

On the Impossible Future

Written by

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Inspired by the lyrics of  
"On the Impossible Past" by The Menzingers

INT. APARTMENT - MORNING

The scene is flooded with morning light coming through the sliding glass door in a small, party-wrecked apartment. Cans and red cups litter nearly every surface. Some people are sleeping on the couch, the floor, chairs. Included in this group is GREG, early 20's, brown hair, scruffy five o'clock shadow, a black band shirt. He stirs, squints, looks around, and gets up.

He walks groggily around the apartment, apparently looking for something or someone. He peers at the sleeping faces, trying to place an identity. After searching most of the apartment, he approaches a door and knocks lightly.

GREG

Casey?

The door sways open a little, revealing a bathroom with someone asleep on the floor.

He opens the sliding glass door, walks onto the balcony, lights a cigarette, and then withdraws his phone, makes a call. After some waiting:

GREG

Hey Casey, I guess maybe you went home instead of coming back to the party last night. I just woke up, but I should be up and running in a little bit. Gonna head home soon. Uh, alright. Give me a call. I'll talk to you soon. Bye.

He drags on his cigarette, looking at the morning sun bathing the city before him.

GREG (V.O.)

I remember the first moment I saw her. Casey. In a sea of drunk and stoned half-memories, there she is, fully-formed.

We linger on Greg smoking, looking out.

EXT. PHILADELPHIA RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOOD - NIGHT

TITLE: 6 MONTHS EARLIER

Greg and a girl, JULIA, mid-twenties, are walking along a sidewalk, past clusters of laughing and smoking people. Most of the crowd are also around their 20's, all varying shades

(CONTINUED)

of punk rock--tattered denim, patches, vests, sun-faded once-black shirts. Greg fits in here with his vague scruff, black skinny jeans, a jean jacket, an old beanie. Julia, in contrast, is wearing a nice cotton dress with a cardigan.

JULIA

You know, after waiting days for you to even respond to my texts, I was kinda hoping for a nice dinner and drinks or something.

GREG

I know--I'm sorry. I still feel like an asshole. I think you'll have a good time though. This band is really, really good. We'll do dinner another time.

JULIA

Who are they again?

GREG

The Menzingers.

JULIA

The what? What kind of a name is that? You said they're a rock band?

GREG

...yyyeah. Ish. It's like fast, kind of catchy. Like punk rock but kind of poppy.

JULIA

Like Blink 182?

GREG

Yeah, maybe. Kind of.

Greg turns into the driveway of a house where the crowds are denser. Julia nearly keeps walking, turning sharply and off-balance to correct herself. She tries her best to avoid it, but she can't help bumping against some people to keep up with Greg.

GREG (CONT'D)

Even if you don't like the music, it's still a really fun show to watch.

A hybrid of disappointment and disgust crosses Julia's face.

(CONTINUED)

JULIA

Wait. The show is here?

GREG

(stopping to look at her)

Yeah, why? C'mon, it'll be fun.

INT. AVA HOUSE - NIGHT

They enter the house. After a quick hallway, they emerge in a hardwood floor main room, crowded and lit by hanging twinkle lights. A band is setting up to play on one end of the room. There's no stage. Many of the people in attendance are equipped with red plastic cups. There's conversation, laughter, the hiss of opening beers. They look around, Greg spots his friends, CHRIS and TOM, and they wade their way through the crowd. Chris and Tom fit the punk bill in their own way. Chris has a handsome, mischievous face. Tom is bearded and looks laid back, friendly. Chris and Tom welcome them noisily. They're both midway through drinking 40s.

CHRIS

Greg! There's you are you son of a bitch! Thought you'd never show. You had us worried sick.

Chris gives Greg a hearty hug.

GREG

(recoiling a bit)

Jesus, you smell like a fucking brewery. How long have you been here?

Chris looks at Tom, Tom looks at his wrist, where there is no watch.

CHRIS

Not, not too long. Not too long. I donno.

He notices Julia, who looks very much out of her element. He extends a hand.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

Hey, my name's Chris. Sorry about my breath. You must be...Kaaaat...

He sees Julia's gaze narrow.

(CONTINUED)

CHRIS (CONT'D)  
 ...Aliiis...Kaaaathryyy...

Her gaze becomes more of a glare. She takes his hand reluctantly.

JULIA  
 ...yeah. Hi Chris. We've met a few times before. Julia.

CHRIS  
 Oh. Oh shit. Yeah, Julia. My bad. I thought you looked familiar. I uh, I drink a lot if that makes you feel any better. Speaking of which, you guys have some catching up to do.

Chris reaches into a backpack near his feet and withdraws a forty ounce, passes it to Greg.

GREG  
 Thanks man.

He takes one out for Julia and offers it to her. She takes it, again reluctantly. She eyeballs the label.

JULIA  
 Beer's not really my thing.

CHRIS  
 No, it's not beer. It's malt liquor, so it's more, you know, fucking...efficient. You'll be fine.

Julia looks around, then looks at Greg, seeking some form of guidance.

JULIA  
 Is there a bar or...?

CHRIS  
 Oh yeah, no. Definitely not. There's barely a bathroom.

Greg and Tom sense the discomfort and exchange a look.

GREG  
 (leaning toward Julia)  
 I can finish it, if you don't want the whole thing.

(CONTINUED)

JULIA  
(to Greg)  
I'm glad you're finally being  
romantic, but I'll pass.

Chris takes the bottle, places it back in his backpack.

CHRIS  
You're really missing out on the  
full show experience though. Like  
going through high school without  
at least one embarrassing handjob  
story. Greg here's got plenty of  
those to--

Greg knocks Chris in the stomach. Chris sputters a bit, but  
shuts up.

JULIA  
(to Greg)  
I thought you said we were going to  
a concert?

GREG  
Yeah. This is it. Some bands are  
going to play later.

JULIA  
But this is just a room. It feels  
like a frat party or something.

GREG  
Haven't you been to a house show?

JULIA  
I mean yeah, but...

Her disappointment is visible. Greg tries to comfort her. He  
puts an arm around her, but she squirms.

GREG  
Just wait for the bands to play.  
It'll be fun.

JULIA  
Whatever you say.

She takes her phone out and busies herself with it.

Chris and Greg look at one another. Greg sucks on his teeth  
and makes an "I don't know" look.

(CONTINUED)

CHRIS  
 Hey Julia, you know Tom, right?  
 This is Tom.

TOM  
 Hey.

Julia looks up from her phone, then looks back down. Tom very slowly looks to Greg and Chris. Chris tries to break the tension.

CHRIS  
 You know, Greg. I think I owe you a  
 cigarette from that one time. Shall  
 we?

EXT. OUTSIDE AVA HOUSE - NIGHT

We see Greg and Chris from head on. They're standing with their backs to a wall, smoking and looking ahead.

GREG  
 I've made a huge mistake.

CHRIS  
 You do this to yourself, you know.

GREG  
 Yeah, I know.

CHRIS  
 So why do you do it then?

GREG  
 (shrugging, smoking)  
 Validation maybe. Insecurity.  
 Filling a void.

CHRIS  
 God I love you. Such big words.  
 I'll fill your void.

GREG  
 I think I'm depressed.

CHRIS  
 Do what I do.

A bit of a pause while they smoke. Greg waits for Chris to elaborate. He doesn't.

(CONTINUED)

GREG

What's that?

CHRIS

(gesturing)

Just...erase all trace of emotion. Wipe it clean. Boom. You'll feel much better. Your problem is that you're always trying to find some answer, something meaningful in everything.

GREG

So, you're saying I should just give up.

CHRIS

Hardly--although not a bad option either. I'm saying, if you go around thinking every girl you fuck might be the one to make you whole, you're going to be really fucking disappointed all the time. How's the saying go? A rose is just a rose? Sometimes a fuck is just a fuck. Goes a lil something like that, right?

The sound of soundchecking drums comes from the venue. A steady thump thump thump.

INT. AVA HOUSE - NIGHT

The drum hits from the previous scene carry over. We see Greg, Tom, Chris, and Julia standing in the crowd, which has now gathered and tightened purposefully, waiting for the band to start. Greg puts a tentative hand on the small of Julia's back. She stares ahead, unresponsive. Greg looks at her to gauge the situation and then removes his hand.

The band is fiddling with amps and pedals. The drums stop and--

Finally, slowly, we hear feedback from the amps, for which people clap. The feedback builds steadily, masking all other sounds. Greg glances around the crowd and sees a beautiful brunette, standing out from the crowd of mostly scraggly dudes. This is CASEY. She's about 5 or 6 people away from him, focused on the band, not noticing Greg. The shot slowly ZOOMS into her face as the feedback whirs and rises to an almost trance-like state.

(CONTINUED)

Julia says something to Greg, but the feedback is too loud. She gets his attention though and he stops looking at the girl as if snapping back from a dream.

GREG  
(barely audible, shouting)  
What?!

JULIA  
(barely audible, shouting)  
I said why is it so fucking loud?!

Greg gestures that he can't hear her and Julia rolls her eyes and looks away from him.

Through the tension and screech of the feedback, the steady beat of the drum kicks in as the Menzingers' "Ava House" begins. The crowd cheers. Vocals soon accompany the drums and the audience rushes forward. Nearly everyone is singing along at the top of their lungs: "Ava, are you trying to get high? I hope the floor holds this time. We'll dance in subtle romance together while we're making our time."

Caught off guard, Julia lurches forward against the people in front of her and tries to steady herself, visibly upset at this point. Greg is now focused on the band, singing along with the rest of the crowd. Chris has his 40 in the air, occasionally splashing its contents on the crowd.

The guitars turn from feedback to music and the rest of the song kicks off, the crowd going nuts still. Greg turns to look at the brunette again and sees her singing along passionately. He watches her, eyes smiling in a longing "if only" sort of way, as the crowd sways and undulates with sweaty, shouting bodies. Greg gives a sad smile, turns back to the band, and sings along. Julia is absent from the scene at this point, but nobody notices.

EXT. OUTSIDE AVA HOUSE - NIGHT

Greg, Chris, and Tom exit the venue in a herd of people, all looking sweaty and happy. They settle some feet from the doors and have a smoke. Greg runs a hand through his hair as he exhales.

GREG  
Man, I really needed that.

CHRIS  
What did I tell you?

He gestures to Tom.

(CONTINUED)

CHRIS (CONT'D)

The man's like a 3 year old. He's grumpy until you give him a 40 and take him to a show. It's the Greg version of a cookie and a nap. How about we keep it going and head to a bar?

GREG

I'm gonna go out on a wild limb here and guess that Julia won't want to come with us. I feel like she had a shitty time tonight so I should probably not be a dick and walk her home. You guys can just text me where you're headed.

CHRIS

I thought she left already.

GREG

Yeah, I noticed she was gone at some point, but I thought maybe she went to the bathroom or was standing in the back to get out of the crowd.

TOM

Hang on. I have an idea of how to solve this.

He walks over to the entrance, leans in the doorway, and we hear him shout.

TOM

JULIA!!!

SOMEONE'S VOICE (O.S.)

(from inside the house,  
mocking)

Elaine! Elaaaaaine!

A bit of silence ensues, in which we hear the sounds of a couple arguing in the background.

TOM (CONT'D)

(walking back)

No luck. She didn't say anything to you?

GREG

I don't think so.

(CONTINUED)

CHRIS

Well, shit happens, I always say.  
No use wasting our precious youth  
waiting. Bar?

MONTAGE

A montage in which Greg's voicemail is the only audio.

It starts in Greg's apartment, the next morning.

VOICEMAIL (O.C.)

You have one new voice message.  
Message one.

-We see Greg, sitting on the edge of his bed, rubbing his  
eyes sleepily, gathering nerve to stand up.

JULIA (O.C.)

(on voicemail)

I can't fucking believe you. I  
don't even know what to say. I  
guess I'll start with you're a  
fucking asshole.

-Cut to Greg pulling on a shirt.

JULIA (O.C.)

(on voicemail)

You invite me out to some shitty  
house party band thing and then you  
act like I'm invisible the whole  
time.

-Cut to Greg waiting at the bus stop, staring ahead.

JULIA (O.C.)

(on voicemail)

Like you can't even try and make a  
fucking conversation with the  
person you invited out who clearly  
doesn't know anyone else there.  
Real nice, Greg. Real nice.

-Greg is on the bus, looking out the window, eyes vacant.

JULIA (O.C.)

(on voicemail)

And then. And then when I leave,  
not even a call or a text to say  
"hey are you okay" or maybe "hey  
I'm sorry" or "hey where are you."

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

JULIA (O.C.) (cont'd)  
You're a real piece of shit, you  
know that? You're a sad,  
self-absorbed piece of shit.  
Needless to say--

INT. FAIRLANE DINER - MORNING

The shot opens abruptly with a CLOSE SHOT of bells jingling noisily as Greg enters the diner.

Greg sees Chris sitting at a table, drinking a beer. He walks over, removes a blue pack of American Spirits from his pocket, places them on the table, and slides into the seat across from Chris.

GREG  
(pointing to the beer)  
Beer for breakfast?

CHRIS  
Yeah of course, it's good for you.  
It's the goddamn breakfast of  
champions.

GREG  
If you had won a championship  
maybe.

CHRIS  
You know if you were on a desert  
island, you could survive for like  
two weeks just drinking beer?

GREG  
When did they start selling beer  
here?

CHRIS  
Brought it myself.

He points to the floor. The camera FOLLOWS his gesture to a cooler full of beer and ice near his feet.

Greg reacts with a mix of surprise and  
"oh-of-course-Chris-would-do-that," condensing all of this  
in an "ah" nod.

GREG  
So I heard from Julia.

(CONTINUED)

CHRIS  
Oh yeah? And?

GREG  
Safe to say it's over.

CHRIS  
Good. I always thought she was kind of...forgettable.

Greg looks at the table, despondent.

CHRIS (CONT'D)  
You alright, man? Need a beer?

GREG  
I'm thinking about changing my name to Sisyphus. Maybe Samsa.

CHRIS  
Okay. I get it. You read books. But I don't know what the fuck you're saying.

GREG  
Honestly I never really expected it to last with Julia. Anytime I thought things were working out, I was kidding myself. I don't know, man. The women in this city just suck. There's something about Philadelphia that attracts the worst kind of uninteresting, shallow, illiterate, self-absorbed, piece-of-shit women. And then somehow I wind up at all the same parties as them. And then I try to sleep with them.

CHRIS  
I wouldn't be surprised if someone told me that women actually are Satan incarnate. I mean, have you ever really looked at a vagina? Like really looked. Stare a vagina right in the eyes and tell me Satan doesn't look back at you.

GREG  
You know, Chris, that's weird that you mention that because what the fuck is wrong with you?

(CONTINUED)

CHRIS

This is me being supportive. We're on the same page with all this. When I did the whole relationship thing, all it ever did for me was reaffirm that every woman in the world is a blood thirsty heart-shitter except for my mother. And your mother, maybe. I'm sure she's pretty nice.

Their waitress walks up, prompting Chris to slyly hide his beer. It's the brunette girl from the concert. Her name tag reveals she is CASEY. In the lighting of the diner and close up, we can more clearly see her: hair pulled back in a messy bun, tattoos scattered across her arms, and a nose-ring. Greg looks up and is visibly surprised to recognize her. She produces a writing pad and pen from her apron and holds them at the ready. She notices Greg's cigarettes and gestures with her pen to them.

CASEY

Those your cigarettes?

Greg is caught off guard, and stumbles a bit in his response.

GREG

Me? Yeah, it's a bad habit...

CASEY

American Spirit Blues. You have good taste.

GREG

I, uh, yeah. They're kind of heavy, but I figure if you gotta smoke, might as well enjoy it.

CASEY

Definitely. No shame in it.

We switch back and forth between Greg and Casey as chemistry is detected and Greg seems to recognize her.

GREG

This sounds weird, but you look really familiar.

CASEY

Maybe we smoke the same cigarettes, but you're gonna have to do better than that if you're trying to pick me up.

(CONTINUED)

Greg is caught off guard and his nervousness goes up a notch.

GREG

No, I, uh--were you at the  
Menzingers house show last night?

Casey's defensiveness noticeably drops at this. She even offers him a smile.

CASEY

Yeah I was. And it was awe-some.

GREG

Damn, that's so cool you like the  
Menzingers. I feel like when I talk  
about music with people it's always  
either innocuous soft rock or neon  
rave shit. I'd never be allowed to  
be the DJ on a road trip with most  
people I've met here.

CASEY

Yeah. We're few and far between. My  
mom said it was a phase but...well,  
here I am.

Greg looks at her admiringly and smiles.

CASEY (CONT'D)

I'm Casey by the way. I'll be your  
waitress today. You boys ready to  
order?

GREG

Yeah. A coffee and a slice of pie  
please.

CASEY

Cream? Sugar?

GREG

No thanks. Just black.

CASEY

Bitter and worth it. A  
life-affirming drink. And for you?

CHRIS

I'll, uh, leave your pie to Greg.  
Just orange juice for me.

(CONTINUED)

CASEY  
Do you want me to spit in your  
juice?

CHRIS  
(hesitating)  
...no?

CASEY  
Then apologize for the shitty joke.

CHRIS  
Sorry. Next one will be funnier, I  
promise.

CASEY  
Good. You're lucky I like your  
friend. Thanks boys.

She clicks her pen and returns it to her apron. She offers a smile to Greg who returns it bashfully.

GREG  
Thanks.

Casey walks away. Greg's gaze follows her until she disappears into the back of the diner. Chris sees this and leans over the table not-so-discreetly.

CHRIS  
Duuuude. She totally wants your  
nuts.

GREG  
Thanks for making it weird.

CHRIS  
You should ask her out.

GREG  
What? No. I can't do that.

CHRIS  
Just see what she's doing later.  
You and I both know you're not  
doing anything exciting tonight.

GREG  
That's false. I'll be drowning my  
sorrows with you and Tom. That's  
plenty of excitement. In fact, I  
don't need much else. That solves  
that.

(CONTINUED)

CHRIS  
You're a fucking idiot if you don't  
make a move.

GREG  
Then I guess I'm a fucking idiot.

Silence falls over them. Chris drinks from his beer  
resentfully. Greg shifts the napkin dispenser between his  
hands idly before asking.

GREG  
So have you started any new art  
projects lately?

CHRIS  
I want you to know I won't be butt  
hurt if you ditch our plans in  
favor of the girl of your dreams.

Greg looks like he's going to protest, but Chris holds a  
hand up.

CHRIS (CONT'D)  
Just. For the record. And yes. I've  
got this cool new project going on.  
It's kind of a microblog. Actually,  
it's just a list of things I've  
written down. It's called "Things I  
Would Rather Do Than Listen to My  
Friend"--for the sake of privacy,  
let's call him, oh, say,  
Shmegory--"Talk About His Shitty  
Love Life."

GREG  
Oh yeah?

CHRIS  
Yeah.

GREG  
Yeah?

CHRIS  
Yeah.

GREG  
Sounds riveting.

CHRIS  
It really is. I'll turn it into a  
twitter and wait for the book deals  
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CHRIS (cont'd)  
 to roll in. I wouldn't be surprised  
 if it got picked up for a Fox  
 sitcom. Something featuring William  
 Shatner maybe. This is the world we  
 live in, you know.

GREG  
 What do you have so far?

CHRIS  
 Off the top of my head? Let's  
 see...there's drinking orange juice  
 right after brushing my teeth.  
 Uh...taking a bulimic girl out to a  
 very expensive dinner--I pay, of  
 course... Spongebathing my  
 grandpa...Um...Living in  
 Missouri...Masturbating with  
 sandpaper...

GREG  
 You've actually given this thought.  
 I'm impressed.

CHRIS  
 Thank you. I'm going for poignant.

GREG  
 And you got it.

CHRIS  
 If you don't ask her out, I will.

Greg leans in and they begin a low-voiced rapid-fire  
 exchange.

GREG  
 I can't just ask her out.

CHRIS  
 Why not?

GREG  
 I just--I donno. I don't want to be  
 a dick.

CHRIS  
 You say this now?

(CONTINUED)

GREG

She's working. Maybe she has a boyfriend. I don't know.

CHRIS

One: you don't know that. Two: she's sending out major signals right now.

GREG

Granted. But, she gets paid to flirt. She's a waitress. She probably treats all her customers like this.

CHRIS

You hear yourself? Maybe she does. Who cares. You lit up when she said that stuff about music and cigarettes and shit. And those tattoos? She. Is. Your. Type. You can't keep complaining about shitty women if you make zero effort when a not-shitty woman is right fucking in front of you.

GREG

Yeah, but I feel like any chance blew out the fucking window with your comment about her pie.

CHRIS

And I bet it's delicious.

They lean back, returning to normal volume.

GREG

If I didn't love you so much, I'd really hate you.

Casey returns with the coffee and orange juice and Greg shuts up immediately. As she sets the hot cup down in front of Greg they make eye contact and he can't help but smile.

CASEY

I'll be right back with that pie.

She leaves. Chris has a doofy grin on his face, looks like he wants to say something.

GREG

Don't.

Chris holds his hands up in a mock display of innocence.

(CONTINUED)

CHRIS

I didn't.

Greg turns in his seat to watch Casey walk away. He turns around again and Chris grins.

EXT. OUTSIDE OF THE DINER - DAY

Greg and Chris are on their way out of the restaurant. Just outside of the door they stop to talk before parting ways.

CHRIS

Hey, you think you could come with me to (some task)? I really don't want to deal with it alone.

Greg offers a very slow shrug with a facial expression like I-know-I-should-but-I-don't-want-to.

CHRIS

Come on dude.

GREG

Sorry man. I gotta go take care of some stuff. I'll see you tonight though. Lion's Club?

CHRIS

Fuck. Lion's Club.

INT. GREG'S APARTMENT MAIN ROOM - DAY

The scene opens to the first lines of "Irish Goodbyes" by The Menzingers on the stereo: "When I get home, I'm not talking to anyone. When I get home, I'm unplugging my telephone. When I get home I'll get high alone." The blinds are drawn.

We see Greg focusing intently on rolling a joint, cutting to him lighting it, cutting to CLOSE SHOTS of the smoke curling upward in front of his face. Greg sinks into the couch as he exhales a thin stream of smoke. As the camera gets a wider shot, we see that Greg has the newspaper open on the coffee table in front of him. An over the shoulder shot reveals that it's open to the obituaries section. Also on the table is a copy of "This Is How You Lose Her" by Junot Diaz.

EXT. UNDETERMINED SIDEWALK - MORNING

We're back to Greg in present day, walking home from the party in the early morning hours. The streets are quiet, barely waking up. He notices a brunette woman with her hand over her face while she's on the phone. A flicker of hope and recognition come over his face. The woman glances up as he gets closer. It's not Casey. He quickly looks away.

GREG (V.O.)

Ever had someone on your mind so much that everywhere you looked you half expected that person to turn up? Even if you knew it was impossible... You start looking for them in the windows of parked cars...

MONTAGE

We see a short series of scenes that pair with Greg's voiceover. This is Greg from 6 months earlier, not post-party Greg.

-Greg's waiting in line at a grocery store, looking at the people around him.

GREG (V.O.)

Expecting the woman in front of you at the grocery store checkout line to turn and be her...

-Greg, looking out the window on a bus. Paying close attention to a brunette on a street corner when the bus makes a stop.

-Greg entering his apartment, turning on the lights, standing in his living room.

GREG (V.O.)

Holding your breath when you enter your apartment, thinking maybe when you turn the lights on, when you turn a corner, maybe she'll be there...

INT. FAIRLANE DINER - AFTERNOON

Greg is sitting in a booth. He flags a passing waitress.

GREG

Excuse me. Excuse me, hi. Do you know if Casey's working today?

WAITRESS

Oh, honey, you just missed her. She works mornings most Thursdays. You a friend?

GREG

Yeah, I just--

WAITRESS

You want me to pass on a message?

GREG

No, that's fine.

WAITRESS

How about a coffee?

GREG

Sure. That sounds good.

The waitress walks away, leaving Greg alone, looking at the table.

INT. LION'S CLUB BAR - NIGHT

Greg, Chris, and Tom are sitting at the back of the bar, facing the other side of the room where a reggae band is playing. We catch occasional generic lyrics like "It'll be alright, no need to worry. Everything will be alright." CUT TO the boys. Greg is staring into his beer.

CHRIS

I'll bet you every last bit of money in my goddamn bank account that no one on this entire planet has ever said the phrase "I wish this party had more reggae bands."

They sit and watch the band some more. It's on a repetitive chorus. Greg notices a girl on the other side of the bar. She's got brown hair, done up in a messy bun. He watches her closely, hopeful that it's Casey from the diner, but she turns and it's just some girl. Disappointed, Greg shakes his head, slowly at first and then a bit quicker before he stands up, grabbing his pack of cigarettes off the bar.

(CONTINUED)

GREG  
I can't fucking do this anymore.  
You guys want a smoke?

No one moves.

GREG  
Great. You'll know where to find  
me.

Still standing, Greg downs the rest of his beer and leaves.

EXT. OUTSIDE LION'S CLUB BAR - NIGHT

Greg is standing underneath a neon sign on the sidewalk out front. The cigarette is in his lips and he's got his lighter ready. He strikes the lighter. Nothing. Again. Nothing. Again, this time with a hand over it. It's lit. And then the wind blows it out. Again. Again. We can see the frustration growing on his face. Suddenly, we see a pair of hands cover the cigarette. Greg successfully lights his cigarette and while doing so, notices in the light of his lighter familiar brunette hair. He looks up. It's Casey. She smiles when he sees her.

CASEY  
Got another one of those?

Greg is shocked to see Casey and is unsure of how to react. To try to save face, he fumbles for his cigarettes, pulls out the blue pack and holds it toward her. She pulls one out.

CASEY  
Thanks. I'm not normally one to  
bum, but--

She turns to shield herself from the wind and lights her cigarette easily. She turns back, exhaling the first drag.

CASEY (CONT'D)  
I'm Casey by the way. In case you  
forgot.

GREG  
(reaching out his hand, still  
smiling)  
I didn't. I'm Greg.

They shake hands. She motions with her cigarette toward the bar.

(CONTINUED)

CASEY

What are you doing at a place like  
Lion's Club?

GREG

Hating myself mostly. My buddy  
works the bar, so we get cheap  
drinks. You're more than welcome to  
join us if you want.

She sucks air through her teeth and puts a hand on his arm  
in a display of mock sympathy.

CASEY

Gosh, Greg. I'd love to hate myself  
with you, buuuuut I'm on my way to  
a show for my friend's birthday.

Greg is bummed.

CASEY (CONT'D)

But what are you doing tomorrow?

GREG

Tomorrow?

CASEY

The day after today?

GREG

Uhh, nothing important. What's up?

CASEY

Wanna go for a morning hike near  
the Paupack Cliffs? I'll bring  
coffee.

GREG

Yeah, that sounds really good.

CASEY

Yeah. We'll meet in the parking  
lot. Eleven ish?

GREG

Sounds good to me.

CASEY

Eleven it is. I'll see you then.

GREG

Hey, what show are you going to  
tonight?

(CONTINUED)

CASEY

It's just a small thing. Some small punk bands, cheap drinks, that sort of thing. You wanna...come with?

Greg bites his lip and looks around, bobbing his head back and forth in indecision.

GREG

Ah I probably shouldn't. I donno. Fuck.

CASEY

No, no, it's cool. I get it. I'll just see you tomorrow then?

GREG

Yeah definitely.

Greg goes for a hug, but somehow it turns into an uncomfortable handshake. Greg is distressed and embarrassed. Casey laughs a little. She winks before turning to leave and says

CASEY

Try not to hate yourself too much tonight.

Greg smiles to himself. He takes a drag on his cigarette.

EXT. PAUPACK CLIFFS TRAIL - MORNING

Beautiful clear sky stretches over golden hills. Casey and Greg are sitting against a large rock formation at the top of a tall climb. They have a fantastic view overlooking an expanse of more hills and trees. Casey is wearing a blue cotton dress, perfect for the early summer heat. Casey is pouring coffee from a thermos into two cups.

CASEY

It's probably cold by now, but whatever. My hangover won't know the difference.

Greg takes a sip of the coffee and winces.

CASEY

Not a fan of cold coffee?

GREG

Did you put something in this?

(CONTINUED)

CASEY

Oh yeah, you mean the roofies? Just a couple. You know, for flavor.

GREG

They taste suspiciously like whiskey.

CASEY

Miiiiight've spilled some in there.

GREG

That's probably it. Wow. It's pretty strong.

CASEY

You know it's good when it hurts.

Casey takes a sip from her cup and a shiver goes through her whole body.

CASEY (CONT'D)

That's the stuff.

Greg takes another sip, winces again, and sets his cup down on the ground next to him.

GREG

How was the show last night?

CASEY

It was awesome. I had never heard of the headliner, but they were really cool. Bunch of young kids playing short catchy songs.

GREG

What were they called?

CASEY

Something like Joy Manor? Joyce Manor maybe?

Greg nearly spits out his coffee.

GREG

Joyce Manor?! No shit?

CASEY

You know them?

(CONTINUED)

GREG

They're incredible.

CASEY

They were pretty good. I was drunk, but it was a good time. Had I known who they were and how you felt, I would've insisted you come along.

GREG

Man. You should look them up and listen to them more. There's something really special about them for a bunch of kids playing catchy punk songs.

CASEY

Yeah? How come?

GREG

In a way they kind of came out of nowhere, some no-name city in Southern California, and they quickly grew a decent sized following in the scene. What they were doing was so different from what everyone else was doing at the time, really refreshing stuff. They self-released an album, everyone loved it, and then they got signed. Everyone was stoked to see what they would do with their next album, especially with the label funding the recording. And then it came out and it was thirteen minutes long. The whole album. And one song was a cover. Two were demo-sounding acoustic songs. After all that anticipation. People were pissed off. But man, I think that's the punkest thing they could've done. They didn't give a shit about what anyone thought, wrote what they wanted to write, and it happened to be thirteen minutes. It's the best thirteen minute album I've ever heard.

CASEY

I like that. I like that a lot. I'd rather have thirteen minutes of music that they really put their heart into than forty minutes of half-assed bullshit.

(CONTINUED)

GREG

Yeah. But I definitely wouldn't complain if they had just recorded maybe five more minutes worth of material.

CASEY

Sometimes it's best to leave people wanting more. There's a value in that sort of mystery.

They sit for a while in silence, taking in the gorgeous view before them.

CASEY

Wanna get high?

INT. CASEY'S APARTMENT - DAY

The scene opens with a CLOSE SHOT of Casey's hand, holding a lit joint, the smoke curling upward. In contrast to Greg's apartment, Casey's place is well lit with the sun washing through open windows. White walls, some minimalist decorations, some framed gig posters neatly arranged around the room. Greg and Casey are sitting on the floor next to a window. Casey reaches up occasionally to flick ash from the joint out the window.

CASEY

If you could go anywhere in the world, where would you go?

GREG

(inhaling a drag and holding it)

That's a timely question. Been especially hating Philly these past few weeks.

Greg passes the joint to Casey.

CASEY

Just the past few weeks? Ain't shit.

GREG

I mean...never really been in love with it. But the urge to leave has been especially strong lately.

(CONTINUED)

CASEY  
So where would you go?

GREG  
Anywhere?

CASEY  
Anywhere. I mean. Anywhere real.  
Don't take the easy road out and  
say some stupid shit like Middle  
Earth.

Greg takes a moment to think. He comes up with a shrug.

GREG  
At this point, I'm not feeling very  
picky. If someone were to offer me  
a ticket out of here, I'd take it  
in a heartbeat. I just need to  
leave.

CASEY  
Kind of a non-answer, but okay, I  
feel it. This city's pretty awful.

Casey takes a hit.

CASEY (CONT'D)  
I'd go to Mexico. I feel like  
there's a lot of cool shit in  
Mexico.

GREG  
That would be rad. I'd love to go  
to Mexico sometime. Kerouac made it  
sound like Mexico was it, you know,  
and he had been all across America,  
so that's gotta count for  
something. Only problem is I don't  
speak Spanish.

CASEY  
Overrated. Kerouac didn't speak  
Spanish. I don't speak Spanish.

She takes a thoughtful drag to provide a cadence between  
this thought and the next.

CASEY (CONT'D)  
I'd go to the diviest bars possible  
and schmooze with the locals. Get  
really drunk. Eat a bunch of tacos.

(CONTINUED)

GREG

Probably not the safest place to be  
American and female and drunk.

CASEY

What's the worst that could happen?

Suddenly Casey stands up and leaves the room. Greg is left alone. He takes idly.

CASEY (O.C.)

Hope you like the Clash.

A song starts up from the other room. It's the Clash. Casey returns and sits next to Greg again.

GREG

I love the Clash.

CASEY

Good. If you didn't, I'd have to  
ask you to leave.

GREG

If the opportunity presented  
itself, I'd marry Joe Strummer. Our  
children would be really really  
ugly, but goddammit they'd write  
some good music. And one really  
horrible triple-album.

Casey laughs at this--the sound is almost musical, full of vitality despite the high. We see that Greg is awestruck for a bit by it, letting his gaze linger on her face, he watches her lips. She looks at him and he quickly looks down so as to not look creepy.

GREG

Bummer he's dead though.

CASEY

You think so? Could be a good  
thing. What about all the other  
musicians who lived long enough to  
undermine how legendary they used  
to be?

GREG

Just seemed too early, too sudden.  
What if the best was yet to come?

(CONTINUED)

CASEY

Words of a gambling man. Maybe the best was yet to come, maybe not. I say it doesn't matter. We got a lot of incredible music during the time he was alive. Maybe it's best he died. Maybe he would've sold out and completely ruined his legacy.

No words. Comfortable silence.

CASEY

Why don't you leave? Philly, I mean. What's stopping you?

GREG

What do you mean?

CASEY

You said you hate it here. So why don't you just leave if it's that bad?

Greg gives this thought, seems a little concerned that he can't actually formulate anything substantial.

GREG

I don't know. I have a job. I know people here.

CASEY

I think it's healthy to always have an exit plan. It's like the light at the end of the tunnel. What's your light, Greg?

He looks longingly at her, while she looks back expectantly. Greg holds this eye contact while he works through his next sentence, studying her eyes.

GREG

I guess I've just been waiting for some sort of catalyst to push me along. I've let myself fall into routine. I don't know.

CASEY

No matter the circumstances--even if I'm completely happy--I like to live knowing I can leave whenever I want.

(CONTINUED)

GREG  
So what's stopping you?

She offers a knowing smirk.

CASEY  
Good question.

A pause, some smoke. As they pass the joint, their hands meet and they find themselves much closer to one another than when they started. Heavy eye contact, hinting toward a kiss, until Casey takes the joint and puts it to her lips. Greg smiles at her. She giggles a bit on the exhale and says

CASEY  
I'm really high.

EXT. BUS STOP - AFTERNOON

Greg, Chris, and Tom jay-walk to get to a bus stop. Circumstance has it that the stop is crowded, so when they get there Greg opts for standing in the street next to the curb rather than finding room on the sidewalk. Chris and Tom squeeze themselves into the crowd. Someone near Chris coughs a loud hacking cough, not covering their mouth.

CHRIS  
You know if you actually drove your car we wouldn't have to put up with this.

GREG  
Yeah except I can't stand driving. It stresses me out. Too many things can go wrong.

TOM  
Why don't you just sell it, get some cash for it?

STRANGER (O.S.)  
Bus coming.

GREG  
(shrugging)  
Just in case I wanna go somewhere, I guess.

STRANGER (O.S.)  
Bus coming!

Chris grabs Greg by the shirt and yanks him onto the curb. The bus pulls up shortly after.

(CONTINUED)

CHRIS

Man, you're gonna kill yourself if you're not more careful.

The bus doors open and they begin piling in.

INT. BUS - AFTERNOON - CONTINUOUS

The bus is too crowded for finding seats. Greg, Chris, and Tom stand somewhere toward the back of the bus, holding onto the railing above. They sway with the bus's frequent speed ups and slow downs.

CHRIS

So did you and Casey eff?

GREG

You really think this is bus appropriate conversation?

CHRIS

Absolutely. This is public transportation in Phila-fucking-delphia. Sometimes I feel pressure to shit my pants just to fit in.

Greg rolls his eyes, but apparently accepts this explanation.

GREG

No, we didn't eff. We hung out like normal people do before they eff. You should try it sometime.

Chris gives a "no thanks" wave with his hand.

CHRIS

Too much investment. So you plan on effing her?

GREG

(to Tom, who is watching amused)

I can't believe your landlord lets this man sleep in your apartment. He'll lower property values. You'll get evicted.

CHRIS

Hey man. I'm just trying to look out for you. Think about it. You've

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CHRIS (cont'd)  
developed a bit of a pattern when it comes to meeting women. You find some girl, maybe she's cute, maybe not. You pursue her halfheartedly when you could be getting hammered with me and Tom instead, and then you guys hump or read poetry to one another or you weep between her breasts or whatever the fuck you do with women in your apartment, and then something goes wrong and you wind up depressed, smoking alone, talking about existential bullshit and being all around no fun.

GREG  
Thanks for the support.

CHRIS  
Yeah, sure, anytime. So get on with it. Effing. Will it happen or not?

GREG  
I donno, man.

CHRIS  
Jesus, you're impossible. Why not?

GREG  
I kinda get the vibe that she might just think of me as a friend.

CHRIS  
I still see no problem. I have sex with my friends all the time, and look at how I turned out. (nudging Tom) Right, sweetheart?

TOM  
You're into this Casey girl?

GREG  
Yeah. A lot. She's different from the other girls. She's special.

TOM  
How so?

GREG  
Shit, I don't know. She's just so fucking cool. We're into the same music, same books, same cigarettes.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

GREG (cont'd)

We can actually hold a conversation, like a real conversation--and when we hang out she doesn't compulsively check her phone which is a goddamn novel concept these days. I donno. She's got a good mind. She has good things to say.

TOM

Alright, great. If you like hanging out with her, keep hanging out with her. Plenty of my good friends are girls that I don't have sex with--

CHRIS

Wait.

TOM

Do I want to have sex with some of them? Yes. Absolutely.

CHRIS

Ah okay.

TOM

Are there reasons that will never happen? Also, yes. Does it make a difference? No, not really, because I won't let it be a big deal. I value their friendship and I won't throw that away just because I'll never see them naked.

CHRIS

Not with that attitude you won't.

EXT. BUS STOP/SIDEWALK - AFTERNOON

We see them exit the bus and then walk along the sidewalk. They continue their conversation while talking.

TOM

You want to know one of my first memories of you?

GREG

Probably not, if we're being honest.

(CONTINUED)

TOM

You had only been working at the record store for just about a week at this point, so I didn't know you all that well. You were still just Chris's co-worker friend to me. Didn't stop us all from going out and getting drunker than a bunch of Catholic moms.

GREG

(aside to Chris)

Is that a thing?

CHRIS

Kinda.

TOM

You had been talking to some girl you met at the show earlier that night. We ended up at Lion's Club, of course, for more drinks. Next thing I know, I look over and see you and that girl leaving together. We made eye contact and you looked so stoked. What a wild look on your face. You even winked at me, you sly bastard.

GREG

Probably wasn't a wink. I was probably so drunk I could only see through one eye at a time.

CHRIS

Ah. The alcohol-monocle. No need to be embarrassed. We've all been there.

GREG

You're forgetting that this girl--Charlotte was her name--she never spoke to me after that night. She ignored all my phone calls. I blew it.

TOM

You told me you had fun that night.

GREG

Yeah, because I did. That night was fun as hell.

(CONTINUED)

TOM

There you go. Point is you were happy then and you've got that. Who cares about the rest?

GREG

That's not really me though. I'm less of a live-for-the-moment and more of a dwell-on-regret-for-the-rest-of-my-life kind of guy.

They arrive at Tom's apartment building and stop in front of it.

TOM

Don't worry dude. Keep hanging out with her and see where things go. If you guys are so into all the same stuff, I'm sure it'll work out in the end.

CHRIS

What he said. I'd offer some more invaluable wisdom on the subject, but I am thiiiiis (holding up fingers) close to shitting my pants right now.

Chris claps Greg on the shoulder and then goes into the building.

INT. GREG'S APARTMENT - MAIN ROOM - DAY

Greg puts his stuff down, sits down on the couch, prepping to presumably roll a joint. He hesitates, pulls out his phone and texts Casey: "Want to hang out?" She texts back "Down. Where and when?"

MONTAGE

A series of quick shots of Casey and Greg hanging out set to either "Housewarming Party" by Joyce Manor or "Twenty Five" by Great Cynics. Both uptempo, rough around the edges, and vaguely romantic songs:

-Casey and Greg in her apartment, drinking wine, notebooks nearby. They look like they are mockingly critiquing the wine, laughing.

-Hiking.

(CONTINUED)

- Laughing at a casual restaurant.
- Smoking cigarettes outside, Greg watching Casey admiringly.
- In a department store. Greg comes out of a fitting room wearing a Chewbacca onesie. We soon see that Casey is wearing an identical onesie. They assess one another approvingly.
- Perusing a bookstore.
- Some sort of party, talking with friends.
- Preparing a meal together, drinking beers.
- At a rowdy punk show, both singing along.

EXT. SIDEWALK - NIGHT

We have a wide shot of Greg and Casey stumbling down the sidewalk together after the punk show, the scene lit by street lights and neon signs. The camera FOLLOWS Casey, who is half-singing, half-humming the song we've just heard in the previous scene, her dancing/swaying eventually taking her into the street. Greg follows in the street behind her. The camera stops following so that we see Casey and Greg make their way off screen, leaving us with a shot of an empty street. We hear her voice fade.

INT. CASEY'S APARTMENT BUILDING - HALLWAY - NIGHT

They reach Casey's door, Casey grabs her keys from a coat pocket, unlocks the door but stops before opening it much. She turns to Greg. Greg raises his eyebrows before Casey pulls him by the jacket into her and they begin to make out, blindly groping their way into her apartment.

INT. CASEY'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

They stop kissing long enough for her to guide him into her room. We see the two silhouetted against the blue-white light from the moon and streetlamps. Her figure reaches a hand toward Greg and pushes him onto her bed off screen. She follows in a sort of jump/freefall. The camera holds the shot of light coming in through the window for a bit.

## INT. CASEY'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - MORNING

Scene opens to slightly muted humming, Casey's voice. We see nothing but white ceiling at first, before the shot flips to an OVERHEAD SHOT of Greg laying in Casey's bed, barely awakening to Casey's humming. It's the melody of "Cringe" by Alkaline Trio, but Greg does not recognize this (a plot point later on). Stretching a bit and squinting at the day's light and facing a mental block, he mutters to himself.

GREG

What song is that?

He slowly gets himself out of bed, following the melody. He turns the corner to enter the...

## INT. CASEY'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

...kitchen. Casey has her back to us. She is wearing just a band t-shirt, possibly Greg's from the night before, and underwear, dancing slightly with her humming. She is built from the stuff that could make a kid at the height of puberty spontaneously combust. She is making coffee. She stops humming to look over her shoulder after hearing Greg walk in and smiles at him. She turns back to the coffee but says

CASEY

Good morning. Happy Sunday.

GREG

(rubbing sleep out of his eyes)

Hey.

He stands there like an idiot, just in his underwear still in the throes of sleep. Casey produces two mugs of steaming beverage and hands one to Greg. After he accepts it, she leans forward and kisses him on the cheek.

## INT. GREG'S APARTMENT - MAIN ROOM - MORNING

Back to the present. Greg is sitting on his couch, rubbing his face a bit. His phone is on the table. He looks at it expectantly.

INT. GREG'S APARTMENT - MAIN ROOM - EVENING

Back to the past. The scene opens with Greg answering the door. It's Chris and Tom. They're holding 40s.

CHRIS

There you are, you waitress-fucking son of a bitch. How's your penis?

Chris hands Greg a 40 oz beer.

CHRIS

Let's celebrate. Welcome to adulthood.

Compared to the last time we saw Greg's apartment, it is well lit this time around. Chris and Greg sit on the couch and Tom takes a nearby chair. Chris positions himself to look directly at Greg. He looks at Greg so long, it verges on creepy before Chris finally speaks. He does this very deliberately.

CHRIS

You did eff, didn't you?

GREG

Yes. We effed.

Chris claps and makes some sort of victory gesture, like a pumped fist.

CHRIS

Yes! Good. This is good. I fully expect you to stop being such a Negative Nelly now that you'll be getting poon the reg. You will be getting poon on the reg, right?

GREG

Here's to hoping.

TOM

And you were worried.

Tom opens his 40, raises it in a toast.

TOM (CONT'D)

Here's to Greg getting laid even though he thought he wouldn't.

CHRIS

(raising his bottle)  
To Greg getting laid.

(CONTINUED)

They drink. Greg wipes his mouth to speak.

GREG

It's not just getting laid though. It's getting laid with the right woman. After a series of dire mistakes, I finally slept with the right woman.

CHRIS

Not to shit on your parade, but I think you should stop analyzing it and just enjoy the post-ejaculatory bliss. You fucked once. Skilled women don't let their crazy show until they have you deeply tangled in their web of monogamy and commitment.

GREG

All I wanna say is things feel different. She seems different from most girls. I feel really good about all this. I really do.

CHRIS

Man, you fall in love too easily.

Greg shrugs.

INT. GREG'S APARTMENT - MAIN ROOM - MORNING

Back to present, Greg on his couch.

GREG (V.O.)

Maybe I do fall in love too easily. I don't know. With Casey, a lot of things happened fast. But with her, they felt so natural. If it were someone else, maybe I'd think they were crazy. With Casey, I thought it all made perfect sense. It was the rest of the world that was crazy.

EXT. CASEY'S APARTMENT BUILDING - ROOFTOP - NIGHT

Back to past. Casey and Greg stand close together, leaning over the edge of the roof and looking out at the city lights before them. Beers are perched on the ledge. Light sounds of distant traffic. A CLOSE SHOT of a match being struck

(CONTINUED)

disturbs the stillness. Return to a MEDIUM SHOT of Casey holding a cupped hand over the lit match to nurture the flame. She brings it closer to her face, the light dancing across her features. She turns her attention suddenly to Greg.

CASEY

How long until it burns out?

Without waiting for an answer she flicks it over the edge of the building, leaning forward against the concrete to better follow the match's glow. It goes out with the wind.

CASEY

Huh. Not long.

Greg picks up the matchbox and lights a match, he uses it to light a cigarette. Casey also lights up.

GREG

Whenever I use matches to light a joint, I think to myself...so this is what it was like to be Benjamin Franklin.

Casey looks at him a moment, a hint of puzzlement on her face.

CASEY

Benjamin Franklin? Of all the people.

GREG

(focusing on the match)

Yeah. Hemp was a legitimate crop back then. Pot was probably a staple in any normal family's garden. You got your tomato plants, some flowers, maybe zucchini, and pot. And Benjamin Franklin, he was always taking naps in the middle of drafting the constitution. Think about it.

CASEY

Whenever I use matches to light a joint I think to myself: Casey, it's time to buy a lighter.

Bit of a pause. Greg keeps playing with fire.

(CONTINUED)

CASEY (CONT'D)  
You know what is cool about  
matches?

She lights one and holds it burning end up.

CASEY (CONT'D)  
This little guy could burn down a  
whole forest. All of it. You know  
how many trees that is?

Greg opens his mouth to respond and Casey cuts him off.

CASEY (CONT'D)  
But. Before they get going, all it  
takes is a slight breeze to stop  
it.

She blows the match out with a light puff of breath. She  
throws it, lights another.

GREG  
This probably isn't as cool for a  
physicist.

CASEY  
Shh, I got more. Look. So if I hold  
it like this, it won't last very  
long.

She then turns the match so that the burning end is pointing  
down.

CASEY (CONT'D)  
Turn it this way, and it'll burn  
all the way back to my fingers.

Greg looks at her expectantly. She notices this and ups her  
enthusiasm to make the point.

CASEY (CONT'D)  
All that fuel! All that potential!  
And all it took to not burn out so  
fast was a change of direction.

She blows the match out before it burns her and throws it.  
She then aims her gaze at Greg.

CASEY (CONT'D)  
There's a metaphor in there, in  
case you weren't paying attention.

(CONTINUED)

GREG  
I think I got it.

CASEY  
You remember how we talked about  
places we'd go if we could go  
anywhere?

GREG  
Yeah.

CASEY  
Well, sometimes I feel like if  
things don't change I'm gonna wind  
up wasting my whole life. And after  
meeting you I feel like I'm finally  
ready to take action and make a  
change. I think we should go to  
Mexico.

Greg studies her face a bit.

GREG  
Are you being serious right now?

CASEY  
Absolutely. We both hate it here.  
We both don't have any reason to  
stay. Let's go to Mexico.

GREG  
Wow. Not even try a different city,  
just skipping right to a different  
country.

CASEY  
Yeah, well, you said yourself that  
you would go anywhere just to  
escape Philly if you were given the  
chance.

Greg thinks and nods to himself. Smokes contemplatively.

GREG  
You're really serious, huh?

CASEY  
I don't see why not.

Toward the end of her sentence, she accidentally tosses her  
cigarette over the side of the building while gesturing.

(CONTINUED)

CASEY

Aw man, perfectly good cigarette.

They peer over the edge and see that the cigarette has landed in a dumpster. Not long after, some newspapers catch and a fire starts. Greg freaks out and Casey starts laughing a wild, almost musical laugh--both of these start at more or less the same time.

GREG

Oh fuck, oh fuck fuck fuck.

Greg scrambles for a solution while Casey has doubled back in laughter. He sees the beers on the ledge, grabs them and pours them into the dumpster. The fire fizzles and beer steam swells up from the embers. Greg is now panting, trying to catch his breath.

We get a WIDE SHOT of the rooftop. Casey is slightly bent forward with laughter, one hand held lightly to her chest as though to keep her heart from bursting, and Greg is leaning against the ledge. Steam floats up in wisps from below. The camera holds this shot as Casey continues laughing and Greg looks toward her in wonderment. The last thing we get from the scene is the sound of Casey's laugh.

EXT. BACK ALLEY - DAY

We see a well-graffiti'd alleyway--lots of vibrant colors, like turquoise and red and white. One particular spray-paint scrawl reads something like "I'll always love you, Katie" or "I still love you, Julie"--both song references.

Greg and Chris stand in front of the graffiti, facing the camera, smoking. They wear button down shirts, each with a name badge pinned to his chest. On the wall near Greg's head is a graffiti sun. They are both facing ahead, rather than looking at one another, when Chris speaks.

CHRIS

Maybe it's a metaphor.

Greg puffs on his cigarette a bit before offering a response.

GREG

How so?

CHRIS

(shrugging)

I donno. Maybe she's a dumpster fire.

(CONTINUED)

GREG

You've seen her before. You know the last way anyone would describe her is as a dumpster fire.

CHRIS

This is true. I'd pork her if you let me.

GREG

Thanks, Chris.

CHRIS

Just give me the signal and I'm there.

GREG

I'll keep that in mind.

CHRIS

Maybe she's a metaphorical dumpster fire.

Cigarette drag.

GREG

I'm thinking of going to Mexico with her.

CHRIS

Trip to Mexico? How would you afford that?

GREG

Not a trip. Like running away with her to Mexico.

CHRIS

Yeah? And I'm thinking of watching every episode of Will and Grace in one sitting.

Greg shrugs a knowing shrug. Chris sees this.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

C'mon, you're not going to Mexico.

Greg takes a final drag and looks at the still-burning cigarette butt.

GREG (CONT'D)

These never last as long as I need them to.

(CONTINUED)

He drops it, puts it out with his foot. Chris flicks his cigarette off screen.

GREG

Hey careful with that. You'll catch the goddamn dumpster on fire.

They begin to move toward a door in the alley, the entry to the backroom of their work.

CHRIS

Man, we'd be so unemployed so fast. I'd have to sell myself into sex slavery and do dirty dirty things just to keep up my drinking habits.

GREG

You'd be like every woman at every frat party ever.

CHRIS

Except I'd be getting paid instead of raped.

GREG

Dark. Very dark.

INT. RECORD STORE - DAY

The inside of their place of work, Daylight Records, is like any record store in an American city. Think "High Fidelity." We see Greg and Chris enter from a door at the back of the store. A woman with short hair, VERONICA--their 30-something year old manager--sees them. She stops her task of sorting through a bunch of vinyl and CDs on a push-cart to talk to them.

VERONICA

You guys back from your fifteen?

CHRIS

(stretching and scratching his belly)  
Define "back."

VERONICA

Good. There's a bunch of used vinyl that needs to be sorted through and stocked. Try to finish in a reasonable amount of time and then clean up the new arrivals.

(CONTINUED)

She stands up and walks away and Greg and Chris take over her task, going through the vinyl and finding places for them on the shelves.

CHRIS

You know she asks about you sometimes.

Greg furrows his brow and keeps at the task at hand.

GREG

Veronica? You can stop Operation Get Greg Laid now. Safe to say I'm off the market.

CHRIS

(mocking)

*Safe to say I'm off the market.* No, man. She worries about you. She'll ask me if something's wrong with you, that sort of thing.

GREG

Huh.

CHRIS

Hey I was meaning to tell you. Speaking of people asking about you. I talked to my dad last night.

GREG

Yeah? What's up?

CHRIS

He mentioned he was going to be in town, something about meeting with a client and was wondering if we had time to catch up.

GREG

Everything okay?

CHRIS

I think so. He just said he wanted to talk to us about something and catch up.

GREG

Hmm. That's not vague at all.

Chris shrugs.

(CONTINUED)

GREG (CONT'D)

Sounds fine though. Just let me know when.

INT. NICE RESTAURANT - EVENING

Low lighting in what appears to be a nice restaurant. We see a grey haired man, PHIL (Chris's dad) wearing a nice suit seated at a table, white tablecloth, with Greg and Chris. Greg and Chris are dressed casually, in contrast to the professionalism of Phil's attire. They are mid-meal, picking at their food and talking.

PHIL

So Greg. Chris tells me you've been frustrated with Philadelphia?

GREG

Yeah. A little bit. I don't think it's just the city though. It's a combination of things.

PHIL

Oh yeah? Like what?

GREG

The people, my job, my apartment. I guess I just thought I'd be in a different (gesturing vaguely in the air) place by now.

PHIL

You're still at the record store with Chris, I take it?

GREG

Yeah.

PHIL

How is that?

GREG

It's alright. It's been a year or so and it's alright for now. A raise would be nice though.

CHRIS

(mouth full)

Only reason Greg's stuck with it this long is because he was waiting to meet the girl of his dreams in the punk section.

(CONTINUED)

GREG

That may or may not be true.

PHIL

Have you been applying to other jobs?

Greg shakes his head.

GREG

I haven't really thought about it that much. I don't really know what I want to do long term. Except get out of Philly. Maybe move to Mexico.

Chris gives him a look, but Phil brushes off the Mexico comment as a joke.

PHIL

Greg, what I'm about to say I mean in the nicest possible way. You're a smart kid. You're bright, you're thoughtful, you're a good guy. It was probably your influence that pushed Chris to finish school.

CHRIS

(weighing this as reasonable)  
Well.

PHIL

Does it bother you that you have a bachelor's degree, but you're working a minimum wage job?

Greg pauses to mull this over. He seems apprehensive as to where the conversation is going.

GREG

To tell you the truth, no. I haven't really thought of it in those terms. I mean my situation's not ideal, but I don't feel like I'm owed anything just because I have a degree. In fact, things seem to be improving lately.

CHRIS

Greg's getting laid now. Tons of poon.

(CONTINUED)

PHIL  
Is that right? Good for you. What  
did you study again?

Greg shoots a sidelong glare at Chris, but carries on the  
conversation.

GREG  
English.

PHIL  
Hmm. What were you planning on  
doing with that?

Greg shrugs.

GREG  
Nothing. I mean. It was just  
something that I enjoyed so I  
studied it. I didn't have a plan or  
anything.

PHIL  
Greg, I think you've got potential  
for so much more than working  
retail. Both of you do. You don't  
need a brain to work in a record  
store. Don't you ever think of what  
else is out there?

GREG  
Believe me I do. And Mr. Mayfield,  
I appreciate your concern, but I'd  
rather not get into it. I've had  
this conversation enough in my head  
when I'm trying to fall asleep.  
Let's talk about something else.  
How's Mrs. Mayfield?

Phil waves this off while finishing his wine.

PHIL  
She's fine. Doing book clubs or  
something.

Greg frowns.

PHIL (CONT'D)  
Listen, I'm not trying to lecture  
you, Greg. You're too smart for  
that. I wanted to talk to you  
because an opportunity came up at  
the firm and I wanted to present it  
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

PHIL (CONT'D) (cont'd)  
to you two first. Chris, after all,  
is my son, and you are my son's  
best friend. You're practically  
family.

CHRIS  
(clearly very excited)  
The marketing firm? Your firm?

PHIL  
My firm. The economy's picking up  
and we're in the process of signing  
agreements with some high profile  
clients that will, if all goes  
well, keep us very busy over the  
next couple of years. So now we're  
hiring and I want you two on my  
team.

Chris is stoked. His eyes grow wide and he looks back and  
forth between Greg and his dad.

CHRIS  
Dad, this is really fucking cool.  
Is this a joke? This better not be  
a joke.

PHIL  
It's not a joke. I want to hire you  
two on.

CHRIS  
I'm in. Where do I sign?

Phil looks pleased. Greg, on the other hand, seems too  
shocked to properly react. His mind is churning to work this  
over.

GREG  
Mr. Mayfield, I--

PHIL  
Please, call me Phil.

GREG  
Phil. I, I don't know what to say.

PHIL  
Please. Just listen. You'd both  
start as marketing coordinators and  
work your way up from there. What  
you lack in experience, you more  
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

PHIL (cont'd)  
 than make up for in your chemistry  
 together. Chris has the artistic  
 talent, you've got a sharp wit. You  
 can't teach that sort of thing.

Greg looks exacerbadated, Chris looks thrilled, and Phil seems  
 very pleased to be able to make this offer.

PHIL (CONT'D)  
 Plus, if you're frustrated with  
 Philadelphia, Greg, this is the  
 perfect chance to move to a better  
 city. There's no place in the world  
 quite like New York. What do you  
 think?

CHRIS  
 I'm in. Greg, don't be an idiot.

Greg's brow is furrowed as he pushes food around his plate.  
 Phil watches Greg expectantly. His expression shifts to  
 concern.

PHIL  
 Greg, you're taking an awful long  
 time to answer an offer for a job  
 at a marketing firm for someone who  
 works for minimum wage in a city he  
 hates.

CHRIS  
 (to Greg)  
 Dude, this is gonna be so much  
 cooler than the record store. We'll  
 come up with the *best* marketing  
 campaigns. Like a Dove soap  
 commercial, where two really hot  
 girls are walking in some store and  
 they brush against one another and  
 they both use Dove soap so their  
 skin is really soft and they're  
 amazed at how soft they are.

PHIL  
 Chris, please.

CHRIS  
 No, hold on. And one is like "Oh my  
 god, your skin is so silky." And  
 the other is like "So is yours" and  
 they lock eyes. Super hot. Then  
 they start making out furiously and

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CHRIS (cont'd)  
then the camera pans down and we see that they both had Dove soap in their baskets. Boom. Brilliant. Sales of Dove shoot through the fucking roof.

PHIL  
Chris, you're my son and I love you and I would love to see that as a commercial, but we'll need to have a talk about knowing your audience in the near future. Marketing 101.

GREG  
I don't think I'm very qualified to work at a marketing firm, Mr. Mayfield.

PHIL  
Nonsense. I wouldn't offer this to you if I didn't think you'd be good at it. And call me Phil.

GREG  
Sorry.

PHIL  
I've been doing this for longer than I'll openly admit. I know who has what it takes and who doesn't. You studied English--you're well-read and you can analyze critically. On top of that you've got an anti-mainstream edge to you that's very desirable for marketing to millenials. You're leaps and bounds ahead of some of the resumes I've seen so far, trust me. If there's something you don't feel confident with, I'm more than happy to be a mentor.

GREG  
I just...can I take some time to think about this? This is all moving really fast. I didn't expect...

PHIL  
Please, of course, take your time. Sleep on it. We can arrange for you two to visit the office, meet some

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

PHIL (cont'd)  
of the team, address any questions  
you might have and see what you  
think. Sound good?

GREG  
Sure.

PHIL  
Excellent. I don't want you to feel  
pressured into something you don't  
want to do, but I'm confident after  
you think about it more, you'll  
realize this is the opportunity of  
a lifetime. Record store clerk to  
marketing guru, like (snaps his  
fingers) that.

Greg nods. Phil smiles a closed-lip smile.

EXT. SIDEWALK - NIGHT

Greg and Chris are walking together. Chris is practically  
exploding with energy.

CHRIS  
You don't seem as excited about  
this as you should be.

Greg shrugs.

CHRIS (CONT'D)  
I know what kind of marketing  
campaigns my dad has worked on.  
These are huge campaigns. The  
starting salary alone has to be  
four times more than what we make  
now--maybe five. You know how many  
hookers you could buy with a salary  
like that?

GREG  
Is that how your parents met?

CHRIS  
Go fuck yourself. No more shitty  
apartments, no more waiting for the  
bus, no more wishing we could buy  
the good beer--we'll actually be  
able to afford the good beer, Greg!  
The good beer! That's how we'll  
know we've made it. It's hard to

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CHRIS (cont'd)

imagine a world where I'm no longer interested in Miller light, but I think I'm ready.

GREG

I can't really see myself in a corporate setting. It feels fraudulent even to think of myself working an office job.

CHRIS

Yeah but it's marketing. Marketing is like the drugs, sex, and rock n roll of the corporate world.

GREG

You don't know that. We've both been record store clerks for the past year.

CHRIS

I've watched a couple episodes of Mad Men. I know my shit.

GREG

Can you really see yourself working a 9 to 5? Tell me honestly. I feel like you're not thinking this through all the way, you're just excited for the salary.

CHRIS

Multiple things: I don't want to work at Daylight forever. I know this for a fact. Also, this is the perfect chance for me to take art from a hobby to a way to afford really nice things. And yes I am excited for the salary, I'm not afraid to say that. Money isn't everything, but it sure fucking helps in a lot of situations. Like buying the good beer. And if we're not cut out for the marketing world, who cares? Greg, we're 24 years old. We can change careers if we don't like it--and in the meantime, why not earn some money? We're not signing our souls away.

(CONTINUED)

GREG

What about Casey?

CHRIS

There it is. The true reason you're being a turd right now. Bring her with you. She'll work there too. I'll even let her live with us-- (interrupts himself to point at Greg) You're welcome.

GREG

Fuck... I donno though... I feel like if I take the job I'm getting too deep into something I'm not certain about. You don't get that feeling?

CHRIS

Dude. It's the perfect opportunity. You're sick of Philadelphia--this is your chance to move. You're sick of being broke--now you'll have money.

GREG

Yeah. When you put it that way.

CHRIS

I think it'd help to travel up there sometime soon and meet everyone and actually see what we'd be getting ourselves into. No obligation to accept the job right then and there, but just a chance to scope it out. Deal?

GREG

Fine. Deal.

CHRIS

I'm serious. Greg. Think about it. I think you'll realize you've been waiting for this for a long time.

INT. CASEY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Greg walks into Casey's apartment--Casey is sitting at her kitchen table on her laptop with a beer on the table. Music is playing in the background. Casey looks up from her computer and sees that it's Greg.

(CONTINUED)

CASEY

Hey there cutie. Do you think it's a good idea to describe us as clean, friendly, and desperate? Or should I leave off the desperate part?

Greg looks like his mind is elsewhere, off balance from his talk with Chris and Chris's dad earlier in the evening.

GREG

What's the context?

Casey backspaces a bit. Keeps typing.

CASEY

I'm posting an ad on craigslist to see if anyone can help us get to Mexico. (looking up at Greg) You okay? Looks like something's on your mind.

GREG

Yeah, I'm alright. Just...thinking about a lot of things. Craigslist?

CASEY

(still typing)

Craigslist. It's a preliminary search. Figured it couldn't hurt.

GREG

It could hurt if we get lured into a sex dungeon. Did you know that someone got their penis eaten off as a result of answering an ad on Craigslist? 100 percent true, look it up.

CASEY

Good thing I had my penis removed last year. Grab a beer, take a seat.

Greg gets a beer from the fridge and sits down with it. He slouches back in his chair and exhales deeply.

She looks at him.

CASEY

You sure you're alright?

(CONTINUED)

GREG

Yeah.

Casey goes back to typing. Greg drinks his beer, still looking distant. After a bit she speaks.

CASEY

How's this sound so far? *My big strong boyfriend who knows Brazilian jiu jitsu and I are trying to get to Mexico. Anyone who can take us there or almost there would be a hero. We can contribute gas money and charm. We are clean, friendly and desperate. Please dear Jesus help. Solicitors and sex murderers, please do not contact.*

GREG

(smiling)

I see zero things wrong with that. Post it.

Greg plays with the beer a bit, picking at the label.

GREG (CONT'D)

So. I was thinking about it more and I'm leaning towards saying yes to Mexico.

Casey looks very pleasantly surprised.

CASEY

Yeah?

GREG

Yeah, but hear me out. Maybe not right away. I was thinking moving that far away might be kind of expensive. What are your thoughts on moving somewhere a little closer but still completely different from all of this? Maybe take some time to save up some money somewhere else and then go from there?

CASEY

What like, Quebec?

GREG

I was thinking maybe New York. Get a better job, save up some money, and then move out to Mexico.

(CONTINUED)

Casey's attention is now fully off her laptop and on Greg.

CASEY

New York? Are you joking?

Greg shrugs.

GREG

(tentatively)

I donno. I mean, it's a big city,  
there's all sorts of people there.  
We could find a scene we like, find  
our people, still start fresh,  
still escape Philly.

CASEY

I've lived in a lot of places,  
Greg. It's all different but it's  
all the same. People will still be  
idiot assholes focused on earning  
as much money as possible so they  
can drive their fucking Range  
Rovers or Audis or whatever and  
wear their fucking jeans with  
designs on the pockets and no one  
will understand our desire for  
something more and we will hate it  
and I will say I told you so.

GREG

I just figured we could make the  
whole process easier if we saved up  
some money first.

CASEY

It might be easier, but we'd spend  
more time hating everything. Not  
sure if that's something I'm  
willing to put up with much longer.  
I'd rather have less money and more  
happiness.

GREG

Hmmm.

CASEY

And here. If you want to talk  
money. I've been doing some  
research. Look.

She clicks a few things and reads from her screen.

(CONTINUED)

CASEY (CONT'D)  
 Rent is 200% higher in the US compared to Mexico. Food is 70% more expensive here. Public transportation is 300% more expensive here. We don't *really* need that much money. We would just need to save a little bit over the next month or so, find a ride, and then we're there.

Greg nods, soaking it in, drinks his beer.

CASEY (CONT'D)  
 Philadelphia is no different from any other city in this country, except maybe it's a little smellier.

Greg breaks a smile at this.

CASEY (CONT'D)  
 Do you honestly want to spend another second here?

GREG  
 No, but--

Casey reaches out to him and rubs the back of his neck.

CASEY  
 Then let's go. Whatever it takes.

INT. GREG'S APARTMENT - MAIN ROOM - MORNING

Present. Greg on couch.

GREG (V.O.)  
 I fucked up. I should've told her. Maybe if I had told her, things would be different. Maybe she wouldn't have left the party.

Greg calls Casey. No answer again.

INT. TRAIN STATION - MORNING

Past. A train pulls up and an LED sign indicates that it's going to New York. Greg and Chris, dressed in suits, board the train.

INT. TRAIN - MORNING

We see Greg and Chris seated as the train moves forward, rocking slightly.

CHRIS

Should have worn sunglasses. People always think people in suits and sunglasses are important.

Chris glances out the window, but is too antsy to stay quiet.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

Man, I'm already imagining how different our lives are going to be in a few weeks. I'll buy argyle socks and the good beer and that's really as far ahead as I've thought so far. But just imagine it, man. Argyle! Beer!

He looks out the window again in a half-pause, but, again, is too antsy.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

I'm glad you came around after all that worry. We should think of a fun way to quit the record shop. Maybe we could have a competition to see who gets fired first. Loser buys drinks.

Greg is out of it. He smiles blandly and looks out the window. Scenery zips by.

MONTAGE - GREG'S DAYDREAM

"Lost in the Supermarket" by The Clash plays as we see various quick scenes from Greg's daydream of his future life. The only audio is the music.

A) INT. OFFICE - DAY - Greg looks at a document and Phil points to a line, where Greg signs. They then shake hands heartily.

B) INT. NICE APARTMENT - DAY - Greg and Chris get situated in an apartment. Greg looks out the window--they have an incredible view overlooking the city.

(CONTINUED)

C) INT. OFFICE - DAY - Greg, wearing dress clothes, sits in a cubicle and squints at a laptop screen. Someone pokes their head into the cubicle and hands him a stack of reports.

D) INT. OFFICE - DAY - Greg is talking to co-workers, all are wearing a Hawaiian shirt. A banner hangs nearby, reading "HAPPY CASUAL FRIDAY." Someone says something and then laughs obnoxiously, clapping Greg on the shoulder, Greg responds with a clearly forced smile.

E) INT. OFFICE - DAY - CLOSE UP of computer screen. We see an e-mail icon indicating 102 unread emails.

F) INT. BEDROOM - DAWN - Greg wakes up to an alarm clock that flashes "5:45am." He stares upward despondently.

G) INT. OFFICE - DAY - Greg opens a drawer in his cubicle and looks at a postcard that displays a photo of a Dia de los Muertos celebration. He turns it over. We see the bottom of the message: "You'd love it here. Hope you're well. Te echo de menos. Love, Casey."

H) INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT - Greg and a blond girl are fucking. Greg looks aloof and bored.

I) INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT - Greg lies awake next to blond girl.

J) INT. CAR - MORNING - Greg looks miserable stuck in traffic, the highway like a parking lot.

K) EXT. SIDEWALK IN FRONT OF OFFICE - DAY - Greg pulls a cigarette out and lights it. A bus drives by with an airline advertisement prominently displaying the message "Need to get away?" Greg closes his eyes.

END OF MONTAGE

INT. TRAIN - MORNING

Back to reality.

CHRIS  
(concerned)  
You alright, man?

GREG  
Yeah. Just a little tired. You ever see Officespace?

(CONTINUED)

CHRIS  
Yeah, why?

GREG  
(turning back to the window)  
No reason.

INT. MARKETING OFFICE LOBBY - DAY

Elevator doors open and Greg and Chris step out. We see a shiny corporate office lobby, decorated with slick modern furnishings. Mounted on the wall behind the front desk is a large sign reading MAYFIELD ASSOCIATES. An extremely attractive woman sits at the front desk. She looks up as they walk across the lobby. Both Chris and Greg are looking around at the lobby's decorations.

RECEPTIONIST  
Can I help you?

Chris looks at her, then turns to Greg and mouths "Oh my god."

CHRIS  
We have a meeting with Phil  
Mayfield.

RECEPTIONIST  
Is this scheduled?

CHRIS  
Yes. I'm his son.

RECEPTIONIST  
(looking him up and down)  
Ah. Names please?

CHRIS  
Chris Mayfield and Greg Barnes.

RECEPTIONIST  
Sign in. I'll give him a call to  
let him know you're here. (dials a  
number on phone) Mr. Mayfield?

Chris takes the opportunity to turn toward Greg, points in the direction of the receptionist and pantomimes sex with his fingers. Greg pushes past him and signs in.

RECEPTIONIST  
Chris and Greg are here for you.  
Okay. Okay, thank you. (hangs up  
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

RECEPTIONIST (cont'd)  
 phone). He'll be with you in ten  
 minutes. Feel free to take a seat.

Greg and Chris sit down. Greg rubs his face. He turns to  
 Chris and they speak in lowered voices.

GREG  
 I'm not feeling so good.

CHRIS  
 Too much blood in your penis? Me  
 too. Let's play a game. It's called  
 "Let's count how many ways we'd  
 fuck the front desk girl."

GREG  
 I think I need to get some water.

CHRIS  
 Get me a glass while you're up.  
 I'll figure out a way to  
 accidentally spill it on her shirt.

Greg stands and approaches the receptionist.

GREG  
 Excuse me. Where are the restrooms?

RECEPTIONIST  
 It's a little confusing to explain.  
 I'll walk you there. (to Chris) Do  
 you need anything while I'm up?

CHRIS  
 (grinning)  
 I'm good. I'll just stay sitting.

Chris stares blatantly at her butt as she walks with Greg  
 through a door.

INT. MARKETING OFFICE - DAY (CONTINUOUS)

The camera follows directly behind Greg as the receptionist  
 leads him through a dizzying series of corridors and  
 numerous turns. When they arrive:

RECEPTIONIST  
 Here you go. Think you can find  
 your way back?

(CONTINUED)

GREG  
Yeah, thanks.

INT. MARKETING OFFICE BATHROOM - DAY

Greg splashes water on his face. Leaving the faucet running, he stares at himself in the mirror for several moments.

INT. MARKETING OFFICE - DAY

Greg walks out of the bathroom. The camera view switches to following directly behind Greg again. We follow him through several hallways, various turns, a maze of cubicles. Everything looks the same. The turns and the unchanging surroundings have a disorienting effect.

At one point Greg turns a corner and reaches a door. This might be the way out. He tries the door--it's locked. He turns around and again walks hallways, turning left and right and left and right. Every now and again, he passes someone in the hall, but does not speak to them. Greg clearly has no idea where he is.

Just when we're not sure if Greg will ever make it back, a door opens--it's Chris and his father.

CHRIS  
There you are. I was worried you  
fell in.

GREG  
Got a little lost.

Phil extends a hand--they shake.

PHIL  
Good to see you, Greg. Step into my  
office. Let's have a chat. Chris,  
would you mind sitting out here for  
a while? I'd like to speak with  
Greg alone.

INT. PHIL'S OFFICE - DAY

Phil's office is spacious and two of the four walls are floor to ceiling windows. Phil is seated behind a large desk. Several prizes of some sort are prominently displayed--crystal sculptures with years and names--and several ads, presumably the firm's work, are blown up and framed on the walls. Phil leans back in his chair, hands behind his head. Greg sits uncomfortably in front of him.

(CONTINUED)

PHIL

So Greg. Let's get all of your concerns out of the way. Tell me what's on your mind.

GREG

To be totally honest with you, Phil, I'm worried that this (gesturing around him), this corporate world isn't right for me.

PHIL

How do you mean?

GREG

I'm worried that it doesn't fit in with what I want out of life.

PHIL

And what would that be?

Greg pauses.

GREG

I don't want to compromise myself. I want to live authentically. And I don't think I'd feel authentic working a 9 to 5 job.

PHIL

Makes sense. You've always been just left of the status quo. I had similar concerns when I was your age, you know. There was a specific moment when I realized I was on the right path though. Would you like to hear about it?

GREG

Sure.

PHIL

I was working for another marketing firm. It was my first job out of college. I was maybe 24. I had to wear a suit every day and I had to comb my hair and I couldn't talk about drugs or music with any of my co-workers. Silly things, sure, but it made me question if I was in the right job. But the firm was successful and I was making good money. So I stuck with it. One day

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

PHIL (cont'd)

I was walking down the street, coming back from my lunch break, and I passed some teenagers drinking out of paper bags. They thought they were pretty cool, wearing jean jackets, plaid shirts, fingerless gloves, smoking cigarettes. When I walked by they said to me "Yeah, you square, you better keep walking." And they laughed and congratulated one another on being so rebellious. They thought they were the shit, doing whatever they wanted. But you know what? At the end of the day, they'd go back home to their parents or their crappy apartments and smoke cheap cigarettes and drink cheap beer and not be able to afford going to see their favorite bands playing live or going out to the bars to pick up girls. They'd be stuck bored out of their minds and broke. I, on the other hand, could buy the beer they wish they could afford, the cigarettes, the drugs, the women. I could afford a life that they could only dream of. So I kept walking.

Greg nods, listening cautiously.

PHIL (CONT'D)

Now, what I'm trying to say is, sure you have to dress in a way that you wouldn't choose to wear on your own during weekdays, but at night and on weekends and on your *paid time off*, you'll have the money to do whatever you want. You want tattoos? You seem like you do. I hear those aren't cheap. If you work for me, Greg, you can afford the best tattoos in the country. You can afford the best drugs, the best booze, you can go to the best concerts and you can afford to park in a parking garage at those concerts so you don't have to worry about your car getting broken into. And if it does get broken into, what would be devastating on

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

PHIL (CONT'D) (cont'd)  
minimum wage becomes a mere hiccup  
with the salary you'd have working  
here. A mere shrug of the  
shoulders. Wouldn't that be nice?

GREG  
I mean, that does sound nice.

PHIL  
You're not giving anything up. You  
can still do the things you love,  
but you'll be living much more  
comfortably. Can I trust you with  
something?

GREG  
Sure.

PHIL  
You can't tell Chris. Do you  
promise?

GREG  
Okay.

PHIL  
Chris is a bright kid and I love  
him. But. I know you have more  
potential. You've got more focus,  
more talent. I can tell--I've been  
hiring people for 15 years now and  
I've gotten pretty good at noticing  
what works and what doesn't work.

Phil leans in and lowers his voice, forcing Greg to lean  
forward as well.

PHIL (CONT'D)  
Greg, I am prepared to offer you a  
ten *thousand* dollar signing bonus,  
on the contingency that you commit  
to a year with my firm. I'm  
confident that that's enough time  
for you to fall in love with the  
firm and that in a year everything  
that we discussed today will make  
sense.

GREG  
So Chris is not getting a signing  
bonus?

(CONTINUED)

PHIL  
Correct. Just you.

GREG  
Wow.

Greg begins to ponder this over but is interrupted when suddenly a bird slams against the window behind Phil, startling them both. The bird flails briefly and then drops out of sight. Greg is visibly shocked. Noticing this, Phil explains:

PHIL  
Damn birds. That happens all the time. The window cleaners do too good of a job. The birds see the sky reflected in the glass and (he claps his hands together loudly) whack! No more bird.

Phil smiles.

PHIL (CONT'D)  
So what do you say?

Phil sticks out his hand. Greg looks at his hand, then looks up, meeting Phil's gaze.

INT. MARKETING OFFICE HALLWAY - DAY

Phil is walking down a hallway between cubicle clusters, with Chris and Greg at his side.

PHIL  
Thanks for taking the time to visit, gentlemen. I'm very optimistic for our futures together.

CHRIS  
I feel like Samantha in Sex and the City.

PHIL  
Chris, if you keep saying things like that I'll have to tell everyone in the office you were adopted.

INT. FAIRLANE DINER - AFTERNOON

Greg is sitting by himself in a booth. The table is empty in front of him. He's mostly looking around, clearly searching for Casey. She notices him, recognizes it's Greg, and approaches from behind.

CASEY

Hey. What are you doing here?

Greg turns toward her and a somewhat sad smile steals across his face. From his shirt pocket he produces that familiar blue pack of cigarettes and holds it up.

GREG

I come bearing gifts. Thought I'd visit, hang out for a bit. You got a shift break anytime soon?

CASEY

Well...I gotta take care of that fucking yuppie family over in the corner first, but then I can take a 15. Is that cool?

GREG

Yeah.

CASEY

I don't know how long it'll be. Especially if they start asking about gluten again. I don't even know what gluten is. You sure you can wait?

GREG

(half-smiling)

I'm sure.

CASEY

You rule.

Later: Greg is watching Casey speak to the yuppie family across the restaurant, amused. From his perspective we can make out Casey rushing through her waitress formalities.

CASEY

Anything else I can get for you folks?

The family can barely get out a "no thank you."

(CONTINUED)

CASEY

No? Great! Have a great rest of the day.

She grabs the check, turns, and takes off her apron while walking toward Greg. She gestures for him to come with her. He stands up and follows her. She grabs his wrist and leads him into the kitchen.

INT. FAIRLANE GRILL - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

She pulls Greg past some cooks, a sticky mess of men and grease and stainless steel cooking equipment.

CASEY

Cuidado. Behind you, Eddie.

They make it to a door and finally emerge outside.

EXT. BEHIND FAIRLANE GRILL - CONTINUOUS

They walk into the sunlight to an unremarkable back-of-the-building. A dumpster to one side and a picnic table with two benches. A half-full ashtray rests on the table. She leads Greg to this and they sit on the table next to the ashtray, feet on the bench. Casey breathes deeply.

CASEY

Finally a chance to get some air and it smells like garbage. Sums things up pretty well.

She looks at Greg and they kiss, short and sweet. When they pull apart, Greg pulls out his cigarettes and offers one.

CASEY

Thanks.

They both light up. Casey takes an apparently much-needed drag and exhales. Greg clearly has the job offer on his mind, but no courage to bring it up.

CASEY

This is what it's come to.

GREG

That's not dramatic at all.

CASEY

Do you feel like an adult, Greg?

Greg takes a fair amount of time thinking this over.

(CONTINUED)

GREG

Right now? No, not really. I've been waiting to feel like an adult for a while, but making minimum wage isn't really conducive to that... I guess I feel the same as I've always felt, just maybe older, if that makes sense.

Bit of a pause.

GREG (CONT'D)

Do you feel like an adult?

CASEY

If you had asked me five years ago where I would be today, waiting tables in this goddamn city wouldn't exactly be my first answer. But this is what it's come to. Waiting tables in this goddamn city. Waiting for things to get better. Waiting for a way to escape. Waiting for a way to get to Mexico. Always waiting. I feel like I'm *letting* myself succumb to this...this horrible settling feeling.

GREG

I know what you mean. I've always kind of figured maybe that's just growing up.

CASEY

And the worst part is I'm *letting* it happen. I don't want to let things slip anymore. I'm worried if something doesn't change soon I'll wind up like my mom.

Greg furrows his brow with concern and curiosity.

GREG

What happened with your mom?

CASEY

First of all, I don't want sympathy out of this. I don't want pity. I'm trying to illustrate a point. That's it. Anyway, I feel like sometimes when people talk about wanting to escape it's just a

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CASEY (cont'd)

concept, a romantic idea...but...anyway. Whatever. Anyway. My dad always told me I was just like my mom. Same stubbornness, same wild streak, same face, same laugh. I was only ten when it happened, so I didn't pick up on a lot of things, but my mom was fed up with her life in a way that I suspect is close to what we're feeling right now. It got pretty bad though. Like really bad. She started drinking a lot and making these really morbid comments all the time. She started doubling up on her medication and took every chance she could to distance herself from reality. My dad said we all just needed a vacation so he booked a trip to, of all places, Mexico.

She nods toward Greg, a silent acknowledgment of the parallels in their stories, and takes a deep drag on the cigarette.

CASEY (CONT'D)

A few days before we were supposed to leave for the trip, my mom killed herself in the bathroom. Pills. A lot of pills.

Greg seems unsure of how to best react.

GREG

I'm so sorry...could it have been an accident?

CASEY

A month's worth of pills in one go doesn't strike me as accidental. And please, no pity. It happened. It's done. It sucked, it was horrible, but we can't change it. What's really stuck with me after everything was how my dad handled it. I kept expecting him to recover eventually. Like one day he'd pull himself out of it and be his normal self and be a father to me and move on. But he never did. He went through the motions, packed me

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CASEY (cont'd)

lunch for school, dropped me off, picked me up, took care of me, but you could tell something inside of him was gone. I can forgive my mom. She was suffering and she found her escape. She left us behind and it was selfish, yes, but it makes sense when you look at (gesturing) the full picture. My dad, on the other hand, I don't think I ever really forgave him. He never did anything to even try to get over it. He just let himself die on the inside and walked around like an empty shell.

Silence. Cigarette pulls.

CASEY (CONT'D)

And ever since then I've always wondered, what would be different if she had just lasted a few more days, and we took that vacation. Maybe she would've fallen in love with the life in Mexico. Maybe she would've convinced my dad to stay there forever. Maybe not, you know, but still. I always wonder what would have changed if she could have waited just a few more days.

GREG

So is that why you want to go to Mexico so bad?

CASEY

As opposed to other places? Maybe. Probably. But I don't think that's relevant. Freudian theories aside, I know this: If the lives we have now were enough, neither of us would feel so fucking bummed out and we wouldn't be posting on craigslist hoping for a Mexican white knight to sweep us away. But that's what we're doing and it's a ticking time bomb. We have to escape or we run the risk of ending up like my mother.

Greg nods solemnly. They sit in silence briefly. To ease the moment, he puts his arm around her and she allows a smile at this.

(CONTINUED)

GREG

How about you come over tonight and I'll make us some dinner. We'll drink for inspiration and figure something out.

Casey kisses Greg, an appreciative peck.

CASEY

That sounds nice. One caveat though. Due to the shittiness of everything, I request that we're drunk by the time we have to do the dishes.

GREG

Not an unreasonable request.

CASEY

Like really drunk. Like Bukowski drunk. Maybe even skip dinner. Maybe throw the dishes off the roof.

GREG

I like how you think.

They kiss again.

INT. GREG'S APARTMENT - EVENING

Greg is standing in the dining area of his kitchenette, setting the table for two. Music plays in the background, an undetermined punk song.

EXT. SIDEWALK - MORNING

Back to present. Greg exits his apartment and we see him walking along a sidewalk. This scene cuts back and forth between, the present, the main past storyline, and a flashback, while we hear his voiceover and the music of the past scene.

GREG (V.O.)

Sometimes loneliness can hit in strange ways. It can make life feel not real. Seamlessly, without any announcement, everything is suddenly different. Familiar places, your own reflection, they become stand-ins, cheap imitations.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

GREG (V.O.) (cont'd)

The lighting is all wrong. Like all of life shifted half an inch to the left, while you stayed still. Now everywhere you go, you feel out of place enough to know something's changed. Something's off.

INT. GREG'S APARTMENT - EVENING

Greg is setting the table for two--glasses of whiskey already poured, plates ready, and even candles.

INT. CAFE - DAY - FLASHBACK

Greg is sitting with a girl at a small cafe table. She has black hair, slender, a friendly look. They look like they've just had a serious conversation. As Greg narrates, we get CLOSE SHOTS of small details, like how the girl's finger traces lines on the marble table, or the still surface of the coffee left in their cups.

GREG (V.O.)

I dated a girl in college for a few months. She was amazing. Beautiful, funny, a blast to hang out with. She was just so cool. So goddamn cool. But she was graduating a year ahead of me and would be moving back to Oregon to take care of her dad and I knew I couldn't do the long distance thing. It'd be unfair of me. So we met at a coffee shop and broke up. The thing was, we had hours of normal conversation before I could mention breaking up. I think we both knew what was going to happen, but it felt so natural to just sit and talk with her like nothing was different. It took a concerted effort to finally say it. And when it happened, sitting there in that cafe, knowing that this was it, this was the end of the relationship it was one of the strangest break ups of my life. There was no animosity. There was no big explosion, no giant disagreement. She didn't cheat on me. I didn't hate her friends. I loved hanging out with her, I

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

GREG (V.O.) (cont'd)  
wanted to keep hanging out with her, but I knew it would be impossible. We were done. And all of a sudden, sitting next to her in this cafe, I felt a void open up. There she was, right next to me, this person whose company I enjoyed so much, this person who I wanted to spend days, weeks, months with. Close enough to touch. But as soon as the words came out an invisible chasm opened between us and inches felt like miles and I saw an entire future of possibilities erased. There'd be no more nights together. No more shared jokes, meals, drinks. No more hanging out. With her still right beside me, I felt myself miss her and everything shifted half an inch to the left.

INT. GREG'S APARTMENT - EVENING

Back to the past. Greg tries to fit a six pack of beer on the table, but there's not enough room. After mental-deliberation, he swaps the candles for the beer and looks pleased.

The doorbell rings. It's Casey.

CASEY

Hello.

GREG

Come on in.

Greg gestures her toward the table. Upon seeing the table she says,

CASEY

Wow. Look at you.

She seats herself and immediately picks up the glass of whiskey. She inhales the aroma at the lip of the glass and then tilts it to her mouth, finishing the entire thing. Greg is in the process of sitting down himself when Casey holds the empty glass toward him.

CASEY

Be a pal and top me off?

(CONTINUED)

Greg smiles as he takes the glass, raises a "hold on" finger, and then drains his own glass, still standing. He moves to the counter to refill them both. He sits back down at the table, giving Casey her glass.

GREG  
 Alright. Brainstorming.

CASEY  
 Nuh uh uh. There's a process to this. And step 1 is to get drunk as fuck.

GREG  
 I'm okay with this.

Casey raises her glass, this time to propose a toast.

CASEY  
 Here's to not settling for a life of mediocrity, high rent, endless disappointment, or a crippling sense of unfulfillment.

GREG  
 (raising his glass)  
 All good things.

We see a CLOSE SHOT of the glasses clinking together, the kitchen light making the whiskey look like liquid gold.

The clink of the last shot gives away abruptly to the jarring opening chords of the uptempo punk barrage of "If I needed you there" by Joyce Manor, a song that clocks in at hardly over a minute. This song is from the thirteen minute album discussed earlier in the film. While this song rips through, we see SLOW MOTION SHOTS:

- A) PANNING across a slew of empty beer bottles on the kitchen counter. The PAN eventually reaches Greg and Casey, dancing in his living room.
- B) CLOSE SHOT of their shifting legs.
- C) CLOSE SHOT of their twisting torsos,
- D) CLOSE SHOT of droplets of beer flying from a bottle in Casey's hand.
- E) CLOSE SHOT of Casey's hair waving wildly in front of her face

(CONTINUED)

F) CLOSE SHOT of Greg's face, a smile of sheer genuine happiness radiating through his drunk features as he's lost in the music.

G) The shot jumps over to Casey, who is dancing next to him, hands above her head--one of which is still holding a beer bottle--eyes down, enjoying the music and the moment. In the beauty that is slow motion, we see her eyes move upward until they land on Greg, at which point her face lights up like an explosion and her smile erupts into a full laugh. We PAN to Greg's face, capturing every microscopic step of his expression transforming into one of adoration as he holds Casey in his gaze.

h) We cut back to Casey's face to see her expression reciprocating the message of Greg's smiling eyes.

The slow motion ceases only when the song and the scene ends.

EXT. GREG'S FIRE ESCAPE - NIGHT

The scene opens up with a CLOSE SHOT of a white lighter lighting a cigarette, the tip of which glows and crackles gently against the flame. There is faint music coming from the apartment and with a new shot we see Casey and Greg sitting on the fire escape, smoking cigarettes, eying one another with playful smiles, a weight lifted from them both.

GREG

So is that the whole process or...?

CASEY

For brainstorming? I was hoping you'd have thought of something by now. Because the most promising thing I've got so far is robbing a bank and making a run for the border.

GREG

The best I could come up with was staying here a bit longer, saving up some money, and then leave. Not very innovative.

CASEY

So exactly the same as what we had before.

(CONTINUED)

GREG

Kind of. Except I was thinking maybe look for a different job, one that pays better. I haven't actively looked for anything outside of the record shop since I graduated. Maybe I could get an office job, earn a few paychecks, maybe a signing bonus and then ditch it.

She looks at him funny.

CASEY

Signing bonus?

GREG

Just a thought.

CASEY

Fuck that.

She playfully lays herself across Greg's lap. Greg looks at her, amused.

CASEY

I don't care if the bonus is a thousand dollars, I don't care if it's a million dollars. That's so...safe. Playing it safe is why we're here and not in Mexico. So let's do something else.

GREG

Sure. Let's start by burning our passports and running through the streets naked, screaming in Spanish. Then we'll get deported and ta da, Mexico.

CASEY

Not a bad idea actually. (pause)  
How about we go for a drive.

GREG

Now?

CASEY

Yeah. Let's go for a drive.

GREG

Casey, you're drunk.

(CONTINUED)

CASEY  
Fine. You can hold the wheel.

GREG  
(flustered)  
I'm drunk. I'm hammered!

CASEY  
Greeeeeg. We just talked about  
this.

Casey sits up and pulls her hair up in a pony tail, holding her cigarette in her lips to free up her hands. When she's got it all tied up, she takes a drag and returns the cigarette to her hand.

CASEY  
I know a place we can go. We won't  
even be in the city all that long.

GREG  
Wait, you're serious? I don't--

CASEY  
Hey, if we die, then we're dead and  
it won't matter to us anyway,  
right?

She raises her eyebrows at him, up and down. She smiles, silently urging "come on." Greg offers a tentative smile back.

CASEY (CONT'D)  
Plus, once we're out of the city,  
we won't really have to worry about  
the cops.

Greg is hesitant.

GREG  
This night is going...differently  
than I pictured it would.

CASEY  
I think best when I'm driving. Come  
on.

She leans towards him and steals a kiss, puts out her cigarette, and goes back inside. She pokes her head out from inside the apartment.

(CONTINUED)

CASEY (CONT'D)

Come on.

Greg studies her face a bit and breaks into a nervous smile.

INT. CASEY'S CAR - NIGHT

Greg sits in the passenger seat of Casey's car; she's at the wheel. Her car is nothing special, a late 90s model Ford.

GREG

You sure about this?

CASEY

Beats the alternatives.

She puts the car in gear and we get a shot from the sidewalk to see the car as it pulls away from the curb, immediately going through a red light, albeit not very fast.

GREG (O.C.)

And we just ran a red.

CASEY (O.C.)

Did we? Shit. Just making sure you're paying attention.

The car makes a turn off screen. We're left with the sound of a car suddenly speeding off.

EXT. RURAL FIELDS - NIGHT

Headlights coming down a dirt road, flanked on either side by vast fields of grass, dried and golden yellow. The car slows until it eventually turns off the road and crawls onto the grass, eventually stopping, the engine still on.

INT. CASEY'S CAR - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Casey puts the car in park. Casey and Greg turn and exchange a quick glance. Casey then twists her body to reach into the back seat, producing a pint bottle of whiskey.

CASEY

You wanna roll up a joint? We have to do this right.

Greg looks out his window, searching for signs of life while Casey takes a swig from the bottle. He doesn't see anything. Taking on an optimistic resignation, he shrugs.

(CONTINUED)

GREG

Well, at this point. Too bad I forgot my meth.

He then reaches into a shirt pocket and pulls out a ziploc bag containing weed and papers.

Casey looks over to him, puts her hand on his shoulder and offers an affectionate smile to ease any residual nervousness.

CASEY

I used to do this in high school all the time, don't worry. If this doesn't make you feel better, you're hopeless.

Greg laughs lightly at this but continues rolling the joint, during which time Casey turns on the car stereo, flipping through several songs, not staying on one for long before moving on to the next.

GREG

I trust you.

He licks the paper, and completes the joint-rolling process. Casey settles on a song, "Cheap Beer" by FIDLAR, a song that seems like it was made for a drunk driving scene with a chorus that chants "I drink cheap beer, so what, fuck you." Greg, joint in mouth, is about to light up when Casey shifts into gear and floors it. The wheels spin for a bit, then find traction and the car takes off. Greg lurches with the car's sudden acceleration, pressed against his seat. Casey screams a "woo," reckless abandon. Greg has a shocked smile on his face, trying to take in what's going on. Casey quickly throws the wheel to the right, so that the momentum of everything in the car slams abruptly to the left. The turn seems to last too long, but Casey finally evens out the car's path. The music blaring, Casey has to shout.

CASEY

Hold the wheel!

GREG

Now!?

CASEY

Yeah!

Greg grabs the wheel and aims all of his focus to the windshield. Casey twists the cap off her whiskey, takes a healthy swig and hands it off to Greg. During the exchange they both turn to look ahead and notice in the dim

(CONTINUED)

illumination of the car's headlights a fast approaching tree. Casey jams the wheel to the side and they miss the tree narrowly, catching a jarring bump off of one of the roots. Some whiskey spills, but Greg is now in safe possession of it, the joint still in his other hand. Casey turns and sees Greg in paralyzed shock and starts to laugh a musical head-tilted-back laugh, barely audible over the music. Greg transitions from shock to laughter, slowly at first, with just a grin spreading across his face and then developing to laughter without restraint, filling the car with both of their laughs.

Greg finally lights the joint, hands it to Casey. She takes a hit, gives it back, and then again veers the car to one side, then quickly cranks the wheel in the other direction, skidding the car sideways across the field. The tires find their grasp and the car launches forward again, with the back end fish-tailing a bit. Casey smiles, letting smoke waft out of her mouth.

EXT. RURAL FIELDS - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

We see the car from outside and the music is muted and low from our perspective. The taillights of the car are the most vibrant thing on screen. We watch them zig zag and fade into the night with the music.

INT. CASEY'S CAR - NIGHT

The music is gone, the car is hazy with smoke, and we see Casey put the car in park and then kill the ignition. All moonlight is filtered through the smoke in the car. Casey and Greg exchange another one of those in-love gazes. Greg begins to say something, running his hands through his hair.

GREG

Man--

CASEY

(turning, hands still on the  
wheel)

Backseat?

Greg stops, hands still in his hair.

GREG

Yes.

We cut to Greg and Casey making out in the backseat, smoke swirling around lightly. No music. Casey pulls her shirt over her head. Greg's kisses move to her neck and clavicle. CLOSE SHOT of Casey's face, head tilted upward, lips slightly parted, slightly curved in a smile, and eyes wild.

EXT. RURAL FIELDS - MORNING

The scene opens with a peaceful shot of the fields, some birds chirping. A shot of the car's tires covered in mud. An overhead shot of the car parked in the field. From our aerial view, we see that the field surrounding the car is wrought with tire tracks, a twisting record of the previous night's recklessness.

INT. CASEY'S CAR - MORNING - CONTINUOUS

Greg is looking up at the car's ceiling. Morning light--golden from filtering through the dirty windows--is splashed across his face. He's leaned against a window in the backseat, Casey is in the crook of his neck.

She awakens slowly with just-waking-up noises, stretching and eventually coming to rest by leaning her head against the seat in front of them. She looks at Greg with half asleep eyes and perfectly-messed up hair for a while before speaking. Greg looks at her with adoration. She speaks:

CASEY

Greg.

GREG

Yeah?

A bit of a pause.

CASEY

I'm so hungover.

She laughs at her own statement lightly. Greg rubs her back.

GREG

Coffee?

CASEY

(mid-stretch)

Pleeeeeease.

Casey completes her stretch and sits back, slightly slumped against the weight of her hangover. She lets out a lengthy sigh.

(CONTINUED)

CASEY

Goddamn.

EXT. ROAD - MORNING

Later: They're back on a paved road, riding into town. Casey has her window open, wind blowing her hair back, tracing the patches of air with a worm-like movement from her hand out the window. She's humming the melody of "Cringe" by Alkaline Trio, the same tune she hummed the morning after she and Greg had sex for the first time. Greg watches her, trying to place the song, just as he did the first time around.

GREG

What song is that?

CASEY

Ah shit. I always think this place is on the next block for some reason.

She parks quickly, causing them to jerk to one side.

CASEY (CONT'D)

Sorry. Here we are.

She turns the car off.

EXT. CAFE PATIO - LATE MORNING

The scene opens with a straight-on shot of Casey, a cup of coffee at her lips, portraitesque. She is centered in the shot, two hands on her mug, a lit cigarette balanced between fingers. Move to a MEDIUM SHOT of both of them seated at a small table on a cafe patio. Greg is also equipped with coffee and a cigarette.

We go back to seeing Casey straight-on. She flicks ash from her cigarette off to the side before taking a drag.

GREG (V.O.)

That night, driving drunk in an empty field, was when I knew I'd go to Mexico with her. I knew. It was the only thing that made sense.

Cut to a WIDE SHOT, showing the two sitting at their table at the center of the screen as people walk by on the sidewalk next to them.

(CONTINUED)

GREG (V.O.)

In a world that felt rented, never quite mine, she gave me something that was my own. She made me feel like I belonged. As long as I was with her, I'd belong.

INT. TOM'S APARTMENT - EARLY AFTERNOON

Chris is sitting on Tom's couch, a 40 in his hand. He jumps forward from his reclined position.

CHRIS

You're going to Mexico? What the fuck?

GREG

Pretty sure I've mentioned this before.

CHRIS

Yeah, but you've been talking about leaving Philly since before I can remember.

GREG

Case in point why I need to get out.

CHRIS

And that was before you had accepted a job offer. My dad is gonna be so pissed off. I'm pissed off. This is fucking stupid. He's been relying on the fact that you would actually stay true to your word and take the job. Do you realize what you're giving up?

GREG

That job is not what I need right now. I talked to Casey--

CHRIS

Yeah of course you did. God dammit dude. I can't even.

GREG

I have to go to Mexico. I have to do this. Any other option and I'm pretty sure I'd lose my mind and jump in front of a train. I'm being serious.

(CONTINUED)

CHRIS

You're being such a piece of shit right now, dude, that's what you're being. And you're mistaken. You're mixing up running away to Mexico with drinking yourself into oblivion. Very common mistake. You just need to drink more.

GREG

Tried that already, man.

Greg opens his mouth to say more, but Chris'll have none of that.

CHRIS

No, false. If it hasn't worked, you're doing it wrong. Dammit, Greg. Fuck.

GREG

Dude. I'm no expert on this whole social interaction thing, but as my friend you should probably at least pretend to support me on this. It's a major fucking life decision.

CHRIS

As your friend I'm trying to tell you that this is a bad decision. You're leaving me and my dad high and dry. You're going back on your word. You're turning down a once in a lifetime opportunity.

GREG

Just because something is a once in a lifetime chance, doesn't mean it's the right choice.

EXT. SIDEWALK - DAY

Greg and Chris exit a bus and walk along the sidewalk.

CHRIS

If you want, I have some Mexican cheese in the fridge at Tom's. There. I just saved you a trip all the way to Mexico. It's already shredded and everything.

Greg doesn't answer, just keeps walking. Chris looks to him occasionally for a sign of a response.

(CONTINUED)

CHRIS (CONT'D)

Do you want some Taco Bell? Let's go get some Taco Bell. You know that's an authentic Mexican experience because it hurts to poop the next day.

Greg keeps walking.

INT. RECORD STORE - DAY

Chris is half-assed stocking CD's, while Greg is one aisle over. Chris delivers a rant, using whatever CD he might be holding at any given time to gesture with and/or wave around wildly and to point at Greg.

CHRIS

The way I see it, one of two things could happen here. You're either gonna get your fucking heads chopped off by a fucking Mexican Drug Cartel and then they'll use your heads as bowling balls or probably fellatio toys because I feel like Mexicans aren't very big on bowling and your dead body will be viciously sodomized again and again and again. Or. Everything will be hunky dory until you accidentally swallow some of the water while showering and you die from shitting your fucking intestines out, which by the way, is probably the most embarrassing way to die. Casey will be so disgusted with how much you've shit that she'll leave you for some attractive man who doesn't shit so much, and you won't even have a chance to beg her to stay because you're stuck birthing satan on a stupid fucking Mexican toilet. And I'll make sure that gets on your tombstone, don't think I won't.

Chris looks off into an imaginary distance and uses his hands to frame a marquee in the air, accenting the next bit of his tirade.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

"Gregory Barnes. Died from Too Much Diarrhea." That's what it'll say.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CHRIS (CONT'D) (cont'd)  
 Which, I'd like to point out, is kind of ambiguous phrasing, so when people see your grave they might think that you died from eating too much diarrhea and then you'll be known as the man that ate diarrhea and people from all over will flock to see the gravesite of the man who liked to eat diarrhea. They'll have an expose on the news and people will give interviews about you saying stuff like "He was always pretty quiet, kept to himself. He seemed like a nice guy. I had no idea." And that's your fucking legacy. Is that what you want?

The next shot, zooming out a bit, reveals that an elderly customer has been standing behind Chris this entire time, shocked by what he has just heard. Chris turns to grab more CDs from his cart and sees the customer, who is staring. Chris points to the CD the man is holding.

CHRIS  
 (incredulously)  
 New Morrissey album huh? Good choice.

INT. TOM'S APARTMENT - AFTERNOON

Tom is sitting on the couch while Chris is standing at an easel nearby, painting.

TOM  
 What's this one called? Looks nice.

Chris steps back to ponder his own work.

CHRIS  
 I think I'll call it "This is a metaphor for my life because all good things have to fall apart and or be viciously destroyed by external forces while I sit by and wonder if I'll ever be truly happy." It's not done yet though. Hold on.

Chris walks off screen and we hear a kitchen drawer open, shuffling of metallic utensils. Tom looks on, somewhat curious. He comes back with a large knife. He then starts to stab the canvas until it's completely destroyed.

(CONTINUED)

CHRIS (CONT'D)

There. All done.

TOM

Explain the metaphor. I'm not sure I get it.

CHRIS

Now it's called "I thought I'd feel better after destroying my painting, but I don't."

TOM

I mean, you have to know deep down that this is what makes sense, right? I'm not surprised and I'm not all that close to the situation. I get that you're a little more attached, that you're nervous about restarting your life without your best friend but--

CHRIS

He's talking about selling out like we're fucking Green Day or something. It's way different. This is an awesome opportunity. And he's gonna miss out. My dad stuck his neck out for him, hands him a golden future on a silver platter and he's just walking away.

TOM

I donno man. Actions always send a message, right? By turning this down, the message is that he views missing out on someone like Casey as worse than missing out on a killer job and letting down your pops. It's not about the job. It's about the girl. When's the last time you saw that kid so happy?

Chris says nothing. Looks at his destroyed painting with regret.

TOM (CONT'D)

Pre-Casey, Greg was shitty. With Casey, Greg is less shitty. Not hard to notice. Maybe instead of jamming the job down his throat and trying to guilt trip him, you should tell him you're okay with

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

TOM (CONT'D) (cont'd)  
 him being happy. You can't change  
 his mind at this point.

CHRIS  
 I hope my actions don't send the  
 message that I don't want him to be  
 happy. I'm just skeptical. Like  
 really really fucking skeptical.  
 How long has he known her? A month?

TOM  
 Uhh, maybe five or six?

CHRIS  
 Really? Shit. I need to smoke less  
 weed. Either way, that's not that  
 long. That's like a fucking high  
 school relationship. Isn't that a  
 little weird to you? Running away  
 to another country with a girl he's  
 known less than the radio lifespan  
 of a pop song?

TOM  
 Maybe you wouldn't go, but you're  
 not him. If it's a mistake, oh  
 well, but I think you should let  
 him decide for himself.

INT. BUS - EVENING

Chris and Greg are seated next to one another on a bus. Greg has the window seat and is watching the streets pass by through the smudged glass. Chris is turned toward him, speaking.

CHRIS  
 Hey man, I wanted to talk to you  
 about Casey.

At this, Greg turns and studies Chris's face. He's mad.

GREG  
 Chris. I don't want to hear it  
 anymore. I've been really unhappy  
 for a very long time now. Long  
 enough to figure out very clearly  
 what I do not want. And that's the  
 daily life we've been drifting  
 through. I don't think being in New  
 York would change much. I can't

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

GREG (cont'd)  
 keep living here, surrounded by these people, doing the same old shit, more money or not. And now I have a chance at a true escape. Not an escape to the same shit in a different city with a different job, but a real, true escape. And you know, I would just kill myself thinking about what could have been if I don't take it. So fuck you if you can't understand that. That's not my fucking fault.

A bit of a pause.

CHRIS  
 Is this about poon?

GREG  
 (sarcastically)  
 Jesus. Yes. This is all about poon.

Greg turns away from Chris and looks out the window. After some silence, Chris puts his hand on Greg's knee and Greg turns his attention back to Chris, looking first at Chris's hand and then to his face. Chris has taken on a "but seriously" tone.

CHRIS  
 I wanted to say I'm sorry... I know how much she means to you. I see the difference in you from before you met her and now. And it's a good difference. I was just really hoping that we'd be able to do this together. Move to New York, make a lot of money... And I still think it's a good opportunity, but you're right.

Chris reaches over Greg to pull the cable that requests a stop and offers a half-smile.

CHRIS (CONT'D)  
 I'm gonna miss you, man.

GREG  
 Oh. Wow. I didn't expect that. For real?

(CONTINUED)

CHRIS

For real.

A short pause between then and the bus stopping.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

Well. I'll mostly miss your doggy style. If you have to get away, let's at least throw a party first.

Greg grins and Chris stands up and begins to make his way down the bus aisle to the exit.

EXT. SIDEWALK - MORNING

Back to present. Greg walks.

GREG (V.O.)

Casey wanted to say fuck it and leave right away, but I'm a slow mover on big decisions. I talked her into a more gradual approach. We agreed to take a few weeks to save some money and figure out logistics. Wrap up loose ends. Say our good byes. And then, finally, head off into an idealistic horizon and live happily ever after.

Greg approaches Casey's apartment building. He walks up the porch, and dials her at the gate, but there's no answer. He buzzes a neighbor.

NEIGHBOR

Who's this?

GREG

Yeah, hi, it's Casey's boyfriend.

NEIGHBOR

Casey?

GREG

She lives across from you. She's not answering so I was wondering if you could buzz me in. It'd--

NEIGHBOR

Sorry, no can do.

Disconnected.

(CONTINUED)

GREG  
(to himself)  
Dammit, Casey. Where'd you go?

EXT. SIDEWALK - DAY

A FOLLOWING SHOT from behind Greg and Chris as they walk down the street. They're wearing jackets, one of the first signs that it's no longer summer. Chris looks particularly punk rock today, as he's also wearing a jean vest adorned with various patches and is carrying what is clearly a 40 wrapped in a paper bag.

CHRIS  
I'm glad you're still going, man,  
because I've been planning this  
party in my head for a while now.

GREG  
Well at least you're happy.

CHRIS  
If you think about it, we can't not  
throw a party. I figure the purpose  
is threefold. One: it sends you two  
off proper, you go out with a bang  
and everyone gets together and has  
one last hurrah. Yaaaay. Two: it'll  
give me the chance to drink away  
the inevitable pain that your  
absence will inflict on me. I hope  
you're haunted by the guilt. And  
three: maybe I'll get laid.

GREG  
You're quite the charmer, Chris. I  
hope you know that.

CHRIS  
But one of my many talents.

They walk up to the Fairlane Diner. Casey is smoking in front, an arm wrapped in a tight self-hug, hair partially obscuring her face from the camera.

CHRIS  
Is that Casey?

They get closer and see that it is in fact Casey. She looks pissed off. She sees them and gives a semi-wave.

(CONTINUED)

GREG  
You on a shift break?

CASEY  
Yeah. I'm on a permanent fucking  
shift break.

She brings her cigarette to her lips.

CASEY (CONT'D)  
I quit. A guy at one of my tables  
was being a jackass.

Takes a shakey drag. Lets it out.

CASEY (CONT'D)  
Which doesn't matter anyway, I  
guess, since we're getting the fuck  
out of this place.

Greg puts his arm around her, rubs her back a bit. Chris  
takes the opportunity to sip on his 40, looking up and down  
the street.

GREG  
You okay?

She nods yes. Just then the door opens and two guys come  
out, probably in their thirties, dressed business casual  
like they're on their lunch break from some office job. They  
pass by and one of the men, JAMES, mutters audibly.

JAMES  
Bitch.

They keep walking down the sidewalk.

CASEY  
(shouting after them)  
Fuck you!

Greg takes a few steps forward, also shouting after them.  
Chris is now very alert in the background.

GREG  
(shouting)  
Hey who do you think you are? You  
think you can just go treating  
people like shit?

The two men stop and turn. We see that James's khaki pants  
are stained down the front.

(CONTINUED)

JAMES

(pointing angrily to Casey)  
 You wanna talk about treating  
 people like shit? Your bitch  
 girlfriend poured coffee on my  
 goddamn lap! So how about you fuck  
 off.

Chris steps forward, pointing with his 40.

CHRIS

Hey, how about you stop being a  
 prick.

JAMES

Fuck you.

CHRIS

Fuck you!

JAMES

The fuck are you gonna do? Fucking  
 idiot.

Chris discards the paper bag from his 40 and then very abruptly throws the bottle dangerously close to the two men's feet. The bottle shatters, malt liquor spraying across the cement and the men look like they've just gotten themselves into serious trouble. Chris starts running toward them; the two men immediately sprint away.

CHRIS

(running)

I'm gonna fuck your fucking mouth!

They sprint down the street and disappear around a corner, leaving Greg looking more amused than shocked. Casey looks like she's not sure what to think.

CASEY

Well that's one way to handle it.

Greg chuckles a little and turns to Casey.

GREG

Did you really pour coffee on him?

CASEY

Damn right I did. In my defense, I  
 said "oops" after.

Greg gives her a look. Defensively, Casey elaborates.

(CONTINUED)

CASEY

He was a total fucking sleezeball. He treated me like a whore. Kept trying to come onto me and at one point he actually *whistled* at me to come over. I'm not a fucking dog.

She throws her cigarette to the ground, stomps it out. Greg is still grinning, apparently tickled by Casey's behavior.

GREG

I assume he didn't tip.

CASEY

God, I can't wait to get out of here.

Casey is the one this time to offer a cigarette from that familiar blue pack. He accepts and she lights it with her white lighter. She takes out another cigarette for herself.

GREG

Chris wants to throw us a goodbye party.

CASEY

Can we skip it, can we just skip everything? I'm ready to go right now.

GREG

You alright?

CASEY

Not really, Greg. Everything's getting to me all at once. I just, I need to get out.

Angry cigarette inhale. Greg puts his arm around her and pulls her into a side hug squeeze.

GREG

Can you wait a little longer?

CASEY

Let's just leave. We can leave tonight. We'll catch a train and figure things out from there.

GREG

It's easy to say that now, but when we need money in a week because we caught the wrong bus, it's gonna be a lot different.

(CONTINUED)

CASEY  
I have money.

GREG  
What do you mean?

CASEY  
My mom's jewelry. I took it to a  
pawn shop.

Greg is unsure of how to react. He looks at her with worry  
in his eyes.

GREG  
You didn't have to do that...I got  
a few more days till my last  
paycheck. We could go to the pawn  
shop and try and get it back

Casey sighs.

CASEY  
No. It's fine. Greg, let's please  
just leave.

Tears are rolling down her cheeks at this point.

GREG  
Can you wait just a few more days?  
Just a few more. We'll go to the  
party and leave the next day. Just  
a few more days and then we'll be  
gone.

Greg kisses her on the cheek.

We hear wheezing. Casey and Greg turn to see what's up. It's  
Chris, staggering back up the street toward them. As he gets  
closer he says:

CHRIS  
(panting)  
Can I have a cigarette?

Casey gives him one. He fans himself by flapping his jacket  
a bit.

CHRIS (CONT'D)  
(still panting)  
We should probably get out of here.

He senses the awkward air of invading a private moment.

(CONTINUED)

CHRIS (CONT'D)  
You guys okay?

INT. CASEY'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Casey and Greg are lying in bed together, naked, but covered by her sheets. We get an overhead shot as they both look toward the ceiling. They lie in silence until Casey breaks it suddenly, eyes still trained to the ceiling.

CASEY  
Hey Greg.

GREG  
Hey Casey.

CASEY  
What do you want out of life?

GREG  
Right now?

Casey tries to use a sweeping hand gesture to help explain further.

CASEY  
No. Like. Life. All of it. What do  
you want out of it?

Greg thinks for a bit and takes his time phrasing each piece of his thoughts, slowly finding word after word until he has a sentence.

GREG  
I think...I think I want...to never  
feel inauthentic. At any given  
moment I want to feel like I'm  
being true to myself. I think  
that's why I'm okay with this whole  
going to Mexico thing.

He repositions himself under the covers to face Casey.

GREG (CONT'D)  
This is gonna sound pretty cheesy.  
But you helped me figure that out.  
You always seemed like you were  
being true to yourself and I really  
admired that. Helped me recognize  
when I was doing something because  
I thought I should instead of  
because I wanted to.

(CONTINUED)

She turns her head and gives an ambiguous smile.

GREG (CONT'D)

What about you? What do you want  
out of life?

She also takes a while to form her thoughts. She keeps  
looking at the ceiling.

CASEY

When I was younger, I remember  
going places with my dad. He was  
always looking up.

She turns her head to look at Greg.

CASEY (CONT'D)

He was an architect.

She turns back to the ceiling.

CASEY (CONT'D)

So he was always interested in  
ceilings. He would walk into a  
building and the first thing he  
would do is look up to study the  
curves and the slants and structure  
of the ceiling. Over time I got in  
the habit of doing the same thing,  
always looking up whenever I enter  
a building.

A lengthy pause.

CASEY (CONT'D)

I'm bored with all the ceilings  
I've seen here.

She squints in thought for a second.

CASEY (CONT'D)

I think I've seen enough ceilings.

A silence follows, like Greg is waiting for her to say  
something more or to elaborate. Greg studies her face, an  
uncertain, kind of confused half-smile forming. She stares  
ahead.

INT. TOM'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

The scene opens to the tune of "Isla de Encanta" by The Pixies with your typical house party scene.

Chris--a red cup in each hand--and a blond girl, MEGAN, approach Greg and Casey. Megan is wearing a long blue button up shirt and leggings. Her hair up in a tight pony tail. Chris puts his arm around Greg.

CHRIS

Hola! That's Spanish for hello. You should probably know that for Mexico.

Greg smiles.

GREG

Thanks.

CHRIS

Hey, I want you to meet Megan. She's a yoga instructor.

He gives a couple of quick eyebrow raises and tongue flicks in the direction of Greg, out of Megan's view. Megan shakes hands and exchanges greeting pleasantries with Greg and Casey.

MEGAN

So I heard you guys are gonna be teaching English in Mexico. That's so cool.

Greg gives a questioning look to Casey who reciprocates.

GREG

Not exactly. Well. I don't know actually. Maybe?

MEGAN

You haven't heard back from the program yet?

GREG

No. We don't really have a plan.

CASEY

Other than to get out of here as fast as humanly possible

This doesn't jive with how Megan apparently thinks trips to Mexico should go.

(CONTINUED)

MEGAN  
Oh, is this a sort of backpacking  
trip or something?

GREG  
No...

Megan laughs somewhat uncomfortably.

MEGAN  
Then...what are you doing?

GREG  
We're just going.

MEGAN  
And you really don't have a plan?

GREG  
No.

MEGAN  
Well what are you gonna do? Where  
are you gonna stay?

GREG  
I donno.

MEGAN  
Doesn't that scare you?

Greg has to think this one over. Casey responds for him.

CASEY  
Not really. And we leave tomorrow.  
How about that?

An uncomfortable pause. Megan still can't fit this in with  
her schema of life.

MEGAN  
So do you plan on coming back?

Casey and Greg respond simultaneously.

GREG  
Maybe.

CASEY  
No.

More silence. Chris takes a nervous drink from his red cup,  
looking back and forth between Megan and the others. Casey  
also takes a pull from her beer. Megan is determined to  
fight off any awkwardness by talking more.

(CONTINUED)

MEGAN

So it sure got cold fast.

EXT. TOM'S APARTMENT - BALCONY - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Casey and Greg are standing against the railing of Tom's balcony, looking out at the city lights. They're wearing jackets and their breath is visible in the brisk air. They have beers in their hands. Casey takes a swig of hers.

CASEY

I'm not gonna miss this for a second.

GREG

Not even a little?

Casey takes a long pull from her beer and then shakes her head.

CASEY

That girl inside started talking about the weather for God's sake.

GREG

I thought I'd feel the same. Get out of here and never look back, you know. But these past few months hanging out with you have been my best in this city. It's softened how I feel about everything.

Casey smiles at Greg.

GREG (CONT'D)

It'll be a nice break though, for sure.

CASEY

A nice break? Greg, this is more than a break. This is a new life. It's not like we're going on a vacation.

GREG

Right, I know. That's not what I meant.

Greg leans to kiss her, but she stops this by asking:

(CONTINUED)

CASEY

Do you have a cigarette?

GREG

I was hoping you'd have one  
actually. Forgot to pick up more.

Casey sighs heavily, shoulders slumping, hair falling in  
front of her face.

CASEY

Shit.

INT. TOM'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Casey is on the couch engaged in a conversation with a guy,  
MILES, next to her while the party goes on. Miles speaks  
earnestly, despite the interrogative nature of Casey's  
questions, albeit he's a bit clueless as to what Casey is  
going for here.

MILES

God I can't wait. One more  
semester, and then life begins.

CASEY

Yeah? Life will magically start up?

MILES

You know. I finally won't have to  
go to classes anymore and I'll  
start doing real people things.  
Things will finally get going.

CASEY

What are real people things?

MILES

Well first I'll have to study for  
the CPA exam. Probably work for my  
dad's firm while I'm doing that.  
And then I'll be a certified  
accountant and I'll start making  
the big bucks. I'll be a real  
person.

Casey nods, sipping her beer.

CASEY

What are you gonna do with all that  
money?

(CONTINUED)

MILES

You know, get a nice car, probably an Audi. Get a nice house somewhere in the suburbs. Somewhere quiet where I can park my car and not worry about a busted in window. That sort of thing.

CASEY

And then what once you've got those things?

MILES

What do you mean?

CASEY

What comes next?

MILES

I don't know. I hadn't thought that far ahead. I don't think I really need to, truly. Life will just keep happening.

CASEY

Will you just keep buying things?

MILES

I don't know. Maybe. Probably. That's how life goes right? You need things, so you work so you can buy those things. Probably start a family at some point, who knows. What about you, what are you doing once you get to Mexico?

CASEY

(shrugging)

I don't know. Existing.

MILES

I should hope so. But I mean what are you going to do. Specifically. Once you get there, what comes next?

CASEY

Maybe stay in a cheap hostel or find people to bum around with. I guess I'll try to find a job somewhere eventually.

(CONTINUED)

MILES

What kind of job?

CASEY

Maybe a waitress job, something like that. Maybe work on a farm.

MILES

Didn't you do that here already, the waitressing?

Casey furrows her brow, frowning.

MILES (CONT'D)

I guess if you have experience, might as well keep doing it. You're lucky to have a guy like Greg going with you by the way. I don't know a lot of people who would give up that marketing job to peace out to Mexico. Pretty ballsy.

CASEY

(taken aback)

Marketing job? You mean the record store gig?

MILES

Nah man, the marketing job with Chris's dad's firm. And Chris's dad tried to recruit him hard, too. Even now, he told Greg that if he comes back within a year, the job will still be there for him. Chris was telling me all about it earlier. Pretty crazy stuff.

Casey looks at Greg talking and laughing with some people across the room. She looks betrayed.

MILES (CONT'D)

Alright, so you'll get a job. Then what? What comes next?

Casey's brow remains furrowed. She's thinking hard about something. She stays like this for a while until Miles reminds her he's there.

MILES (CONT'D)

Casey?

Abruptly, Casey stands up.

(CONTINUED)

CASEY

I have to go.

Miles looks confused and Casey walks away. She walks up to Greg and pulls him aside.

CASEY

Hey I'm gonna leave.

GREG

What? Why?

CASEY

I gotta go get some cigarettes and then I'll probably drive around for a bit.

Greg is concerned.

GREG

You sure you should be driving?  
Chris has some cigarettes if you--

CASEY

Yeah, I'll be fine.

Greg hesitates.

GREG

You okay?

CASEY

Fine.

GREG

You sure? You look off.

Casey reaches up to kiss him on the cheek.

CASEY

I'm fine. Bye.

And she leaves.

We see Greg watch her go.

Cut to: It's later in the night, a fact we know because there are significantly more beer bottles and cans scattered around the apartment and only five or six people are still present. Greg sits with them in a loose circle, composed of people on couches and chairs. Everyone is also much more drunk than when we last saw them.

(CONTINUED)

CHRIS

I think you chose a bad time to go to Mexico.

MILES

Tons of drug violence right now.

CHRIS

No, I mean, it's a bad time having a girlfriend. You're gonna see so many beautiful exotic Latina girls and you'll never know what it's like to pork them.

GREG

Good thing I never really liked pork.

CHRIS

Another reason Mexico isn't right for you. Fucking carnitas, man.

TOM

So this is it. It's finally happening.

GREG

Yeah. This is it. Two things I never thought would happen are happening all at once.

CHRIS

Your balls dropped and what else?

GREG

Chris, I'm going to murder you in your sleep. I'm talking about finally getting out of here and finally meeting a girl who doesn't suck.

Greg sticks his hand out at Chris in a pre-emptive strike.

GREG

Chris.

INT. CASEY'S CAR - NIGHT

Casey looks upset as she drives. We see lights flicker over her face. She swerves slightly. We see ice on the roads.

INT. TOM'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Back to the party. Tom reaches for a small wrapped gift.

TOM

Hey I wanted to give you something.

He hands over the gift.

TOM (CONT'D)

This is half congratulatory and half because I know you're too busy romanticizing the entire trip to think about the practical things. Like learning to speak Spanish.

Greg unwraps the gift, revealing a Spanish phrase book.

INT. LIQUOR STORE - NIGHT

From the window we see Casey's car pull up rather quickly and park crooked. She gets out and enters the liquor store.

INT. TOM'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Chris quickly grabs the phrase book away from Greg.

CHRIS

The problem is these books never have anything that you'll actually need to know.

He flips through the book a bit.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

Like how do you say "I can't dance, so let's just skip that and fuck?" Or "That baby looks nothing like me." Crucial information just left out like it doesn't even matter.

Flips through more, sees something, tries to make fun of it and butchers the pronunciation.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

Ah. Here's how to make small talk about your macaroni. You'll probably need to know this: *Probe los maricones y eran un poco salados.*

(CONTINUED)

## SUBTITLES

I tasted the faggots and they were  
a little salty.

No one speaks Spanish well enough to catch the error of  
mixing up macarones and maricones.

TOM

I'm really happy for you, man. I  
think getting out will be good for  
you.

GREG

No kidding. Visiting me would be a  
good excuse for you guys to come  
down to Mexico sometime, too.

He motions to Chris.

GREG (CONT'D)

Might have to put a muzzle on this  
one, but it'd still be rad to see  
you.

Chris is still transfixed on the Spanish book.

TOM

You think you'll ever come back?

GREG

I mean, yeah maybe, there's always  
the possibility, but right now I  
can't really think about that.  
Gotta look ahead.

INT. LIQUOR STORE - NIGHT

Casey walks up to the counter. The clerk is transfixed on  
something playing on a small TV. He does not acknowledge  
her. She's annoyed.

CASEY

Hello?

The clerk either can't hear her or ignores her. He chuckles  
at the TV.

Casey looks around, as if debating leaving or trying again.  
She heaves an irritated sigh.

(CONTINUED)

CASEY  
I said hello. Hello?

The clerk reluctantly turns from the TV.

CLERK  
What? What can I get for you?

Casey answers as she fumbles for money inside her bag.

CASEY  
American Spirit Blues.

The clerk makes scanning the wall of cigarettes look like a chore. We see Casey waiting somewhat impatiently, money in hand.

INT. TOM'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Back to the circle of drunk dudes.

TOM  
So do you think you love her?

Greg thinks about this, or maybe thinks about what it entails.

GREG  
Yeah. I do. She's...she's it for me, you know?

Someone in the group makes a whip-sound.

TOM  
You told her that yet?

GREG  
No, not yet. I mean. One milestone at a time.

Greg pauses to drink and looks wistfully ahead.

GREG (CONT'D)  
I can see us living together in Mexico, playing shitty acoustic punk rock songs--Mexican Greg will play guitar, of course--bumming around in the sun, smoking joints, drinking wine, just doing what we please. Taking things slowly. Never have to deal with the bullshit of Philadelphia. We'll have the life,  
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

GREG (CONT'D) (cont'd)  
 man. That's it. That's all I want  
 right now, is just...that. Nothing  
 else.

CHRIS  
 Have you met her mom though?

GREG  
 What?

CHRIS  
 Her mom. You look at a girl's mom  
 and it's the best way to see how a  
 girl will turn out later on. If her  
 mom's hot, congratulations. If her  
 mom's fat, you might have a big  
 girl on your hands in a few years.

INT. LIQUOR STORE - NIGHT

The clerk produces a yellow pack of American Spirits.

CLERK  
 This?

CASEY  
 No. No, it's just like that, same  
 brand, except the pack is blue.

The clerk turns again, seeks out the blue pack. He finally  
 finds their place on the wall, but there are none left.

CLERK  
 All out.

Casey reacts with a muttered expletive.

INT. TOM'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

CHRIS  
 My dad's offer still stands.

GREG  
 And my decision still stands.

CHRIS  
 Fine. More hookers for me. *Mas  
 hookers para mio.*

(CONTINUED)

TOM  
Where's the old lady anyway?

GREG  
She dipped out for cigarettes.  
She'll be right back.

Chris stands up.

CHRIS  
I think I have to throw up.

INT. LIQUOR STORE - NIGHT

CLERK  
You want a different kind?

CASEY  
No. I'm fine.

She walks out in a strange state of panic/upset. We see her, still from a viewpoint inside the store, get inside her car. She sits looking defeated for a bit before starting the car. At first the car jumps forward, Casey shifts to reverse, and she hastily pulls out of her parking spot, speeding out of the parking lot, misjudging the driveway dip and scraping the curb hard on her way out.

EXT. SIDEWALK - MORNING

Present. Greg walks out of a liquor store, pocketing cigarettes. He gets a phone call, checks his screen and sees it's from a strange number. He answers, hopeful.

GREG  
Hello? Yeah, this is he.

He listens intently, his expression dropping.

GREG (CONT'D)  
How do you know? No, no way. No, a lot of people drive those--how do you know? How do you know?

He stops on the sidewalk and his face distorts in pain. All sound suddenly fades away. He cries.

EXT. CEMETARY - MORNING

We receive no audio for this entire scene except for the rhythmic pulse of a record that needs to be flipped, still spinning with the needle at the end of the album, crackling softly. The entire scene happens in SLOW MOTION.

First, Greg steps out of the driver's side of his car, dressed in a black suit. The camera FOLLOWS him as he walks toward Casey's funeral. The morning is overcast, everything gray and desaturated.

Cut to: An EXTRA WIDE SHOT of the funeral.

Cut to: Greg standing at the funeral, looking downward.

Cut to: A CLOSE SHOT of the priest's face while he's speaking. Still only vinyl crackle as audio.

Cut to: The casket being lowered into the ground while Greg watches intently. People around him are crying. Chris and Tom are present with pained looks on their faces.

Cut to: A CLOSE SHOT of Greg, gaze trained on the grave. We see the dark circles around his eyes. He looks tremendously depressed.

INT. FUNERAL PARTY - DAY

Greg, Chris, and Tom are sitting together, all still dressed in their funeral attire. Each of them has a drink of some sort in their hand. No one is speaking. We hear light chatter in the background. Chris tries to diffuse the tension, albeit not in his typical manner. He is appropriately somber.

CHRIS

My dad said you can work at the firm whenever you're ready. Take as much time as you need.

No response.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

Greg?

Greg reacts like he has just been abruptly pulled from a day dream. He turns and sees Chris, almost looking like he hadn't known he was there.

(CONTINUED)

GREG

Yeah. Thanks.

He nods idly, looking downward. Takes a tentative sip of his drink. Still looking at his glass he asks

GREG (CONT'D)

You think Casey wanted this?

An ambiguous question. Neither Chris nor Tom know how to respond. They seem saddened by it. Greg looks up from his glass, eyebrows up expectantly. Chris holds the silence a bit longer before simply saying,

CHRIS

I don't know. I don't know, man.

INT. GREG'S CAR - DAY

Greg gets into his car after the funeral. He seems to be gathering nerve, takes a deep breath, and then starts the car. He lets the car run a bit, then turns on his stereo. "Cringe" by Alkaline Trio begins to play (the song Casey hummed twice previously in the movie). He cocks his head at the opening chords of the song, a vague sense of deja vu manifesting in an expression of concentration. When the vocals kick in he concentrates harder, things falling into place.

We hear the song playing and Casey's humming of the melody from earlier layered over--her humming starts softly and then eventually reaches volume equal with the song:

-Very quick flashes of Casey's ceiling.

-Casey in her underwear in the kitchen the morning after they first had sex.

-Casey laughing while they're getting stoned on her floor.

Back to Greg in his car, recognition setting in.

-Quick flashes of Casey laughing while driving drunk in the fields.

-Casey dancing in Greg's apartment.

-Casey driving with one hand out the window the morning after.

-Casey smiling sleepily at Greg in bed and Greg looking back adoringly.

And then the single line of the chorus hits: "You were the last good thing I ever saw." As the instrumental that follows the chorus plays out we see Greg's face breakdown from shocked recognition of the song to crying, letting out everything he held in during the funeral.

EXT. OUTSIDE OF GREG'S CAR - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Greg buries his face in his hands, shaking with his cries as the rest of the song continues to play, muted slightly.

MONTAGE

The only audio for the ensuing montage is Greg's voicemail.

VOICEMAIL (O.C.)

You have six new voice messages.  
Message one.

-Greg is sitting in a doctor's office waiting room. Medical posters on the walls.

CHRIS (O.C.)

(on voicemail)

Hey Greg, it's Chris. I heard about what happened at work the other day and I haven't really heard from you in a while, so...just wanted to check in, make sure you're doing okay.

-Greg is in the doctor's office, nodding solemnly as the doctor is speaking to him. The doctor writes something on a prescription pad and hands the slip to him.

CHRIS (O.C.)

(on voicemail)

If you need anything at all, man, just let me know. I want to help you get through this. And I'm worried about you. Give me a call back when you can. Maybe we can get a beer or something. Alright.

-Greg emerges into a gray autumn day outside the clinic. He takes another look at the prescription.

VOICEMAIL (O.C.)

Next message.

(CONTINUED)

CHRIS (O.C.)  
 (on voicemail)  
 Greg. What's up dude. Been a while,  
 still no word from you. We're all  
 worried for you, we're all thinking  
 about you.

-Greg fills the prescription at a drug store. The  
 pharmacist, points to something on the pill container. Greg  
 nods. The pharmacist packages it in a small paper bag and  
 they complete the transaction.

CHRIS (O.C.)  
 (on voicemail)  
 I mean. No one's expecting you to  
 come hang out or anything but at  
 least give us a signal. Blink once  
 if you're okay sort of thing.

VOICEMAIL (O.C.)  
 End of message. Next message.

-Greg walks into his apartment, sets the pills on the table.  
 He opens a cabinet and gazes at an assortment of whiskey  
 bottles.

CHRIS (O.C.)  
 (on voicemail)  
 I was doing some research on this  
 sort of thing, the grieving  
 process...anyway, the first few  
 weeks are the worst and most people  
 just want to be alone.

-Greg is on his couch, drinking a glass of whiskey. He eyes  
 the pills on the table.

CHRIS (O.C.)  
 (on voicemail)  
 But I read that sometimes this  
 makes things worse, you know, and  
 it's, like, healthy to not go  
 through it alone. So. I guess what  
 I'm saying is we're all here for  
 support if you need. You can call  
 anytime. I love you, man. Hope  
 you're okay. Alright.

-Greg stands up with his drink still in hand. He walks to  
 the table and picks up the pill container, turns it over and  
 contemplates it.

INT. GREG'S APARTMENT BEDROOM - DAY

We see Greg's foot, unmoving, poking out from the edge of his bed. Someone is knocking on the door, loudly. No movement. Thin streams of light filter through the blinds.

The knocking gets louder and we hear Chris' muffled voice.

CHRIS (O.S.)

Greg! Greg! Open up, man!

Finally, the foot moves. Greg stirs and wakes up slowly. As he does this, we can see a bedside ashtray filled with smoked joints and cigarettes.

EXT. GREG'S APARTMENT BUILDING - HALLWAY - DAY

Greg opens the door, hair a mess, in pajama pants and an undershirt, early stages of a beard. It's Chris.

CHRIS

You alright man? Did I wake you up?

GREG

Why, what time is it?

CHRIS

One. And you look like shit.

Greg stares ahead at Chris with dead eyes.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

Come on, dude. Put on some clothes.  
We need to get you some sunlight.

INT. LION'S CLUB BAR - DAY

Chris and Greg sit across from one another in a booth at the Lion's Club. They both have pints of beer in front of them. Greg's is full. Chris has already taken a few swigs.

CHRIS

No one's heard from you in over a week. Fuck dude, I have no way of knowing if you're alive or not.

GREG

Yeah. Well. Me neither.

Greg looks at his drink. Unresponsive.

(CONTINUED)

CHRIS  
Seriously, dude. How've you been?  
I'm worried about you.

Greg looks up. Seems like he's getting ready to say something. He opens his mouth, eyes squinted a bit. Takes a sip of his beer, then speaks in a flat tone.

GREG  
I was thinking about killing  
myself, but I'm worried I'd fuck it  
up. Like I fuck up everything else.

He looks off at nothing in particular, frozen. Chris winces.

CHRIS  
Please don't make jokes like that  
after no one's heard from you for  
so long.

Greg says nothing. Chris watches him with uncertainty, looking for some response.

CHRIS (CONT'D)  
You know you didn't fuck up  
anything. She was drunk, there was  
ice on the road. It was an  
accident.

Greg gives an intense glare.

GREG  
You don't know that.

Chris shrugs.

CHRIS  
Okay, sure. That's technically  
true. But no matter what, at this  
point there's nothing you or I can  
do to change things. All we can do  
is try to cope and move on. I'm not  
trying to be a dick--but the least  
productive thing to do here is to  
blame yourself for anything that  
happened.

Greg is blank-faced.

GREG  
I don't know what to tell you.

(CONTINUED)

CHRIS

Tell me you'll be alright, man. It kills me seeing you like this.

Greg is silent. He gives an open palm "I got nothing" gesture.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

I know it's hard. But this isn't any way to live.

GREG

I'm aware of that. Trust me.

CHRIS

What would Casey say if she saw you like this?

Greg contemptuously sniffs at this and looks out the window.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

I'm being serious. Think about it. How would Casey want you to live?

Greg studies Chris's face for a while without saying anything.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

What would she want you to do in this situation? Would she want you moping around like this? Making no effort to escape from feeling shitty?

Greg keeps studying Chris. Finally he begins nodding slowly.

GREG

I think I know. I think I know what Casey would want.

Chris waits for Greg to elaborate. After a bit of silence:

CHRIS

Good. I want you to focus on that and make it happen. I can't bear to see you like this.

Chris lifts his glass toward Greg. Greg half-heartedly clinks his glass in a cheers, their pints meeting at the center of the screen. They drink.

INT. GREG'S APARTMENT BUILDING - HALLWAY - DAY

Chris--wearing different clothes than the previous scene, indicating a new day--walks up to Greg's front door and notices a cardboard box sitting in the hall by his door. There's a note on the top that says "For Chris."

He unfolds the note and reads it.

GREG (V.O.)

Wanted you to have these. Sorry I couldn't say a proper good bye. After our talk and what's happened these past few months, I knew this was what I had to do and I had to do it without announcing it. Hope you'll forgive me. Thanks for everything.

He turns the note over--nothing on the back. He looks around, confused. No one's around. He opens the box and finds some knick knacks, some records, and Greg's car keys. Chris holds the keys in his hands with deepening worry on his face. He flips through the records quickly, recognizing them as important to Greg.

CHRIS

(to himself)

Jesus christ.

He stands, knocks on the door, steps back to wait for it to open. He waits a bit, then knocks again, this time louder. Then again, louder. After some waiting he knocks again and supplements the knock by shouting at the door.

CHRIS

Greg? Greg are you in there? If you can hear me, open up.

He turns, ear to the door and gets closer, listening for any sound of life coming from within the apartment. He knocks loudly again. He shifts anxiously while he waits and listens. He knocks again.

CHRIS

Greg? If you don't wanna talk that's cool. Just say something and I'll leave you alone.

He knocks harder, his mannerisms getting more frantic, practically punching the door.

(CONTINUED)

CHRIS

Greg! Greg!

A man in a suit--the PROPERTY MANAGER--walks down the hallway. He sees Chris and studies him apprehensively. He stops near Greg's door.

PROPERTY MANAGER

You here to see the apartment?

CHRIS

Who are you?

PROPERTY MANAGER

I'm the Property Manager. If you're looking to view the apartment, I'm afraid you're too early. I'm happy to show it to you, but I still need to clean up and take care of loose ends. Legal stuff.

CHRIS

See the apartment? This apartment?

Property Manager, opens a leather portfolio and checks a paper, checks the number of the door.

PROPERTY MANAGER

301, yeah, this is it.

Chris is dumbstruck. The PM moves ahead with his business. He takes a ring of keys out, unlocks and enters Greg's apartment.

INT. GREG'S APARTMENT - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Chris follows him in. The PM busies himself with walking around and inspecting the apartment, taking some notes in his portfolio. He does this while he speaks to Chris.

PROPERTY MANAGER

It's an old building, but it's close to a lot of things--bus stop just a block away, some grocery stores in walking distance.

CHRIS

I don't understand.

PROPERTY MANAGER

Not much to understand really. I'll post it up this afternoon and host

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

PROPERTY MANAGER (cont'd)  
proper viewings sometime during the  
week.

CHRIS  
What happened to Greg?

PROPERTY MANAGER  
Oh, you knew Greg? He was a good  
tenant. Quiet. Didn't break any  
windows. Shame he's gone. Happened  
pretty unexpectedly too, but he was  
month to month, so--

He shrugs, keeps looking at this and that and taking notes.

CHRIS  
By gone, you mean he's...

The PM stops what he's doing for a moment to look at Chris  
like he's an idiot.

PROPERTY MANAGER  
Oh he didn't tell you? Figured  
that's the sort of thing you tell  
people. Yeah, he e-mailed me, said  
he was going somewhere. Mexico, I  
think. Literally happened over the  
course of a few days.

He finds a loose paper in his portfolio and withdraws it,  
hands it to Chris. Chris takes the paper absent-mindedly.

CHRIS  
Mexico?

Chris's expression is one of incredulity at first, but it  
doesn't take long before he can't help but laugh. It comes  
out in a quick burst, involuntary spasms.

CHRIS (CONT'D)  
Mexico?

PROPERTY MANAGER  
Yeah, pretty sure. Anyway, that's  
the application. Fill that out and  
send it to back with 40 dollars and  
we can get you processed by the end  
of the week.

Chris laughs more, not caring about the paper in his  
hands--the sort of laughter that can only come from fearing  
the worst and then hearing good news.

(CONTINUED)

CHRIS  
Motherfucking Mexico. That son of a  
bitch.

He shakes his head, smiling widely.

EXT. TRAIN STATION PLATFORM - DAY

We see Greg, face weathered from the past few weeks, looking straight ahead, center of the screen. He's wearing a jacket and a scarf, another sign of the onset of autumn. The shot does not show below his waist, and as such we do not know if he has a suitcase with him or not. We see him glance at a monitor that indicates the train is arriving shortly. We hear the train approaching. Greg takes a deep breath and lets it out and then steps closer to the edge of the platform. We see him lean forward and peer in the direction of the train. We never see whether or not he actually has a suitcase with him. As we watch these last moments of the film, the 4 click of drum sticks counting in a song plays, and then--black--and the credits begin to roll the second the song kicks in. It's "Good Things" by The Menzingers. The opening line: "I've been having a horrible time pulling myself together."