

Chasing Amy

Written by Kevin Smith

INT. COMIC BOOK STORE - DAY

A pile of COMIC BOOKS are on a shelf next to myriad others. The most prominent one is called 'BLUNTMAN AND CHRONIC'. A hand reaches in and pulls one out of frame. HOLDEN opens the comic and flips through it. He shakes his head. BANKY looks over his shoulder.

BANKY

Felt Like this fucking day would never come. Issue two - on the shelf.

HOLDEN

Yippee.

BANKY

Don't start, alright! This is a cool moment, and I'd appreciate you not trying to ruin it. How often does a guy get the opportunity to purchase something with his name on it!

(points to name on cover)

Banky Edwards- right!

(points to the other)

Holden McNeil.

HOLDEN

I know my name.

BANKY

C'mon, sour puss. We got the rest of our lives to be artists. But it's supply and demand. And right now, the unwashed masses demand this.

HOLDEN

(off comic)

This is easy, alright! And right now it pays the bills. Just don't forget that we're better than this.

BANKY

I'll tell you who we're better than: these two fags right here.

They approach the counter, where STEVE-DAVE, the store manager, and WALT the Fan-boy, play a card game.

BANKY

(lays books on the counter)

Alright Old-Maid's - take a break from the Crazy-8's marathon and ring us up.

STEVE-DAVE

(not looking up)

Well, well,well, Walt Did you see who it is! The local celebrities. Quick - get them to autograph one of their books so we can sell it for triple it's value.

WALT

I'm not that in need of fifteen cents right now.

They snicker and high-five one another. Holden rolls his eyes.

BANKY

You guys operate the smallest, ladies' bridge circle I've ever seen.

WALT

For your information, we're playing 'Crimson Mystical Mages' - an overpower card game. Not that either of you would give a shit about something as advanced as this - there are no dick or poopie jokes involved.

BANKY

(to Holden)

I don't think they're fans.

WALT

No, we're not. You're both a couple of fucking no talents that got lucky.

STEVE-DAVE

And obviously your handlers or hangers-on convinced you that your first comic was good which it was not it was thoroughly mediocre with a few spiky bits of dialogue. And when you get your foot in the door of the business, what do you do! You turn out a piece of shit like 'Bluntman and Chronic'.

WALT

Tell him, Steve-Dave.

STEVE-DAVE

(off comic)

'Bluntman and Chronic'. Pah. What was that thing the little stoner pulled on the villain in the last issue!

WALT

The Stinky-palm.

STEVE-DAVE

Stinky-palm. You give comics a bad name I tell all my customers not to buy it, to spend their money on a real comic book.

WALT

Fucking one hit wonder, dime-store
Frank Miller's.

STEVE-DAVE

This is the reality at Comic-Toast -
you're not going to get your ass
kissed here, because both me and Walt
think you suck.

WALT

And me.

STEVE-DAVE

I said that.

Steve-Dave offers the boys his two middle fingers, then
goes back to playing his game with Walt. Holden and
Banky stare, shocked. Banky nudges Holden and they both
exit Steve-Dave and the Fan-boy slap hands and go back to
playing.

WALT

I've got a dragon card - forty power-
ups and twelve life points! Ha! I
get your elf card!

STEVE-DAVE

You're such a bitch! But thankfully,
I've saved a dark forces Shaman card
for just such an occasion.

WALT

You suck! Eighty six life-power
points to my twenty two!

STEVE-DAVE

I schooled their asses, now I'm
schooling your's.

Suddenly. A trash can crashes through the front window.
Steve-Dave and Walt hit the deck like bitches, covering
one another. They look up slowly. Steve-Dave leaps to
his feet and looks at the shattered mess. He pulls
something off the garbage can and reads it.

WALT

You know it was those two fucks!
Let's call the cops and have them
busted! I know where their studio is!
Or better yet, let's sue! You can sue
them, Steve-Dave!

STEVE-DAVE

(still reading note)

That won't be necessary.

WALT

What?! Why the hell not!

STEVE-DAVE

(holds up check)

Because this is a check for three
times what that window cost.

(reading note)

Dear critics - thanks for the

insight. But like my grandmother
always said - Fuck 'em if they can't
take a joke.. and break their window.'
Kiss it, Banky the Hack.
P.S. - Your card game blows.

WALT

He said Kiss it !

CREDITS

INT. COMIC BOOK: CONVENTION SIGNING BOOTH - DAY

A physically large FAN - sweaty brow, tote bag bursting
with comics - leans forward, smiling.

FAN

Could you sign it To a really big
fan !

Holden sits at a table. Across from the barely-managing-
to-stand Fan. He offers him a patronizingly kind, half-
smile in return,

HOLDEN

You bet.

We're at a Comic Book show, specifically at a book-
signing. Behind Holden hangs a large banner, heralding
HOLDEN McNEIL AND BANKY EDWARDS -
CREATORS OF BLUNTMAN AND CHRONIC'. Beside it is a large
mock-up of the comic book cover which features two stoner
super-heroes who bear a
striking resemblance to a pair of very familiar friendly
neighborhood drug
dealers, Holden hands the book back to the Fan.

FAN

I love this book man! This shit's
awesome. I wish I was like these guys
- getting stoned, talking all raw
about chicks and fighting
supervillains! I love these guys!
They're like Cheech and Chong' meet
Bill and Ted'!

HOLDEN

I like to think of them as
Rosencrantz and Guildenstern' meet
Vladimir and Estragon'.

FAN

Yeah!

(beat)

Who!

BANKY signs the book of another COLLECTOR.

COLLECTOR

So you draw this!

BANKY

(signing the comic)

I ink it and I'm also the colorist.
The guy next to me draws it. But we
both came up with the characters,

COLLECTOR

What's that mean - you ink it'!

BANKY

Well. It means that Holden draws the pictures in pencil, and then he gives it to me to go over in ink

COLLECTOR

So you just trace!

Banky freezes up. He composes himself and continues signing.

BANKY

It's not tracing. I add depth and shading to give the image mere definition. Only then does the drawing really take shape.

COLLECTOR

You go over what he draws with a pen - that's tracing.

BANKY

(hands book back to
Collector)

Not really.

(calling out)

Next!

A LITTLE KID steps up but the Collector lingers.

COLLECTOR

Hey man. If somebody draws something and then you draw the same thing right on top of it, not going out-side the designated original art what do call that!

LITTLE KID

(shrugs)

I don't know. Tracing?

COLLECTOR

(to Banky)

See?

BANKY

It's not tracing.

COLLECTOR

Oh, but it is.

BANKY

(to Little Kid)

Do you want your book signed or what?

COLLECTOR

Hey - don't get all testy with him just because you have a problem with your station in life.

BANKY

I'm secure with what I do.

COLLECTOR

Then say it - you're a tracer.

BANKY

(grabbing Little Kid's book)
How should I sign this?

LITTLE KID

(grabs book back)
I don't want you to sign it, I want
the guy that draws Bluntman and
Chronic to sign it. You're just a
tracer.

COLLECTOR

Tell him, Little Shaver.
Holden accepts a comic from another Fan.

HOLDEN

(off comic)
Who do I sign it to!
Before Holden can finish, a loud crash is heard. He
looks to his left and freaks.
Banky is throttling the Collector from across the table.
The Collector attempts to fight him off. SECURITY GUARDS
pull them apart. Holden grabs Banky.

COLLECTOR

Jesus! All I did was call him a
tracer!

BANKY

(to Collector)
**I 'LL TRACE A CHALK LINE AROUND YOUR
DEAD FUCKING BODY, YOU FUCK?!**

HOLDEN

(to Security Guard)
Could you get him out of here!
The Security Guards drag the collector away.

COLLECTOR

Hey, wait a sec! He jumped me! And
you're dragging me away!!
(exiting)
Fucking tracer!

BANKY

(calling OC)
YOUR MOTHER'S A TRACER!!

HOLDEN

Can I explain the audience principle
to you! If you insult and accost
them, then we have no audience.

BANKY

He started it! Fucking cock-knocker!
He's lucky I didn't put my pen through
his thorax!

HOLDEN

Need I remind you...
(holds up watch)
Curtain's in ten minutes.

INT. COMIC BOOK CONVENTION LECTURE HALL - DAY

HOOPER fills the frame. He comes off like a typical, pro-black/anti-white homeboy.

HOOPER

For years in this industry whenever an African-American character - hero or villain - was introduced usually by white artists and writers - they got slapped with racist names that singled them out as negroes: Black Panther, Black Lightning, Black Goliath, Black Mantra, Black Talon, Black Spider, Black Hand, Black Falcon, Black Cat..

VOICE FROM CROWD

She's white.

HOOPER

She is?

(beat)

Well bust this - regardless.

We're at a panel discussion. The room is full. Five creators sit at a long table, their names on placards in front of them.

(One of them is a very striking Girl.) The banner behind them reads WORDS UP - MINORITY VOICES IN COMICS'.

HOOPER

(holds up comic)

Now my book, White-Hating Coon', doesn't have any of that bullshit. The hero's name is Maleekwa, and he's a descendant of the black tribe that established the first society on the planet, while all you European mother fuckers were still hiding in caves and shit, all terrified of the sun. He's a strong role model that a young black reader can look up to, Cause I'm here to tell you - the chickens are comin' home to roost, ya'll: the black man's no longer gonna play the minstrel in the medium of comics and Sci-Fi/Fantasy! We're keeping it real, and we're gonna get respect - by any means necessary!

During the speech, Holden and Banky enter and sit up front.

HOLDEN

(calling out)

Bullshit! Lando Calrissian was a black man, and he got to fly the Millennium Falcon!

Hooper whips his head around, looking for the source of the comment

HOOPER

Who said that?!?

HOLDEN

(standing)

I did! Lando Calrissian is a positive black role model in the realm of Science Fiction/Fantasy.

HOOPER

Fuck Lando Calrissian! Uncle Tom nigger! Always some white boy gotta invoke the holy trilogy! Bust this - those movies are about how the white man keeps the brother man down - even in a galaxy far, far away. Check this shit. You got cracker farm-boy Luke Skywalker, Nazi poster boy - blond hair, blue eyes.

And then you've got Darth Vader: the blackest brother in the galaxy. Nubian God.

BANKY

What's a Nubian?

HOOPER

Shut the fuck up! Now Vader, he's a spiritual brother, with the force and all that shit. Then this cracker Skywalker gets his hands on a lightsaber, and the boy decides he's gonna run the fucking universe - gets a whole Klan of whites together, and they're gonna bust up Vader's hood the Death Star. Now what the fuck do you call that!

BANKY

Intergalactic Civil War!

HOOPER

Gentrification. They're gonna drive our the black element, to make the galaxy quote, unquote safe' for white folks.

HOLDEN

But Vader turns, out to be Luke's father. And in Jedi, they become friends.

HOOPER

Don't make me bust a cap in your ass, yo! Jedi's the most insulting installment, because Vader's beautiful, black visage is sullied when he pulls off his mask to reveal a feeble, crusty white man! They're trying to tell us that deep

inside, we all want to be white!

BANKY

Well isn't that true!

Hooper explodes, He pulls a nine millimeter from his belt, draws on Banky and fires. Banky goes down, falling forward into the crowd The crowd screams and starts to scatter, Hooper jumps over the table and raises his fists in the air.

HOOPER

**BLACK RAGE! BLACK RAGE!! I'LL KILL
ANY WHITE FOLKS I LAY MY MOTHER
FUCKIN' EYES ON!!!**

The crowd-is gone. Holden sits in his chair, laughing. Hooper steps off the stage and picks Banky's head up off the floor.

HOOPER

(breaking character)

What's a Nubian!' Bitch, you almost made me laugh!

Hooper sounds different Actually, he sounds gay. Actually - he is. Banky smiles.

BANKY

Well what about you! You didn't tell me you were going to scream Black Rage'. I nearly pissed myself.

HOLDEN

How do you manage to get away with this all the time? Shouldn't cops be busting your head open right about now?

BANKY

Wrong coast.

HOOPER

(off gun)

Well this right here - she full of blanks, okay. And Opiate gets all sorts of legal clearances before I go on.

HOLDEN

Your publisher condones these theatrics!

HOOPER

Condone? Honey, they insist. I need to sell the image to sell the book Would the audience still buy the Black Rage' angle if they found out the book was written by a.. a...

BANKY

Faggot.

HOOPER

When you say if it sounds so sexy...
(he kisses Banky full on the

lips)

BANKY

(wipes his lips)

Hey, hey! I'll play your victim, but not your catcher.

VOICE

How is it that you sound like Minister Farakhan when you're on stage..

They turn to see...

A beautiful, blonde, ruffled-haired angel swinging her purse in a circle. Her name is ALYSSA. She's the striking Girl from the panel who didn't get to say much.

ALYSSA

...and the King of Pop when you're nor.

HOOPER

Look out, boys - this kitten has a whip.

ALYSSA

(shoves and slaps him)

Always before I get to speak! I swear - the next con I attend and they ask me to be on the minority panel, if I see your name anywhere near the List, I'm passing.

HOOPER

(defending himself)

Holden. Banky - this pile of P.M.S. is Alyssa Jones. She does that book 'Idiosyncratic Routine'. This is the fourth panel we've been on together, and even though she knows my publisher sets this up and pays for the event. She still gets mad when it ends with my act.

ALYSSA

I just wish I was the one who gets to shoot you.

HOOPER

That's what my father said when I came - nay - leapt out of the closet

(off guys)

These boys do 'Bluntman and Chronic', which outsells both of our books put together, hence they're never on a panel with the likes of us. They slumming right now.

BANKY

I've read your book. It's cute. Chick stuff, but cute.

Holden hits him.

BANKY

What?

HOLDEN

(shoots him a look; to
Alyssa)

Sorry about him. He's dealing with
being an inker.

ALYSSA

(to Banky)

Oh. You trace!

Banky seethes.

HOLDEN

(shaking her hand)

I really enjoy your book I'm surprised
we've never met at any other Con's
before.

ALYSSA

Lose the dick or change your skin tone
and we can get to know each other on
panel after panel while the Pink Black
Panther here plays Chuck D. for the
fanboys.

HOOPER

Hey, jealousy.

(to the Boys)

I told Alyssa I'd buy her a post-rave
drink. Do the Garden-Staters have to
sprint to the Lincoln Tunnel, or can
you stay for a round in the big, scary
city!

BANKY

We're gonna take off soon...

HOLDEN

We'll go.

Banky offers Holden a puzzled glance. Then he nods to
Hooper.

BANKY

We'll go.

INT BAR - NIGHT

Holden, Banky, Alyssa and Hooper sit around a table
drinking, talking, and smoking.

BANKY

Archie, alright! Archie and the
Riverdale gang were a pure and fun-
lovin' bunch. You can't find
dysfunction in those comics, because
they were just flat out wholesome.

HOOPER

Archie and Jughead were lovers.

(sips his drink)

BANKY

Shut the fuck up.

HOOPER

It's true. Archie was the bitch and Jughead was the butch - that's why Jughead wears that crown-looking hat all the time: he the king, of queen Archie's world.

BANKY

Man, I feel a hate-crime coming on

HOLDEN

He's got a point. Archie never did settle on Betty or Veronica.

BANKY

Because he wanted them both at the same time, you assholes! He never chose one because he was trying to get both of them into a three-way!

HOOPER

(pulls out a dollar and hands it to Banky)

Here. I want you to go down to the corner store and buy yourself a clue. Go on.

BANKY

Eat it. Urkel.

HOOPER

I told you to watch it with that Urkel shit. Face it, girl - Archie's a sister.

BANKY

(getting up; to Hooper)

That's it. You.

HOOPER

Moi?

BANKY

You are marching back across the street with me, and we're going to pick up a shit load of Archie books, I am going to prove to you - beyond the shadow of a doubt that Archie was all about pussy. Come on.

HOOPER

(sliding out of booth)

This boy is conflicted, I shall play mother-therapist for him. You two sit tight. We shall return promptly.

Banky and Hooper exit, leaving Alyssa and Holden alone at the table.

ALYSSA

Is he always Like that!

HOLDEN

For years now. Started back in third grade - a nun was teaching us about the Blessed Trinity. She's going on

about the three persons in one God thing - Father, Son, Holy Spirit - and he just goes ballistic. I guess it was too big for him to grasp. They got into this huge fight.

ALYSSA

Please. How bad could it have been!

HOLDEN

You ever seen a nun call a small child a fucking cunt-rag'? Wasn't pretty, Shit like that's bound to happen when you make a kid wear a matching tie and slacks everyday.

ALYSSA

And your parochial school misadventures!

HOLDEN

Limited to wine-tasting prior to mass. Turned me into a grade school alcoholic altar boy. I couldn't tell you how many mornings after serous benders I'd wake up next to strange priests.

ALYSSA

Aren't you the sharp wit!

HOLDEN

Sharp! No. I'm just a fan of clergy-molestation humor. Probably why the extended family quit inviting me to First Communion parties.

Alyssa laughs. Holden smiles.

ALYSSA

(looking OC)

You play darts!

HOLDEN

Not professionally. You know - only in bars.

AT THE DART BOARD

A dart hits the board then, one hits the wall beside the board.

Alyssa winds up with another dart. Holden watches. Her's always hit. His never do.

ALYSSA

So your new book seems to be selling like mad.

HOLDEN

It goes back to something my grandmother told me when I was a kid. "Holden," she said "The big bucks are in dick and fart jokes." She was a church-goer.

ALYSSA

Uh-oh - the cry from the heart of a real artist trapped in commercial hell - pitying his good fortune. I'm sure you can dry your eyes on all those fat checks you rake in.

HOLDEN

I'm sorry - did I detect a note of bitter envy in there!

ALYSSA

Nope. I'm happy my stuff gets read at all. There's very little market for hearts and flowers in this spandex-clad, big pecs, big tits, big guns field. If I sell two issues, I feel like John Grisham.

HOLDEN

(looking out window)

It's all about marketing. Over- or underweight guys who don't get laid - they're our bread and butter. People like those two outside should be yours.

Through the window, we see a COUPLE making out on the hood of a car.

HOLDEN

And sadly, there are more of our core audience out there than yours.

(smiles)

Look at that, though - kind of gives you a little charge, to see two people in love. And all over Banky's car, no less. That car's seeing more action right now than it's seen in years.

ALYSSA

Bubbly guy like that, it's hard to figure out why.

HOLDEN

(still looking at OC Couple)
You've gotta respect that kind of
display of affection. It's crazy,
rude, self-absorbed - but it's love.

ALYSSA

That's not love.

HOLDEN

Says you.

ALYSSA

That out there! That's fleeting.

HOLDEN

Fleeting.

ALYSSA

Uh-huh. You wanna hear about love!
Oh, I'll tell you about love.

HOLDEN

A story?

ALYSSA

The story. The original love story.

HOLDEN

'Doctor Zhivago'.

ALYSSA

Nope. My mother's uncle. He was a
millionaire.

HOLDEN

Get out.

ALYSSA

I kid you not.

HOLDEN

Explain.

ALYSSA

All through high school, he dated this
one girl. They were inseparable.
And when they graduated, she went off
to Carnegie Mellon...

HOLDEN

In Pittsburgh.

ALYSSA

I'm impressed. So he stays in the home town, and they begin their long-distance relationship. The plan is, on the third Sunday of every month, he'll train out, spend a week then train back They do this for four years.

HOLDEN

That is love.

ALYSSA

Not nearly finished. Two months before she's going to graduate, he's got this job digging graves, and he comes across...

HOLDEN

A stiff.

ALYSSA

A steamer trunk containing silver ingots.

HOLDEN

Get out of here.

ALYSSA

Many, many silver ingots. Now, my mother's uncle being quite the ingenious chap - he buries the trunk again and heads up to the main office, where he proceeds to purchase a cemetery plot. Guess which one?

HOLDEN

Clever.

ALYSSA

So now he owns the plot and all of its contents. Two days later, my mother's uncle is worth three million.

HOLDEN

At which time he marries the high school sweetheart and lives happily ever after.

ALYSSA

Not even close. Inside the steamer trunk, stenciled into the wood, or

something like that, is a curse.

HOLDEN

Someone wrote 'Fuck' inside his new steamer trunk.

ALYSSA

Not that kind of curse. A cryptic curse "Great fortune means great loss" it said.

HOLDEN

What kind of asshole writes that inside a steamer trunk!

ALYSSA

The same kind of asshole that buries silver ingots. The day my mother's uncle is heading out to see the girl, he stops at his accountant's to grab some cash, and winds up missing his train. So he has to take the next one - which he does - and he gets there an hour later than his usual time of arrival, whereupon he sees lights.

HOLDEN

A hero's welcome for the new millionaire.

ALYSSA

It seems that while she was standing on the platform waiting that extra hour for my mother's uncle to show up, the girl was dragged into the bushes by an unknown assailant, raped and gutted.

Holden is silent Alyssa downs her drink.

ALYSSA

The assailant was never apprehended.

HOLDEN

(beat)

That's a love story!!

ALYSSA

Yes, and here's why: my mother's uncle rode that train every day for the rest of his life. One day up, the next day back. Did that 'till the day he died.

He donated the fortune he'd acquired to the train station in Pittsburgh, to have a well-lit terminal built. The train line let him ride for free after that.

HOLDEN

I should hope so. Jesus, that's the saddest tale I've ever heard.

ALYSSA

That's my love story.

Alyssa tosses her last dart. Holden seems a bit dazed. He looks out the window.

HOLDEN

Those two aren't on the hood of Banky's car anymore.

ALYSSA

I told you It wasn't love.

(grabs her purse)

I gotta split. It was really nice meeting you. I wish you the best of luck with your book.

(shakes his hand)

Tell Hooper I'll call him later. And tell your friend to calm down.

Alyssa exits to the night. Holden stares after her. Two beats later, Hooper and Banky enter, holding an 'Everything's Archie' comic between them.

BANKY

You're insane. Archie is not fucking Mister Weatherbee!

HOOPER

Deny, deny, deny.

(to Holden)

Where's Alyssa?

HOLDEN

Huh! Oh. She left. She said she'd call you later.

BANKY

(off comic)

He's just offering to help Archie with his homework!

HOOPER

Read between the lines.

BANKY

(shoves book at him)

Fuck this.

(to Holden)

Let's go. Traffic.

(no response from Holden)

Holden!

HOLDEN

(shaken)

What!

BANKY

Let's go.

HOOPER

(looking out window)

D'jou see that dent in the hood of
your car!

BANKY

(looking out window)

What the...! Son of a bitch!

Banky runs out Holden shrugs at Hooper.

HOOPER

Let me guess: you like her!

HOLDEN

Who?

HOOPER

Miss Alyssa Jones.

HOLDEN

She's alright.

HOOPER

As long as that's all.

(finishes drink)

Maybe you can convince that partner of
your's to drop me off downtown before
you scurry out the tunnel!

HOLDEN

(beat)

Mister Weatherbee wasn't really trying
to fuck Archie, was he!

They begin exiting.

HOOPER

Hell no. Weatherbee was Reggie's
bitch.

INT. STUDIO - DAY

We're in Holden and Banky's studio/apartment. It's a rented loft-style place with high ceilings, wood floors and sparse furnishings. There are posters on the walls, a sort of kitchenette, a hockey net, a big TV. (with all the trimmings - VCR, Laserdisc player, Sega, SNES), a huge comfy couch, and two drawing boards with adjacent desks (littered with pencils, pens, coloring pencils, paints, erasers, etc.) - at which sit Holden and Banky. They're working. Some music plays.

C.U. OF HOLDEN PENCILING - over his shoulder, we see Holden sketching Chronic in mid-attack of his arch-nemesis - the Giggler. Holden erases a line and re-draws.

C.U. OF BANKY INKING - over his shoulder, we see Banky outlining a pre-penciled page. He traces Bluntman swinging from a street light.

The two work in silence. Then...

BANKY

(not looking up)
This is one of the best street lights
you've ever drawn.

HOLDEN

It's the one across from the post
office.

BANKY

Looks just like it.

HOLDEN

Thanks.
(beat)
What do you wanna do tonight!

BANKY

Get a pizza. Watch 'Degrassi Junior
High'.

HOLDEN

(erases)

You got a weird thing for Canadian
melodrama.

BANKY

I've got a weird thing for girls who
say 'about'.

The phone starts ringing. Holden answers it, while still
drawing.

HOLDEN

Bank-Hold-Up.

CROSSCUT between Holden and Hooper. He's on a phone in a
CLUB.

HOOPER

Hooper here. Listen, I know how you
burb-fiends hate the city, but there's
a club shindig going down that I think
you'd get into.

HOLDEN

Where is it?

HOOPER

Place called Her-sterectomy - I'm
tempting as bar-keep.

HOLDEN

I don't know, Hoop. We're prepping
the next issue, and we've got our big
M-TV meeting in the morning.

HOOPER

I told her you wouldn't be interested.

HOLDEN

Told who?

HOOPER

Alyssa.

HOLDEN

Alyssa from last night Alyssa?

HOOPER

How do you begin and end a question
with the same word like that? You got

skill. Yes, that one. She asked me to invite you. Now here's the part where you say...

HOLDEN

I'll be there.

HOOPER

Thought so. Ten o'clock. Later.
(both hang up)

BANKY

Who was that?

HOLDEN

Hooper. He invited me to a club.

BANKY

When's that faggot going to learn - you like chicks.

HOLDEN

(getting up)
Not that kind of a club.

BANKY

So when we leaving?

HOLDEN

'We'? You can't go. He's setting me up with Alyssa.

BANKY

And?

HOLDEN

And I don't want you messing it up.

BANKY

Like I care about your shit. Maybe I'll hook up myself.

HOLDEN

(pulling on coat)
I just told you - it's not that kind of club.

BANKY

How does one man get to be so funny!

HOLDEN

(throws him his coat)

How are you going to get home if I hook up!

BANKY

Like that'll happen.

HOLDEN

Let me explain something to you, my witless chum the other night in that bar, we two - Alyssa and I shared a moment, alright!

BANKY

Oh, you had a moment!

HOLDEN

(brings his two pointer fingers together)

We shared a moment. And in that moment, one thing was made abundantly clear: this girl loves me, my friend. Loves-me.

6. INT. HER-STERECTOMY - NIGHT
6.

It's a club - people are mingling, a band is playing, it's loud. But something's fishy. Hooper's tending bar. He hands a GUY a drink. The Guy sips it.

GUY

This is so watered down. It's terrible. Why is it you can never get a decent drink in these places!

Hooper looks around in a very exaggerated fashion.

GUY

What are you doing!

HOOPER

Trying to find you a tissue.

The Guy shoots Hooper an angry glare, Banky enters.

BANKY

Alright - bring on the free hootch.

HOOPER

As long as you don't bitch about how

little alcohol is in the drink.
(hands Banky a drink; to Guy)
You owe me five sixty.

GUY

(off Banky)
And I suppose you're going to make
your friend here pay for his drink
right!

BANKY

Hey, I befriended a guy in a position
of authority so I could abuse that
authority and get free shit. You want
to do the same? There's a lonely
Hindu works at the '7-11' across the
street. Get in tight with him.

The Guy angrily pulls out his money and slams it on the
bar.

GUY

I work at that '7-11'!
(storms away)

BANKY

(calling after him)
Wanna be friends!

HOOPER

Where's your better half!

BANKY

Taking a piss. Guy's got a bladder
like an infant.

HOOPER

That's funny - he says you're hung
like an infant.

BANKY

Must his mother tell him everything!

Holden enters.

BANKY

What'd you do - fall in love?

HOLDEN

Where is she?

HOOPER

Over there...

ON THE DANCE FLOOR - in the middle of a thrall of people - dances Alyssa. She moves like a cat and she's looking very sexy.

OC HOOPER

Been dancin' for an hour. Hasn't stopped yet.

Hooper, Holden, and Banky stare OC.

BANKY

She ain't no Denny Terrio, I'll say that.

Holden smacks Banky and moves to exit.

HOOPER

Wait. wait, wait - there's something you should know.

HOLDEN

She's got a boyfriend.

HOOPER

Well.. no.

HOLDEN

Then what's to know?

Holden exits; They watch him go. Banky looks around.

BANKY

There're a lot of chicks in this place.

HOOPER

'Chicks'. You're such a man.

BANKY

(beat)

He didn't really say that about my dick, did he!

ON THE DANCE FLOOR - Holden slips into the crowd and dances up to Alyssa. He intentionally bumps into her.

HOLDEN

(fake rage, dancing)

Hey, hey, hey - you fucked up my cabbage-patch!

ALYSSA

Well, well, well - Bluntman himself.
Or should I call you Chronic!

HOLDEN

Call me flattered. I heard you sent
me the invite to this little soiree'.

ALYSSA

From a former home-town girl, to
Mister Home-Town himself.

HOLDEN

You're saying you're from the 'burbs!

ALYSSA

Middletown, N.J.

HOLDEN

Get out of here! I'm from Highlands!

ALYSSA

I know. Hooper told me.

HOLDEN

How is it that we never ran into one
another?

ALYSSA

You graduate from Hudson?

HOLDEN

Yeah. Eighty eight.

ALYSSA

I went to North. Also eighty eight.

HOLDEN

What a small fucking world. So you
know the tri-town area!

ALYSSA

Quiz me.

HOLDEN

Miller Hill?

ALYSSA

I wrote my name on the wall.

HOLDEN

Sandy Hook?

ALYSSA

Lost my virginity there.

HOLDEN

This is so cool. The mall!

ALYSSA

Eden Prairie of Menlo Park!

HOLDEN

Wait - here's the big test: Quick Stop!

ALYSSA

My best friend fucked a dead guy in the back room.

HOLDEN

You know that girl!!

ALYSSA

I did. Before she was committed.

HOLDEN

You know what this is! This is fate.

ALYSSA

(regarding her move)

No, this is the 'Rog'.

HOLDEN

I was talking about us meeting - what are the chances!

ALYSSA

Pretty slim. I haven't been back to the 'burbs since my friend's funeral.

HOLDEN

The Quick Stop girl died!

ALYSSA

Another friend - Julie Dwyer. She died in the..

HOLDEN

Y.M.C.A pool! Damn! You knew her too!

ALYSSA

So well.

HOLDEN

One friend in an asylum, the other
friend in the grave. You're a
dangerous person to know.

ALYSSA

But I can tap.
(does an impromptu tap dance)
That was the Buffalo Two-Step.

HOLDEN

Very solid.

ALYSSA

That's what six years of tap lessons
yields.

HOLDEN

Two towns away from each other for
years and we had to meet in New York.

The Sand stops playing. People clap.

ALYSSA

Coulda been worse - we could have not
met at all.

Holden looks at her.

OC SINGER

Thank you. Thanks.

The SINGER on stage speaks into the microphone.

SINGER

A long time ago, we used to have this
bass player who took off one day to
draw funny books or something. Maybe
you've seen her stuff - it's called
'Idiosyncratic Routine''

The crowd applauds. Alyssa shakes her head, smiling.
Holden pokes her.

SINGER

But what a lot of people don't know is
that she used to harbor these
delusions that she could sing. And
she used to subject us to these
throaty renditions of Debbie Gibson

tunes and shit, insisting that we let her front on a few numbers. Well, we didn't and she quit.. and then she got famous, the bitch.

(crowd laughs)

But she's here tonight, and I think if we all begged, or maybe offered her some X, she'd get up here and treat us to some of her vocal stylings.

(crowd applauds)

What do you say, Alyssa?

Alyssa shakes her head no. The crowd urges her. Holden pushes her forward.

SINGER

She's shy.

(yelling)

GET UP HERE AND SING, BITCH!!

The crowd thunders. Alyssa offers the Singer an embarrassed half-smile. She looks at Holden, who claps along with the others and nods toward the stage. Alyssa shakes her head and relents, heading through the crowd

Banky and Hooper stand at the bar.

BANKY

This is so queer.

(he exits)

HOOPER

(beat)

You don't know the half of it.

Alyssa jumps on stage, hugging the Singer. She takes the mic, shaking her head. The crowd is applauding.

ALYSSA

She is such a twat.

The crowd cheers. Alyssa laughs. She turns to the band and says something which they nod. She turns back to the crowd.

ALYSSA

Alright. I should dedicate this, right?

(thinks)

This is for that special someone out there.

Holden smiles. Banky joins him. Holden glances at him. Banky offers a mocking mimic of his smile.

The band starts playing. Cross cutting begins.

Alyssa launches into a torchy tune. The song is extremely sexy - as is Alyssa who works the mic, making direct eye contact with...

Holden. Or does she! Holden is smiling, being seduced, Banky rolls his eyes. Beside Holden, stands a pretty GIRL with a short haircut, who's also riveted by Alyssa's performance.

Alyssa makes big-time eye contact with somebody out there.

The song seems to be aimed at whoever she's looking at. It's more than obvious there's a seduction going on, bur of whom! At the end of the song, the crowd goes wild but Alyssa's preoccupied. She points to someone in the crowd, and curls her finger back in a 'c'mere' fashion, urging whoever it is to join her. She jumps off the stage.

Holden shakes his head sheepishly and looks downward, aw-shucks style. At that moment, the Girl beside him leaps forward. Banky's eyes widen. Holden looks up and is suddenly taken aback.

Alyssa and the Girl race into each other's arms and fall into a way-to-passionate-to-mean-anything-else kiss.

Holden's eyes bug. Banky allows a smile to creep across his face. The crowd applauds. Banky looks around, and for the first time, we get the distinct impression that this is a lesbian bar...

There are a lot of chicks in this place. Gay chicks. Banky looks at Holden and slaps him on the back.

BANKY

Now that, my friend, is a..
(brings his fingers together,
mimicing Holden)
...shared moment

Holden continues to stare - mouth agape.

Alyssa and the Girl continue to kiss.

INT. HER-STERECTOMY - LATER

Banky, Holden, Alyssa and the Girl from the dance floor sit around a table. Alyssa and the Girl continue to make out. Holden and Banky casually watch, wide-eyed. Banky stares a little harder. Holden hits him.

BANKY

What?!

HOLDEN

(under his breath)

That's rude.

BANKY

Man, when are we ever going to get a chance to see this kind of shit live without paying for it?

Alyssa and the Girl break their kiss.

ALYSSA

Uh-oh - better knock it off: we're getting a man excited.

HOLDEN

Sorry. It's just... new to him.

BANKY

Oh, and you're an old hand at this.

ALYSSA

No, I should apologize. I don't usually get all mushy in public. But it's been awhile since I've seen Kim here.

KIM

(formerly the Girl)

Tell me you didn't set that gross display up with the band just so you could nail me.

ALYSSA

Like I'd have to go through that much effort

KIM

You know what! I want to dance.

ALYSSA

Go ahead. I'll watch from here.

KIM

(tugging at her arm)

No. I want to dance with you.

ALYSSA

Don't be such a rag. I have to sit here and work up the desire to fuck you later.

KIM

Please.

Kim exits. Banky is smiling ear-to-ear. Alyssa looks at him.

ALYSSA

Yes?

BANKY

You said 'fuck'. To that girl. You said you'd 'fuck' her.

ALYSSA

And?

BANKY

How can a girl 'fuck' another girl! Were you talking about strap-ons or something?

HOLDEN

(hits him)

Would you shut up!!

BANKY

What!!? It's a valid question. You know the dyke stuff in the Penthouse Letters section is written by guys - this is our chance to get the inside scoop.

HOLDEN

(to Alyssa)

I don't know how many times I can apologize for him.

ALYSSA

It's okay. Secretly, all I really want is to be the center of attention.

(to Banky)

I've never used a snap-on.

BANKY

Then what's with saying 'fuck'?
Shouldn't you say 'eat her out' or at
least modify the term 'fuck' with
something like 'fist'?

ALYSSA

Let me ask you a question - can men
'fuck' each other!

BANKY

Ask Hooper.

ALYSSA

In your estimation.

BANKY

Sure.

ALYSSA

So for you, to 'fuck' means to
penetrate. You're used to the more
traditional definition - you inside
some girl you've duped, jack-hammering
away, not noticing that bored look in
her eyes.

BANKY

Hey - I always notice the bored look
in their eyes.

ALYSSA

(laughs)

'Fucking' is nor limited to
penetration, Banky. For me it
describes any sex when it's not
totally about love. I don't love Kim,
but I'll fuck her. I'm sure you don't
love every girl you sleep with.

BANKY

Some of them I downright loathe.

ALYSSA

But I'll bet it's different with the
ones you love. I'll bet you go the
full nine when it's not just a quick
fix - like you go down on them longer
or something.

HOLDEN

Here we go.

BANKY

I don't do that.

ALYSSA

What?!?!

BANKY

I stopped dropping. It got to be too frustrating.

HOLDEN

As stupid as you usually come off during this diatribe of your's, you're going to come off ten times as stupid on this occasion.

BANKY

What?! I lost my tolerance for the bullshit baggage that comes with eating girls out. What's the big deal?!

ALYSSA

If you say the smell, so help me, I'll slug you.

BANKY

Not the smell - the smell is good. I'm talking about not being able to do it property. And my mother brought me up to believe that if I can't do something right I shouldn't do it at all. Of course, my father told me she gave lousy head, but that's beside the point.

ALYSSA

At least you blame yourself for your sexual inadequacies.

BANKY

No, I blame them. Chicks never help you out. They never tell you what to do. And most of them are self-conscious about that smell factor, and so most of the time they just lay there, frozen like a deer in the headlights, right? Not for nothing, but when a chick goes down on me. I

let her know where to go, and what the status is. You gotta handle it like CNN and the Weather Channel - constant updates.

HOLDEN

You're such an idiot.

ALYSSA

No, he's got a point. That's how I was in high school - I was nervous, and inhibited about being eaten out. But by the time I got to college, that all changed. I loosened up. Not only did I learn to communicate - I learned to be bossy.

I was like one of those guys at the airport with those big flash lights - waving them this way, directing them that way, telling them when to stop.

BANKY

And that's all I'm saying, it'd be different if chicks helped out - pointed a guy in the right direction. Then there'd be no bullshit, no wasted time, and no chance for permanent injuries.

ALYSSA

Permanent injuries?

BANKY

Sure. You wanna see something permanent!

(pulls out front tooth)

I got this from Nina Rollins, sophomore year. I'm going down on her, and out of nowhere, her cat jumps on her stomach. She does this big ol' pelvic thrust - cracks my tooth in half, sends it down my throat. I had to get a crown for the stub.

ALYSSA

(to Holden)

I got that beat.

(to Banky)

I got that beat.

(half-turns and lifts chin)

Sophomore year. I'm going down on Cynthia Slater in her dorm room after

we went club-hopping. I'm totally drunk, and in the middle of it, I fall asleep - right there in her lap. She got so mad, she digs her heel into my back, right there.

(points to scar)

That's permanent.

BANKY

You see this!

(moves neck slightly right)

That's the farthest I can move my neck to the right Sophomore year, I'm going out with Maria Bennert, and for six months, I'm going down on her, and not a damn thing's happening.

Then one night, I change a position, or vary my lapping-speed, and suddenly it's a whole new world. She's moving around, convulsing, breathing heavy. And her legs are pressing against my ears so tightly that I don't hear her father come into the room. He grabs my hair...

(grabs his own hair and pulls back)

...and he pulls me way back, hard.

ALYSSA

(throws up her leg, and rolls up pants)

Senior year. Spring Formal. I'm eating our Missy Kurt in her brother's car. She's laying across the back seat, and I'm half-hanging out of the car, my knees on the ground. She's flailing around, and she knocks the parking brake off. The car starts rolling down the hill, and my right knee is cut up all to shit like a kiddy's scissor class cut it up for paper dolls.

Banky and Alyssa laugh. Holden looks at a small scar on his arm and thinks better about mentioning it. Then Kim re-enters and plants a big kiss on Alyssa's neck.

HOLDEN

(off Banky's watch)

Holy shit, is that the time. We've gotta beat traffic.

BANKY

What traffic - it's one thirty in the morning!

HOLDEN

(getting up)
And rush hour starts in six hours.
Let's go.
(to Alyssa)
Thanks for inviting us out. It was...
educational.

Alyssa waves at him as he exits. Banky slides out of the booth.

BANKY

(to Kim)
Since you like chicks, right..
do you just look at yourself in the
mirror all the time?

Holden reaches in and pulls Banky out. Alyssa watches them go, then turns and kisses Kim.

INT. M-TV EXEC'S OFFICE WAITING ROOM - DAY

Holden looks preoccupied. Banky flips through magazines, biting off mini pieces of the gum he's chewing. He sticks them between pages, presses the mag closed, picks up another one and then repeats the whole process. A Receptionist types.

BANKY

(off Holden's look)
You're still dwelling on the dyke,
aren't you?

HOLDEN

Lower your voice.

BANKY

What'd I tell you - she just needs the
right guy. All every woman really
wants - be it mother, senator, nun -
is some serious deep-dicking.

The Receptionist stops typing and looks at Banky, shocked.

BANKY

(off her look)
Don't give me that look - I heard Adam
Curry say worse.

The Secretary goes back to typing. Banky shrugs at
Holden.

BANKY

That's why I can't buy lesbians.
Everyone needs dick. See, I can buy
fags. Bunch of guys that need dick -
just plain need it? That I get.
Dykes? Bullshit posturing. But -
live and let live, I guess.

HOLDEN

I'm sure the gay community appreciates
your support.

JOHN SLOSS, the boy's lawyer, joins them.

SLOSS

Please tell me you haven't blown this
deal already.

BANKY

Sloss like a mother fucker.
(slaps his hand)

SLOSS

Hey, every mother but your's - a
shyster's gotta have his standards.
Shall we?

INT. M-TV EXEC'S OFFICE - DAY

The EXECs are a casual couple of guys, sitting on couches
across from our trio.

EXEC 1

We just want to start off by saying
that it's a pleasure to finally meet
you. While it's been - shall we say -
an experience dealing with Sloss here,
one of the main reasons we started
this whole thing was to meet the guys
that do 'Bluntman and Chronic'.

EXEC 2

(points at them)

'Snootchie Bootchies'.

The Execs and Sloss laugh. Holden and Banky politely join in. Banky shoots Holden a 'these guys are idiots' look.

EXEC 1

Which brings us to our proposal: we are extremely interested in doing twelve, half-hour 'Bluntman and Chronic' cartoons. The age of Beavis is coming to a close, and we're looking for something... something...

BANKY

Even more retarded and juvenile to sate the voracious, intellectually-challenged miscreants that make up your key demographic.

The Execs laugh hard. Sloss secretly shrugs to Banky and gives the thumbs up.

EXEC 1

(composes himself)

So what do you say! Are we in business!

Banky leans back into the couch, wearing a thoughtful face. He looks to Holden, then to Sloss. Sloss nods in understanding.

SLOSS

Jim, Sean - could we have a few minutes!

EXEC 2

(looks to Exec 1)

Uh... absolutely. We'll just..

EXEC 1

Uh...wait outside

The Exec's smile and head our, closing the door behind then. Sloss turns to Banky.

SLOSS

So? Did I do good?

BANKY

You did better - you sold us out!

They clasp hands and quietly explode in ebullience.

SLOSS

Do you know how much you'll make on merchandising alone!

BANKY

(as Simon Bar Sinister)
Money and Power, and Money and Power...

SLOSS

(joins in)
Money and Power, and Money and...

HOLDEN

(interrupting)
I don't think it's a good idea.

Banky and Sloss freeze. They stare at Holden.

BANKY

What's not a good idea! Please don't say the cartoon, please don't say the cartoon...

HOLDEN

The cartoon.

SLOSS

What?!? Are you out of your fucking mind!

BANKY

(getting up)
John, let me handle this.
(to Holden)
You are out of your fucking mind, aren't you!

HOLDEN

Is this how you want to be remembered!
As the guy who created Bluntman and Chronic!

Banky sits at the Exec's desk and starts rifling through the guy's stuff.

BANKY

No, I'd like to be remembered as the filthy rich guy who created Bluntman and Chronic.

HOLDEN

But it'll be all glossy and mainstream. We'll lose any artistic credibility we ever had.

SLOSS

(to Banky)

Is it me! I don't see the problem.

BANKY

(to Sloss)

He just has to get over this crush of his.

SLOSS

Oh God - not on Carrie Fisher again!

(to Holden)

Holden - she's not really a Princess.

BANKY

(opening drawer with a letter opener)

Not on her; on Alyssa Jones - the chick that does that comic book 'Idiosyncratic Routine'. You ever seen it?

SLOSS

Please. Like I even read your comic, let alone anyone else's,

(to Holden)

I'm not limited to offering you legal counsel only, my friend. I'm also learned in the ways of the heart, and can offer you this advice - nail her, get it out of your system, and move on. Like we say at Sloss Law - good fences make good neighbors.

BANKY

She'd never let him in her yard. The chick's gay.

SLOSS

(laughing)

She's gay? You fell for a gay, comic-book writing chick? Holden, you poor, poor man!

(beat)

Wait a sec - does she have representation!

BANKY

Always working, you.
(holds up a Polaroid of a
naked woman)
Look at this - Mrs. M-TV Exec has a
string of pearls hanging out of her
ass,

SLOSS

Would you leave his stuff alone!
(to Holden)
You can break her resolve, killer.
All it takes is one good man. But if
it takes two good men, don't hesitate
to call me. That being said, in
regards to the more pressing issue, I
suggest you leave art to the museums
and grab on with both hands to the
big, fat check.

HOLDEN

I'll give it some thought

BANKY

(holding up Polaroid)
I'm taking this as a precaution - just
in case they give us any shit about
pussy's decision delay.
(glaring at Holden)
You'll 'give it some thought'. You're
so retarded

HOLDEN

I'm retarded! This from the guy who
only forty five minutes ago paid fifty
bucks for what's supposed to be a boot-
leg of 'March of the Wooden Soldiers'
with a deleted scene of Stan Laurel
wearing a French Tickler.

SLOSS

How'd you fall for that!

BANKY

The guy who sold it to me had an
honest face.

INT. STUDIO - DAY

There is a door. There's a knock at the door. Holden opens it and Alyssa is standing there.

ALYSSA

Somebody told me that they make comic books here, and I've got an idea for this story about a guy who comes to a club and high-tails it when he finds out this girl is pay. Any interest in a story like that!

Holden smiles.

EXT. RIVERFRONT PARK - DAY

Alyssa and Holden walk through the park, eating hot dogs.

ALYSSA

M-TV?

HOLDEN

Twelve episodes.

ALYSSA

That's great, isn't it?

HOLDEN

Banky seems to think so.

ALYSSA

But you don't.

They come to a swing set and sit down on the swings.

HOLDEN

I don't know if that's the perception I want people to have of our stuff. I know this sounds pretentious as hell, but I like to think of us as artists. And I'd like to get back to doing something more personal - like our first book.

ALYSSA

Well when are you going to do that?

HOLDEN

(beat)

As soon as we have something personal to say.

ALYSSA

Do you know how pretty you are?

HOLDEN

What?

ALYSSA

You're a pretty man.

HOLDEN

Uh... thanks.

ALYSSA

Oh. I get it. I'm into girls, so I have to find all men repulsive or something.

HOLDEN

I didn't say anything.

ALYSSA

Aren't there some men that you find attractive? Granted, not enough to sleep with, but still - just handsome or something!

HOLDEN

Sure. Harrison Ford. And our mailman.

ALYSSA

Well it's the same thing. I look at you and just find you really handsome. And you know, it has very little to do with your look, per-se. Your look is fine, don't get me wrong. But it's more your outlook. The things you say, the way you see things. It's... I don't know... attractive,

Holden looks away, embarrassed,

ALYSSA

I weired you our the other night

HOLDEN

Huh! No, not really.

ALYSSA

Come on.

HOLDEN

(beat)

It's just that we've.., I mean, I've never seen that kind of thing up close and personal. It just took awhile to process, longer than usual.

ALYSSA

Do you want to talk about it!

HOLDEN

Um. If you want to.

ALYSSA

I like you. I haven't liked a man in a long time. And I'm not a man-hater or something. It's just been some time since I've been exposed to a man that didn't immediately live-into a stereotype of some sort. And I want you to feel comfortable with me, because I want us to be friends. So if there are things you'd like to know, it's okay to ask me.

HOLDEN

(beat)

Why girls?

ALYSSA

(beat)

Why men?

HOLDEN

Because that's the standard

ALYSSA

If that's the only reason you're attracted to women - because it's the standard..

HOLDEN

It's more than that.

ALYSSA

So you've never been curious about men?

HOLDEN

Curious about men? Well... I always wondered why my father watched 'Hee-Haw'.

ALYSSA

You know what I mean.

HOLDEN

No.

ALYSSA

Why not!

HOLDEN

No interest.

ALYSSA

Because...?

HOLDEN

Girls feel right.

ALYSSA

And that's how I feel. I've never really been attracted to men. I'm more comfortable with the idea of girls.

HOLDEN

Wait, wait, wait - you're still a virgin?

ALYSSA

No.

HOLDEN

But you've only been with girls.

ALYSSA

You're saying a person's a virgin until they've had intercourse with a member of the opposite sex?

HOLDEN

Isn't that the standard definition?

ALYSSA

Again with the standards. I think virginity is lost when you make love for the first time.

HOLDEN

With a member of the opposite sex.

ALYSSA

Why? Why only then?

HOLDEN

Because that's the standard.

ALYSSA

So if a virgin is raped, then she's still a virgin?

HOLDEN

Of course not.

ALYSSA

But rape is not the standard. So she's had sex, but not the standard idea of sex. Hence, according to your definition, she'd still be a virgin.

HOLDEN

Okay, I'll revise. Virginity is lost when the hymen is broken.

ALYSSA

Then I lost my virginity at ten, because I fell on a fence post when I was ten, and it broke my hymen. Now I have to tell people that I lost it to a wooden post I'd known my whole young life?

HOLDEN

Second revision - virginity is lost through penetration.

ALYSSA

Physical penetration or emotional?

HOLDEN

Emotional?

ALYSSA

Well, I fell in love hard with Caitlin Bree when we were in high school.

HOLDEN

Physical penetration.

ALYSSA

We had sex.

HOLDEN

Yeah, but not real sex.

ALYSSA

I move to have that remark stricken from the record. On account of it makes you come off as completely naive and infantile.

HOLDEN

Well where's the penetration in lesbian sex.

Alyssa holds up her hand.

HOLDEN

A finger? Come on. I've had my finger in my ass but I wouldn't say I've had anal sex.

ALYSSA

Did I hold up a finger?
(waves her hand)

HOLDEN

(beat; then he gets it)
You're kidding?!?!
(she nods)
How...?!?

ALYSSA

Our bodies are built to pass a child, for Christ's sake.

HOLDEN

But doesn't it hurt?!

ALYSSA

Sure. But in a good way. And it's only a once-in-awhile thing - reserved for really special occasions.

HOLDEN

What about not-so-special occasions?

ALYSSA

Tongue only.

HOLDEN

But how can that be enough? I mean, let's be real - how big can a tongue even get?

Alyssa swallows what she's chewing and releases her tongue, which is just huge. Holden is transfixed. Alyssa wraps it back up and smiles, standing.

ALYSSA

Let's go.

She exits. Holden remains in the swing. Alyssa comes back in.

ALYSSA

Come on.

HOLDEN

Just...uh... just give me a moment.

INT AIRPORT - DAY

Holden enters. Banky tries to balance way-too-much luggage.

HOLDEN

Look at you. It's a two day trip.

BANKY

I got the Sega in one bag, my clothes in the other, and two months worth of unread comics in this one.

HOLDEN

We're going to a convention, for the love of God. We'll be busy from ten 'till eight each day. When are you possibly going to have time for any of that shit? In fact, fuck it - you're leaving some of this shit here in a locker. Come on - give me the two that aren't clothes.

BANKY

Hold on.

(starts rifling through one bag)

HOLDEN

What are you doing?

BANKY

I just have to get something.

(pulls out a huge stack of

porno books)

HOLDEN

Who are you, Larry fucking Flynt?
What are you going to do with all of
those?

BANKY

Read the articles. What do you think
I'm going to do with them? They're
stroke books.

HOLDEN

You've got like thirty books there!
We're only there for two days!

BANKY

(leafing through mags)
Variety's the spice of life. I like a
wide selection. Sometimes I'm in the
mood for nasty close-ups, sometimes I
like them arty and air-brushed. Some
times it's a spread brown-eye kind of
night, sometimes it's girl-on-girl
time. Sometimes a steamy letter will
do it, sometimes - not often, but
sometimes - I like the idea of a chick
with a horse.

A beeping sound is heard. Holden checks his beeper.

HOLDEN

Go check us in. I've gotta call
Alyssa.

BANKY

His master's voice.

HOLDEN

Put that stuff away.

Holden exits. Banky starts packing his mags up. A
little KID enters, staring at him.

KID

What are those?

BANKY

(looks at kid then books)
Do you Like horsies?

Holden finishes dialing the phone. Cross cut between him

and Alyssa at home.

ALYSSA

I hope for the sake of the women
you've dated that you're only this
quick in returning calls.

HOLDEN

What's up? I'm about to get on a
plane.

ALYSSA

Ohhh. Why!

HOLDEN

Last minute invite to the Dragon Con'.

ALYSSA

Shit.

HOLDEN

What?

ALYSSA

My sister's at my parents'. I was
gonna go see her.

HOLDEN

The one that wrote the book?

ALYSSA

Yeah. But I was staying all weekend,
and I wanted to hang out with you.
This sucks.

HOLDEN

You didn't get invited to the Con'?

ALYSSA

I don't do southern con's - all the
chicks have that annoying drawl. You
know how hard it is not to laugh when
someone moans "Fuhhk me"?

HOLDEN

Well this sucks.

(thinks)

You know - both of us don't have to
go.

ALYSSA

Really?

HOLDEN

Yeah. Banky can go by himself. It's not like we're on a panel. It was just a signing appearance.

ALYSSA

If you come pick me up, I'll be your best friend.

HOLDEN

(beat)

Where's your apartment?

ALYSSA

I'm not there. I'm at a friend's - in the Village. Corner of Houston and Mercer. Number eighty six, apartment **6-D**.

HOLDEN

I'll be there in half an hour.

ALYSSA

You're so easy.

They hang up. Holden reacts to something OC and exits quickly.

C11. Banky points to pictures in the book. The kid looks on.

BANKY

...And then Black Beauty couldn't take it any longer, and he finally did some of his own mounting.

KID

(off book)

Wow.

Holden grabs Banky's arm and drags him away.

HOLDEN

What are you doing?

BANKY

(waving to kid)

I think I want kids of my own one day. They're fun.

HOLDEN

Listen to me - I'm not going. You're going to have to do this one by yourself.

BANKY

What? Why?

HOLDEN

Alyssa's coming down for the weekend, so I want to hang out with her. You don't need me for this.

(taking his excess baggage)

Meantime, I'll take this stuff home. You can keep the filth. I'll pick you up at nine Sunday night, alright? Don't forget to plug the Annual and don't mention the t.v. show, okay? Call me if you get bored.

And he's gone. Banky stands there, open-mouthed. A check-in FLIGHT ATTENDANT comes up to him. His name-tag reads 'Frank'.

FLIGHT ATTENDANT

Checking in, sir!

BANKY

(still watching Holden go)

Hunhh!

(looks at F.A.)

Yeah. But this is carry-on.

F.A.

Federal aviation security law requires me to ask if you've been given any strange gifts or parcels to carry-on since arriving at the airport today.

BANKY

(thinks)

Not this trip. But one time, when I was using curb side check-in, this sky-cap gave me a cock ring and a set of anal ben-wa balls. I always thought that was pretty strange. He said his name was Frank.

(looks closely at him)

Hey! You're name's Frank!

Banky storms away. The Flight Attendant watches him go.

F.A.

Fucking kids.

EXT APARTMENT 6-D - DAY

Holden knocks at the door. It opens. A WOMAN is standing in the doorway in her bra She looks Holden up and down and smirks.

WOMAN

Let me guess - 'the right man'?

HOLDEN

Excuse me?

WOMAN

You've got it in your head that Alyssa's not really into chicks - that she just hasn't met the right man. And you believe you're it. You're going to treat her right, fuck her like a stud, and 'straight-jacket' her back from the land of the lost. And the sad truth is that you'll accomplish none of that and wind up as either an even more bitter misogynist or a reverse fag-hag.

Holden's at a loss. Alyssa slips past the Woman, carrying an overnight bag.

ALYSSA

Don't mind her. That's just her way a saying hello.

WOMAN

Actually, it's just my way of saying "Give it up."

ALYSSA

(to Woman)

You're such an asshole.

WOMAN

When you file the date-rape charges, don't say I didn't warn you.

HOLDEN

(holding out hand)

I'm Holden, by the way.

WOMAN

I'm the voice of reason that Miss Bitch is having such a hard time listening to.

HOLDEN

Look, we're just friends.

WOMAN

That's what every guy says before he tries purring your hand on his dick.

HOLDEN

And how do you know men so well?

WOMAN

Because I lapdance for a living, dick-head.

She slams the door. Holden looks to Alyssa.

ALYSSA

Ohhh - you look so cute!

She heads down the stairs.

HOLDEN

Who was that?

ALYSSA

Just an occasional friend.

HOLDEN

Why would you want to hang our with someone bitter as that?

ALYSSA

(stops)

Remember this!

(sticks out huge tongue)

Her's is even bigger than that.

She smiles and continues on. Holden looks back up at the door. He sticks his own tongue our and sizes it with his fingers.

EXT TURNPIKE - DAY

The car sits in traffic.

INT CAR - DAY

Holden sighs. Alyssa plays with the radio.

ALYSSA

You were raised Catholic, right?

HOLDEN

Yeah. You?

ALYSSA

Baptist.

HOLDEN

Really? Did you have a strict upbringing?

ALYSSA

Please There was no time to be bad - we were too busy saying 'Jesus'.

HOLDEN

You think your upbringing had something to do with your lifestyle choice?

ALYSSA

Somewhere along the line. It's a gradual transition to make - from doing what the majority does to taking a leap of faith and doing what feels more natural. Everything helps - from the way you were handled as a kid, to the way the boys acted in third grade, to the shoes you wore at your freshman prom.

HOLDEN

Shoes?

ALYSSA

Well they were really tight.

HANGING OUT MONTAGE BEGINS

With the requisite music, over which we hear a conversation between Holden and Alyssa.

1) Holden and Alyssa sit in the DINER eating. Holden's talking. The Waitress walks past and drops her pad. She bends over, to pick it up, hiking her mini-skirt up in the process. Alyssa stares at her ass. Holden stops talking and stares at her. Alyssa looks over at him and offers a caught smile.

2) Holden pushes a shopping cart at the FOOD STORE, throwing various things into the basket. Alyssa comes up with a box of Tampons and throws them in. Holden glances at them, a bit flushed. Alyssa catches him, picks up the box, and pulls one out. She proceeds to demonstrate their usage, throwing one leg on the can and miming insertion. Holden puts up his hands in the "I know, I know," fashion.

3) In the Studio, Holden displays some of his artwork to Alyssa, during which she pulls out a cigarette and goes to light it. It's a child-proof lighter, so she's having trouble. Holden grows a little frustrated. Finally, he grabs the lighter and pulls the child proof tab out with his teeth. Alyssa stares at him a bit taken aback. Holden spits the tab out, and lights Alyssa's smoke. He then continues with his display.

4) Holden and Alyssa at the COMIC BOOK STORE. Steve-Dave and the Fan-Boy eye them suspiciously. Alyssa pays for a comic. Steve-Dave glowers at Holden. He gives Alyssa her change and they exit. Steve-Dave goes back to his card game with the Fan-Boy. Suddenly, a garbage can comes crashing through their window. Steve-Dave rips a check off the garbage can and punches the counter. The Fan-Boy rubs his back soothingly,

5) Holden and Alyssa walk through a PARKING LOT, talking. She takes his hand and pulls his arm around her shoulder. Holden smiles to himself.

HOLDEN V.O.

Let me ask you something - we get along, right?

ALYSSA V.O.

Famously.

HOLDEN V.O.

We have a definite chemistry?

ALYSSA V.O.

So it would seem.

HOLDEN V.O.

But we're both into girls.

ALYSSA V.O.

I'm into women.

HOLDEN V.O.

But you weren't always gay.

ALYSSA V.O.

When I was nine I had a crush on Scott Baio.

HOLDEN V.O.

So If we'd met a long time ago, say in high school...

ALYSSA V.O.

...I'd still be muff-diving, yes.

HOLDEN V.O.

Thought so.

INT STUDIO - DAY

Holden and Banky play EA Sports Hockey on Sega. There's a knock at the door.

HOLDEN

Come in.

Alyssa enters and stands besides them, smiling at their game.

ALYSSA

I read somewhere that guys who play hockey are merely making up for penile deficiencies by carrying big sticks.

BANKY

I thought you lived in the city? This is like the umpteenth time I've seen you here. Isn't that grounds enough for the little pink mafia to throw you out of their club?

HOLDEN

(hits Banky; to Alyssa)

I'll be ready in a second.

I just have to school this mouthy second-stringer.

BANKY

Bitch, you're schooling no one.

They play. Cut back and forth between the game and Banky, Holden, and Alyssa.

HOLDEN

(off game)

What? Do something!

BANKY

(off game)

You fucking cock-teaser. I'll knock your fucking teeth out and pass all over your ass.

HOLDEN

Look at how slow you are. Christ, you move like a geriatric.

BANKY

(screaming at screen)

Fuck! You Fucking cock-sucker, man! These faggots won't do what I tell them to!

HOLDEN

Oh. It's the controller, right? It's always the controller.

BANKY

No, it's these... fucking queers on blades that can't accept a fucking pass to save their lives! What period is this?

HOLDEN

Final sixty of the third.

BANKY

Fuck! Look at your fucking guys, they... FUCK!!!

(whips controller)

FUCKING COCK SUCKER, MAN! I SWEAR TO GOD!

Banky storms away. Alyssa looks at Holden,

HOLDEN

Imagine if I'd only beaten him by one instead of thirty.

INT SKEE-BALL ARCADE - DAY

Holden feeds a couple dollars into the change machine.
Alyssa looks on.

ALYSSA

Explain this again.

HOLDEN

How could you have grown up down the
shore and never played skee-ball?
What did you do with your youth?

They head toward the skee-ball runs.

ALYSSA

Stayed out late, smoked pot, screwed
around.

HOLDEN

Not your grade school years; your high
school years.

ALYSSA

(off skee-ball run)

This looks complicated.

HOLDEN

(Inserts coin and pulls
lever)

The premise is very basic - you roll
the ball up the ramp at varying
speeds, in an effort to pop it into
the score circles. The higher the
score, the more prize tickets you get.

ALYSSA

What do you do with the prize tickets?

HOLDEN

Trade them in for prizes that aren't
worth nearly as much as you paid to
play the game.

ALYSSA

Then what's the point?

HOLDEN

It's fun.

ALYSSA

And you question my lifestyle.

HOLDEN

Observe.

Holden rolls the ball. It pops into a twenty point circle.

HOLDEN

See? It's just that simple.

ALYSSA

Why not just walk up there and put it in the fifty every time?

HOLDEN

Where's the skill in that?

ALYSSA

Oh, this is a skill? I'm sorry, I had no idea.

HOLDEN

Just toss one.

Alyssa picks up a ball, squints to aim, and whips it overhand. It pops off one of the circles and shoots back at them, missing them as they duck. An OC knock and an "OW!" is heard. Holden reacts as Alyssa laughs.

HOLDEN

(to OC guy)

I'm sorry, man. She's new at this.

Holden ducks as the ball comes sailing back at his head. He gets up.

HOLDEN

(to OC)

Thank you.

(hands Alyssa another ball)

Underhand. Throw it underhand.

ALYSSA

This is where you take straight chicks on dates?

HOLDEN

It's like Spanish Fly. This'll probably be the first time I don't

score afterwards.

ALYSSA

I don't know. I'm starting to get a
tingle in my bottom.

(tosses a ball)

Ten.

HOLDEN

(grabs a ball)

So what'd you do last night?

(prepares to throw)

ALYSSA

Got laid

Holden whips the ball in surprise. It ricochets off the ceiling and through the glass of an old pinball machine. Alyssa laughs. Holden looks around, nervously.

ALYSSA

Some more of that skill you were
telling me about?

HOLDEN

Maybe we should just leave before
somebody gets hurt.

ALYSSA

No way. I want a cheap prize.

(throws a ball)

So your friend's quite the homophobe.

HOLDEN

He just feels left out, I think.

ALYSSA

I'm not talking about his infantile
hang-up with me. I'm talking about
when you two were playing that game.
Everytime he swore - when his players
messed up, he called them cocksuckers,
he referred to the players as queers,
he called you a cock-teaser...

HOLDEN

I thought he was talking to you.

ALYSSA

I know you think it means nothing, and
it may in fact be unintentional, but
it's ugly all the same.

HOLDEN

He was just pissed he was losing.

ALYSSA

So he slams the gay community?

HOLDEN

C'mon. Don't get all p.c. on me.

ALYSSA

I'm not. But what is that saying?

HOLDEN

It says he gets too easily frustrated.

ALYSSA

It's passive/aggressive gay-bashing.

HOLDEN

How do you figure?

ALYSSA

How casually did it roll off his tongue? And that's how he expresses his anger? By calling people faggots?

HOLDEN

I think you're reading too much into it.

ALYSSA

I think you're just so used to it that it rolls off your back. I've heard the two of you play your little rank out game where one insists the other is gay.

(as the boys)

"You're a faggot. No, you're a faggot." It's cute and all to watch you go at it like grade-schooler, but it's also offensive - labeling and ducking the label of being gay as if it were the scarlet fucking letter.

HOLDEN

You're blowing this way out of proportion. We live in a more tolerant age now. You refer to yourself as a dyke. Hooper calls himself a faggot all the time...

ALYSSA

Yeah, but that's what's known as empowerment/disempowerment. I call myself a dyke so it's not too devastating when some throwback screams it at me as I'm leaving a bar at night.

Same for Hooper - by calling himself a faggot, he steals the thunder away from the mouthy jerks of this world who'd like to beat him to it. But the difference between us having it and your friend saying it is miles wide. We say it to mask the pain - you say it for lack of a better expression at any given moment. No Holden, we do not live in a more tolerant age. And if you think that's the case, then you've been in the suburbs way too long to be resuscitated.

Holden kind of sulks. Alyssa notices.

ALYSSA

But you know what?
(picks up his face)
I have more faith in you than that.
(rips her tickets off)
Come on - I want my cheap prize.

INT STUDIO - NIGHT

Holden enters. Banky's still playing Sega. Holden sits next to him.

HOLDEN

(off screen)
How bad do you suck!

BANKY

How was your pseudo-date?

HOLDEN

Leave it alone.

BANKY

That chick bugs me.

HOLDEN

(rubs his head; in baby-talk)

Aww. Everyone bugs you.

BANKY

Get off.

(off game)

Fucking faggot! Did you see that?!
Your dyke courting ass just got me
scored on!

HOLDEN

(beat)

You know, you should watch that. If
you're going to get all bent out of
shape while playing the game, so much
so that you need to curse the t.v.,
try not to gay-bash it, alright.
You're nor that kind of guy.

(gets up)

And don't call her a dyke, alright?
She's a lesbian.

Holden goes to his drawing table and takes off his coat.
Banky sits there, shocked. He puts the controller down
and crosses to the drawing table.

BANKY

What the fuck is going on here?

HOLDEN

(pulling out pencil)

I'm starting a new page.

BANKY

(smacking pencil away)

Not with this shit! With you. What
the fuck is going on with you and that
girl?

HOLDEN

We're friends.

BANKY

She's programming you.

HOLDEN

I beg your pardon? Programming?

BANKY

Yeah. And apparently, you don't even
realize it. What does it matter if I
refer to her as a dyke, or if I call
the Whalers a bunch of faggots in the

privacy of my own office, far from the sensitive ears of the rest of the world?

HOLDEN

It's passive/aggressive gay-bashing; and I know you're not really prejudiced at heart. You should just find some other way to express your anger, is all I'm saying.

Holden starts drawing. Banky stares at him. Then he grabs the pencil out of Holden's hand and shoves him to the side. He starts drawing something.

HOLDEN

What the fuck are you doing!

BANKY

Bear with me here. I just want to put you through this little exercise.
(drawing feverishly)
Okay, now see this? This is a four way road, okay?

Banky draws a four-way stop. He illustrates according to his voice-over.

BANKY V.O.

And dead in the center, is a crisp, new, hundred dollar bill. Now at the end of each of the streets, are four people, okay? You following? Up here, we got a male-affectionate, easy-to-get-along-with, no political agenda lesbian. Okay? Now down here, we have a man-hating, angry-as-fuck, agenda-of-rage, bitter dyke. To this side, we got Santa Claus, right? And over to this side - the Easter Bunny.

Banky finishes drawing. Holden's shaking his head

BANKY

Which one's going to get to the hundred dollar bill first?

HOLDEN

What is this supposed to prove?

BANKY

I'm serious. This is a serious

exercise. It's like an S.A.T. question. Which one's going to get to the hundred dollar bill first - the male-friendly lesbian, the man-hating dyke, Santa Claus, or the Easter Bunny?

HOLDEN

(beat; then pissed)
The man-hating dyke.

BANKY

Good. Why?

HOLDEN

I don't know.

BANKY

(wildly crossing out the other three)
BECAUSE THESE OTHER THREE ARE FIGMENTS OF YOUR FUCKING IMAGINATION!

Holden storms away. Banky follows.

HOLDEN

I don't need this. I'm going home.

BANKY

She's fucking with your mind, man! She knows you've got this schoolboy crush and she's using it to sway your way of thinking!

HOLDEN

And why would she need to do that? What is she Mata fucking Hari?! What does she gain?

BANKY

Maybe she thinks you'll get her comic picked up by Contender. Or maybe she thinks you'll change the content of our book to something more political and message oriented. Or, gee - I don't know - maybe because that's just what dykes like to do: fuck around with straight guys' heads, just so she can go back to her little rug-muncher club and have a good laugh with all her man-hating harpy cronies about how fucking stupid and easily duped men

are!

HOLDEN

You're so out of line right now..,

BANKY

You don't even know this girl! Big deal, she's from Middletown and she went to North! All the girls at North were bitches and sluts anyway! And this one's got them beat by a mile because she's a bitch/slut/dyke!

HOLDEN

Watch your fucking mouth, is all I'm going to tell you..

BANKY

Oh why? Do you get my back when she bashes me? Because I know she does. And do you know why she does? Because I won't play her fucking game!

HOLDEN

Sometimes your paranoia and suspicious bullshit is amusing. Sometimes it's just fucking annoying as piss!

BANKY

What is it about this girl? You know you have no shot at getting her into bed! Why do you bother wasting time with her? Because you're Holden fucking McNeil - most persistent traveller on the road that's not the path of least resistance! Everything's gotta be a fucking challenge for you, and this little relationship with that bitch is a prime example of your fucking condition. Well I don't need a fucking magic eight ball to look into your future; you want a forecast? Here - will Holden ever fuck Alyssa.
(shakes and looks at
imaginary ball)

What a shock - "Not fucking likely"! This relationship of your's is affecting you, our work and our friendship, and the time's going to come when I throw down the gauntlet and say it's me or her! And then

what're you going to say?!

HOLDEN

(beat)

I think you should let this one go.

BANKY

No, what would you say? Would you trash twenty years of friendship because you've got some idiotic notion that this chick would even let you sniff her panties, let alone fuck her?!

HOLDEN

Let it go...

BANKY

What the fuck.. WHAT THE FUCK MAKES
THIS BITCH ALL THAT IMPORTANT?!?!?

Holden looks at Banky for a long beat.

HOLDEN

I'm in love with her, man.

Banky stares at him. Holden stares back. Banky looks into Holden's eyes. Suddenly, he softens a bit. He drops his head.

BANKY

Fuck.

Banky walks away. Holden watches him go and exits.

INT DINER - NIGHT

Holden and Alyssa sit at a booth. Alyssa picks through her food. Holden looks at the check and pulls money from his wallet.

HOLDEN

I wish you were the one being pursued by M-TV.

ALYSSA

Oh really?

HOLDEN

Sure. Then you could sell our and maybe pick up the check once in

awhile.

ALYSSA

(drops her fork and wipes her hands)
We're leaving!

HOLDEN

Well it's not like this is a bed and breakfast,

ALYSSA

I've got a little business to conduct.

She grabs her bag and slides out of the booth. Holden watches her, then follows.

A23. Alyssa slides up to the cashier's desk as does Holden, who offers a puzzled shrug. Alyssa offers the 'just wait' finger. The CASHIER turns to her.

ALYSSA

Are you an authorized deal-maker in this establishment? Do you have the power to negotiate.

CASHIER

You wanna haggle over the price of your French Dip?

ALYSSA

I want to haggle over the price of fine art.

CASHIER

What do you mean?

ALYSSA

(pointing OC)
There. By the kitchen. That painting.

CASHIER

What about it?

ALYSSA

The price tag says seventy five.

CASHIER

So!

HOLDEN

(to Alyssa)
Tell me you're kidding!

ALYSSA
I'll give you fifty.

CASHIER
(to OC)
Manuel! Bring, me the Dyksieszski off
the wall.

(to Alyssa)
All my years in the diner business,
I've waited for this day - the day
when someone wanted to buy one of the
pictures.

ALYSSA
(holds out hand)
Alyssa Jones. Pleased to meet you.

CASHIER
You say you want to haggle, but you
don't know rule one about haggling,
which you just broke: you never give
your name. The name is power, and to
give the opponent that piece of you is
to give away victory.

ALYSSA
I'm only trying to conduct a
transaction. We're not opponents.

CASHIER
(accepting painting from
BUSBOY)
Oh, but we are - if you think I'm
letting this beautiful piece go for
fifty.

ALYSSA
Ah-ha!
(to Holden)
Now we're haggling.

**24. INT CAR -
NIGHT**

24.

It's drizzling outside. Holden drives. Alyssa hugs her
painting and pushes her bare feet against the windshield,
making footprints.

HOLDEN

I've always wondered what kind of people buy those things. I can't believe you talked him down to twenty five!

ALYSSA

It was looking shakey when he told me the artist was a blind cripple with a hump-back, but I held my ground. There's no room for sympathy in the buyer's market.

HOLDEN

Where are you going to hang it?

ALYSSA

I'm not. You are.

HOLDEN

You want me to hang it for you? You better hope it doesn't get out to the girl-nation that you needed a man to help you hang a picture.

ALYSSA

You're going to hang it in your house. I bought it for you.

HOLDEN

(laughs)
Yeah, right.

ALYSSA

(looks at him)
I'm serious.

Holden stares at her.

HOLDEN

Why?

ALYSSA

Because it's captured the moment. It'll be a constant reminder - not just of tonight, but of our introduction, the building of our friendship, everything. Make no mistake about it my Friend - it's a gift to you, from me, so you'll always remember us.

Holden stares ahead. Then he swerves the wheel to the right.

EXT ROADSIDE - NIGHT

The car pulls to the side of the road. The rain is a bit heavier now.

INT CAR - NIGHT

Holden throws the car into park

ALYSSA

Why are we stopping?

HOLDEN

Because I can't take it.

ALYSSA

Can't take what?

HOLDEN

I love you.

ALYSSA

(beat)

You love me.

HOLDEN

I love you. And not in a friendly way, although I think we're great friends. And not in a misplaced affection, puppy-dog way, although I'm sure that's what you'll call it. And it's not because you're unattainable. I love you. Very simple, very truly. You're the epitome of every attribute and quality I've ever looked for in another person. I know you think of me as just a friend and crossing that line is the furthest thing from an option you'd ever consider. But I can't do this any longer. I can't stand next to you without wanting to hold you. I can't look into your eyes without feeling that longing you only read about in trashy romance novels.

I can't talk to you without wanting to express my love for everything you are. I know this will probably queer our friendship - no pun intended - but I had to say it, because I've never felt this before, and I like who I am because of it. And if bringing it to light means we can't hang out anymore, then that hurts me. But I couldn't allow another day to go by without getting it out there, regardless of the outcome, which by the look on your face is to be the inevitable shoot-down. And I'll accept that But I know some part of you is hesitating for a moment, and if there is a moment of hesitation, that means you feel something too. All I ask is that you not suppress that - at least for ten minutes - and try to dwell in it before you dismiss it.

There isn't another soul on this fucking planet who's ever made me the person I am when I'm with you, and I would risk this friendship for the chance to take it to the next plateau. Because it's there between you and me. You can't deny that. And even if we never speak again after tonight, please know that I'm forever changed because of you and what you've meant to me, which - while I do appreciate it - I'd never need a painting of birds bought at a diner to remind me of.

Holden stares at Alyssa. She stares back. Then she gets out of the car.

HOLDEN

Was it something I said?

EXT ROADSIDE - NIGHT

Holden gets out of the car. It's raining pretty hard now. Alyssa's hitching up the road. Holden reaches her.

HOLDEN

What are you doing?

ALYSSA

Get back in the car and get out of here.

HOLDEN

You're going to hitch to New York?

ALYSSA

Y'ep.

HOLDEN

Aren't you at least going to comment?

ALYSSA

Here's my comment fuck you.

HOLDEN

Why?

ALYSSA

That was so unfair. You know how unfair that was.

HOLDEN

It's unfair that I'm in love with you?

ALYSSA

No, it's unfortunate that you're in love with me. It's unfair that you felt the fucking need to unburden your soul about it. Do you remember for a fucking second who I am?

HOLDEN

So? People change.

ALYSSA

Oh, it's that simple? You fall in love with me and want a romantic relationship, nothing changes for you with the exception of feeling hunky-dorey all the time. But what about-me? It's not that simple, is it? I can't just get into a relationship with you without throwing my whole fucking world into upheaval!

HOLDEN

But that's every relationship! There's always going to be a period of adjustment.

ALYSSA

Period of adjustment?!?
(hitting him)

**THERE'S NO 'PERIOD OF ADJUSTMENT'
HOLDEN! I'M FUCKING GAY! THAT'S WHO
I AM! AND YOU ASSUME I CAN TURN THAT
AROUND JUST BECAUSE YOU'VE GOT A
CRUSH?!?**

HOLDEN

If this is a crush... then I don't
know if I could take the real thing if
it ever happens.

She looks at him, rain drenching the pair. She shakes
her head ruefully.

ALYSSA

Go home, Holden.

She walks away. Holden stands there, at a loss. Then he
turns and heads back to his car.
As he reaches the door and turns to look back at her,
Alyssa pounces on him, grabs his face and locks lips with
him, big time. He drops his keys and embraces her.

And there they stand, by the side of the road, drenched
kissing.

EXT STUDIO - DAY

Banky carries a bag in one arm and pulls out his keys
with the other. He jams them into the lock, opening the
door. He picks up the mail on the floor.

INT STUDIO - DAY

He closes the door behind him and shuffles to the
kitchenette, passing by the blanket-covered, slumbering
forms of Holden and Alyssa, who are out cold in each
other's arms. The place looks a mess - Like a couple of
people were engaged in some tremendous fucking. Banky is
oblivious. He sets the bag down on the counter and pulls
out a chocolate milk. He opens it, sticks a straw into
the top, and begins sipping and sifting through the mail.
He comes to mail that's Holden's and tosses it onto the
couch, near Holden's head. He looks down at the sleeping
couple, then back at the mail for a couple of beats.

Then he freezes. He looks down again, and drops his jaw and his carton of choco. It hits the floor with a pop. Holden and Alyssa shoot straight up, eyes struggling to focus. They look at one another, then at the flabbergasted Banky. Banky blinks. Then he shuffles toward the door again and lets himself out.

ALYSSA

(off Holden's reaction)

I take it that's not good.

HOLDEN

(getting up)

Stay here.

(he kisses her and exits)

EXT STREET - DAY

Banky sits on a curb, staring into the distance, Holden saunters up and sits beside him. He follows Banky's gaze.

BANKY

Catholic school girls.

Across the street, the Catholic High School is letting out. Teenage girls clad in uniforms and tight sweaters smoke, frolic, wait for their bus.

BANKY

The uniform is what does it for me. I wish I'd have went with more Catholic school girls when I was a kid. As it stands. I have no "...and then she unzipped her jumper..." stories.

HOLDEN

You looked weirded out back there.

BANKY

That's my couch you were fucking on.

HOLDEN

Sorry.

BANKY

I wanted to watch some TV. Hard to do when your best friend's wrapped around a naked rug-muncher on your couch.

HOLDEN

She had boxers on.

Banky shoots him a glare. He goes back to staring at the OC girls.

BANKY

This is all going to end badly.

HOLDEN

You don't know that.

BANKY

I know you. You're way too conservative for that girl. She's been around and seen things we've only read about in books.

HOLDEN

But we have read about them. So we're prepared.

BANKY

There's no 'we' here. You're going to have to go through this alone. And it's one thing to read about shit, and something different when you're forced to deal with it on a regular basis. When you guys are walking in the mall and both your heads turn at a really nice looking chick, it's going to eat you up inside. You'll spend most of your time wondering when the other shoe's going to drop. Because for you, this isn't about cool weird sex stuff, it's about love.

HOLDEN

Maybe it is for her as well.

BANKY

Somehow I doubt it.

HOLDEN

Everyone's not out to get someone in life. Bank.

BANKY

Everybody has an agenda. Everyone.

HOLDEN

Yourself?

BANKY

My agenda is to watch your back.

HOLDEN

To what end?

BANKY

To insure that all this time we've spent together, building something, wasn't wasted.

HOLDEN

She's not going to ruin the comic.

BANKY

I wasn't talking about the comic.

(gets up)

I'm going to gel a bagel. Clean off my fucking couch so I can watch TV.

Banky walks away. Holden shakes his head.

INT ALYSSA'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

An all-girl gathering. TORY, NICA, DALIA and JANE help Alyssa finish an issue of 'Idiosyncratic Routine'. Tory letters a page. Nica and Dalia lay-out the artwork. Dalia drinks wine. Alyssa paints the cover.

DALIA

From what I understand, when you sign with a publisher, someone else does all this work for you, and you just sit back and collect.

ALYSSA

And miss these last minute cram sessions with my nearest and dearest? Never.

TORY

I don't know what she's bitching about. All she's done since we got here is pound Merlot.

DALIA

I'm sorry weren't you the one who misspelled 'receipt' on page eighteen? Yeah, you're a real help.

NICA

What I'd like to know is why we're here at all when we haven't seen Princess funny-Book in a month.

JANE

Yeah Alyssa - who've you been shacking up with?

ALYSSA

'Shacking up!' Please.
(stops painting; smiles wide)
I'm so in love!

Everyone aww's. Alyssa buries her face, giggling.

ALYSSA

I know. I know -I feel like such a goon. But I can't help it - we have such a great time together.

DALIA

Who is it? Don't even tell me it's Ms. Thing from the C.D. place. I'll kill you.

ALYSSA

It's not her. It's someone you guys don't know.

NICA

That chick you left the restaurant with that night?

ALYSSA

They're not. From around here.

TORY

Don't even tell me you met her down the shore!

JANE

Eww! Not a bridge-and-tunnel Jersey dyke!

TORY

With huge hair and acid-washed jeans!

They all cackle. Alyssa tries to laugh with them.

DALIA

Come on, Alyss - Hoboken Hussy or what?

ALYSSA

For your information, they don't have big hair or wear acid wash.

(goes back to painting)

They're from my home town.

Dalia stares at Alyssa, suspiciously.

DALIA

Why are you playing the pronoun game?

ALYSSA

What? What are you talking about? I'm not even.

DALIA

You are. "I met someone." "We have a great time. "They're from my home town." Doesn't this tube of wonderful have a name!

ALYSSA

(beat)

Holden.

All four Girls stare at Alyssa, a bit horrified. She stops painting.

JANE

Oh, Alyssa - no. Not you.

TORY

You're dating a guy?

ALYSSA

He's not like a typical man. He's really sweet to me, and we relate so well. You guys'd love him, really.

They stare at Alyssa. Then Dalia gets up.

DALIA

I've gotta go to the store.

JANE

I'll go with.

They exit. Alyssa looks to Tory and Nica.

TORY

(pouring wine)

Whelp - here's to both of you.

(moves the glass to her lips)

Another one bites the dust.

INT HOLDEN'S BEDROOM -NIGHT

Holden and Alyssa lie in each other's arms, moonlight bathing them. She smokes.

HOLDEN

Can I ask you something?

ALYSSA

Don't even tell me you want to do it again.

HOLDEN

Why me - you know? Why now?

ALYSSA

Because you were giving me that look, and I got wet...

HOLDEN

You know what I'm talking about.

ALYSSA

Why not You?

HOLDEN

I'm a guy. You're attracted to girls.

ALYSSA

I see you've been taking notes. Historically, yes that's true.

HOLDEN

Then why this?

ALYSSA

I've given that a lot of thought, you know? I mean, now that I'm being ostracized by my friends, I've had a lot of time to think about all of this. And what I've come up with is really simple: I came to this on my terms. I didn't just heed what I was taught, you know? Men and women

should be together, it's the natural way - that kind of thing. I'm not with you because of what family, society, life tried to instill in me from day one. The way the world is - how seldom you meet that one person who gets you... it's so rare. My parents didn't really have it. There was no example set for me in the world of male/female relationships. And to cut oneself off from finding that person - to immediately half your options by eliminating the possibility of finding that one person within your own gender... that just seemed stupid. So I didn't. And by leaving my options open, I was branded 'gay', which to me was no big deal - labels are labels, you know? They define what you do, not who you are, I guess. But then you come along. You - the one least likely; I mean, you were a guy.

HOLDEN

Still am.

ALYSSA

And while I was falling for you, I put a ceiling on that, because you were a guy.

Until I remembered why I opened the door to women in the first place - to not limit the likelihood of finding that one person who'd compliment me so completely. And so here we are, I was thorough when I looked for you, and I feel justified lying in your arms - because I got here on my terms, and have no question that there was someplace I didn't look. And that makes all the difference.

HOLDEN

(beat)

Shit.

ALYSSA

What?

HOLDEN

Well, you took the luster out of it.

ALYSSA

What luster?

HOLDEN

(joking - in case you didn't
get it)

Of how I brought you back from the
other side. How all you needed was
the right man to turn you around.

ALYSSA

You're not the right man.

(kisses him)

You're just the one.

She snuggles into him and closes her eyes. Holden stares
at the ceiling.

HOLDEN

Can I at least tell people that all
you needed was some serious deep-
dicking?

She hits him with her pillow.

THE BIG OL' FALLING-IN-LOVE MONTAGE BEGINS

1) In Holden's Apartment - Alyssa waves in various
directions, shaking her head accordingly. Then she puts
up her hands to stop. Cut to Holden, hanging the
picture. Alyssa gave him.
It hangs at a severely crooked angle. He looks back to
her and shakes his head 'no'.

2) Holden and Alyssa try to play a video game. Banky
plays as well. Holden instructs her in the ways of NHL
'96 (turning her paddle right-side-up, pointing at things
on the screen). She presses the reset button, over and
over. Banky gives Holden a 'What the fuck?' look.
Alyssa sticks her tongue at him.

3) At the Video Store - Holden picks up a Disney cartoon
off the shelf. He goes to show it to Alyssa, who's
reading the back of 'Anything But Dick', an allchick
porno. An old WOMAN stares at her. Holden nods to the
old Woman and takes the tape out of Alyssa's hands,
putting it back on the shelf. He ushers her away. The
old Woman waits until they're gone and then picks up the
tape herself,

4) Holden carries Alyssa on his shoulders through the park, her crotch against the back of his neck. He's talking. She taps him and he stops and looks up. She begins to maneuver around so her crotch is in his face. He pulls her off and put her down. She's laughing. He's flushed with embarrassment. The same Old Woman from the Video store passes by with her husband. Holden shrugs.

5) In Holden's Apartment again - Alyssa again with the waving, then putting up her hands to stop. Cut to Holden again, this time with the painting hung completely upside down. He looks at it, then offers her a bewildered gaze.

6) In the Office Banky comes to his drawing table. There are penciled pages on it with a note that says "Hanging out with Alyssa today. Holden". Banky crumples it up and throws it across the room.

7) In Holden's Apartment - Alyssa waves this way, then that way, then puts up her hands frantically to stop. She settles back against the wall, a satisfied smile crawling across her face, and closes her eyes. We pull back to reveal Holden on his knees in front of her, eating her out (no, we don't see anything!).

INT OFFICE - DAY

Holden draws. A book is thrown in front of him. He looks up. Banky stands there.

BANKY

Check out page forty eight.

Holden looks down at that book. It's the Nineteen Eighty Eight yearbook from Middletown North. He shakes his head at Banky and flips it open.

On the page is Alyssa's Senior year photo. Under her name is another name in quotes that says 'Finger Cuffs'.

HOLDEN

(looking up)

So?

BANKY

Did you see the nickname?

HOLDEN

'Finger Cuffs'.

BANKY

And...?

HOLDEN

And... she had a weird nick-name.
What's your point?

BANKY

Do you know why it's 'Finger Cuffs'?

HOLDEN

I suppose you do.

BANKY

I do.

(takes a seat)

You remember Cohee Lundin? Left
Hudson and went to North our senior
year?

HOLDEN

Yeah.

BANKY

Well, I ran into him at Food City the
other day, and we got to talking, and
I mentioned that you were dating
Alyssa, and he said..

CUT TO COHEE LUNDON. In the PARKING LOT of FOOD CITY,
addressing the camera.

COHEE

Alyssa Jones? Shit. I know Alyssa
Jones. I mean, I know Alyssa Jones,
you know what I'm saying?
Me and Rick Derris used to hang out
with her for awhile, right? Just
hanging around her house after school,
'cuz her parents were like never home,
and shit. And one day, Rick just
whips it out, and starts rubbing it on
her leg and shit; chasing her around
the living room - I was dying. But
you know what the crazy bitch did?
She fucking drops to her knees, and
just starts sucking him off right in
front of me! Like I wasn't even there
man! I almost died! But that's not
the fucked up part - the fucked up
part was Rick, man - right in the

middle of it, he turns to me and he's pointing at her and he says "Cohee." Just like that - "Cohee." So I'm like I'll give it a shot. And I start pulling her pants down all slow, 'cuz I figure any second she's gonna turn around and belt me in the mouth, right? But yo, check this shit out - she's all into it man! She don't try to stop me or nothing! She's all wet and shit, and I just went to work, know what I'm saying? Me and Rick are going to town on this crazy bitch, and she's just loving it, all moaning and shit! It was fucked up! So Rick's the one that came up with the nickname - 'cuz that day, she had us locked in tight from both sides - like a pair of goddamn Chinese finger cuffs!

BACK IN THE OFFICE - Holden stares at Banky.

HOLDEN

He's full of shit.

BANKY

Cohee's a lot of things, but an exxagerator he's not. The dude's Catholic.

HOLDEN

She's never even been with a guy.

BANKY

That's what she says. But I say her on her hands and knees getting filled out like an application constitutes 'being with a guy'.

HOLDEN

He's pulling your chain. And the fact that you even bought it for a second makes you look like an idiot.

BANKY

I'm getting your back, asshole! People don't forget shit like 'Finger Cuffs'. And if it got out that she's queer as well, how do you think it's going to make you look?

HOLDEN

I give a shit what people think.

BANKY

Alright, forget about that; what if she's carrying a disease? That was just one story - what if there's more?

HOLDEN

(grabs his coat)

You're such a fucking asshole.

BANKY

What? Oh, it's not possible that she's all crudded up? Cohee I can vouch for as clean - the dude never got laid in high school. But Derris is an arch fucking bush-man! Name me one chick in our senior class that Rick Derris didn't nail, for Christ's sake!

HOLDEN

Would you let this go? I'm telling you - she's never even been with a guy, let alone those two zeroes.

BANKY

And I'm telling you, the bitch could be a bigger fucking germ farm than that monkey in 'Outbreak'!

Holden grabs Banky and pins him against the wall.

HOLDEN

Give it a rest! Do you hear me?! I'm tired of this shit! She's my goddamn girlfriend, do you understand?! Show her a little fucking respect! And if you ever even so much as mention that Alyssa looks a little peaked from now on, I'll put your fucking teeth down your throat!

He releases Banky. Banky brushes himself off.

BANKY

Maybe I'll put your fucking teeth down your throat.

HOLDEN

(walking out)

Not bloody Likely.

Banky runs to the open door.

BANKY

(calling after him)

I've been working out you know!

(no response)

You better be ready to make that M-TV deal!

The downstairs door slams. Banky makes a muscle, then feels it.

INT TOWER RECORDS - DAY

Holden and Hooper peruse laser discs.

HOOPER

Where's that bitch partner of your's been?

HOLDEN

Sulking. He's having a real problem with this Alyssa thing.

HOOPER

I think it's more like Banky's having a problem with all things not hetero right about now. And I'm just another paradigm of said aberration.

HOLDEN

Banky does not hate gays, you know that.

HOOPER

But I do think he is a bit homophobic. And this latest episode between you and Ms. Thing has tapped into that. In his warped perception, he lost you to the dark side - which is she.

HOLDEN

You make it sound like me and him were dating.

HOOPER

Don't kid yourself - that boy loves you in a way that he's not ready to

deal with.

HOLDEN

(beat)

He's been digging up dirt on Alyssa.

HOOPER

And just what has Mister Angela
Lansbury uncovered about your lady
fair?

HOLDEN

He heard some bullshit story that she
took on two guys.

HOOPER

Really? Well then he's barking up the
wrong we if he wants to split you up,
isn't he? He's not going to make you
see the error of your ways by pointing
out how truly gay she's not

(holds up a disc)

This one?

HOLDEN

Have it.

(beat)

Actually, it's kind of gotten to me.

HOOPER

How so?

HOLDEN

Banky's not known for believing
misinformation. He's got a pretty
good bullshit detector.

HOOPER

So, what if it is true? Would that
bother you?

HOLDEN

Sex with multiple partners?

Hooper lets our a faux-shock shriek.

HOLDEN

At the same time.

Again, even louder, hands slapped against his cheeks.

HOLDEN

Thanks for being so comforting.

HOOPER

So what do you care?

HOLDEN

Well that's the thing, isn't it? I shouldn't.. but it gets to me.

HOOPER

Kind of gal Alyssa is, you don't think she's been in the middle of an all - girl group-grope?

HOLDEN

You see - that doesn't bother me. But the thought of her and guys... Uh!

HOOPER

Oh Holden, I beg you - please don't drop fifty stories in my opinion of you by falling prey to that latest of trendy beasts.

HOLDEN

Which is?

HOOPER

Lesbian chic. It's oh-so acceptable to be a gay girl nowadays. People think it's cute, because they've got this fool picture in their heads about lipstick lesbians - like they all resemble Alyssa - while most of them look more like you.

HOLDEN

Do I detect a little inter-subculture cattiness?

HOOPER

Gay or straight - ugly's still ugly. And most of those boys are scary.

HOLDEN

I thought fags were all supposed to be super-supportive of one another.

HOOPER

Screw that 'all for one' shit. I gotta deal with being the minority in the minority of the minority, and

nobody's supporting my ass? While the whole of society is fawning over girls-on-girls, here I sit - a reviled gay man, and to top that off, I'm a gay black man - notoriously the most swishy of the bunch.

HOLDEN

Three strikes.

HOOPER

Hey, hey! There's a line.

A young BLACK KID approaches Hooper, holding a comic book.

KID

Are you Hooper X?

HOOPER

(in militant mode)

A-salaam Alaikum, little brother.

KID

Could you sign my comic?

HOOPER

(signing comic; nods to Holden)

See that guy there? He's the devil, you understand? Never take your eye off the Man. Our people took their eyes off him one time, and he had us in chains in two shakes of his snake's tail.

The Kid offers Holden an angry look. Hooper gives him back his comic.

HOOPER

Fight the power, little 'G'.

KID

Word is bond

The Kid leaves, Hooper slips back into his real voice.

HOOPER

Look at what I have to resort to for professional respect. What is it about gay men that terrifies the rest of the world.

(shakes his head)
As for this hang-up with Alyssa's
past, maybe what's really bothering
you is that your fragile fantasy might
not be true.

HOLDEN

What do you mean?

HOOPER

Holden - don't even try to come off
like you don't know what I'm saying.
Men need to believe that they're Marco
fucking Polo when it comes to sex -
like they're the only ones who've ever
explored new territory. And it's hard
not to let them believe it. I let my
boys run with it for awhile - feed
them some of that "I've never done
this before..." bullshit, and let 'em
labor under the delusion that they
rockin' my world, until I can't stand
them anymore. Then I hit 'em with the
truth. It's a sick game. The world
would be a better place if people
would just accept that there's nothing
new under the sun, and everything you
can do with a person has probably been
done long before you got there.

HOLDEN

I can accept that.

HOOPER

Honey, that almost sounded convincing.
Do yourself a favor - just ask her
about her past, point blank. Get it
out of the way, before it gets too big
for both ya'll to move.

(spotting something OC)

Oooh! 'Myra Breckinridge'!

Hopper trots off, Holden glances at the disc in his
hands. Pictured on it are two gorgeous chicks, barely
clad, making out. The title is 'Men Suck.. and so do
Girls - All XXX Action.'

INT HOCKEY RINK - NIGHT

On the ice, two teams clash, chasing the puck up and

back, checking galore.

In the bleachers, amidst a slew of fans, Alyssa watches the game with a large degree of enjoyment. Sitting beside her, Holden doesn't seem to share her enthusiasm.

ALYSSA

Since most of these people are rooting for the home team, I'm going to cheer for the visitors. I'm a big visitors fan - especially the kind that make coffee for you in the morning before they go.

(smiles at Holden; no response)

That was a joke. A little wacky wordplay?

HOLDEN

What do you mean, 'visitors'?

ALYSSA

Was I being too obscure? The kind that - until recently - had no dicks and would spend the night.

HOLDEN

So that was until recently!

ALYSSA

Oh, yeah.

(shouting; to ice)

Hey - foul! Foul! He was traveling or something!

HOLDEN

So nobody but me has stayed the night at your place since we got together?

ALYSSA

(beat)

Something on your mind, Holden?

HOLDEN

No, I was just wondering,

ALYSSA

If I've been 'faithful' or something?

HOLDEN

Look, I was just asking.

ALYSSA

(toucher his face)

Oh, sweetie. I only have eyes for you.

(to ice)

CALL THAT FUCKING SHIT, REF!! THE GUY ON THE SKATES TOTALLY SHOVED ONE OF MY GUYS!!

(to Holden)

I told you I was great at sporting events. Imagine what a bitch I could be if I knew what was going on?

ON THE ICE - Things heat up between two opposing PLAYERS. One snatches the puck away from the other and skates off. The other Player gives chase.

Alyssa's very into the game. Holden shakes his head

HOLDEN

That'd make Banky half right.

ALYSSA

About what?

HOLDEN

He said all the girls from North were bitches and sluts.

ALYSSA

Really. I'm sorry - you two left high school behind how many years ago?

(grabs his face and kisses his cheek)

Can I put some of my books in your locker?

(goes back to watching game)

HOLDEN

(under his breath)

How about your yearbook.

ON THE ICE - The Player giving chase slashes the Player with the puck.

Alyssa jumps to her feet.

ALYSSA

(to ice)

IF YOU DON'T START USING THAT WHISTLE I'M GONNA JAM IT STRAIGHT UP YOUR ASS!!

(to guy next to her)
Right?

HOLDEN

What's with 'Finger Cuffs'?

ALYSSA

(sitting back down)
'Finger Cuffs'?

HOLDEN

Yeah. In your senior yearbook your
nickname was 'Finger Cuffs'. What is
that?

ALYSSA

It was? Shit, damned if I can
remember. I'd look it up, but I threw
all that shit our years ago?

(beat)

Where'd you see a North yearbook?

HOLDEN

Do you know Rick Derris?

ON THE ICE - The Players skid into the corner where
Player One checks Player Two into the boards, hard.
Player Two scrambles to his feet and throws down his
gloves.

The crowd around Alyssa and Holden go wild.

ALYSSA

Rick? Sure. We used to hang out in
high school.

(to ice)

**PUNCH HIM IN THE FUCKING NECK, NUMBER
TWELVE!!**

HOLDEN

Did you go out with him or something?

ALYSSA

(eyes on the ice)

Date Rick Derris? No. We just hung
out a lot.

HOLDEN

Just... you and him?

ALYSSA

No. Me, Rick, and... um... what was

that guy's name...?

HOLDEN

Cohee?

ALYSSA

Yeah! Cohee Lundin. God, I haven't thought about that name in years.

ON THE ICE - The Players square off. Player Two pulls Player One's helmet off and punches him in the face.

Holden looks as if he'd Like to do the same to his companion. Alyssa's into the game.

ALYSSA

I remember those guys'd come over almost everyday after school. They'd bug my sisters, look for porno tapes in my dad's closet, raid our fridge. They really took advantage of my parents never being home.

ON THE ICE - Player Two yanks at Player One's jersey and gut punches him. Alyssa seems oblivious to Holden's anger, so enthralled with the action is she.

ALYSSA

(starts laughing)

This one day... Rick pulled out his dick and chased me around the house with it! Right in front of Cohee! I couldn't believe it! Guys are weird - I thought the whole size hang-up made you all terrified to show your dicks to each other?

ON THE ICE - Player One staggers a bit, then quickly rights his jersey and lunges at Player Two, landing a barrage of his own punches. Blood sprays across the ice.

Holden's face is reeeeeaaaally sour looking. Alyssa's still in the game.

HOLDEN

Rick pulled his dick out? Really? What'd you do?

ALYSSA

(looks him dead in the eye)
I blew him while Cohee fucked me.

ON THE ICE - Player One delivers the kill shot, slamming his fist into Player Two's nose. The blood shoots out like a geyser, and Two goes down hard.

Holden stares at Alyssa, flabbergasted. The crowd around them stares not at the fight on the ice, but the fight in their midst, shocked. Alyssa fumes.

HOLDEN

Excuse me!?!

ALYSSA

That's what you wanted to hear, isn't it? Isn't that what this little cross-examination of your's is about? Well try not to be so obvious about it next time, there are subtler ways of badgering a witness.

(to Bystander)

Am I right?

BYSTANDER

(to Holden)

Jeez, even I knew what you were getting at.

ALYSSA

(gathering her stuff)

If you wanted some background information on me, all you had to do was ask - I'd have gladly volunteered it. You didn't have to play Hercules fucking Poirot!

She storms away. Holden chases after her. The Bystander watches them go.

BYSTANDER

(to companion)

I told you these were good seats.

INT RINK LOBBY / EXT PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Alyssa marches quickly, pulling on her coat. Holden catches up to her. We track with them our into the parking lot.

HOLDEN

So it's true?!

ALYSSA

Yes Holden! In fact, everything you heard or dug up on me was probably true! Yeah, I took on two guys at once! You want to hear some gems you might not have unearthed - I took a twenty six year old guy to my senior prom, and then left halfway through to have sex with him and Gwen Turner in the back of a limo! And the girl who got caught in the shower with Miss Moffit, the gym teacher? That was me! Or how about in college, when I let Shannon Hamilton videotape us having sex - only to find out the next day that he broadcast it on the campus cable station?! They're all true - those and so many more! Didn't you know? I'm the queen of urban legend!

HOLDEN

How the hell could you do those things?!

ALYSSA

Easily! Some of it I did out of stupidity, some of it I did out of what I thought was love, but - good or bad - they were my choices, and I'm not making apologies for them now - not to you or anyone! And how dare you try to lay a guilt trip on me about it - in public, no less! Who the fuck do you think you are, you judgemental prick?!

HOLDEN

How am I supposed to feel about all of this?

ALYSSA

How are you supposed to feel about it? Feel what ever the fuck you want about it! The only thing that really matters is how you feel about me.

HOLDEN

I don't know how I feel about you now.

ALYSSA

Why? Because I had some sex?

HOLDEN

Some sex?

ALYSSA

Yes, Holden - that's all it was: some sex! Most of it stupid high school sex, for Christ's sake! Like you never had sex in high school!

HOLDEN

There's a world of fucking difference between typical high school sex and two guys at once! They fucking used you?

ALYSSA

I used them! You don't think I would've let it happen if I hadn't wanted it to, do you?! I was an experimental girl, for Christ's sake! Maybe you knew early on that your track was from point 'a' to 'b' - but unlike you I wasn't given a fucking map at birth, so I tried it all! That is until we - that's you and I - got together, and suddenly, I was sated. Can't you take some fucking comfort in that? You turned out to be all I was ever looking for - the missing piece in the big fucking puzzle!

(tries to calm down)

Look I'm sorry I let you believe that you were the only guy I'd ever been with. I should've been more honest. But it seemed to make you feel special in a way that me telling you over and over again how incredible you are would never get across.

She touches his face. He pulls back. She stares at him, hurt and pissed.

ALYSSA

Do you mean to tell me that - while you have zero problem with me sleeping with half the women in New York City - you have some sort of half-assed, mealy-mouthed objection to pubescent antics, that took place almost ten years ago? What the fuck is your problem?!?

Holden's eyes are downcast. Alyssa waits for a response.

HOLDEN

I want us to be something that we
can't.

ALYSSA

And what's that?

HOLDEN

(beat)
A normal couple.

Holden skulks off. Alyssa stares after him, and then starts kicking and punching a car beside her, finally slumping to the ground. She cries.

INT STUDIO - DUSK

Holden sits on the couch, alone in the dark. The door opens and Banky enters. He stands there, sizing up Holden's mood.

BANKY

The girl?

Holden nods. Banky nods back. He stands there for a beat. Then he sits beside Holden. He opens his arms. Holden shifts into his friend's embrace and begins crying on his shoulder. Banky pats his back. Pull back on a man in pain and the comfort of a friend.

INT DINER - NIGHT

Holden sits alone at a booth. He stirs his iced tea.

OC VOICE

Yo, look at this morose mother fucker
here..

Holden looks up. JAY and SILENT BOB stand above him.

JAY

Smells like somebody shit in his
cereal.

Holden offers a half-smile. The pair slide into the booth.

HOLDEN

What took you so long?

JAY

We were at the mall. You bring the salad?

Holden pulls an envelope out of his jacket and tosses it to Jay. Jay opens it and pulls out a thick wad of bills, along with the latest issue of 'BLUNTMAN and CHRONIC.'

JAY

Man, this likeness rights shit is more profitable than selling smoke.

HOLDEN

How'd a dirt merchant like you ever learn about likeness rights?

JAY

(hands envelope to Silent Bob)

We deal to a lot of lawyers. Speaking of which...

(pulls out a dime bag)

Little signing bonus and shit!

HOLDEN

I'll pass. Take a look at the issue.

Silent Bob thumbs through the comic. Jay looks over his shoulder, as he begins rolling a joint.

JAY

Yeah. When you gonna get some pussy in that book, man! Throw some supervillain in with big fucking tits that shoot milk or something, and I just drink her dry, bust some moves on her...

(demonstrates)

...and then she has to fuck me.

(Silent Bob hits him)

Fuck us.

HOLDEN

I'll see what I can do.

A WAITRESS joins them.

WAITRESS

What can I get you.

HOLDEN

Nothing, thanks.

JAY

Yo Flo - tell Mel to whip me up a
toasted bagel and cream cheese.

(to Silent Bob)

You want one too?

(Silent Bob nods)

Make that two. And kiss my grits.
Noonch.

(the Waitress leaves; to
Holden)

D'jever watch 'Alice'? That show's
good as hell.

(continues rolling)

So why the long face, Horse? Banky on
the rag?

HOLDEN

When is he not? No - I'm just having
some girl trouble.

JAY

Bitch pressing charges? I get that a
lot.

HOLDEN

No. I'm just at a point where I don't
know what to do.

JAY

Kick her to the curb. Girls get to be
too much trouble, there's always the
'band of the hand'.

HOLDEN

Can't do it, g. I'm in love.

JAY

Ah, there ain't no such thing. You
gotta boil it all down to the
essentials. It's like Cube says -
life ain't nothing but bitches and
money.

HOLDEN

Just what I needed - advice from the
'hood

JAY

Who is this girl?

HOLDEN

I don't think you know her.

JAY

Come on man - I'm people who know people.

HOLDEN

You sound like Barbra Streisand.

JAY

That's 'cause I got this tubby bitch playing her greatest hits tape in my ear all the time. You should see him: she starts singing 'You Don't Bring Me Flowers', this faggot starts crying like a little girl with a skinned knee and shit. It's embarrassing. I got the only muscle in the world with a weakness for ballads.

(to Silent Bob)

You big fucking softie.

(to Holden)

So what's this skirt's name!

HOLDEN

I'm telling you, you don't know her.

JAY

I ain't playing. Tell me her name, Mysterio.

HOLDEN

Alyssa Jones.

JAY

Finger Cuffs?

Holden rubs his eyes.

JAY

You're dating Finger Cuffs? Wait a minute I thought she was all gay and shit!

HOLDEN

She is. Or was. I don't know.

The Waitress returns with the order.

JAY

And you go out with her? Shit, man - you're a lucky dog. She bring other chicks to bed with you, get a little of that filet o' fish sammich going on?

The Waitress stares wide-eyed and offended at Jay.

JAY

(off the Waitress' look)

Yeah - you know what I'm talking about, baby.

(Waitress leaves; to Holden)

So - four tits, or what?

HOLDEN

It's not like that.

JAY

Well what's it like then?

HOLDEN

Right now?

(beat)

I don't know. I love her. But she has a past

JAY

I'll say. Stuffin' two guys, eating chicks out. Yo - I heard one time, she had this dog...

HOLDEN

Eat your fucking bagel already!

JAY

(to Silent Bob)

Look at this touchy mother fucker right here.

(to Holden)

So, if you're all in love with her, what's the problem?

HOLDEN

The problem is shit like that. It was one thing when it was just girls - that was weird enough. But now you throw guys into the mix - two guys at once, no less. All that

experience...What am I supposed to think?

JAY

You think good; because now she'll be all true blue and shit. The girl's tasted life, yo. Now she's settlin' for your boring, funny-book-makin' ass.

HOLDEN

Settling. That's comforting, Jay. Thanks.

JAY

That's what I'm here for.

HOLDEN

I'm lusc having a problem with all of it I can't get it out of my head these visuals of her doing all this shit. And I don't know why I can't let it go. Because I'm crazy about her, you know? I look at this girl, I see the future. I see kids. I see grand-kids.

JAY

You're scaring me.

HOLDEN

I'm scaring myself. Because I think so much of her, and then I can't get over shit like 'Finger Cuffs'.

(shakes his head)

I don't know what I'm doing.

Holden looks out the window. Jay continues to roll his joint. There's silence. Then...

BOB

You're chasing Amy.

Holden's head snaps forward. He stares, wide-eyed at Silent Bob.

HOLDEN

What..what did you say?

BOB

You're chasing Amy.

Holden stares, shocked. He looks to Jay, who's still rolling his joint.

JAY

What do you look so shocked for? He does this all the time. Fat bastard thinks just because he never says anything, that it'll have some huge impact when he does open his fucking mouth.

BOB

Why don't you shut up? Jesus! Always yap, yap, yapping all the time. Give me a fucking headache.

(to Holden)

I went through something like what you're going through. Years ago. Same kind of thing with a girl named Amy.

JAY

When?

BOB

A couple of years ago.

JAY

What'd she 'Live in Canada' or something? Why don't I remember this?

BOB

What you don't know about me I can just about squeeze into the Grand fucking Canyon. Did you know I always wanted to be a dancer in Vegas?

Jay and Holden look at him. Silent Bob busts a move with his hands.

BOB

Hunhh? Bet you didn't know that?

JAY

Just cell your fucking story so we can get out of here and smoke this.

BOB

(to Holden)

So there's me an Amy, and we're all inseparable, right? Just big time in love. And then about four months in,

I ask about the ex-boyfriend. Dumb move, I know, but you know how it is - you don't really want to know, but you just have to... stupid guy bullshit. Anyway she starts telling me all about him - how they dated for years, lived together, her mother likes me better, blah, blah, blah - and I'm okay. But then she tells me that a couple times, he brought other people to bed with them - menage a tois, I believe it's called. Now this just blows my mind. I mean, I'm not used to that sort of thing, right? I was raised Catholic.

JAY

Saint Shithead.

Silent Bob backhands him. Jay raises his fist as if to strike.

BOB

Do something.

(to Holden)

So I get weirded out, and just start blasting her, right? This is the only way I can deal with it - by calling her a slut, and telling her that she was used - I mean, I'm out for blood I want to hurt her - because I don't know how to deal with what I'm feeling. And I'm like "What the fuck is wrong with you?" and she's telling me that it was that time, in that place, and she didn't do anything wrong, so she's not gonna apologize. So I tell her it's over, and I walk.

JAY

Fucking a.

BOB

No, idiot. It was a mistake. I wasn't disgusted with her, I was afraid. At that moment, I felt small - like I'd lacked experience, like I'd never be on her level or never be enough for her or something. And what I didn't get was that she didn't care. She wasn't looking for that guy anymore. She was looking for me. But by the time I realized this,

it was too late, you know. She'd moved on, and all I had to show for it was some foolish pride, which then gave way to regret. She was the girl, I know that now. But I pushed her away...

Everyone's silent Silent Bob lights a cigarette.

BOB

So I've spent every day since then chasing Amy...
(takes a drag from his smoke)
So to speak.

They sit there for a beat. Jay pockets the rest of his dime-bag.

JAY

Enough of this fucking melodrama. My advice - forget her, dude. There's one woman in the world. One woman, with many faces.
(to Silent Bob)
Get up, bitch
(to Holden)
We gotta book. We're catching a bus to Chi-town.

HOLDEN

What's there?

JAY

Business, yo. How many more of those phat envelopes do we got coming to us?

HOLDEN

I don't know. I don't know if the book's going to be around much longer.

JAY

Yeah? Good. I'll be glad as shit when it's gone.

HOLDEN

Are you kidding me? There's millions of people out there that'd love to see themselves in a comic book.

JAY

I know. I spend every fucking waking hour with one of them. But it ain't

like us at all - all slapsticky and
shit - running around like dicks,
saying... What's that shit you got me
saying?

HOLDEN

Snootchie-bootchies.

JAY

'Snootchie-bootchies'. Who talks like
that? That's baby-talk.

(slaps his hand)

It's a big world, g - but we're bound
to run into you again. Until then -
keep your unit on you.

HOLDEN

I'll try.

BOB

Do, or do not - there is no ay.

JAY

(slaps him)

Knock it off! Get your fat ass moving
- we got a bus to catch.

(under his breath)

Jedi-bitch.

Exit Jay and Silent Bob. Holden remains in the booth,
thinking.

MONTAGE - AN UNCOMFORTABLE SILENCE

- 1) Holden sits at his drawing table, tapping his pencil
up and down.
- 2) Alyssa sits in a club, getting talked at by some women.
She's not present in the conversation.
- 3) Banky meets with Sloss at a restaurant Sloss shakes
the contracts at him, and Banky makes the "I know, I
know," face.
- 4) Holden stares at the picture Alyssa gave him.
- 5) Alyssa with her ear to the phone. She hangs up,
angrily.
- 6) Holden sits in the park that he and Alyssa walked

through. He's staring at Alyssa's yearbook picture. He closes the book and sighs. Then, an idea hits him. He jumps up and dashes out of the park.

INT STUDIO - NIGHT

Banky and Alyssa sit on the couch. Holden paces in front of them.

HOLDEN

I know you're wondering why I asked you both here tonight, at the same time, knowing that we have shit to settle between us, separately.

BANKY

I just figured you wanted to kill two birds with one stone by telling her to fuck off with me here so you didn't have to go through the story again later on.

ALYSSA

Fuck you.

BANKY

Not even if you let me videotape it.

HOLDEN

Enough!

(they both look at him)

I've been going through things, over and over. And I dissected it all, and looked at it a thousand different ways. Banky - there's friction between us for the first time in our lives. You hate me dating Alyssa and you want me to sign off on this M-TV thing.

BANKY

How perceptive.

HOLDEN

Alyssa - you and I hit a wall, because I don't know how to deal with... your past, I guess.

BANKY

That's a nice way of putting it. I'd

have said the whole double-stuff
thing...

HOLDEN

(right in his face)
I'm only going to say it once: shut
up.

(back to pacing)
Now - I know I'm to blame one way or
the other on both accounts. With you,
Alyssa - it's my fault because I feel
inadequate. Because you've had so
much experience, had such a big life;
and my life's been pretty small in
comparison.

ALYSSA

That doesn't matter to me...

HOLDEN

Please. I have to get through this.
(beat)
And with you Banky - I know why you're
having such a hard time with Alyssa,
and it's something that's been obvious
forever, but I guess I just didn't
acknowledge it.
(takes a deep breath)
You're in love with me.

BANKY

(makes a face; beat)
What?

HOLDEN

You're attracted to me. Just as, in a
way, I'm attracted to you. I mean, it
makes sense - we've been together so
long, we have so much in common...

BANKY

(getting up)
Well, I've got to get home and catch
the last few minutes of 'Babylon 5',
so I'll be...

Holden grabs him, kisses him full on the lips, and pushes
him back onto the couch Alyssa reacts. Banky - wide-eyed
and speechless - looks away.

HOLDEN

It's something you're going to have to

deal with. Bank. You may very well be gay, which explains your homophobia and why you're so jealous of Alyssa, and your sense of humor as well.

BANKY

Just 'cause a guy's got a predilection toward dick jokes...

HOLDEN

Bank. Stop. Deal with it. You'll feel much better.

He grabs a chair from the side of the room.

HOLDEN

Now - at this point, you may be asking yourself the question that I've been going over and over in my head for the last few days: what does one have to do with the other?

Alyssa's face drops. She subtly shakes her head.

ALYSSA

(under her breath)

Don't.

HOLDEN

And when I did some serious soul-searching, it came at me from out of nowhere, and suddenly it all made sense - a calm came over me. I know what we have to do. And then you - Bank, you Alyssa, and I - all of us... can finally be... alright.

ALYSSA

(again, under her breath)

Please don't say it.

HOLDEN

(sits in the chair; takes a long beat)

We've all got to have sex together.

The room is silent. Holden Lights a cigarette. Banky's eyes nearly bug. Alyssa's head drops.

HOLDEN

Don't you see? That would take care of everything. Alyssa - I wouldn't

feel inadequate or too conservative anymore. I'll have done something on par with all the experience you've had. And it'll be with you, which'll make it that much more powerful. And Banky - you can cake that leap that everyone else but you sees that you should take. And it'll be okay, because it'll be with me - your best friend for years. We've been everything to each other but intimates. And now, we'll have been through that together too. And it won't have to be a total leap for you, because a woman will be involved. And when it's over, all that aggression you feel toward Alyssa will be gone. Because you'll have shared in something beautiful with the woman I love. It'll be cathartic. A true communion. We have to do this. For me, for both of you... for all of our sakes. This will keep us together.

(beat)

What do you say?

Banky stares forward, wide-eyed. He leans back into the couch and lets out a huge sigh. Then shrugs.

BANKY

Sure.

Holden smiles at his friend. Then he looks at Alyssa.

HOLDEN

You know I need this. You know it'll help.

Alyssa looks at him, sadly.

ALYSSA

No.

Holden reacts, shocked Banky lets out a sigh of relief.

HOLDEN

No? I... I thought you'd be into this.

ALYSSA

You did? What does that say about me?

HOLDEN

But you've... you've done... stuff...
like this. This should be no big deal
for you.

ALYSSA

You don't want this.
(lights her cigarette)
You really don't want this. Trust me.

HOLDEN

I need this. This has to happen. Why
can't you see that? And how can you
not? What does that say about me?
You can take it from two guys whose
names you can barely remember, but I
ask you to share an experience like it
- where it's about intimacy - and you
say no?

ALYSSA

(inhales from her cigarette,
takes a beat)
I can't.

Holden moves to her side of the couch.

HOLDEN

You can. I'll be there. And when
it's over, we'll be the strongest
we've ever been because we got through
some nasty shit together. And we'll
finally be on the same level together.
And then there'll be nothing we can't
accomplish.

A tear rolls down her cheek She looks at him, sadly, and
touches his face.

ALYSSA

Oh Holden.
(trying to compose herself)
That time is over for me. I've been
there. I've done it. And I didn't
find what I was looking for in any of
it. I found that in you - in us.
Doing this won't help you forget about
the things you're hung up on. It'll
create more.

HOLDEN

No it won't. I thought about all of

that.

ALYSSA

No, it will. Maybe you'll see me differently from then on - maybe you'll despise me for going along with it, once you're in the moment. Maybe I'll moan differently and then you'll resent Banky, and become suspicious of us. Or you'll alienate him because of it, and then grow to blame and hate me for the deterioration of your friendship. Or what if- I sincerely doubt it, but what if - I saw something in Banky that I never saw before, and fell in love with him and left you. I've been down roads like this before; many times. I know you feel doing this will broaden your horizons and give you experience. But I've had those experiences on my own. I can't accompany you on your's. I'm past that now.

(touches his face; stares to cry)

Or maybe I just love you too much. And I feel hurt and let down that you'd want to share me with anyone. Because I never wanted to share you

(holds it in; gets up)

Regardless I can't be a part of this.

(beat)

Or you. Not anymore

(hugs him)

I love you. I always will. Know that.

She releases him, then slaps him.

ALYSSA

But I'm not your fucking whore.

Alyssa storms away, stopping briefly to look Banky up and down.

ALYSSA

He's your's again.

She walks our of the studio. The door closes behind her.

Banky and Holden stand there, silently. Cut to black.

INT COMIC BOOK SHOW - DAY

It's ONE YEAR later. We're at another show, not unlike the one from the opening.

A copy of 'Bluntman and Chronic' enters the frame. The cover reads 'The Death Chronic', complete with a corresponding drawing.

BANKY V.O.

Blast from the past.

Banky sits at his own signing table. Behind him hangs a banner that reads 'BANKY EDWARDS - CREATOR Of BABY DAVE'. A small line is formed in front of him. He talks with a **FAN**.

FAN

Do you know how much it's going for these days? One ten. You signing it will push that up even higher,

BANKY

If you sell it, I want a kickback
(starts signing)

FAN

I don't know if this is true, but I heard once that there was going to be an animated series.

BANKY

There was going to be

FAN

What happened!

BANKY

(off comic)
You're looking at it. No Chronic - no cartoon

FAN

That sucks man. That would've been awesome.

BANKY

Tell me about it

FAN

Is that what happened to you and Holden McNeil? You got into a fight

over the rights or something?

BANKY

It was a little more involved than that.

FAN

Whatever happened to him?

BANKY

He quit the biz. I guess.

FAN

You guys don't talk anymore?

BANKY

(looks OC)

No. Not really.

Banky locks eyes with someone OC. His expression softens.

Holden leans against a wall on the far side of the room. He smiles at Banky. Banky smiles back, and sort of nods.

Holden holds up a copy of Banky's new solo comic. He points to it and gives a thumbs up.

OC FAN

Probably shouldn't have killed off Chronic.

Banky smiles to OC.

BANKY

Guess not. Some doors just shouldn't be opened.

Banky looks in another direction, OC. He looks at Holden and points to it. Holden looks in the same direction, and then looks back at Banky and nods.

OC FAN

You don't need that guy, anyway. You do great stuff without him.

Banky looks at Holden for a beat. Then he brings his pointer fingers together, mimicing Holden's 'shared moment' gesture.

Holden shrugs slightly, then crosses his fingers - as if to say 'hopefully'.

OC FAN

You were just carrying that guy,
anyway.

Banky sort of smiles at the OC Holden. Then he offers
his own thumbs up - as to say 'good luck'.

BANKY

(to fan, still looking OC)
You're so right.

Holden smiles back, nods 'bye', and walks off.

OC FAN

Well, keep up the good work, man.
Love them dick jokes. Love 'em. See
ya.

The Fan Leaves, but Banky is watching Holden go.

BXVKY

Yeah. Bye.
(shakes it off)
Okay. Who's next?

Alyssa sits at a separate signing table, with a line in
front of her. A WOMAN behind her. Alyssa dashes off
signatures in the copies of her comic.

ALYSSA

(to OC departing fan)
Thanks for reading it.

The Woman stands and rubs her shoulders.

WOMAN

I'm going to get a soda. You want
anything?

ALYSSA

I'm fine, thanks,

The Woman heads off. Alyssa starts rummaging through her
bag.

ALYSSA

(not rooking up)
Okay, who's next!

A comic book drops on the table in front of her. It's a
comic book called 'Chasing Amy'.

She leafs through it, not looking up.

ALYSSA

Um... This isn't one of mine.

OC HOLDEN

It's mine.

Alyssa looks up sharply.

Holden stands before her, smiling.

HOLDEN

I saved you one.

ALYSSA

Hi.

HOLDEN

Hi.

ALYSSA

(beat)

How've you been?

HOLDEN

Good. Really good. Yourself?

ALYSSA

Good

(beat; off her own comic)

New issue's selling like crazy, for some reason.

HOLDEN

Because it's so good. I really liked it.

ALYSSA

Thank you.

(off comic)

I haven't even seen this yet. Did it just come out?

HOLDEN

A month ago. I did a really small run. Self-financed. Only about five hundred issues.

ALYSSA

Will I enjoy it?

HOLDEN

You might. It's familiar subject matter.

Alyssa leafs through it. Her eyes get somewhat misty.

ALYSSA

Looks Like a very personal story.

HOLDEN

I finally had something personal to say.

They look at each other for a beat

HOLDEN

I'm going to go. I don't want to hold up the line.

ALYSSA

Yeah. I mean, it can get ugly. I just saw this nun in line call this small child a cunt-rag.

HOLDEN

(smiles)

Read that, when you have a minute

ALYSSA

I will.

HOLDEN

I'd like to hear your thoughts about it. If you get a chance, give me a call.

ALYSSA

Okay.

They look at each other for a beat.

HOLDEN

Nice seeing you again,

ALYSSA

Really nice to see you too.

He walks away. A few steps away, he turns and waves again. She waves back. And then he starts moving through the thrall of fan-boys.

The Woman returns with coffee. She follows Alyssa's

gaze.

WOMAN

who was that?

ALYSSA

Hmm! Oh. Just some guy I knew.

She watches him go for another beat, then.

ALYSSA

(to line)

Next

(to Woman)

So what do you want to do tonight?

And as they fall into conversation, the show goes on.

END