

SUICIDE PREVENTION

Screenplay by

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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.

The 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 moves smoothly, confidently, driven by his dark purpose. It's obvious he doesn't belong here. His clothing is Nordstrom/REI, dark and plain, but pricey-casual, fitted - hair styled and in place. He's after something or something is after him.

He eyes front windows here and there to get ideas for an 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 secure 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, 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, out of the blue...

HOPE (O.S.)
Drop something?

He startles and turns. It's a short, plump woman (40s) with a round baby face - unfiltered, bigger than life and cheerful as hell - the opposite of what Roy needs now.

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

HOPE
(Here comes a story)
You don't want to drop anything down there. Believe me.

Roy tries to ignore her.

HOPE (CONT'D)
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. Shut down the whole damn system. They had to call in this fuckin' SWAT team that like jumped down there and grabbed it out with a million volts snapping all around.
(Makes an electrocution sound and laughs)
Needless to say, I wasn't popular around here that day. It was like, fuuuuck.

Roy is doing everything in his power to appear disinterested. 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)

Uh, 9-45.

HOPE

Thanks.

She turns to the digital schedule. Roy sees his chance to move a safe distance away from her. Turns his attention once again to the high-voltage rails. And there she is...

HOPE (CONT'D)

Hey, do you know when the Bart to Berkeley is? I'm not seeing it on this thing.

She's like the plague.

ROY

You just missed it.

HOPE

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

ROY

That was it.

HOPE

The last one?!

ROY

Yup.

HOPE

Fuck.

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

Roy sees his chance to evade the woman. He gives up on Bart and hops on the up escalator.

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 trying to figure out this Bart system, you know, and this crazy fucked-up city. Would you happen to know if there's like a bus I can take? That you know of? Or something?

He's still avoiding eye contact...

ROY

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

HOPE

Ah good. And that goes to Berkeley?

ROY

Yeah.

HOPE

Oh good. Thanks.

Out of the corner of his eye, he sees her step toward the escalator. Then, just as she's about to get on, his head drops to his chest...

ROY

But you don't want to do that.

HOPE

(Stopping)
Huh?

ROY

(Looking at his feet)
It's late. And Oakland is... fairly unsafe at this hour. Actually, very unsafe. Actually, everything is unsafe.

HOPE

Well, shit.

ROY

You got Uber?

HOPE

No.

ROY
Can you do a taxi?

HOPE
I don't think so.

ROY
Well. I don't know.

She turns 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 on...

ROY
(Shaking his head)
Wait.

She does.

ROY (CONT'D)
(With great difficulty)
I have an extra bed.

HOPE
Are you?

ROY
If you want. It's nothing special.

She approaches him, cautiously.

HOPE
Wow. That's really nice.

Her enthusiasm is like nails on a chalkboard.

ROY
It's just a dump but it's better than wandering around Oakland in the dark.

She faces him. He looks up. Their eyes meet for the first time. Clearly, this is taking every ounce of his patience.

HOPE

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

ROY

(Jaw set)
Fine.

HOPE

(Sizing him up)
And just so you know, I trust you.

She's found the key to his cynical soul.

ROY

Thanks.

HOPE

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

ROY

I try.

HOPE

Can I hug you?

Could it get any worse?

ROY

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

HOPE

If you don't want to, you know, if
you're not that type...

(Looking deep in his
uncaring eyes)

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?

BEAT.

ROY
(Bracing himself)
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. Harsh streetlights, neon liquor stores and bars provide pools of ugly light.

Hope rides in behind Roy, oblivious to her surroundings, in the middle of one of her brain dumps...

HOPE
...And 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. Then, Vegas happened. Now, that's weird. Fucking Vegas. I don't know.

She pauses to take a breath as she steps over a pile of sleeping bags with a human inside. This stops her. She stares, momentarily struck dumb by the sight of so much pain and dysfunction all around.

She turns away and rushes to catch up with Roy and they continue down the street, passing by homeless, hookers and drug dealers. It's all very bleak, except for Hope.

HOPE (CONT'D)
So this is going to work out nice for tomorrow, because I have to like get up early and head over to the hospital. There is a hospital around here, right?

ROY
San Francisco General?

HOPE
Yeah, that's it.

BEAT. And?

ROY
Do you know how to get there?

HOPE
I don't know. I can Google it, I guess. 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 - worn-out 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.

She approaches it.

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

ROY
Here, I'll get it.

He removes the cushions and pulls out the saggy, old 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?

She sits on the bed and looks up at Roy with her big, round inquisitive eyes, and something hits him...

ROY
I'm sorry.

HOPE
For what?

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

HOPE
(Smiling)
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
There's beer and some juice in the
fridge. Help yourself.

His foul mood has thawed enough to look her in the eye with
maybe a hint of not-a-frown.

ROY (CONT'D)
Night.

She watches him head into 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.

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

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. Why not?

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

He gets up and runs to 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, BANGS his head on the top of the oven. Turns off
the gas. RING, RING. Pulls the phone out of his pocket.

ROY
(Distracted and down)
Hi Jon.

Jon is Roy's age, a co-worker.

JON (V.O.)
(Cheery and 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 week or so 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 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.)
You're 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.)
(Trying to be funny)
The bloodsucking attorneys, huh?

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. With each BUZZ his temper ratchets down a notch. BUUUZZZZ!

Finally, he bursts from the oven, BANGS his head again on the top, kicks it, turns it off 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, what?

HOPE (V.O.)

Listen. I, uh... Can I ask a favor?

EXT. MISSION DISTRICT - MORNING

Hope is rushing to keep up with Roy, as he strides with intensity ahead of her down the sidewalk. She's keeping the convo light and clueless, as always.

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. This is really big of you.

ROY

It's no problem.

It is.

HOPE

What are you up to today?

ROY

(Minimal information)
Not much.

HOPE

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

ROY

No.

HOPE

I mean, nothing personal, but it's pretty awful, actually. You know?

(MORE)

HOPE (CONT'D)

I mean, I appreciate you letting me stay there and all, 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 abruptly. She nearly runs into him. He realizes she's not going to shut up until he gives her something to chew on.

ROY

I have some things I need to take care of.

HOPE

(To his back)

Ok?

ROY

That's it.

HOPE

Can you give me a clue?

ROY

What do you mean?

He starts walking again ahead of her. She catches up.

HOPE

I mean... You're this fucking enigma. You're kind of, you know, depressed acting 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, abruptly.

ROY
(Resigned)
You're right.

HOPE
(To his back)
I know I'm right.

ROY
What do you want to know?

She comes around to face him.

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

Providing minimal information at high speed.

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 a
few things.

HOPE
Good. What things?

ROY
(Dicey territory)
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.

Roy is surprised to feel a bit less tense after the purge.
Hope feels the need to hug him again.

HOPE
See that wasn't so bad.

ROY
It's bad.

She draws closer to him, wraps her hands around his arms.

HOPE
I know. I know. Do you mind?

ROY
What?

HOPE
You know.

He clenches. She hugs. 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

It's a discrete personal security shop in the middle of anti-gun San Francisco. Roy is looking over handguns in a glass counter. A rough-looking, but tastefully attired, 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.

Roy nods.

GUN SALESMAN (CONT'D)

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

Uh, yeah.

The salesman pulls the gun out and hands it to Roy, who holds
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
Well, I'll have to think about it.

GUN SALESMAN
(Threateningly)
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 stays in the elevator and watches as they hover by the small 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. He startles. It's a gray-haired 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.

He closes his eyes, drops his head. The mood is gone.

INT. ROY'S FLAT - LATER

Roy enters hot and drained, SLAMS the door and 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
Low, 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)
(MORE)

PARAMEDIC 1 (CONT'D)
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 more comfortable. How are you feeling 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 everyone that passes by. His head is throbbing. 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?

And now the punishment. He is defenseless.

ROY
I don't know.

HOPE
Maybe this could've been avoided if we'd talked about your problems earlier. 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.

Slow death by a thousand words.

HOPE (CONT'D)
(Reading)
To whom it may concern. After a great deal of thought and pondering my options, I have decided the most prudent course of action...
(Lowering the note)
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 okay. That's all that matters.

A nurse walks by and glances in. 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. 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's *raison d'être* is to dominate by inflicting pain and she plans to take full advantage of the current situation.

MAEVE

I'm sorry it came to this.

ROY

You're not the only one.

MAEVE

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

ROY

I couldn't.

MAEVE

Don't be ridiculous.

ROY

(Voice raising)

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.

Jab. His blood begins to boil. He turns and rises to face them.

ROY
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.

He flops back down.

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
(Surprise)
Attorney?

MAEVE
We need to move on, Roy.

ROY
What about seeing a therapist or marriage counselor or something?

MAEVE
It's too late for that.

ROY

Well, I don't think it is!

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

MAEVE

Anyway, it's not up to you.

ROY

(Another shock)

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

(Pointedly, voice raised)

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, syrupy, talking
down to him)

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

She and the kid turn and head out.

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

They're 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.

Note. This is Roy before his recent problems, when he was all-business, aggressive and full of himself. He still had a stick up his capitalist ass but he was more human.

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... Uh..
 (Shaking off the gloom)
 Anyway, bottom line. AdLiveo! We
 got 'em!

They CLAP, HOORAY! Roy takes a seat, happy with himself.

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

AdLiveo invented a medical device for stage four cancer patients that actually increases life expectancy without pouring more expensive drugs into them. Who knows how, but it works like fucking magic and they're close to getting FDA approval right now.

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 the process. Then, once we're past the FDA hump, we have recommendations for streamlining. Just between you and me, at least half the founding partners will be redundant once we transition to a manufacturing model. Then, we can really start generating some serious Benjy's. We got an aging population, with lots of stage four 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, but knows when he's about to blow.

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, the ego high from the meeting fueling his intensifying rage.

Chloe stands and 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
(Seething, but keeping it
low)
Allegra.

ALLEGRA
(Surprised, but
unenthused)
Oh, hi.

ROY
You're fired.

ALLEGRA

Huh?

He marches right out.

INT. CLOVESS OPEN OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

FLASHBACK. He approaches Chloe, realizes he's probably just made the second biggest mistake of his career.

ROY

(Shaking)

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

CHLOE

Sure, I guess.

Allegra is rapidly 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'm on my break, drinking my fucking coffee, minding my own business and you just fucking come out of nowhere and fire me? Fire me? Fire 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-

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)

The truth, Roy Thode. 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, knocking over trays and scattering folders as she goes.

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 likely to make off-color remarks as I was, probably more so. She was known by everyone for being loud and vulgar. You know that. I didn't think anything of it. Most people thought it was funny. It seemed to be okay with our open culture.

JON

Did you penetrate her?

ROY

(Shocked)

Pene... Hell. That's, that's. I don't do things like that. You know me.

JON

Did she try to, you know, arouse you?

ROY

I think... she may have tried. She was that way. You know, 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

(Referring to a legal
paper)

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.

ROY

I know.

JON

We have procedures.

ROY

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.

Jon drops the letter and leans back, drums his fingers on the
desk.

JON (CONT'D)

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

Roy slumps. He knows.

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. 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. Confessing to a stranger was hard.

ROY

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

The Counselor has it all figured out. She seems compassionate, but isn't really listening.

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.

(MORE)

COUNSELOR (CONT'D)
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?

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

ROY
I don't want... people to feel sorry for me. 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.

She smiles, a breakthrough is imminent.

ROY (CONT'D)
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.

Not the direction she had in mind. She must correct him.

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 use.

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.

No more secrets now. He has told her what he told the counselor. He is vulnerable, broken - drained of his dignity, his manhood, his will to keep fighting.

HOPE

That's what she said?

ROY

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

HOPE

Are you?

ROY

Good question.

HOPE

Do you know what I think?

ROY

(Reaching his limit)

Hey, go for it. Everyone else has checked in.

HOPE

(Tough love)

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. What I think is 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 down in a chair. Her advice is the last thing he needs now, but here it comes anyway.

HOPE (CONT'D)
You fired this pond scum bimbo 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. But they're like 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. He begins to lighten up.

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 walking down the hall with a load of paperwork. Hope is tagging along.

COUNSELOR

Hospital policy doesn't allow us to release you until we do a full assessment. We have to make sure we're not legally liable.

ROY

(Being positive)

What if I promise not to kill myself?

She stops walking, smiles.

COUNSELOR

Sorry, we'll need more than that.

ROY

What?

COUNSELOR

Well, we need to observe you for a day or two 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?

He stares at her with his mouth agape for a moment, then jumps in.

ROY

Easily, um, many months, 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. He can use the extra room. 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 could work. Are you ok with this, Roy?

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 takes it all in, not sure what he's gotten himself into.

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 finishes taking off his shoes and stands, smiles, confused, not sure what the protocol is.

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

ALICE
 Oh, that's nice.

She sticks her hand out. He notices and shakes it.

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 off the 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.

(MORE)

HOPE (CONT'D)
We just have to watch him to make
sure he doesn't try to commit
suicide again.

Alice stares a few beats with a frozen smile. Then,
unfazed...

ALICE
Would you like some tea?

ROY
Sure.

She heads off to the kitchen.

HOPE
How are you feeling, by the way?
Have a seat.

He does.

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. Hope starts pouring it in small cups.

HOPE (CONT'D)
How do you take it?

ROY
You don't have to-

HOPE
A little cream and sugar?

ROY
Actually, I don't uh...

Too late, she's adding cream and sugar. This is how it's
going to be.

Alice squats on a cushion and pulls out a bong.

ALICE
Do you mind?

ROY
(Shrugging)
Uh...

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 an unusually sizeable hit.

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

ALICE MONTAGE

HIP HOP 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 chickens, eating greens with the others on a rickety wooden 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 substances.

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 tousled and face more relaxed.

EXT. ALICE'S HOUSE BY POND - DAY

Roy is sitting on a lawn swing with Alice, drinking tea. Hope is sitting in an Adirondack chair facing them.

Alice is going full tilt on Roy with her special blend of proven psychological principals and metaphysical nonsense. He's not sure what to make of it.

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.

(MORE)

ALICE (CONT'D)
Is truth really "where it's at," as they say? I don't know. I don't think it is. What do you think?

Hope shakes her head.

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-

HOPE
Mom, what are you up to?

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. But I should, probably. That ever happen to you?

ROY
Uh, maybe-

HOPE
Roy, don't listen to her. She's psycho.

He smiles.

ALICE
Oh, 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.

She laughs it off.

HOPE

Tell me about it.

ALICE

Let me know if I'm making it worse for you.

HOPE

Roy, keep in mind, I was raised by this whack job.

ROY

What is Ass-

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 Asperger's. It just interests me. Sorry. I didn't mean to offend you. Did I?

ROY

What did 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.

HOPE
Mom, we're not allowed to damage
him.

ALICE
(To Hope)
Oh, I know that. I was just
thinking it's very practical how he
did it. The way he over-thought
everything and held his focus, lots
of stick-to-itiveness. That's very
interesting. Don't you think?

HOPE
I think you're upsetting him?

ALICE
(To Roy)
Am I?

ROY
No more than anything else.

ALICE
That's good.

She settles back. Hope stands with her tea and heads for the house.

HOPE
I think I need something stronger.

INT. HOPE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Hope is slowly removing her clothes before bed. The room is aglow from one dim lamp on her nightstand. A thin red cloth covers the light so the color is warm and soft. She moves in slow motion, having just ingested something blurry and distant.

The door opens slowly. It's Roy. She covers herself and turns to him.

ROY
(Wide-eyed)
Oh sorry. I thought... I didn't
think... I thought I didn't think.
I didn't think I thought.

Let's out a deep breath. He's had the same substance, mind a little bent.

ROY (CONT'D)

Wow. I didn't know you were, you know. Sorry.

(Realizing it)

You're undressed...

HOPE

It's okay. You can come in if you want. Or not.

ROY

Is it okay?

HOPE

You know, there's okay and there's okay.

ROY

Which one is this?

HOPE

The second one.

They laugh, a bit too much, but it's okay.

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, kiss deeply. Then, they tumble back on her bed.

INT. GOLDMAN'S OFFICE LOBBY - DAY

Roy is waiting in the cold, opulent lobby of a fairly expensive attorney, ROGER GOLDMAN. Goldman's assistant JUNE (35), approaches Roy down a long echoey hallway.

JUNE

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

Roy follows her all the way to his corner office.

INT. GOLDMAN'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Goldman (40s) 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 turns around to face Roy with a wink. Roy gives him a weak, intimidated smile.

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

Uh, 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 dick you are and so on. All really good news. However. We weren't so lucky with the "penetration" complaint.

Roy begins to sweat. Goldman studies him the whole time.

GOLDMAN (CONT'D)

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

(Barely audible)

Why is she holding on to the pene...

GOLDMAN

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

ROY

How can she... why is she doing that?

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? Right?

(BEAT)

Indicate no.

Roy shakes his head.

GOLDMAN (CONT'D)

We're good to go. 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.

Roy exhales finally.

GOLDMAN (CONT'D)

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?

Beat. Roy is still processing.

ROY
Oh, 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.

Roy smiles - almost.

INT. DIVORCE ATTORNEY - DAY

Roy is meeting for the first time with HERB SACHS (50s), on a lower floor. He and Roy face each other in comfy office chairs. He's older, rounder, balder, a more benign presence than Goldman.

SACHS
(Carefully choosing his words)
So, Mr. Thode. I did speak with your wife's attorney and uh... well I'll be honest, this could go one of two ways at this point. It all comes down to how... really how flexible both parties are.

ROY
(No hesitation)
I'm flexible.

SACHS
(Surprised)
Oh, okay, that's a good start.

ROY
(All gloom)
I have nothing to gain and nothing to lose. I've lost it all.

Sachs holds his hands up, smiles.

SACHS

Whoa okay, just... hold on now, we haven't lost it all yet. I mean-

ROY

She can have it all. I don't care. I just want it to be over. I don't want to fight.

SACHS

Well now, it seems your wife's only issue, well main issue, is this alleged extra-marital affair or dalliance or indiscretion. Not sure how we want to spin that...

Roy isn't as intimidated by Sachs but still proceeds cautiously.

ROY

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

SACHS

The lawsuit, well maybe. What do you think? You know her better than I do.

ROY

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, the anger. And she stopped trusting me.

SACHS

Not unusual. It happens all the time. She thinks you're lying. She's afraid, feels betrayed.

ROY

I told her there was nothing to it, period. Nothing. But she believes the lawsuit and me getting fired, 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 smiles, slaps Roy's knee.

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

Hesitation.

ROY
I don't know why she would.

Sachs looks him in the eye.

EXT. ROY'S FLAT - DAY

Roy is drained. 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 tries the key, but 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 rug.
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 you left it.

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

There's even a few flowers in a vase.

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 checks the kitchen table and counters, while Roy
continues looking around the room in amazement. Checks for
dust on a table. It's spotless.

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 and he waves to get her attention.

ROY
Hey.

She stops and looks around, he's the last thing she expected to see.

HOPE
Roy. What's up?

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 again 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 be 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 an insensitive dick. Just an observation. 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 an annoying bitch. Just an observation. No judgment.

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)
I'll buy that.

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's got this puny, wheeled thing
in the garage. It takes gas, so I
think it legally qualifies as a
car.

ROY
You could drive that.

HOPE
Eh, 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.

These things are harder than he thought to talk about.

HOPE
That would be nice. How many kids?

ROY
One. Skyla.

HOPE
Interesting name.

ROY
Yeah. Too bad.

He starts to lose it.

HOPE
(Tough love again)
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?

Silence.

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. He stops the car 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.

The words, the feelings just seem come to him and he can't stop the flow.

ROY (CONT'D)
(Slow and authentic)
I have never known, never met... anyone like you. You're like the polar opposite of anyone I would ever consider knowing. Ever. And here you are.

HOPE
Here I am.

She knits her fingers coyly under her chin and blinks Shirley Temple style.

ROY
What the fuck. Where did you come from?

HOPE
The Bart station. Remember?

ROY
(Tearing up)
Yeah.

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

ROY (CONT'D)
You left this in the flat... after cleaning up my shit.

HOPE
Thanks, wondered where that went.

He starts to tear up as she puts it on her finger

HOPE (CONT'D)
Now don't get all maudlin on me.
Nothing worse than a maudlin man-

Without over-thinking, he spontaneously reaches over and gives her a giant car hug. She reciprocates after a moment.

EXT. ALICE'S HOUSE BY POND - DAY

Alice is sitting in the lawn swing, while Roy paces in front of her.

ROY
(Thoughtful)
I don't feel as much like killing myself now... I don't think.

ALICE
Really? Why?

ROY
Hmm. It seemed like the only option a week ago.

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.

He sits facing her.

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)

It's not lack of options, it's lack of imagination. People think they're the smartest animals on earth, but how many... cockroaches do you know give up when things get tough? How many, I don't know, penguins lie down and cry when they get lost in a blizzard? If all your options are gone, you just find some new ones. 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 Roy, who's way deep in thought.

EXT. ALICE'S HOUSE - DAY

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

ROY

(On phone)

Hi Charlotte, glad you could take my call. I saw your job listing in LinkedIn and thought I'd reach out to see if-

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. CHARLOTTE'S AARDVARK OFFICE - DAY

CHARLOTTE (35) is seated with her phone, behind a crazy minimalist desk in her colorful workspace, with pictures of zoo animals stuck all over and toy animals crowding every surface. Her dress is extreme casual, hair long and tied back.

CHARLOTTE

(On phone)

Are you the Roy Thode at Clovess?

ROY

Yes. I'm-

CHARLOTTE (V.O.)

I thought so. I know who you are.

ROY

Oh, that's great.

CHARLOTTE (V.O.)

(Disbelieving)

You don't really want to write code, do you?

ROY

(Not sure where she's going)

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...

She pours seeds in a bowl for a noisy cockatoo. WAK!

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.

ROY
Nice to meet you. Roy Thode.

They shake. He takes a seat.

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...

CHARLOTTE shows up and sits next to Harper, two peas in a pod.

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)

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

(Means it)

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

(Big smile)

Animals? Hell, no. I love animals.

HARPER

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

(Tada)

Zookeepers.

ROY

Not really interested in cleaning out cages...

HARPER

Enclosures.

ROY

I'm sorry?

HARPER

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

ROY

Oh, right.

They CHUCKLE.

CHARLOTTE

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

HARPER

San Diego has over 4,000 animals.

ROY

Had no idea.

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
Hi. Guess what? 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 outside my comfort zone, but it'll get me back in the game.

HOPE

That's nice.

She dozes off. He's taken aback. Alice is standing behind him. She puts her hand on his shoulder. He turns.

ALICE

(Whispering)

Let's talk.

INT. ALICE'S HOUSE LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Alice is facing Roy, unusually somber and sober.

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, what do you mean?

ALICE

It happens when the tumor metastasizes and slowly takes over her body.

His anxiety grows.

ROY

Tumor?!

ALICE

You don'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

I thought she worked there or something. And the nose spray...

Alice nods.

ROY (CONT'D)

What the hell.

ALICE

What the hell.

ROY

Is she... is she...

ALICE

No. It's not going to cure her. She's too far...

Alice can't finish. She's choked up. He looks away, shakes his head.

ROY

I had no idea. It happened so fast. Breakthrough pain...

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 just have to see.

He settles back, suddenly overwhelmed and in the dumps.

ROY
(Empty)
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 walks away in a haze.

EXT. ALICE'S HOUSE BACKYARD - CONTINUOUS

He is walking slowly 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.

His eyes open. 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 giant 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...

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 is making her extra hyper and bizarre acting. Roy is overwhelmed.

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.

Her unfiltered words land like a million tiny daggers.

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

(Not enjoying this)

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? And 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

(Giving up)

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 end up jumping off buildings or drinking 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. All Roy can do is watch it happen.

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.

She reaches across the table to him.

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.

She goes back to stuffing her face.

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.

She drops her fork on her plate.

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 is on the phone, feet propped up on the window sill.

GOLDMAN
(On phone)
It's starting. Finally. Allegra Johnson is being deposed next week, probably Monday. As soon as we nail her time down, we can get you set up.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. SF GENERAL STAIRWELL - CONTINUOUS

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

ROY
(On phone)
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 an interactive map of the zoo with cartoon animals.

She's far more subdued than usual, due to the pain meds working their dark magic. And Roy is right with her.

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

I'm sorry.

She pats his knee.

HOPE
 (Referring to the app)
 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.
 (He studies her)
 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 hyper 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
 I'm 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 in a sterile room, 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. 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. 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-

Hunt shoots Sachs a "here we go again" look.

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. 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. She holds up a blouse.

HOPE
What do you think?

ROY
Colorful.

HOPE
Too much?

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

HOPE
I agree. It's a little over the
top.
(Moving on)
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.

(MORE)

HOPE (CONT'D)

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. She continues looking through the racks.

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 another 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

(Lowering her voice)

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

I don't think so.

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 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.

On the spot, he channels his familiar financial pro rap.

ROY

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 the way 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 studies her, not sure where this is going.

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

(Trying)

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 coming to work.

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, making a connection 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 and wait for his comeback. He gets it now.

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, transformed.

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

(On phone)

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

(On phone)

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. 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

(In charge now)

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

Do you know what you're going to say?

ROY

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?"

BEAT.

ROY

Well, I'll tell them... what they expect me to say.

HOPE

The truth?

ROY

I thought truth didn't matter anymore.

She opens her eyes, turns to him.

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. 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?

He's deep in thought.

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. The serenity ends.

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. 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 thang 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 Drano.

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

(On phone)

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 on the phone with Goldman. He is calm now, as he watches the goldfish grab specks of food from the surface.

ROY

(On phone)

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 do. She's young, not particularly bright.

(MORE)

GOLDMAN (CONT'D)

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.

Roy sits on a boulder.

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.

Roy is at peace.

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. Roy tries to be cheerful but she seems hopelessly distracted, drugged up, 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 CAR - CONTINUOUS

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. 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

Pithy?

HOPE

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

That's a little funny. They smile and hold each other.

ROY

Something like that.

HOPE

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

They continue going 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

(On phone)

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, walking slowly on a distant path through the woods.

ROY

(On phone)

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 bunch 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
(He's ready)
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 putz. 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.

(MORE)

ALICE (CONT'D)
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 seagulls. They're a
menace to society." I finally had
to buy 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 trademark comic timing. 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.

She becomes silent, studies him. 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 notebook 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?
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
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?

Roy texts back...

ROY

(Text)

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

ALLEGRA

(Thumbs up emoji)

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 rage 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