine so you'll get that suicide bullshit out of your head. Tell me I haven't been wasting my time.

The car pulls into Hope's drive and he stops and takes a close look at her.

ROY

You haven't been wasting your time. I have plenty of sunshine in my ass, thanks to you. And I really mean that.

(Getting all abstract)

Where did you come from?

HOPE

The Bart station. Remember?

ROY

(Tearing up)

Yeah.

He pulls the mood ring out of his pocket and hands it to her.

ROY (CONT'D)

You left this in the flat.

HOPE

Thanks, wondered where that went. Now don't get all maudlin on me. Nothing worse than a maudlin man-

He reaches over and gives her a car hug. She reciprocates after a moment.

EXT. ALICE'S HOUSE BY POND - DAY

Alice and Roy are sitting in the lawn swing.

ROY

(Thoughtful)

I don't feel like killing myself.

ALICE

Really? Why?

ROY

Hmm. It seemed like the only option a week ago, but now I have options.

ALICE

So the only thing keeping you alive is options? This need to have options?

ROY

I think that's the way with most people. Don't you?

ALICE

I don't know.

ROY

What if everything had been taken away from you and the only option left was death?

ALICE

Then, I would die. But, just because everything has been taken away from you, doesn't mean all your options are gone.

(Moving in)

The only reason for suicide isn't lack of options, it's lack of imagination. So what if your wife leaves you. It sucks but there are plenty of other women out there. You lose your job, you lose all your money, you get thrown in jail, whatever. There are plenty of jobs, lots of money to be had. You can start all over. Brand new life. You learn your lessons - like going to school again, the school of hard knocks, happens all the time.

She studies at Roy, who's deep in thought.

EXT. ALICE'S HOUSE - DAY

Roy is excited, pacing in the garden, making a call on his earpiece.

ROY

Hi Charlotte, glad you could take my call. I saw your job listing in LinkedIn and I thought I'd give you a call to-

CHARLOTTE (V.O.)

Are you the Roy Thode at Clovess?



ROY

Yes. I'm-

CHARLOTTE (V.O.)

I know who you are.

ROY

That's great.

CHARLOTTE (V.O.)

(Disbelieving)

You don't really want to write code?

ROY

Well, yes... and no. I decided to... I'm actually taking a break from Clovess and looking for some consulting work to fill in and thought I'd see if... If I could... If there was a fit for me at Aardvark? It's a long shot, but...

CHARLOTTE

Consulting. Interesting. We might have something for you. Do you have time to get together?

ROY

(Surprised)

Yeah, sure.

CHARLOTTE

Like today?

ROY

Uh, let me look.

He pretends to look at his calendar.

ROY (CONT'D)

Um, looks like I'll be free later. Sure.

CHARLOTTE

Let's do it. I'll send you a meeting request.

ROY

That's great.

He hangs up and let's out a big breath.

INT. MISSION DISTRICT BAR - AFTERNOON

It's a dark dive in the Mission District, crowded with young tech workers, unwinding after five.

Roy enters and scans the faces as he makes his way toward the back. He spots a woman drinking by herself. HARPER (35) is lean, athletic, quiet-spoken, spurns make-up.

ROY  
Charlotte?

HARPER  
She'll be right back. I'm Harper.

They shake. He takes a seat.

ROY  
Nice to meet you. Roy Thode.

HARPER  
So, you have quite the resume.

ROY  
Thanks. Yeah, we started Clovess,  
what, ten years ago. Worked out of  
a bedroom. Got lucky. Got hungry.  
Put the right pieces together.  
Found our niche...

CHARLOTTE shows up and sits next to Harper. She's Harper's age, the boss.

CHARLOTTE  
Hi, you must be Roy Thode.

ROY  
Yeah, hi.

They shake. Charlotte signals an approaching waiter.

CHARLOTTE  
I see you met Harper. I thought she  
should be part of the conversation,  
if that's ok. What are you  
drinking?

ROY  
Oh, just an IPA.

CHARLOTTE  
(To waiter)  
And we'll have another round.  
(To Roy)  
(MORE)

CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)  
So, Harper and I started Aardvark  
five years ago, after getting  
funding from one of your  
competitors.

ROY  
I remember. Hard name to forget.

CHARLOTTE  
So you probably know we're a fast-  
growing start-up based here in the  
Mission District, specializing in a  
suite of back-office apps for zoo  
managers.

ROY  
Did you say zoo?

CHARLOTTE  
Uh yes. Harper and I actually have  
degrees in veterinary science.

HARPER  
We love animals.

Roy's enthusiasm dips a bit.

ROY  
Didn't know that part.

HARPER  
I hope that's not going to be a  
problem?

ROY  
Animals? Hell, no. I love animals.

HARPER  
We actually met when we were  
working at the San Diego Zoo as,  
what else, zookeepers.

ROY  
Not really interested in cleaning  
out cages...

HARPER  
Enclosures.

ROY  
What was that?

HARPER  
We no longer call them cages.  
They're enclosures.

ROY  
Oh, sorry.

They CHUCKLE.

CHARLOTTE  
We saw a need for a program to keep  
track of large animal collections.

HARPER  
San Diego has over 4,000 animals.

CHARLOTTE  
And now we have more orders than we  
know what to do with and we're a  
little desperate.

HARPER  
We want our sleep back.

CHARLOTTE  
What do you know about expanding a  
software business?

Roy smiles.

EXT. ALICE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Roy pulls into the drive and stops. Then, bounds up the  
stairs to the house, full of energy.

INT. ALICE'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

He flies in the front door and freezes. Something's not  
right. All the lights are off, except for a dim glow from the  
hall.

He makes his way through obstacles in the living room and  
sees the light coming from Hope's room.

INT. ALICE'S HOUSE HOPE'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

He looks in. Hope is lying in bed, curled up on her side - a  
very unusual sight.

He pulls up a chair and sits next to her, not sure what to  
do, but bursting with energy.

ROY  
(Quietly)  
Hope?

He repeats her name, tenderly, but she remains completely still, deep in sleep. After a few more attempts, he gives up, at a loss. Finally, she stirs and turns to face him, with drunken eyes.

HOPE  
Hi.

ROY  
I got a job.

HOPE  
Oh, good.

ROY  
I'm going to be consulting for a start-up that does back-office software for zoos.

HOPE  
(Trying to smile)  
Zoos?

ROY  
Yeah, zoos. It's a little out of my comfort zone, but it'll get me back in the game.

HOPE  
That's nice.

She dozes off.

Alice walks into the room and puts her hand on his shoulder. He turns.

ALICE  
(Whispering)  
Let's talk.

INT. ALICE'S HOUSE LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Alice is facing Roy. She is unusually somber and contained.

ALICE  
It was a fairly nasty attack. The worst one so far.

ROY

Attack?

ALICE

Breakthrough pain. They said it would happen but you're never really prepared.

Roy's heart stops.

ROY

What do you mean?

ALICE

It happens as the tumor grows and slowly takes over her body.

ROY

Tumor?!

ALICE

You didn't know?

ROY

Of course not!

ALICE

Figures. It took her months to tell me about it. It started in Vegas and she thought it would just go away on its own. But that's not how cancer works, unfortunately. By the time she moved in here and started getting treatment, it was pretty far advanced.

ROY

(Aha moment)

That's why she goes to the hospital everyday?

ALICE

Right, she's on chemo.

ROY

What the hell.

ALICE

It's not going to cure her. She's too far... Too far...

Alice can't finish. The tears come. He looks away, shakes his head

ROY

I had no idea. It happened so fast.  
Breakthrough pain, what the hell.

ALICE

You never know when it'll flare up.

ROY

Will it go away?

ALICE

They say it will, might, they don't  
know. It'll probably come and go.  
Anyway, we'll have to see.

He settles back, suddenly overwhelmed.

ROY

I got a job.

ALICE

Good. I'm sure she'll be happy for  
you. That's her way of feeling  
happy.

ROY

But it's not important now.

ALICE

Oh, stop.

He stands and turns away from her.

ROY

I can't believe this is happening  
to me.

ALICE

It's not. It's happening to her.

He goes into the kitchen.

EXT. ALICE'S HOUSE BACKYARD - CONTINUOUS

He is walking along a dark path, head down, deep in thought.  
When he looks up, he can see the light from her room. The  
only light in his life now. He can't stop looking at it.

INT. ALICE'S HOUSE HOPE'S ROOM - LATE NIGHT

He's sitting in a padded chair, watching her sleep.

MATCH DISSOLVE  
TO:

INT. ALICE'S HOUSE HOPE'S ROOM - NEXT MORNING

He's still in the chair, head bent forward, sleeping.

HOPE (O.S.)  
Hey, Roy. Roy.

He looks up. She's sitting up on the edge of the bed. He lights up.

HOPE (CONT'D)  
What's going on?

ROY  
(Startled)  
What... You tell me.

HOPE  
It's weird. I was feeling some pain yesterday so I took a hit of the nose spray. Whoa. That shit knocked me the fuck out.

ROY  
How do you feel now?

HOPE  
Ok. Actually, let me think. I could use a "two moons over my hammy".

ROY  
What's that?

HOPE  
Let's go.

INT. DENNY'S - DAY

Roy and Hope are seated in a bright orange booth. He's eating a subtle plate of pancakes, while she's pouring syrup all over a massive mountain of eggs, meat and potatoes. The nose spray hangover has made her extra hyper.



HOPE

The good thing about dying of cancer is you can fucking eat whatever you want.

ROY

Why didn't you tell me?

HOPE

I don't know. You were having such a good time with your shit, I didn't want to spoil it for you.

ROY

You're kidding, right?

HOPE

That's all I ever do, if you haven't noticed. Life is one big joke. Don't you think?

ROY

Not sure I agree.

HOPE

Well, what is it then?

ROY

(Can't argue)

It's... Fuck, I don't know. It's trying to stay alive.

HOPE

You see the absurdity in that, right? Living just to stay alive?

ROY

And reproduce.

HOPE

Ha! Creating offspring so we can spread the misery to a whole new generation of dumb fucks.

ROY

A very jaundiced view.

HOPE

If you don't recognize the irony, you're destined to repeat it. Life is the ultimate example of circular logic or something. What is circular logic anyway?

ROY

It doesn't matter.

HOPE

You're right! And that's another fun fact about cancer. You can say shit that doesn't make any sense, because nothing matters! If you take it too seriously, you jump off buildings or drink someone's nose spray. And that's exactly what life wants you to think. It's saying take me seriously and be miserable because I'm so fucking important. But if you tell life to fuck off, you're still miserable but at least you're aware of the irony and that makes all this shit just a rat's cunt hair easier to take.

She takes another huge bite. Roy watches her, shakes his head.

ROY

So what are your plans? For today. Do you have any plans? Or are you just going to rant all day?

HOPE

What's up with you?

ROY

Nothing.

She watches him for a sec as she chews.

HOPE

Not nothing, something. I detect something here. I think Roy's in love with Hope.

ROY

What gave you that idea?

HOPE

It's true, isn't it? Well, sorry to disappoint, but I'm on the way out. Yup. It's real sad. Another blow for Roy.

ROY

Fuck you.

HOPE

Hope comes along and you think everything's going to be hunky dory, then bam, kicked in the huevos once again.

ROY

Why are you picking on me?

HOPE

Because it's so easy. If Hope is all you got, then you got nothing.

ROY

Holy shit.

HOPE

Sorry, it's the nose spray talking.

ROY

No, it's not. It's the truth.

HOPE

What's that? Truth? Ha! Weren't you listening? Hope is dying and truth doesn't matter anymore, if it ever did.

Roy has lost his appetite.

ROY

Stop, please.

HOPE

Come on, let's go get some chemo.

INT. SF GENERAL CHEMO ROOM - DAY

Roy is sitting across from Hope, who's hooked up to a chemo bag. He gets a text, looks at it, then sees that she has dozed off.

INT. GOLDMAN'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Goldman's feet are propped up in his usual casual pose.

GOLDMAN

It's starting. Finally. Allegra Johnson is being deposed next week, probably Monday.

(MORE)

GOLDMAN (CONT'D)  
As soon as we nail her time down,  
we can set up a time for your  
deposition.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. SF GENERAL STAIRWELL - CONTINUOUS

Roy is pacing, as he talks to Goldman on the phone.

ROY  
Will I be able to hear her  
testimony?

GOLDMAN  
We'll have the transcript from the  
court reporter. We can probably  
arrange something if there's time.  
But you will not be in the dark.  
I'll make sure of that.

ROY  
Do I need to do anything?

GOLDMAN  
Nothing now. We'll talk strategy  
next week after we hear what she  
has to say. Ok?

ROY  
(BEAT)  
Yeah.

GOLDMAN  
Ciao.

He hangs up, even more confused than before.

EXT. SF ZOO - AFTERNOON

Roy and Hope are sitting on a bench watching the penguins.  
Hope is playing with the Aardvark zoo app on an iPad. It  
shows a map of the zoo with cartoon animals. She's far more  
subdued than usual.

HOPE  
After I throw up I feel better,  
usually.

ROY  
Can't they give you something?

HOPE

They do. It helps, but no more gut bombs from Denny's. The cancer was not happy with that one.

ROY

Too bad.

Referring to the iPad.

HOPE

If I press this can I feed the penguins?

ROY

No, it doesn't work that way. If you want, I can buy some fish over there.

HOPE

That's ok. So is Aardvark going to make you happy? I want you to be happy, Roy.

ROY

Yes. It will make me happy. I forgot how much fun it is to work on a product team. Do you feel ok? Is this too much for you?

HOPE

Hard to say. Everything is kind of too much.

ROY

Are you going to get all abstract and weird again?

HOPE

I might. I can feel it kind of welling up.

ROY

Would you rather go shopping?

Referring to the app...

HOPE

No, let's go look at the red panda.

ROY

Where's that?

She points on the map, and they get up and start walking.

HOPE  
Oh God. My bones ache.

ROY  
Don't push yourself.

HOPE  
It's ok.

ROY  
Are you hungry? You should eat something. Actually, liquids would be better. Bottled water, ginger ale?

HOPE  
Tomato juice.

ROY  
What made you say that?

HOPE  
I don't know. I feel like tomato juice. My system's like all fucked up and unpredictable.

ROY  
Well, it might not be easy to find now.

HOPE  
Actually, that penguin food looked pretty good.

ROY  
Are we going in the right direction?

HOPE  
Here.

She hands him the iPad, feeling nauseous.

ROY  
I think we're heading toward the anteaters.

HOPE  
No way.

She stops.

HOPE (CONT'D)  
I can't deal with anteaters now.

ROY  
The red panda is this way.

HOPE  
Is that a carousel?

ROY  
I think so.

HOPE  
Let's do that.

She leads him to the carousel.

INT. DIVORCE ATTORNEY CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

Roy and Maeve are on opposite sides of a long table with their attorneys Sachs and HUNT.

HUNT  
So, we have agreement on the property split?

Sachs looks at Roy. He nods. Maeve does everything in her power to look away from Roy, who is staring straight at her.

HUNT (CONT'D)  
Good. As far as the child is concerned, Maeve will have primary custody of Skyla, with equitable visitation to be decided after Mr. Thode has secured employment and a permanent residence. And I might add, we wish him the best of luck. Are we good?

Roy nods.

HUNT (CONT'D)  
Good. I think that covers everything. We'll prepare the final judgement forms and get them over to you in a few days. Any questions or...

Maeve and Roy trade uneasy looks. He pleads, she stiffens.

SACHS  
The restraining order on my client is set to expire Friday.  
(MORE)

SACHS (CONT'D)

He has honored the order in good faith and would like assurance that communication with Maeve and Skyla will resume and he will be able to visit his child at that point.

Hunt turns to Maeve and they whisper something.

ROY

I just, can I say something?

Sachs holds his hand up to stop him. Hunt turns back.

HUNT

Maeve doesn't feel sufficient time has elapsed and would like Roy to continue to honor the order, even after it expires, until-

ROY

I'll honor the order. And continue to do so as long as necessary to make everyone happy.

SACHS

Roy, it's best if I-

ROY

Can I say something, please?

SACHS

(To Hunt)

Would it be ok if Mr. Thode addresses the...

HUNT

We are about to wrap this up. I would hope that Mr. Thode restrains himself-

ROY

I promise to restrain myself. I want this all to be over as much as everyone else.

HUNT

Proceed.

ROY

As you know, I have lost everything that's important to me and I've had to endure public humiliation.

(MORE)



ROY (CONT'D)

No one wants to be friends with someone who's been accused of rape, so in addition to losing my family and job, I've lost friends. Basically, no one's on my side. No one wants anything to do with me-

Maeve is fuming.

MAEVE

Can I say something?

HUNT

Why don't we let Roy finish and then-

MAEVE

I can't believe you're letting him get away with this. It's so blatantly obvious what he's trying to do. He thinks if he can appeal to the pity of the court, I'll back down and forget all the shit that he's done. And I object. This is not all about him. This meeting is all about finalizing-

HUNT

Maeve, please don't-

MAEVE

I'm talking now. I'm talking. He's had his chance and he blew it. It's his fault, 100 percent. He lost everything because of his actions and his actions alone-

ROY

I agree. If I-

MAEVE

(Screaming)

I'm not going to waste my good time sitting here, listening to him carry on about all his supposed problems. He has no idea what I've been going through these past weeks. No idea. Taking care of a child by myself, trying to make ends meet, all the uncertainty I've had to deal with.

(MORE)

MAEVE (CONT'D)

It's his fault he lost his family,  
his fault he lost his job, his  
fault he raped a woman, his fault  
he lost all his friends. And I'm  
left to suffer. That's what this is  
all about. If anyone should be  
pitied it's me.

There's silence.

ROY

I have nothing more to say.

INT. CLOTHING STORE - DAY

Roy is tagging along behind Hope looking through the plus  
size section.

HOPE

What do you think?

ROY

Colorful.

HOPE

Too much?

ROY

I don't know. They all look the  
same to me.

HOPE

I agree. It's a little over the  
top. In general, would you say you  
like the way I look?

BEAT.

ROY

Uh, yes.

She makes a BUZZER SOUND.

HOPE

Took too long to respond.

ROY

I wasn't expecting the question.

HOPE

I don't even know why I'm here.

ROY

You wanted to get out. We're here because you wanted to do something and you like shopping. What's wrong with that?

HOPE

Yeah, but this is... pointless.

ROY

It's all how you look at it.

She looks him up and down.

HOPE

Whoa, look who's become Mr. Positive. Turning what could be a pointless exercise in futility into a waltz down memory lane. I like it. Seems like all our good work on Mr. Thode hasn't been a complete waste of time after all.

She squeezes his crotch. He smiles/smirks.

HOPE (CONT'D)

And it all started when he was caught boning some bubble-head at the office.

ROY

Accused, not caught. She accused me.

HOPE

Oh, the problems we create for ourselves. When will you men ever learn? You need to keep it in your pants. In your pants. As long as it stays there, you're golden. But you guys never learn. Whenever you get something good going, out it comes and everything gets fucked up. Am I right or am I right?

(Holding up a blouse)

What do you think?

ROY

Too colorful. Think more subdued.

HOPE

Are you trying to subdue me?

ROY  
That would be impossible.

She turns to him abruptly.

HOPE  
Let's do it right here in the plus  
section. No one ever comes back  
here. Come on.

She grabs him. He raises his hands.

ROY  
Yeah, right.

She suddenly grabs her stomach and clenches in pain.

HOPE  
Oh shit.

Roy is taken aback. Then, when he realizes it's not one of her gags, he leads her over to a seat and helps her down. She can't talk, can barely breathe.

He riffles through her backpack and pulls out the nose spray. She does a big hit and sits crumpled over and perfectly still. He sits next to her, puts his arm around her.

ROY  
It's ok. You'll feel better in a  
second.

The pain abates and she's able to surround him with her arms.

INT. CHARLOTTE'S AARDVARK OFFICE - DAY

It's bright and colorful with animal pictures and paraphernalia hung all over. She and Harper are dressed in their casual work clothes right out of an REI catalog, sitting around a table with Roy, paging through his presentation on their laptops.

CHARLOTTE  
I don't know, Roy. Your timelines  
are like... way out there. How are  
we supposed to meet all our  
deadlines?

ROY  
It's going to take time to develop  
the software and expand.

CHARLOTTE

We got the money. Why don't we just hire more developers now?

ROY

That's not how it works.

She looks up at Roy, feeling mansplained.

CHARLOTTE

Alright. Tell me how it works.

ROY

(On the spot)

Well first, the money isn't in the bank. It's contingent on finishing the work.

CHARLOTTE

It'll come.

ROY

I'm sure it will. But your investor wants to see both - healthy accounts receivable and cash. You're cash poor now. You're barely making payroll.

CHARLOTTE

But we are.

ROY

That's not how investors think. If you want to keep your investor happy, you need to show slow steady progress, not a history of over-extending yourself.

CHARLOTTE

We're not in business to keep our investor happy.

ROY

But that's how you stay in business.

CHARLOTTE

Roy, I think we have a major disconnect here. You're looking at this like we're some kind of money machine. But that's not how we look at it, or our clients. That's not what we are.

ROY

What you are is a business, a software business.

HARPER

That's true... in one sense, but it's not what we are, why we get excited about what we do.

CHARLOTTE

We're here - all of us - the developers, the testers, the sales staff, everyone - because we love animals.

She points out the animal pictures on the walls.

HARPER

Do you think zookeepers are in it because they like shoveling poop?

CHARLOTTE

Our software helps zoos make their animals happy. We believe in happy animals.

Something clicks for Roy. He gets up and walks around the room, looking closely at the animal pictures, really noticing them for the first time.

CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)

We want you to show us how we can expand the business to make more animals happy. That's your goal.

ROY

Do you even care if you make money?

CHARLOTTE

Of course.

HARPER

But that's not why we're here.

CHARLOTTE

If we make the animals happy, the money will come.

He's taken by a shot of a lioness licking her cub. He studies it for some time, as Harper and Charlotte watch him and wait for his comeback.

ROY

That's a beautiful picture.

HARPER

I took that in San Diego. The cub was only a few hours old - the only one that survived.

ROY

The mother seems very happy with that one.

HARPER

You take what you get.

ROY

Sad.

HARPER

That's life.

CHARLOTTE

(Quiet now)

That's what we are.

He looks out a window into the open office, where developers are writing code. He notices animal pictures and toys everywhere for the first time.

He turns to them.

ROY

Let's do it. You tell me what you want and I'll make it happen. I'll run interference with the investor, if need be. That's my job. Happy animals. Let's make some happy animals!

CHARLOTTE

It's not going to be easy.

ROY

That's why you hired me.

CHARLOTTE

(Smiling)

Bravo! I think you need one of these.

She hands him a polo shirt with their logo - a smiling cartoon aardvark.

INT. GOLDMAN'S OFFICE

He's putting golf balls, talking into his earpiece.

GOLDMAN  
I called to let you know that Allegra is scheduled for her deposition Monday at 10 at her attorney's office. Can you do next Tuesday at 11 over here?

INTERCUT WITH:

EXT. OUTSIDE AARDVARK OFFICES - LATER

He's walking to his car, on the phone.

ROY  
Um, sure. Should I be at the Monday deposition?

GOLDMAN  
Uh, you don't need to be there.

ROY  
What if I want to?

Goldman leans on his putter.

GOLDMAN  
It's better if you don't.

ROY  
Why?

GOLDMAN  
You have a way of triggering this woman. We want her to be as untriggered as possible.

ROY  
I feel the need to defend myself.

GOLDMAN  
You'll get your chance. Do you even know what a deposition is? It's not you two arguing back and forth.

ROY  
I know.

GOLDMAN  
Monday, she talks. Tuesday, you talk.



ROY

Then, I want her to be at my deposition. I want her to hear what I have to say.

GOLDMAN

Are you sure?

ROY

Very sure. Very.

GOLDMAN

I advise against it. This is a very tense, emotional case and this woman is known to be somewhat high-strung.

ROY

I... I appreciate your advice. I realize I'm going out on a limb, but I think it's better if she hears my side from me.

GOLDMAN

(Rubbing his temple)

Oy. Alright, I'll see if they're amenable. Keep in mind, it's going to add unnecessary complications.

ROY

You want to keep it simple?

GOLDMAN

I do.

ROY

So do I.

INT. SF GENERAL CHEMO WAITING ROOM - DAY

Roy is seated, thumbing through a stack of magazines. He's wearing the Aardvark shirt.

After a moment, Hope emerges from the restroom, wiping her mouth with a paper towel. Roy pops up and follows her to the elevator.

ROY

How are you doing?

HOPE

Better now. Let's get out of here.

ROY  
What happened?

She is sick as a dog and not herself.

HOPE  
Just barfed my brains out. They got  
me on some strong shit now, man.

ROY  
They upped your dose?

HOPE  
It's burning holes in me. I swear.

ROY  
Did you tell the doctor?

HOPE  
They know.

She presses the down button and they get in.

ROY  
Are they going to fix it?

HOPE  
I guess.

ROY  
Do you want me to talk to them?

HOPE  
Roy, it's ok. Seriously. You don't  
need to do anything. They're on top  
of it. Or they're not. It doesn't  
matter.

They ride down in SILENCE.

INT. SF GENERAL LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

The elevator door opens. She runs down the hall and ducks  
into a restroom.

INT. ALICE'S LIVING ROOM - EVENING

It's unusually quiet. Hope is lying on the puffy couch,  
resting her eyes. Roy is next to her working on his laptop.  
Alice is reading a book in her chair.

HOPE

(Eyes still closed)

Hey Roy, I forgot to mention. I like the Aardvark shirt. So you're a team player, now, huh?

ROY

That's me.

HOPE

Any word on the lawsuit?

ROY

My deposition is tomorrow.

HOPE

What are you going to say?

ROY

I don't know. I was told to answer the questions without giving them anything they can use against me.

HOPE

How are you going to do that?

ROY

By not telling them what they want to hear.

HOPE

What if they ask, "did you do it?"

ROY

Well, I'll say I didn't.

HOPE

Is that the truth?

ROY

I thought truth didn't matter anymore.

HOPE

Roy, I want you to do something for me.

ROY

What?

HOPE

I don't want you to take this the wrong way, but you're a lousy liar.

(MORE)

HOPE (CONT'D)

You suck at lying and you have no talent for gaming people. It's not you. And when you try it, you become your own worst enemy. It eats you up inside. You're one of those people who can only be happy when everything in the universe lines up perfectly, and all those messy lies are put in their place. And Roy, I want you to be happy. Can you do that for me?

INT. GOLDMAN'S CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

It's Tuesday, quiet. A wall clock indicates 10:54am. The light in the room is dim, matching the gloom outside, as seen through the floor-to-ceiling windows.

Roy is seated in the middle by himself, hands folded and resting on the table.

Goldman rushes in.

GOLDMAN

Roy, how you doing?

ROY

Fine.

GOLDMAN

I saw them in the lobby, so we just have a moment to touch base before they're brought in. Do you have any last-minute questions? Anything on your mind? Anything you want to talk about?

He's silent, not what Goldman wants to hear.

GOLDMAN (CONT'D)

Roy. This is a big deal. Now is the time to ask questions if you got any.

ROY

I'm good.

GOLDMAN

Her deposition went as expected. No surprises. She's still holding on to the penetration argument.

(MORE)

GOLDMAN (CONT'D)

We just need to hold firm on the fact that she has no rape kit, no evidence, no motive, nothing. If everything goes as expected, we could be wrapping this thing up in a week or two. So. Last chance. Anything? You sure?

Roy shakes his head. He's tense and very still.

GOLDMAN (CONT'D)

Relax. Piece of cake.

Roy stares at his hands, jaw set tight.

June opens the door and ushers in Allegra and her attorney, FITZHUGH. Then, the court reporter enters. They stand, smile and shake hands.

GOLDMAN (CONT'D)

So Roy, I don't believe you've met Marvin Fitzhugh. Marv, this is Mr. Thode.

FITZHUGH

Nice to meet you, Roy.

They all sit in their proper places - Goldman and Roy opposite Allegra and Fitzhugh, the court reporter at the end of the table.

Roy avoids making eye contact with Allegra, who is staring bullets through him.

INT. GOLDMAN'S CONFERENCE ROOM - LATER

The deposition has been going for awhile.

FITZHUGH

So, on the night in question, You and Allegra were working in your office, correct?

ROY

Yes.

FITZHUGH

What were you working on?

ROY

We were working on a pitch.

FITZHUGH  
What did that entail?

ROY  
I sat at my desk and looked over  
the pages on my laptop, while she  
made corrections and laid out the  
draft print-outs on the table.

CUT TO:

INT. ROY'S CLOVESS OFFICE - NIGHT

FLASHBACK to the night in question - Roy at his desk, Allegra  
arranging pages on the table.

FITZHUGH (V.O.)  
What did you talk about?

ROY (V.O.)  
Not much. When we did, it was  
mostly about the report.

FITZHUGH (V.O.)  
Did you talk about things that  
weren't work related?

ROY (V.O.)  
I think we did. I'm sure we did,  
actually.

FITZHUGH (V.O.)  
Things of a sexual nature?

ROY (V.O.)  
Most likely. We often joked around  
to, you know, keep it light.

FLASHBACK DIALOG.

ROY  
How's it going with that new  
boyfriend?

ALLEGRA  
Who, Steve? He's not my boyfriend.  
We've been friends since like  
second grade but he's definitely  
not my type.

ROY  
What type is that?

ALLEGRA

Gay.

ROY

That can work sometimes.

ALLEGRA

Not in Steve's case. He's got his own thing goin'.

ROY

Too bad. So, you're back to finding Nemo?

ALLEGRA

Huh?

ROY

You know cooking the cucumber, DIY, trolling the Bermuda triangle?

ALLEGRA

(Laughing)

Roy. Eeeooo. That's gross. Where did you learn all that?

ROY

Online.

ALLEGRA

Now, that's really gross. I don't even want to know where your mind goes when you're busy doing lap dances with your laptop.

They CHUCKLE. He's watching her intently as she bends over to adjust the pages, paces in front of him, becoming more and more distracted as time goes on.

ROY

I have a wife, you know.

ALLEGRA

Yeah? How's that working out for you?

ROY

Eh.

ALLEGRA

(Pointing to the pages)

How does this look?

Roy gets up and walks over to the table, studies the layout.

ALLEGRA (CONT'D)

This is everything minus the title page.

ROY

I like it. But I think you're right. Let's just lose this whole page. That'll tighten it up.

She reaches in to remove the page. As she does, she brushes against him. Roy inhales sharply. She continues to stand too close.

ALLEGRA

Sorry.

ROY

It's ok.

ALLEGRA

How's that?

ROY

Good. I think we got it.

ALLEGRA

Alright. I'll make the change and start printing.

ROY

Hey, you need a break. Why don't you finish this up tomorrow?

ALLEGRA

Nah.

ROY

I won't need it 'til noon.

ALLEGRA

That's ok. I'm all set up. I can just do it now and get it over with.

ROY

Suit yourself.

She grabs her laptop and makes changes as she walks out of the room. Roy watches her closely.

FITZHUGH (V.O.)

After she left for the printer room, what did you do?



He sits behind his desk and watches where she left his view. Moments pass. Tension is building inside him.

ROY (V.O.)  
I sat at my desk and waited. Looked at email...

INT. GOLDMAN'S CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

BACK TO THE PRESENT.

FITZHUGH  
Why didn't you just go home?

ROY  
I... felt bad that she was staying late for me. I thought the least I could do was stick around until she finished.

FITZHUGH  
What happened next?

ROY  
What do you mean?

FITZHUGH  
I mean exactly that.

ROY  
(BEAT)  
I went to the printer room.

INT. CLOVESS PRINTER ROOM - NIGHT

FLASHBACK. Allegra is watching the printer, grabbing pages as they finish.

FITZHUGH (V.O.)  
What then?

No answer.

FITZHUGH (V.O.)  
What did you do after you went to the-

ROY (V.O.)  
I went in.

Roy enters the room behind Allegra.

FITZHUGH (V.O.)

Then?

ROY (V.O.)

I watched her work.

FITZHUGH

Yes?

CLOSE CUTS OF ACTION.

ROY (V.O.)

Then, I took her arms... and pulled her back. I think then, I grabbed her pants and pulled them down. They were tight, so it wasn't easy, and she... she fought against me. I pushed her down on a table and... entered her from the back. Behind. And I had to hold her down because she was fighting me the whole time. And I did it.

INT. GOLDMAN'S CONFERENCE ROOM - CONTINUOUS

BACK TO PRESENT.

ROY

I'm not happy with what I did. Very much so.

The others are speechless. Finally...

FITZHUGH

Just to be clear, you penetrated her and-

ROY

Had sex, intercourse.

FITZHUGH

Did she consent?

ROY

Not specifically.

FITZHUGH

I need you to be specific-

ROY

No.

FITZHUGH  
Would you say she enjoyed it?

INT. CLOVESS PRINTER ROOM - NIGHT

FLASHBACK. QUICK CLOSE CUTS of the struggle.

ROY (V.O.)  
No. She didn't. She started yelling  
and trying to get free. But I kept  
holding her... tight... until I was  
finished. It happened very quickly.  
I don't remember all the details.  
But it was quick.

Roy runs out of the room as he's pulling up his pants.  
Allegra is frozen, shaking, crying, in a state of shock.

FITZHUGH (V.O.)  
Again, the act was not consensual?

INT. GOLDMAN'S CONFERENCE ROOM - CONTINUOUS

BACK TO PRESENT.

ROY  
Correct. It was rape. I raped her.  
I don't feel good about it. I feel  
very-

GOLDMAN  
Roy, let's just stop right there,  
ok? We need to talk.

ROY  
I'm finished.

FITZHUGH  
(Trying to get his  
attention)  
Again, Roy? Roy? Roy, are you  
then admitting to raping  
Allegra?

GOLDMAN  
Marv, can we take a break,  
please? Marv, we need to end  
the session, so that Roy and  
I can-

ROY  
I raped Allegra on the night in  
question.

GOLDMAN  
Roy, you don't have to say anymore-

FITZHUGH

Did you try raping her at any other time?

GOLDMAN

Marv, please. We need-

ROY

No, just that one time. After that our working relationship changed, needless to say.

GOLDMAN

Done! Roy, we're done! I encourage you to leave it-

ROY

I'm done. I'm done.

There's silence for a moment. Allegra feels her tension evaporate - her face softens, she is finally at peace.

FITZHUGH

In light of this new discovery, I believe we will all need some time to reset our expectations.

GOLDMAN

I agree.

ALLEGRA

Can I say something?

GOLDMAN

Please, no.

ROY

Let her talk.

(To the court reporter)

Stop typing and let her talk.

GOLDMAN

Roy, I wholeheartedly advise against saying any more-

ROY (CONT'D)

I think it's fair to hear what she has to say. Off the record. Please.

Goldman signals the court reporter to stop.

GOLDMAN (CONT'D)

Allegra, I ask that you please refrain from-

FITZHUGH

Roger, please.

Goldman throws up his hands.

ALLEGRA

Roy. I'm glad you were man enough to come out with the truth, but it doesn't make it ok.

ROY

I know. I'm very, very sorry.

ALLEGRA

As you should be. You're going to have to pay for what you did, so it doesn't happen again. So, some other woman doesn't become your victim. You can't just get away with it.

ROY

I know.

ALLEGRA

I suppose that's all I have to say. For now.

The group sits in silence.

INT. SF GENERAL CHEMO WAITING ROOM - DAY

Roy is pacing, head down, over-thinking as usual, checking his watch more than he needs to. Finally, Hope appears, walking purposefully down the hall from the chemo rooms. She passes him and heads straight for the elevator. Roy catches up.

ROY

What's up? Did you see the doctor? Did he change your chemo drug?

HOPE

You could say that.

ROY

Well, is it better?

HOPE

Things are going to be better now.

ROY

Talk to me. What's going on? What happened?

HOPE  
 Roy, I need... I just need a moment  
 to process. Ok?

She presses the down button and they wait in silence.

INT. SF GENERAL ELEVATOR - DAY

As they ride down in silence. Finally...

HOPE  
 That last shit was like shooting up  
 Draino.

ROY  
 I remember.

HOPE  
 I told the guy that and he took me  
 off the chemo. No more chemo. It  
 wasn't working anyway.

ROY  
 Good.  
 (Thinks a second)  
 That's good, right?

HOPE  
 Now it's just me and the cancer.

ROY  
 What does that mean?

HOPE  
 It means... my hair might start  
 growing back and I won't be  
 throwing up all the time.

ROY  
 He's starting you on something  
 else, right?

HOPE  
 No, his job is done.

The elevator stops and Hope gets off. Roy processes for a moment, then follows just as the door is starting to close.

INT. GOLDMAN'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Goldman is in his usual phone convo position.

GOLDMAN

You fucked up and then you fucked up again. And you'll probably fuck up a few more times.

INTERCUT WITH:

EXT. ALICE'S HOUSE BY POND - DAY

Roy is pacing on the phone with Goldman.

ROY

What are my options?

GOLDMAN

Well, you don't have any options. The balls in her court now. I just spoke with her attorney and he says she's gone back into hiding - meaning she wants to think about it.

ROY

Is there any chance she'll drop the suit?

GOLDMAN

Not likely. She wants you to pay. And now she has the option of reporting rape to the police, which would make it a criminal case. And since you pretty much confessed under oath, it would be fairly straightforward to prosecute.

ROY

How likely is that?

GOLDMAN

Well, you know her better than I. She's young, not particularly bright. She might be the type that has a lot of gossipy friends, reads trashy magazines, cries at movies. Who knows? She's about to make a very important decision based on what's going on with her emotionally.

ROY

I feel like... well, I feel like talking to her.

GOLDMAN

That is a particularly bad idea.

ROY

I just want to let her know how I feel. Maybe if we sat down and-

GOLDMAN

No. She's a loose cannon now. Anything could set her off. She could watch something on TV and get it in her head that you need some serious rehabilitating.

ROY

So, all we can do now is...

GOLDMAN

Wait and see what she comes up with.

EXT. PARKING LOT CARNIVAL - DAY

The carnival fills half the parking lot of a big box store on sale day. Roy is holding an armful of low-quality stuffed animals that Hope is collecting at shooting galleries.

She lines up a dart, shoots, and somehow hits a balloon. He tries to be cheerful but she seems hopelessly distracted, in the dumps.

ROY

Damn, you're good.

HOPE

I'm a straight shooter, man.

The CARNIVAL WORKER motions to a row of cheap stuffed animals.

CARNIVAL WORKER

(Uninspired)

Any of these.

HOPE

That green one.

ROY

You already have that one.

HOPE

Ok, the reddish one.



Roy takes it and she leads him away.

ROY  
It doesn't even look like an  
animal.

HOPE  
I think that's what I like about  
it.

ROY  
(Pointing to another  
gallery)  
So, where to next?

HOPE  
I'm done.

ROY  
You sure?

HOPE  
Yeah.

She stops and looks around.

ROY  
How you feeling?

HOPE  
Pretty good, actually. How about  
you?

ROY  
Hey, I'm fine. You're the one with  
the cancer.

HOPE  
I don't want to talk about my shit  
anymore.

ROY  
(Quietly)  
I hear you.

She sits on a bench and stares off in the distance. He sits  
beside her.

ROY (CONT'D)  
What do you think of that hospice  
nurse, huh? I think he's pretty  
good. He seems to care a lot, knows  
what he's doing. Sounds like you'll  
have all the pain meds you'll ever-

HOPE  
Roy.

ROY  
Yeah?

HOPE  
I think I've lost it.

ROY  
(Alarmed)  
What?

HOPE  
That ability to make fun of shit.  
To laugh at other people, piss  
people off. I suddenly don't find  
anything that humorous anymore.  
Makes me think the end is near.

She points.

HOPE (CONT'D)  
See that fat guy with the stupid  
hat and t-shirt stretched so tight  
it's like cutting off all the  
circulation to his brain, with his  
three fat kids getting melted  
cotton candy shit all over them? I  
don't even feel like mocking him.  
He looks so miserable. All I can  
think about is how miserable he is.

ROY  
Could be the Zoloft.

HOPE  
Why am I taking it?

ROY  
The doctor thought you'd start  
getting depressed.

HOPE  
Why would dying of a painful  
terminal illness depress me? That I  
can deal with.

ROY  
Well, most people, I guess-

HOPE  
Roy, I'm not most people.

She stands abruptly and heads toward the Ferris wheel. Roy tries to keep up.

She walks right up to the Ferris wheel operator, who is taken by her assertiveness apparently, and ushers them right into a waiting car.

#### FERRIS WHEEL

The ride starts. He's holding an armful of stuffed animals, staring at the people below. She's staring at him. Their minds are elsewhere.

HOPE

I've never been friends with a rapist.

ROY

Neither have I. How does it make you feel?

HOPE

Like I don't know you.

ROY

I feel that way too.

HOPE

What made you do it, Roy?

ROY

I don't know. I must've thought it was a good idea at the time.

HOPE

Did you think she'd be into it?

ROY

Yeah. I guess. I wouldn't have done it if I thought she wasn't.

HOPE

But you went ahead anyway.

ROY

I know. I don't know what I was thinking. Actually, I do know. I know exactly what I was thinking. I was wrong. I got the whole thing wrong. It was a big fucking stupid mistake, but I couldn't stop and everything went to hell and I ended up hurting someone.

(MORE)

ROY (CONT'D)

Obviously, I wish it had never happened. I can guarantee it'll never happen again. But who's going to believe a rapist. I wouldn't. What can I do if I don't even believe myself? Seriously, what can I do?

HOPE

You fucked up.

ROY

I fucked up and I'm not going to get away with it. I'm goin' down. That's just the way it is.

HOPE

I can relate.

They look in each other's eyes.

ROY

Both of us. Going down.

Their car starts down. Roy gets up and climbs over to her side, takes her hand. It's hard for him...

ROY (CONT'D)

We're here... to... hold each other together.

HOPE

(Very serious)

I don't know what to say. That was so concise.

ROY

Almost pithy.

HOPE

Absolutely pithy. Like a "you complete me" kind of pithy.

ROY

Something like that.

HOPE

That's what we do. That's what people are for.

They hold each other and go around in circles.

## CARNIVAL MONTAGE

They grow together as they take in all that the cheesy little carnival has to offer - flying, spinning, bouncing, shooting. For a dizzy moment they tap into the nothingness of a parking lot carnival and all that it means.

INT. ALICE'S HOUSE HOPE'S ROOM - NIGHT

Roy is sleeping with Hope in her saggy double bed.

INT. DIVORCE ATTORNEY OFFICE - DAY

Sachs is on the phone with Roy.

SACHS

In light of what appears to be a confession of rape on your part, Maeve was able to extend the restraining order against you.

INTERCUT WITH:

EXT. ALICE'S HOUSE BACKYARD - DAY

Roy is on the phone, pacing on a distant path through the woods.

ROY

She didn't have to do that.

SACHS

Well, you and I know that but she was not so sure. At any rate, we'll have to take it one step at a time.

ROY

I don't even care anymore.

SACHS

I don't want you to stop caring.

ROY

It's ok. I'm fine. Life just keeps getting more interesting by the minute.

SACHS

Good. Hold that thought. In the meantime, let's get through this divorce-

ROY

Tell me one thing. Do you ever wake up in the middle of the night and wonder about how hopeless life is?

SACHS

(Very certain)

Never. I never wake up worrying about bullshit like that and neither should you. Who cares about all that existential crap? It's a waste of energy.

ROY

Yup.

SACHS

My advice to you is see a therapist and talk it out. Get it out of your system. It's not in your best interest to get sucked into a whirlpool of emotional crap. You had a break-up. So what. Not to make light of your emotions. I'm sure they're very real, but you gotta move on.

Silence.

SACHS (CONT'D)

You with me?

ROY

Yeah. Move on.

INT. ALICE'S HOUSE HOPE'S ROOM - NIGHT

Roy is sitting in a chair watching her sleep.

INT. ALICE'S HOUSE LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Roy and Alice are sitting on the couch looking through an album of baby pictures.

ALICE

She liked the beach. That was her favorite. Water, sand, sun... and people. She used to be a real people person. Everybody loved her. Big talker, big smile. Friendly as hell.

ROY  
What happened?

ALICE  
High school. There she is.

Pictures of a young Hope - bookish, pudgy.

ALICE (CONT'D)  
We homeschooled her until high school and then sent her into the public school system. It was a disaster. Our funny, bright little girl could never adapt. She only had one friend and he was a terrible loser. There he is. Steve. What a loser. She was smart as a whip but never learned how to make good choices. After Steve dumped her, she was a wreck. Hooked up with all the wrong people. Went from one disaster to another.

The pictures stop.

ALICE (CONT'D)  
They played her, stole from her, took advantage of her in every conceivable way. She ended up in Vegas doing who knows what. Waiting tables, running drugs, selling her body. She'd still be there if she hadn't gotten sick.

ROY  
I wish there was something I could do.

ALICE  
You're doing it.

INT. ALICE'S HOUSE HOPE'S ROOM - NIGHT

Roy is seated, working on his laptop, while she sleeps. After a moment, her eyes open slowly and she stirs. Roy leans in to her.

ROY  
Hey, you're awake. You've been out all day. How you feeling?

HOPE  
(Slurring badly)  
Really, really shitty.

ROY  
I got more dope. You want some? How  
about some food?

HOPE  
What do you got?

ROY  
Well, your mom made a nice mac 'n  
cheese? She can make soup if you  
want? Anything.

HOPE  
Just water. I'm super thirsty.

He grabs the glass and angles the straw toward her mouth. She  
takes a few sips.

ROY  
It took awhile to get your mom to  
buy-off on the plastic straws. It  
was like I was asking her to commit  
genocide. "They never decompose.  
They kill whales. They're a menace  
to society." I finally had to get  
them myself and sneak them into the  
house.

HOPE  
What time is it?

ROY  
It's like 11:30 at night.

HOPE  
Holy fuck. I slept all day.

ROY  
That's what I was saying.

HOPE  
I need to get up.

She tries to sit up in bed.

ROY  
You can't.

HOPE  
Why not?



ROY  
You're too sick. Remember that  
whole cancer thing?

HOPE  
I need to pee.

ROY  
You can use the bedpan.

HOPE  
Oh hell.

She flops back down in pain.

ROY  
(Calling)  
Alice! Can you do the bedpan!?

He looks down. Pee is dripping from under the covers.

ROY (CONT'D)  
Never mind!  
(To Hope)  
It's ok. The nurse is coming in the  
morning and we can ask him what to  
do. Maybe they have some medical  
device-

HOPE  
Roy, It's ok.

ROY  
What?

HOPE  
You don't need to stick around. You  
got your own problems.

ROY  
It's ok.

HOPE  
I just need a little time to get  
back on my feet.

He sits. Takes her hand.

ROY  
I know. But my life is... I got a  
lot of spare time now. And I need  
someone like you to make me laugh.  
I need your rapier wit and acid  
tongue and trademark comic timing.

(MORE)

ROY (CONT'D)

As long as I'm here with you, I am sure to be much amused.

HOPE

You're a funny guy, Roy Thode. Did I ever tell you, you have a very amusing name?

ROY

Thank you.

HOPE

Just thinking of your name adds another 5 to 7 minutes on my timer. If I thought about it enough, I could amuse myself a whole new life.

ROY

Glad I could be of service.

HOPE

But seriously, you don't have to stick around.

ROY

I know. But I don't have anyplace I'd rather be.

He moves in closer.

HOPE

Really?

ROY

Really.

HOPE

That's sweet. But I'm so fucking sick. It's hard to maintain my comic timing.

ROY

I forgive you.

HOPE

Thanks, Roy Thode. Roy Thode.

She CHUCKLES, then stiffens in pain. Her eyes close and she dozes off.

## INT. ALICE'S HOUSE HOPE'S ROOM - MORNING

The sun streaming in the window lands in a soft pool over Hope's body. Roy is sleeping in the soft chair. He awakens and immediately notices something is different. It's very quiet and empty. She is still, with a soft, peaceful countenance.

He approaches her and takes her cold hand. Kisses her cheek. His eyes well with tears. He sits back down, unable to let go of her hand. And he stays in that position, watching her for hours.

## EXT. ALICE'S HOUSE BACKYARD - DAY

Seven friends and relatives are gathered around an empty grave dug next to a young oak tree. Roy is with the group but stands behind them. An unaffiliated minister reads something meaningful from a small book and everyone listens with heads bowed, as a gray-haired friend plays acoustic guitar.

Then, Roy and a small group gather around Hope's body wrapped in compostable linen, gently lift her and set her in the grave. It's not easy. They stumble a bit, not having much practice. Then, they take turns dropping shovels of dirt on her.

When they're finished, they step back and smile, and hug each other. Then, they clap and cheer to propel her spirit into the roots of the tree.

## EXT. GOLDEN GATE BRIDGE DECK - EARLY MORNING

The traffic is light. The sun has just risen and is starting to burn away the thick fog. A single figure stands motionless on the pedestrian walkway.

CLOSER. Roy is leaning against the railing facing the white-out sky and the roiling water, no doubt overthinking his current situation.

He grabs the railing and practices hoisting himself up and swinging his legs to the side in a vaulting motion. He tries a few more times, then walks back across the pathway toward the road.

He turns to face the railing, checks around him, braces himself. Then he runs forward, grabs the railing and does a practice side vault. Almost, got it. Just a little faster. He goes back to the other side of the walkway and gets in position. He braces himself.

A text NOTIFICATION SOUND erupts from his phone. He slumps.

He decides to ignore it. He gets in position, tenses. Another text comes in. Then, another and another. Finally, he gives in and opens his phone.

INSERT TEXT BOX in the FRAME. It's from...

ALLEGRA

(Text)

Can we meet sometime to talk about things? Without attorneys!!!

Roy steps forward slowly as he reads on. In his face, we see hope turn to empathy turn to remorse turn to compassion. He stops and leans against the railing, deep in thought.

ALLEGRA (CONT'D)

(Text)

I don't have any agendas. I just think I need something good to happen.

Been dealing with a lot of shit. I'm sure you have too. I'm so done with it! It doesn't need to be this way!!!!

Maybe if we just talk, I'll feel better. You too. Worth trying, don't you think?

Roy texts back...

ROY

(Text)

I want you to feel better. More than anything in the world.

ALLEGRA

(Text)

Thanks.

The TEXT BOX POPS OFF as a bicycle suddenly flies in from nowhere and CRASHES into him. The force pushes him against the railing hard, causing him to nearly drop his phone into the drink.

PEYTON, a 40-something female bike rider, is CURSING a blue streak, struggling, trying to untangle herself. He reaches down and pulls the bike up, helps her to her feet. She angrily brushes the dirt off her bloodied legs. Kicks the bike.

PEYTON

Fuck this fucking bike. I swear to God. I've had it with this piece of shit. The gear thing keeps jamming and the whole thing twists around and locks up. I never know when it's going happen. Completely random. I'll just be riding along and BAM, I'm on the ground or in a fucking ditch, covered with blood. Fuck you! You fucking fuck bi-fucking-cycle!

She kicks it hard again a few times. Roy is enjoying the moment. She notices and calms down.

PEYTON (CONT'D)

Sorry. I'm sorry. This fucking! Ok, I'm done. Sorry. Very sorry.

She takes a few calming breaths.

PEYTON (CONT'D)

Are you ok?

ROY

Yeah. I'm fine. How about you?

PEYTON

No! I got this fucking piece of shit- Sorry.

Another kick.

ROY

Need some help?

PEYTON

No, I got it. I just need to get this hunk of crap back home.

(To the bike)

Then, it's a fucking one-way trip to the landfill, asshole. I swear to God. Fucking landfill for you, you piece of shit!

She gets on the bike and starts to ride it again. But 20 feet down the path it starts wobbling, twists and crashes into the railing.

Roy is much amused. He trots down the path and helps her up. Red-faced, burning mad, and cursing, she grabs the bike away from Roy and attempts to lift it up.

With all the super-power anger she can muster, she almost gets it above her head and then tries to shove it over the railing.

Roy joins in. He grabs the bike and they both lift it high in the air and unceremoniously launch it over the edge. They watch as it tumbles downward into the murky water.

PEYTON (CONT'D)

There. Finally.

(To Roy)

Thanks.

ROY

Feel better?

PEYTON

No! I would like to have a fucking bike that works! But... it did feel good to see it....

(To the bike)

Burn in hell! Bastard!

(To Roy)

Sorry. Peyton Burns.

Holds her hand out.

ROY

Roy Thode.

PEYTON

Thanks. I normally don't throw my crap in the bay, just so you know.

ROY

I understand. This was a special occasion.

She starts to walk but realizes something has snapped in her knee and HOLLERS.

ROY (CONT'D)

Need some help.

PEYTON

I don't want to be an imposition.

ROY

It's ok.

PEYTON

You sure?

ROY

Yeah.

They try a few positions. Then, they settle on her putting her arm around his neck to keep the weight off her left knee. And they slowly hobble off down the walkway.

**THE END**