GREENBERG

Screenplay by
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Story by
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Black.

VOICE
Okay, that was the big box, now let’s use the small box.

1 INT. MUSIC STUDIO - DAY

Florence Marr, 25, stands on a ball. A tiny woman, 40’s, hovers near her.

MUSIC TEACHER
From your groin.

FLORENCE
(singing)
I’m going walking today, I’m going walking today, I’m going walking today...

MUSIC TEACHER
Your groin!

FLORENCE
(singing)
I’m going walking today, I’m going walking today...

MUSIC TEACHER
Let me see your tongue.

Florence sticks out her tongue and the teacher grabs hold of it.

MUSIC TEACHER
Again.

FLORENCE
(with her tongue being held)
I’m going walking today...

2 INT. FLORENCE’S CAR - LATER

Florence drives. The radio plays.

FLORENCE
(to the car behind her)
Are you going to let me in? Are you? (waves)
Thank you.

3 INT. DRY CLEANER

Florence rummages through her purse.
FLORENCE
Shoot, I think I left my ticket in the
car. It’s under Philip Greenberg, two
suits and a dress.

The dry cleaner stares at her.

FLORENCE
You don’t remember me?

DRY CLEANER
I need the ticket.

Florence hesitates and hurries toward the door.

EXT. OPEN MARKET

Florence idles at the various stalls.

FLORENCE
They really liked the heirlooms I got
last week. Do you have the heirlooms?

EXT/INT. PHILIP AND CAROL’S HOUSE, HOLLYWOOD

A large, open California craftsman. Florence, clutching grocery
bags and dry cleaning, types in a code on the keypad outside the
front door and enters.

A boy, 7 and girl, 5, rush her.

KIDS
Florence!

FLORENCE
Hey, guys. Let me put this stuff
down.

A German shepherd mutt bounds toward her, wiggling with
anticipation.

FLORENCE
Hi, Mahler.

INT. KITCHEN

Florence unpacks the groceries. The kids dancing and chirping *
around her.

BOY
We’re going on vacation!
FLORENCE
I know.

BOY
But we will come back. Right? We’re not going to live there.

FLORENCE
No, that’s why it’s a vacation.

INT. UPSTAIRS LANDING
Florence hurries toward the master bedroom, holding the dry cleaning. The kids follow, still chattering.

GIRL
Are you going to go with us?

FLORENCE
No, remember, I have to stay here.

GIRL
Why?

FLORENCE
Because I do.

GIRL
Why?

FLORENCE
Because the vacation is for family members only. Mahler and I have to stay in LA.

GIRL
(horrified)
Mahler isn’t coming? I want Mahler to come. Mahler!

She bursts into tears and runs in the other direction.

INT. KITCHEN
Florence feeds the dog. The boy still jabbering. Philip Greenberg, 30’s enters holding a toothbrush, harried, in the midst of packing.

PHILIP
Did you get the neck pillows?
FLORENCE
Yes. They didn’t have those chocolate covered rice balls.

PHILIP
(concerned)
Did you try Trader Joe’s?

FLORENCE
Yeah and Bristol Farms.

Carol, 30’s, enters, equally harried, holding a sweater and pair of jeans in her hand.

CAROL
Were you able to find the liquid decongestant?

FLORENCE
Shoot!

She immediately turns around and heads for the door.

CAROL
It’s okay, Florence, don’t worry about it.

FLORENCE
(on her way out)
No, no, no...

EXT. PHARMACY
Florence hurries out holding the decongestant.

INT. FLORENCE’S CAR
Florence puts the car in reverse, looks over her shoulder. A long scraping sound as she backs up. We STAY on Florence’s face.

FLORENCE
(under her breath)
Oh, Florence.

INT. PHILIP AND CAROL’S BEDROOM
Open suitcases and bags on the bed. Florence helps Carol fold clothes and pack. Philip is organizing passports, money, keys.

CAROL
...and the toilet in the pool house is running. What else?
FLORENCE
I’ll schedule the plumber for next week.

PHILIP
...and there’s a package I need you to mail to my father...

CAROL
(to Philip)
Did you tell her about Roger?

PHILIP
My brother will be staying here. He might call you with things...questions or an errand or two...

FLORENCE
That’s no problem.

CAROL
He just got out of the hospital.

FLORENCE
Is he sick?

PHILIP
Not that kind of hospital.

CAROL
He had a nervous breakdown.

PHILIP
Carol, come on...

CAROL
It’s relevant. He’s fine.
(to Florence)
Don’t pack that skirt.

FLORENCE
Okay.

PHILIP
He really is fine now. I mean, he’s delicate, but...

FLORENCE
Uh huh.

PHILIP
And I’m hiring him to do some work around the house. He’s a carpenter. *
FLORENCE
That’ll look nice.

CAROL
We hope. Oh, and can you walk Mahler quickly before you go...

11
EXT. RUNYON CANYON

Florence walks Mahler up the canyon.

CUT TO: Florence sits on a bench, Mahler at her feet.

12
INT. FOYER

Philip and Carol hug Florence on her way out. The kids grabbing her legs.

FLORENCE
Have a great trip, you guys.

CAROL
Okay, I’ll call you tonight if there’s more to go over which I’m sure there is.

FLORENCE
No problem.

PHILIP
And you’ll confirm the car service and the flight info for tomorrow.

FLORENCE
(makes a mental note)
Yes.

CAROL
And we can always call or e-mail. I’m sure there’s e-mail in Vietnam.

FLORENCE
I think there’s e-mail everywhere.

PHILIP
Oh, I forgot to write you a check for, what do we owe you now...
FLORENCE
I think it’s three weeks. Don’t worry about it.

CAROL
Oh, Florence, you have to speak up.

FLORENCE
No, I know, but it’s fine.

PHILIP
(looking in a drawer)
I’m out of checks.

CAROL
I can give you some cash in the meantime...

FLORENCE
Really, don’t worry about it. It’s better in a way because then I don’t spend it all at once.

PHILIP
I’ll leave it for you in the kitchen drawer before we go.

EXT. SILVERLAKE ART GALLERY - NIGHT

CLOSE on a TV screen. Monkeys play in a dense forest. We PAN down from to find Florence and her friend, Gina, 20’s, outside the gallery window, watching this image on the TV. Florence finishes a cigarette.

They go inside the gallery.

INT. SILVERLAKE ART GALLERY - NIGHT

Florence and Gina enter the forest installation. It’s an opening. We see snippets of party conversation.

GINA
Don’t wander away.

FLORENCE
Okay.

GINA
Let’s make a point of sticking together.
FLORENCE
Okay. Can I borrow forty bucks until tomorrow?

INT. BACK ROOM

A keg and chairs fill out the ad hoc reception area. Florence sits on a couch and leans in closely to a guy she’s been talking to.

FLORENCE
I was thinking this morning that I’ve been out of college now for as long as I was in. And nobody cares if I get up in the morning.

They kiss. Gina appears in the doorway.

GINA
Florence, it’s time to go home now.

Florence looks up from her kissing, a dazed look on her face.

FLORENCE
I’m gonna stay.

INT. GUY’S APARTMENT - NIGHT

They’re kissing. The guy leads Florence to his bedroom.

FLORENCE
(slowing down)
I don’t know. I’m...I just got out of a long relationship.

GUY
This isn’t a relationship...

Florence hesitates, not what she expected to hear.

FLORENCE
Um...right...I know. Okay.

She follows him down the hall...

INT. GUY’S BEDROOM - LATE NIGHT

Florence looks over at the sleeping young man. He’s curled on his side, his back to her. She puts her hand on his naked back and feels his breath move in and out. Quietly she gets out of bed and begins to dress. The clock radio glows: 4:48.
INT. FLORENCE’S CAR - DAWN

Florence drives, in the same clothes, her hair unwashed. The early morning light is starting to creep up.

FLORENCE
(to car behind her)
Are you going to let me in?
(pause)
No. Okay.

INT. REHEARSAL STUDIO

A low-rent place in the valley. Florence sorts through some song sheets. A tall, bony guy unpacks his guitar from the case.

FLORENCE
Where’s Brian?

GUITARIST
Brian got a gig in Frisco.

FLORENCE
(concerned)
I wish someone had told me. Are you going to play with me next week?

GUITARIST
I don’t know.

FLORENCE
You don’t know about the gig or you don’t know your schedule?

GUITARIST
Both.

FLORENCE
(nods)
Okay.

GUITARIST
Brian said you pay for gas money.

FLORENCE
Uh huh. How much do you need?

GUITARIST
Five bucks. And...I get fifty an hour for practice.

FLORENCE
I...I don’t pay Brian to practice.
The guitarist shrugs.

    GUITARIST
    I’m not Brian.

Florence hesitates then opens her wallet. She fingers through some bills.

    FLORENCE
    Shit... Can I write you a check?

18    INT. FLORENCE’S APARTMENT - DAY

A studio with a kitchenette. It’s messy. Clothes and magazines lie on the floor.

Florence, her hair wet from the shower, and in a robe, is on her computer, answering e-mail. The phone rings. She picks up.

    FLORENCE
    Hello?

    GREENBERG
    (through the receiver)
    Hi, this is Roger Greenberg. I’m Philip’s brother.

    FLORENCE
    (pause)
    Oh, hey.

    GREENBERG
    Is this Florence?

    FLORENCE
    (pause)
    Sorry, I’m quitting e-mail. Yes, this is Florence.

19    INT/EXT. BEDROOM BALCONY, PHILIP’S HOUSE - INTERCUT

CLOSE on a stack of instructions open to:

    If you need anything call Florence Marr at: And the number.

We’re on the back of Greenberg, 40, in a T-shirt and boxers. He anxiously shifts his weight from one foot to the other.

He stands inside a door on the second floor balcony and watches a hairy burly man, 30’s, leap in the pool — his ass curls up over the water and submerges. Two women and another man, 30’s, sun themselves and chat.
FLORENCE
(through the receiver)
Okay... Hi.

GREENBERG
How are you?

FLORENCE
I’m fine.

GREENBERG
Um, there are people in the pool.

FLORENCE
That’s Marlon and Peggy.

GREENBERG
Okay.

FLORENCE
Your brother and Carol let Marlon and Peggy use the pool.

GREENBERG
There’s more than two.

He turns. We see his tired face for the first time.

FLORENCE
They don’t come in the house.

GREENBERG
Okay, thanks.

FLORENCE
Um, your brother left a check for me. Is that okay if I come by?

GREENBERG
Yeah. I’ll be here.

19A INT. TEENAGE GIRL’S ROOM

Greenberg’s feet creak on the wooden floor boards. On a side- * board is a vintage wind-up toy girl playing vibes. Greenberg winds it and the girl rotates and plunks out a tune. He pours a pill into his palm from a container at his bedside and downs it with a glass of water.

Mahler stretches out in a sun patch on the floor. Greenberg steps into the sun stream and passes his hand aimlessly through the floating dust particles.
Florence turns the key in the lock and enters. Mahler ambles toward her, his long nails scraping the floor. Florence hugs his face and scratches behind his ears.

FLORENCE
Hi little Mahler baby.

Greenberg enters holding his cereal bowl.

FLORENCE
Hey. I’m Florence. I hope this isn’t a bad time.

GREENBERG
No, I guess it’s fine.

FLORENCE
(to Mahler)
Treat?

She retrieves a dried chicken lung from a jar in the pantry and feeds it to him. The dog licks her hand thoroughly -- she giggles.

FLORENCE
His tongue is so scratchy.

She slides open a drawer and retrieves an envelope. Greenberg pats the dog stiffly on the top of the head. He chooses a song on the iPod. “It Never Rains in Southern California.”

GREENBERG
Do you remember how they used to play this on the radio every time it rained.

FLORENCE
I’m not sure.

GREENBERG
And if there was a fire they’d play...Burn Baby Burn or...

FLORENCE
... what’s it called? Disco Inferno. It’s funny.

FLORENCE
I don’t think I know it.
GREENBERG
Before your time, I guess. You have *
to see past the kitsch.

FLORENCE
I can see past it...

She makes a show of listening.

FLORENCE
Cool. Um, Philip said if you need *
anything, I can pick you up some
groceries or things.

GREENBERG
I’m okay.

FLORENCE
You sure, it’s no problem.

GREENBERG
Well, I could use some things, sure.

FLORENCE
Make a list. I’ll be right back.

She disappears into the other room, a door shuts. Greenberg
starts a list: whiskey, ice cream sandwiches... The muffled
sound of her peeing. He hesitates.

The toilet flushes. Her feet clomp across the floor. He hands
her the grocery list with the two items. She grabs Mahler’s
green leash from a hook. Mahler jumps up, excited.

FLORENCE
I’ll take him on a W-A-L-K.

GREENBERG
No... No, I got it.

FLORENCE
(hesitates)
Okay. Cool.

She hangs the leash back on its hook, walks quickly, her back to
Greenberg and is out the door.

FLORENCE
Bye.

The kitchen door sticks open behind her. Mahler runs along the
wall to the window. He jumps up, standing, with his paws on the
sill and watches Florence walk away.
20A EXT. BACKYARD - DAY
Greenberg sands the kitchen door on a sawhorse.

21 EXT. RUNYON CANYON - DAY
Greenberg walks the shepherd on a dirt incline. He wears painter’s pants and a sweater, clearly not used to dressing for warm weather or exercise.

Greenberg rests on a bench with Mahler.

22 EXT. BACKYARD - LATER

The swimmers are gone. Greenberg, in a T-shirt and shorts, walks cautiously around the edge of the pool. Mahler runs energetically in the grass. He nudges Greenberg with a frisbee. Greenberg grunts a sound that approximates “Sit.” The dog doesn’t respond. Greenberg wrestles the frisbee from the animal’s mouth and tosses. Mahler bolts after it.

Greenberg removes his shirt and wades into the water. He shivers. Suddenly he pushes out. He can’t really swim -- he keeps his head above water and dog paddles to the other end. Finally he reaches the ladder and lifts himself out. He’s panting.

He lies down in a chaise and tries to relax.

22A INT. KITCHEN - DAY

CLOSE on a handwritten letter:

“Dear American Airlines,
...but my issue is not with the lack of leg room, but with the quality of the buttons on the seats. Not only was my flight attendant button busted, but so was my recline...”

Greenberg scribbles away. He eats cereal.

23 INT. TEENAGE GIRL’S BATHROOM - LATER

Greenberg empties his cereal bowl into the toilet. He scrapes at the remaining soggy flakes with his spoon.

He looks in the big, well lit magnifying mirror.

24 OMMITTED

25 INT. LIBRARY

CLOSE a scrap of paper with the name Ivan and the number.
Greenberg, his hair damp, dials.

GREENBERG (V.O.)
"...Dear Mayor Bloomberg...if you placed a police officer at strategically chosen corners of Manhattan...

INT. FOYER/LIVING ROOM - DAY

Greenberg stands in the doorway reading his hand-written letter. Across from him is a man, late 30’s, in an untucked flannel over a T-shirt and khakis. This is Ivan.

GREENBERG
"...if they can do it in LA -- a car culture if there ever was one -- I’m confident we can do it here in Manhattan..."

IVAN
It’s true, no one honks here really.

GREENBERG
In LA they understand the horn is for emergencies only. In New York it’s a constant.
(pause)
I don’t know, I don’t really recognize New York anymore, you know?

Ivan takes a few tentative steps into the space.

IVAN
When did you get in?

GREENBERG
Only Monday, you’re the first person I called.

IVAN
No, I didn’t mean...

GREENBERG
No, I know, I was just saying.

IVAN
Right. How long you staying?

GREENBERG
About six weeks. Can you imagine going to Vietnam?

IVAN
You mean to fight?
GREENBERG
Well, to fight too, but I just meant now -- my brother and his wife are there on vacation.

IVAN
(shrugs)
I don’t know. Some people like travel.

Ivan picks up a photo of a teenage girl.

GREENBERG
That’s my brother’s wife’s daughter, Sara. My step-sister?

IVAN
Niece.

GREENBERG
She’s at UC Santa Cruz.

Greenberg walks into the den. We STAY with Ivan. He looks at the attractive eighteen year old girl posing in front of the Coliseum.

Greenberg returns with two glasses of scotch. He hands one to Ivan.

IVAN
No thanks, man. I don’t really drink now.

GREENBERG
(disappointed)
Okay.

IVAN
Yeah, I think it’s best. I’ve gotten into these Arnold Palmers, you know, ice tea with lemonade.

Greenberg pours Ivan’s drink into his own.

GREENBERG
Yeah, I don’t have that.

Ivan sits on a speaker. Greenberg perches on a window ledge.

IVAN
I thought I’d told you, but I guess I think we talk more than we do.
GREENBERG
The beard is cool.

IVAN
Yeah, you know, it’s a winter beard.
Greenberg stands.

    GREENBERG
    I probably shouldn’t be on the window here...
    (pause)
    Maybe don’t sit on the speaker.

Ivan stands up.

    IVAN
    Sorry.

    GREENBERG
    What do you want to do tonight?

    IVAN
    Beller is having a barbecue which *
    means, you know...

    GREENBERG
    What’s he up to -- you see him?

    IVAN
    Not with any regularity. He calls me
    with computer questions.

    GREENBERG
    What a dick.

    IVAN
    He always offers to pay.

Greenberg grabs scissors from a left behind paper-doll project
on the table and idly snips at his hair while he talks.

    GREENBERG
    It’s still rude. So, let’s not do
    that. What else, man? We could get a
    drink at a bar. We could stay here.
    (indicates shelf)
    They have, uh, Mannequin and...The Day
    After...

27    INT. IVAN’S CAR – DAY

    A CD plays. Ivan winds his way up Laurel Canyon. Greenberg is
shotgun -- he looks down at his feet.

    GREENBERG
    I’m not sure about these pants. Do
    they look flare-y to you?
IVAN
I think that’s the style.

GREENBERG
I feel like I shouldn’t have changed. *
No one’s going to be dressed up at this thing.

IVAN
Fabula and I are in a trial separation.

GREENBERG
Oh... Uh huh.

Ivan hesitates.

IVAN
It’s a lot to go into. I feel terrible for Victor. I really want you to meet him he’s like a little person now.

GREENBERG
I saw him a few years ago.

IVAN
Yeah, but now, he’s eight, he’s like a friend -- he’s fun to hang out with.

Ivan gets into the turn lane and waits for the oncoming traffic to pass.

IVAN
I’m glad you’re here, man. It’s good for me to get out like this.

GREENBERG
You want to put your blinker on?

Ivan does. They make the turn and continue upward, the street narrowing. Greenberg applies cherry chapstick to his lips. Ahead, people are spilling into the street. Kids run around. * Balloons are tied to the outside railing. *

GREENBERG
Are you kidding me...balloons? *
(pause) *
Keep going, keep going, keep going...

Ivan slowly drives past the house, both of them craning their necks to survey the party.
GREENBERG
I hate how the men out here all dress like children.
(watching)
What a nightmare. This kind of thing makes me want to live in Europe.

IVAN
I can maybe park over here.

GREENBERG
No, keep going...keep going...

Ivan continues winding upward. He pulls into a drive-way and turns around. Greenberg yawns, anxious, almost giddy.

GREENBERG
I feel like I have those glasses from that John Carpenter movie and I can see who these people really are...

IVAN
That wasn’t bad, that movie.

GREENBERG
I thought it was terrible.

They re-approach the group now from the other direction.

IVAN
There’s that space.

GREENBERG
Let’s go home.

IVAN
We drove all the way out here. We’ll have one drink.

GREENBERG
Let’s go home. I shouldn’t have let you talk me into this. It’s a nightmare here. It’s this kind of shit -- why I can’t find a movie I want to go to in the fucking multiplex or...why when I’m in Starbucks I hear music I actually like... I had this better when I was saying it to someone a week ago -- I’m having trouble articulating it now.
EXT. STOP SIGN - LATER

Ivan waits at a Stop sign.

GREENBERG
Should we go back?

IVAN
We’re almost home.

GREENBERG
(hesitates)
They might be okay. What do I know?

IVAN
You want to go back?

GREENBERG
Maybe we should have given it a chance.

IVAN
You’re kidding me.

INT. BELLER’S HOUSE - LATER

People mingle, kids run around. Ivan dumps his jacket on a chair with a pile of coats knocking some onto the floor.

GREENBERG
(under his breath)
Is this a fucking children’s party?

Greenberg, in his down vest, drifts toward a wall of packed CD shelves. He looks irritated.

IVAN
What’s wrong?

GREENBERG
I just...I find Beller’s CD collection offensive. He’s...you can see all the effort. The amount of Brazilian music...I mean, I doubt he really needs eight Os Mutantes CD’s.

MEGAN (O.S.)
Hey, manly men.

IVAN
Hi, Megan.

GREENBERG
(trailing off)
At a certain point you’re just showing off.
Megan, a busty short girl, embraces Ivan. She raises an eyebrow at Greenberg and smiles slyly.

MEGAN
Hey, Greenberg, what are you doing out here?

GREENBERG
You know...

MEGAN
Should I know? Insert foot into mouth. Are you really big or something?

GREENBERG
No, Megan...

MEGAN
I’m sorry, I’m all shits and giggles tonight.

GREENBERG
Yeah...I think you’ll find I’m pretty much all shits.

(pause)
I’m going to get a drink.

IVAN
Oh, can you get me a Diet Pepsi?

Greenberg sighs.

MEGAN
And I’ll have another white wine spritzer.

GREENBERG
That it?

They both nod.

CUT TO: Greenberg finds the bar area. He suddenly comes face to face with a scruffy guy, 40, in a hooded sweatshirt. This is Eric Beller.

GREENBERG
Hey, Beller.

Beller appears to make eye-contact with Greenberg, but quickly engages with another guy in a baseball cap, Pep Boys T-shirt, and cargo shorts, Johno. Greenberg taps Beller’s shoulder.
GREENBERG
Hey, man, how are you?

BELLE
(dryly formal)
I’m good. I didn’t know you were out here.

GREENBERG
I wasn’t.
(in a funny voice)
“How is Lenny?”

Beller hesitates, confused.

BELLE
(to Johno)
Duder, it’s called Your Grandma’s Pussy -- it’s like Anaconda -- you get seven cards down --

Greenberg nods, trying to participate, but neither guy addresses him. Greenberg applies his chapstick. Finally:

BELLE
That shit just makes your lips drier.

GREENBERG
I know.

Someone yells: “Beth!” Greenberg turns around. Beth, late 30’s, holds a young girl in her arms and the hand of a boy in a Devil costume at her side. She’s greeted by Beller’s wife. Greenberg stares.

BELLE
She and Steven are getting a divorce.

JOHNO
They were a cool couple.

BELLE
(looks at Greenberg)
Come to think of it he’s kind of a less Jewish looking version of you.

GREENBERG
Less? I’m not even...I’m only half.

BELLE
But you’re doing this.
Beller holds his hands about a foot apart and shakes them, *imitating Greenberg’s previous gesture. Johno laughs.*

GREENBERG
What’s...I’m thinking small...I’m...
(trying to figure out what he did)
Is this a Jewish gesture?

Beller shrugs. Johno laughs.*

GREENBERG
(to Johno)
Beller, always with the self-hatred.*

JOHNO
You kidding, have you been to one of Eric’s Seders? Eric gave trees to Israel.

BELLER
Am I not allowed to make a joke about it?

GREENBERG
No, I know, I’m just saying since you said “less Jewish looking...” Because people think I look Italian. And since my mom was Protestant I’m actually not Jewish at all.

They stare at him. Greenberg excuses himself and walks through the crowd over to Beth. At the last moment she sees him coming.

BETH
Oh my God, hey...

GREENBERG
Hey, Beth...

He leans over and kisses her cheek.

BETH
How are you?

GREENBERG
Oh, I’m fair to middling. You know. Leonard Maltin would give me two and a half stars.

BETH
I haven’t seen you since --
GREENBERG
In his movie guide... -- probably like ten years ago in New York.

GREENBERG
I think it was at Matt Levy’s wedding actually. It seems like such a long time ago. Or maybe it doesn’t, maybe it feels kind of recently.

BETH
It’s both.

Greenberg wipes his damp brow with the sleeve of his wool jacket.

BETH
You’re sweating!

GREENBERG
Yeah.

BETH
Sad about Matt Levy.

GREENBERG
Yeah. Wait, what happened?

BETH
You didn’t hear? A totally random thing, had a really high fever, went to the hospital and...died...

GREENBERG
(thrown)
Really? I hadn’t...I didn’t know.

BETH
Yeah. Some kind of rare infection.

GREENBERG
(pause)
We’re at that age where people start dying. I mean, not of old age obviously, but the freak ones. The suicides and the...the weird sudden shortness of breath, check into the hospital, dead in an hour ones...

(pause)
How are you?
BETH
(not enthusiastic)
I’m okay. I’m okay...

GREENBERG
(re: the kids)
Are any of those yours?

BETH
Mine are the one in the princess costume and the one in the devil costume.

GREENBERG
(re: devil outfit)
I think that’s the Flash.

BETH
You’re probably right.

GREENBERG
(trying out his line)
All the men out here dress like children and the kids dress like superheroes.

BETH
What are you doing these days? You’re in New York, right? You’re making music?

GREENBERG
I haven’t played music in years. I’m a carpenter, you know, for money, but now I’m really trying to do nothing for a while.

BETH
That’s brave at our age.

Greenberg hesitates. Megan passes by.

MEGAN
You owe me a white wine spritzer.

Greenberg barely nods.

BETH
(seems familiar)
Who’s that?

GREENBERG
I don’t know.
BETH
Well...it’s good seeing you.

GREENBERG
I’m here for a few weeks, at my brother’s...and...do you want to have a drink or something?

BETH
Okay. Sure. I think I have a pen...

She goes into her purse and writes down her name and number.

BETH
There you go.

He wipes the sweat off his face with his sleeve again.

BETH
You’re sure you’re not hot.

GREENBERG
I’m fine. But I wish I could be one of those guys who doesn’t care where he dumps his coat at a party.

She laughs and backs away.

GREENBERG
I like your hair.    BETH
I’m gonna go talk to my friend, Perry. It was good seeing you Roger.

Pause.

BETH
What did you say?

GREENBERG
Nothing.

She walks away. Greenberg looks around for Ivan. Beller plays* with his kids. Greenberg sweats.  "*"

OMITTED  29  *

INT. PHILIP AND CAROL’S FOYER - LATER  A30  *

Greenberg arrives home.  "*"
He presses play on a portable CD player. The opening organ of Steve Winwood’s “While You See A Chance.” He stares at himself — the music swells. We hold. And hold. The vocal starts, he reaches over and stops the CD. He starts it again from the beginning. He studies his face, deadpan, the music playing as sound-track. He stops it again at the same point. And does it again.

CLOSE: “Dear Starbucks, In your attempts to manufacture culture out of * fast food coffee...”

Greenberg drops the pencil, bored already with the letter. *

It’s getting dark. Greenberg flips through a stack of papers, directions, emergency numbers...

Florence Marr.

He hesitates, picks up the phone and dials.

FLORENCE  
(through the receiver)  
Hello.

GREENBERG  
Florence? Hey, it’s Roger Greenberg.

FLORENCE  
Hi.  
(swallowing)  
Sorry, I’m eating.

GREENBERG  
That’s okay.

Silence. She chews.

FLORENCE  
A friend said I chew kind of loudly.

GREENBERG  
Chewing always sounds louder on the phone, I think.

FLORENCE  
(likes that analysis)  
That’s true.
GREENBERG
You want to get a drink or something?

Silence on the line.

FLORENCE
Uh, sure, okay.

GREENBERG
Is there a bar you know we could go to?

FLORENCE
There's one near my apartment, but it's pretty lame.

GREENBERG
Okay.

FLORENCE
It's in Culver City. Do you want to meet there?

GREENBERG
I don't drive.

31A  EXT. PHILIP AND CAROL'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Greenberg walks to an idling car. Florence waits in the driver's seat. She waves. He opens the passenger door -- there's a mess of CD's and papers on the seat and floor.

FLORENCE
Oh, sorry, you can just put that on the...

She tosses a couple of things in the back seat and clears the rest off onto the floor. He gingerly steps in the car. The sound of cracking plastic...

32  INT. FLORENCE'S CAR - NIGHT

Florence waits at a light. She wears a green vinyl raincoat. Greenberg, in the passenger seat, roots through the pile of CD's at his feet. The radio is on.

FLORENCE
Those are all kind of cheesy.

GREENBERG
(indicating)
You have the light.
She turns. Greenberg reads the back of a John Mayer CD.

FLORENCE
Oh, do you mind if we stop by my house. I left my purse. Sorry.

GREENBERG
Do you need it?

FLORENCE
I still get carded.

INT. FLORENCE’S APARTMENT

Florence searches the room, turning things over. Greenberg looks at her books on shelves held up with bricks. Ed McBain and Lawrence Block-type mysteries interspersed with psychology, film and literature maybe saved from college. They’re both still in their coats.

FLORENCE
(seeing him with her books)
I don’t read enough. I’m such a bad reader.

A framed photo of Florence around ten wearing a T-shirt that says: Yo-Yo. A blonde man in a polo shirt has his arm around her -- she looks scared and uncomfortable.

GREENBERG
Is that you?

FLORENCE
Yeah...it’s one of the rare times I was actually happy around my dad.

Greenberg nods. He moves over to the refrigerator. A colorful, abstract drawing held up with a La Brea Tar Pits magnet.

GREENBERG
Did you do this?

FLORENCE
No, that’s my niece.

GREENBERG
I have a niece. Two and a step one.

FLORENCE
I know, I work for their parents.
GREENBERG
Of course. Right.
   (re: the picture)
It’s good.

FLORENCE
She’s four.
   (pause)
I want to have a relationship with her, but she’s just not that friendly to me. You want to see, I got her these puppets for her birthday --

She retrieves two puppets -- a witch and devil -- from a drawer.

FLORENCE
They might be too old for her. They have sticks.

GREENBERG
I’m sure they’ll be fine. What do you have to drink?

FLORENCE
Oh. Um, okay. You don’t want to go to a bar?

GREENBERG
It’s Friday -- the bars are probably full of bridge and tunnel people...or whatever the LA version of bridge and tunnel is.

She walks across the room, her foot catches a boot in the middle of the rug. She stumbles.

FLORENCE
Sorry.

She opens the fridge.

FLORENCE
I don’t really have...there’s a Corona Light and I have some cheap tequila someone left here once.

GREENBERG
Shall we split the Corona.

FLORENCE
Okay.
She opens it and hands it to him. He takes a swig and passes it back to her. She drinks. Hiccups.

FLORENCE
I always get hiccups when I first drink carbonation.

GREENBERG
Don’t worry about it.

She offers the beer back to him.

His mouth is on hers. Their arms grooping. He pulls her blouse over her head.

FLORENCE
I’m wearing kind of an ugly bra.

He nods and tries to undo it.

FLORENCE
There’s no clasp.

GREENBERG
(frustrated)
It’s like an ace bandage.

He lifts it -- her breasts heave toward him. The bra awkwardly stuck at her collar bone.

He leads her down on the bed and yanks down her jeans, pulls aside her underwear and shoves his face between her legs. Her eyes search the room uncomfortably.

FLORENCE
Do you hear a train? Is that a train?

She sits up stiffly. He stands, goes over to the kitchenette and pours himself a tequila.

FLORENCE
I get kind of nerdy.

She pulls her bra back down over her breasts.

GREENBERG
Don’t worry about it.

FLORENCE
Can we take it slow? I’m sorry, it’s just... I just got out of a long relationship and...

(MORE)
I don’t want to go from just having sex to just having sex to just having sex.

Uh huh. Who is the third “just having sex?”

You. If we had sex.

Okay. Then who’s the second one?

A guy I met at this gallery thing.

You slept with him?

Yeah...I did.

Greenberg looks annoyed.

How did that go?

What do you mean? The sex?

Yeah, well...

It was pretty awkward.

She gets off the bed, pulls up her pants and walks toward him. They stand about a foot apart. He takes her hands. The nails and cuticles are chewed.

She undoes his pants and sinks down to her knees.

(suddenly)

Oh, there’s my purse.

He looks at her head at his crotch. He holds onto the counter for stability and comes immediately. She withdraws brusquely and stands up.

Greenberg shivers, still finishing. He registers something on her face.
GREENBERG
What’s that on your lip?

FLORENCE
What?
(she touches her mouth)
Nothing.

GREENBERG
It’s not...

FLORENCE
No, it’s not a cold sore.

GREENBERG
You sure?

FLORENCE
Yeah. I picked it.

GREENBERG
Mm. Where’s your bathroom?

INT. BATHROOM
He flushes the toilet with his foot and washes his hands. He
inspects a black head in the mirror, but thinks better of
squeezing it. He notices a scale on the floor.

He steps on the scale. He frowns. He braces himself on the
sink and pushes off his shoes. He gets back on the scale.
Still a look of displeasure. He steps off quickly.

INT. LIVING ROOM/BEDROOM
Greenberg exits the bathroom. Florence wears a bulky white robe
and smokes a cigarette. She listens to a message on her
machine. A girl’s voice. She holds the receiver.

FLORENCE
Ugh, this is so annoying, but I really
have to call my friend, Gina, back.
Sorry, it’s just if I don’t call her
right away I’ll be a bad friend.
She’s always got an emergency. I’m
sure it’s nothing.

GREENBERG
How far do you think it would be to
walk?
FLORENCE
To your brother’s place? Way too long. It’s like five miles. You can stay...

GREENBERG
I have the dog...and...

FLORENCE
I can drive you.
(re: the phone)
This will only take a second.

GREENBERG
You have to call her right this moment -- won’t she understand you’re in the middle of --

Florence slowly puts down the phone, hesitates.

FLORENCE
No, I can take you now.

GREENBERG
I don’t want to make you do that. You’ve got your robe --

FLORENCE
It’s not a problem.

GREENBERG
I can probably call a cab...

FLORENCE
Okay.

She grabs a flyer from a stack on her desk.

FLORENCE
Oh...this is stupid, but I’m singing Saturday night at this place on Orange and Sunset.

She hands it to him -- it’s a drawing of a bird and a guitar. Greenberg debates something in his head.

FLORENCE
I mean...if you feel like it, I know it’s last minute...

She grabs it back and writes a 6 over the 4 on the address.
FLORENCE
Gina made the flyers and she copied the address down wrong...

GREENBERG
I don’t think... What time?

FLORENCE
Like at 11:30. It’s...there are a lot of acts so it’s hard to pinpoint. Don’t feel obligated.

GREENBERG
(pause)
We probably shouldn’t do this again. I mean, you work for my brother.

FLORENCE
Yeah --

GREENBERG
And I’m really trying to do nothing right now.

FLORENCE
That’s cool. And I’ve got to stop doing things just cause they feel good.

35A INT. FLORENCE’S APARTMENT - LATER
Greenberg is gone. Florence is on the phone, smoking a cigarette.

GINA
(through the receiver)
You just gave a blow job to someone who got out of a mental hospital.

Florence laughs despite herself.

FLORENCE
Why do you say it like that? He’s not crazy. A lot of people go to insane asylums.

GINA
A lot of people are in therapy, they’re not in insane asylums.

FLORENCE
I blew a lunatic.
They both crack up.

FLORENCE
He’s also forty.

GINA
Jesus.

FLORENCE
(thoughtful)
He seems vulnerable.

We hear a shriek:

36
INT/EXT. BEDROOM BALCONY - MORNING

From a distance we see Marlon climb out of the pool. Peggy is getting dressed and packing up. Mahler lies in a sun patch.

Greenberg, on the balcony, frowns and waits. Marlon sees him and waves. Greenberg immediately ducks back inside.

* 37
EXT. BACK YARD - LATER

Greenberg hauls a wooden plank from the garage. He nods to a Mexican gardener who collects fallen palm fronds from the ground. He passes Mahler who still sleeps.

37A
CUT TO:

He hammers a nail into the wood. He sweats. The gardener revs a leaf blower. The pool man fishes debris from the pool with a net on a pole. An active green hose snakes and curls in the water.

Greenberg looks at the dog lying in the shade. The sun has moved with the day, but Mahler hasn’t. Greenberg reaches for the frisbee. He chucks the disc across the grass.

GREENBERG
Go get it.

Mahler doesn’t move. Greenberg hesitates. He stands and approaches the animal slowly. Mahler’s breaths are labored gasps.

38
INT./EXT. KITCHEN/BACK YARD

Greenberg reads his brother’s number in Vietnam off of a sheet of paper and anxiously dials the endless buttons on the phone. He’s interrupted by a loud busy signal. He hangs up, irritated, and tries again. Same result.
Frustrated he whips through the pages and dials another number. He paces breathlessly, on the phone.

FLORENCE  
(through the receiver)  
Hello?

GREENBERG  
Florence, it’s Roger Greenberg. Mahler is...I don’t know, he’s breathing weird and he’s suddenly lethargic and --

FLORENCE  
(through the receiver)  
Sometimes he gets overheated.

GREENBERG  
No, I mean, he hasn’t moved period. I can’t get through to fucking Vietnam...and I’m sorry to have to call you, but I thought you might know --

INT. VET WAITING ROOM - LATER

A woman with a guinea pig in her lap sits next to Greenberg who is next to Florence who wears her green raincoat. Mahler breathes heavily at their feet. Florence takes off her shoe and rubs her foot against his fur.

GREENBERG  
(finally)  
How long do we wait?

FLORENCE  
(shrugs)  
I don’t know they seem kind of busy.

GREENBERG  
(eyeing the receptionist’s desk)  
Should I go ask how long?

FLORENCE  
If you want.

GREENBERG  
(hesitates)  
Do you want to do it?

FLORENCE  
Um, okay...they know we’re here, but...
She rises from her seat.

INT. EXAMINATION ROOM

Greenberg looks away while three doctors spay a rabbit. Mahler rests on a brown towel in a cage. An Hispanic female vet addresses them.

FEMALE VET It seems like sciatica.

Greenberg looks relieved.

FLORENCE (relieved) Yeah, he’s had that before.

FEMALE VET But his eyes are jaundiced and I’d like to run some tests. We’ll keep him over night and monitor him. I’d imagine you can bring him home tomorrow.

INT. TEENAGE GIRL’S BEDROOM - DAY

Greenberg holds a beer. He’s on the phone.

MALE VOICE (through the receiver) Eric Beller’s office.

GREENBERG Hi, is he there please?

MALE VOICE Who may I say is calling?

GREENBERG Roger. Roger Greenberg.

MALE VOICE Let me see if I can get him.

Hold music. Greenberg swallows the last liquid at the bottom of the beer bottle, stands and drifts aimlessly in the room. He idly sings to himself:

GREENBERG “It never rains in Southern Mahler-fornia...”

He lands in front of a mirror. He stares at his reflection.
MALE VOICE
I’m transferring you to Mr. Beller.

GREENBERG
Thank you --

Ringing. He mouths “thank you” a second time, admiring the movement and shape of his mouth.

MALE VOICE
Eric, you’re on with Roger Greenberg.

Silence on the line.

GREENBERG
Hello?

BELLER
(through the receiver)
Hello.

GREENBERG
Beller, it’s Greenberg.

BELLER
(pause)
Hi.

GREENBERG
We didn’t get a chance to talk the other night so much and... Do you want to get a drink or something?

Silence. Beller takes a deep breath.

BELLER
(exhales)
Roger...

Silence. Greenberg continues to stare at himself in the mirror.

GREENBERG
Eric, did I... Did I do...

BELLER
(small chuckle)
What do you want, Roger?

GREENBERG
I’m out here and I...

Silence.
GREENBERG
You know...I’ve been in New York, but
I don’t really recognize New York
anymore, you know?

Silence.

GREENBERG
So, I’m here...and I’m really trying
to do nothing for a while.

BELLER
Are the rumors true?

GREENBERG
(concerned)
What rumors?

BELLER
Nothing, I just made that up.

Silence. Greenberg swallows. He studies the reflection of his
adams apple moving up and down. He touches it. The sound of
Beller’s breaths on the line.

BELLER
How about next Thursday?

GREENBERG
Um, I think that’s probably fine.

BELLER
My assistant will call you with a
place.

INT. KITCHEN

CLOSE on a scrap of paper: Beth and her number.

Greenberg waits while it rings.

YOUNG GIRL’S VOICE
(through the receiver)
Hello?

Greenberg hangs up. He’s sweating. Among the scraps from his
pockets, newspaper sections, coins, he sees --

Florence’s flyer.
INT. CLUB - LATER NIGHT

Greenberg enters holding the creased flyer. It's bright for a bar with a series of folding chairs and tables facing a badly painted black riser and a cheap glittery back-drop. The place is about a quarter full.

A lanky bearded guy with glasses plays acoustic guitar on a stool and Florence stands and sings at the microphone. Greenberg slides into the bar at the back and orders a beer.

FLORENCE

"There's a rugged road on the prairie
Stretchin' all across the last
frontier. There a stranger strives
solitary. Blessed is the lonesome
pioneer..."

Florence’s voice is sultry, low, and unstudied. Greenberg watches Florence sing. Gina, a short haired girl in a striped T-shirt, appears next to Greenberg. She orders from the bartender who's distracted, texting someone:

GINA
Can I get four beers?

She stares at Greenberg. She whispers:

GINA
Are you Roger?

GREENBERG
Uh huh.

GINA
I'm Gina, Florence's friend.

GREENBERG
Uh huh.

GINA
I've heard a lot about you. Do you want to come join our table?

A couple of girls and a short guy sit up front and are clearly Florence's contingent.

GREENBERG
No, I think I'll stay here. Maybe later.
GINA
Isn’t she beautiful? She’s so ultra sexy and hot up there.

Greenberg nods, uncomfortable.

GINA
What’s that look? You’re so quiet.

GREENBERG
I’m thinking of a letter I’m going to write.

GINA
I hear you don’t drive.

GREENBERG
Uh huh.

GINA
Did you ever drive?

GREENBERG
Uh huh. I grew up here. I drove then. I moved to New York and I stopped. I think I’m done with it.

She collects her beers from the counter.

GINA
It was really nice meeting you.

Greenberg looks back at Florence. It’s hard to make out what he’s feeling -- he looks completely thrown.

CUT TO:

Florence stands at the foot of the stage, holding her amp in one hand and a beer in the other. People are filing out or moving to the bar. She’s surrounded by her contingent. Florence sees Greenberg standing alone by the door. She grins and waves. He waves back.

INT. FLORENCE’S STUDIO APARTMENT - LATER

Florence sits in a cushy chair and rubs her feet. Greenberg, stands at the kitchen counter and pours some cheap tequila. He says with his back to her:

GREENBERG
No, it was good.
FLORENCE
Yeah, it felt good tonight. I’m so glad you came. Very unexpected. Nice.

GREENBERG
(rushed)
Really good. You should do it more.

FLORENCE
I know. It helps when you’ve had three rum and Cokes. Did you meet Gina?

GREENBERG
Yeah, I met Gina.

FLORENCE
Stop.

GREENBERG
What? Nothing. I met her.

He wets a paper towel and wipes the bottom of the sticky tequila bottle then runs it across the counter.

GREENBERG
Where’s your garbage?

FLORENCE
Under the sink. In that last song I kept the singer male.

He opens the cabinet below the sink and tosses the paper towel in a plastic bag tied to a hook.

FLORENCE
I don’t like when people change the sex in songs.

GREENBERG
What?

FLORENCE
I don’t like when people change the sex in songs.

GREENBERG
No, it was great.

FLORENCE
I used to play in a band...

GREENBERG
Really? What’d you play?
GREENBERG
Keyboards, a little guitar... I wrote most of the lyrics... Anyway...
(can’t help himself)
We had a little following around New York after college... We opened for Fishbone once.

FLORENCE
Cool. I’d like to hear something sometime.

GREENBERG
I just couldn’t deal with the bullshit of the record business...you know?

FLORENCE
Not that I would know, but I hear it’s kind of hellish.

He opens a counter and checks out a near empty cereal box.

FLORENCE
I made Jello if you want.

GREENBERG
What do you mean?

Florence goes over to the refrigerator and opens it. She takes out a red Jello mold with floating fruit.

FLORENCE
I got the fruit at the farmer’s market.

She cuts off two pieces, puts one in her mouth and hands one to Greenberg on a plate. He eats it.

GREENBERG
It’s good.

FLORENCE
Let’s just keep things sweet and simple, okay?

She begins to unzip his pants. He holds the Jello awkwardly and then places it onto the counter.

GREENBERG
Can I just... You do this thing...when you finish...or rather when I do...you immediately lift your mouth off of the...
Uh huh.

Off of the head of... And it leaves me feeling...cold. Like cold cold, winter cold. Not off-put, cold.

Sorry.

You don’t need to apologize. I mean the rest of it is great.

She tries to laugh it off, but she’s gone a deep shade of red.

What?

Nothing, you just basically told me I stink at blow jobs.

You don’t stink. It’s just a small thing. I don’t know, maybe it’s how people of your generation give blow jobs. I shouldn’t have said anything.

No, and it’s probably good advice for the future...

(hesitates)
What do you mean, for the future?

(shrugs)
I don’t know. My future.

(Greenberg’s Brother (V.O.))
(through the receiver)
They gave him an infusion? Is it his white blood cells or his red blood cells?

Greenberg, on the phone, stands at the window pouring himself a scotch. It pours rain outside. The wind-up girl rotates and plays the vibes.
GREENBERG
I’m pretty sure white.

PHILIP
(through the receiver)
Well, it makes a difference. Are you taking notes?

GREENBERG
I haven’t yet, no.

PHILIP
You have to write this stuff down if you’re not going to remember it.

GREENBERG
I’m sorry. I’m almost positive it’s white.

PHILIP
(trying not to get angry)
When’s he coming home?

GREENBERG
He was supposed to come home today, but the numbers dropped and they have to keep him until he’s stable. They asked if the gardeners use rat poison.

PHILIP
They’re not supposed to, no... Shit, should we be getting on a plane?

GREENBERG
No, no, he’ll be okay. I mean, I’ll let you know if --

PHILIP
Fuck, poor Mahler. I’ll call Florence to get the information.

GREENBERG
(defensive)
I’m doing it, okay? So you can call me, I pretty much know it.

PHILIP
“Pretty much” isn’t very comforting to Carol and me.

GREENBERG
Well, he’s not my dog. I’m trying to take care of it.

(MORE)
GREENBERG (CONT'D)
Listen, I'm sorry...I know when Mom was sick...I know you said I needed to come out, but Mom said I didn’t --

PHILIP
Listen, we've done that, Mom's dead. I'm not going to baby you about it. I'm talking about right now. I'm in Vietnam and my dog is sick!

Silence. Philip’s voice breaks:

PHILIP
I know you’re trying. It’s...it’s scary, you know when you’re far away.

GREENBERG
(softening)
Yeah. You can trust me. Okay?

PHILIP
How...how are you doing, I mean...?

GREENBERG
Fine...fine.

PHILIP
Good. Carol wants me to ask about the dog-house, if that even matters now. *
Ugh. *

Roger eyes the pool -- the water has filled almost to the top. *

GREENBERG
Um, can the pool overflow?

EXT. POOL - LATER

The rain continues to pour. Greenberg covers the dog-house with a plastic tarp.

He drags the end of a green hose into the pool -- the water's nearly overflowing. He follows the hose back to its other end. He takes a deep breath and sucks from the opening. He removes his mouth and waits. He coughs and tries again. Suddenly water spurts out and he quickly dodges the stream.

INT. LIBRARY

Greenberg sits at his lap top with a stack of CD’s and records, making a mix.

CUT TO: Greenberg slides a CD labeled MIX FOR FLORENCE in an envelope with her address.
EXT. FAIRFAX

Greenberg runs across the street, dodging traffic, toward the post office.

EXT. LA BREA BLVD - LATER


EXT. STREET - LATER

Greenberg steps into the street. A black Explorer cuts in front of him. Greenberg instinctively smacks the back window of the car in irritation. The driver slams on the brakes. Greenberg runs.

EXT. ALLEY - LATER

Greenberg, clutching his grocery bag, cuts into an alley behind La Brea. He’s panting and sweating.

EXT. CURSON STREET

Greenberg trudges back toward home. We ZOOM toward him. He holds his jacket and a sweater in his arms along with the bags. Sweat drips from his forehead and seeps through his clothes.

INT. STEAK HOUSE - NIGHT

Greenberg sits across from Ivan who is tucked in the middle of a long, crowded banquet. They’re both in blazers, Greenberg his usual sweater but with a collared shirt underneath. Greenberg has a scotch, Ivan a Diet Pepsi.

GREENBERG
People don’t call on my birthday anymore. I guess I don’t call people on their birthdays, why should they call me? I didn’t call you. When is yours?

IVAN
In February.

GREENBERG
That’s right. I’ll call you this year.

People at another table erupt into loud laughter. One guy guffaws and claps. Greenberg glances over at them, irritated.
Laughing already demonstrates appreciation, the applause seems superfluous.

Ivan laughs. The guy at the table stretches out his legs.

Also, it’s like, just treat the restaurant like it’s your living room, guy...

(pause)
I’m weirdly on tonight.

Should we order?

I was reading an article in the paper this morning about someone running for office and they gave his age as 41 and my first thought was, that guy’s an adult. Adults run for office.

Right.

But what I’m not thinking is, “I’m 41 too.” If I was in the paper, that would be my age.

I know, it’s like when I look at my highschool yearbook now, the seniors still look so old.

Maybe I should’ve invited Florence. Or I should’ve had a party...I don’t know.

Birthday’s are hard.

It’s weird aging, right? It’s like, “What the fuck is going on?”

I know. It’s like that Eddie Money song.
GREENBERG
I mean, you know it’s happening. We’re all playing by the same rules and still...somewhere in the back of my head I thought I’d never actually be forty. Let alone...over forty.

IVAN
It’s heavy, forty.

GREENBERG
It’s a chunky word.

IVAN
Youth is wasted on the young.

GREENBERG
I’d go further, I’d go, life is wasted on...people. (sighs)
Should I invite her? It doesn’t have to mean anything. I don’t want to set up a series of expectations with her. What do you think?

IVAN (shrugs)
Yeah if you want.

GREENBERG
I guess I could call her.

IVAN
Then we should wait to order.

GREENBERG
Maybe it would be good. Do you care?

IVAN
No...I mean... GREENBERG
It’s a different dynamic.

IVAN
Right.

GREENBERG
She lives near here. I’ll see if she’s around. She probably has other plans. I won’t get into it being my birthday. (an afterthought)
She’s young.
Greenberg gets up and heads outside. We STAY with Ivan, alone in his thoughts. He watches different women at the bar. He hums to himself. The bus boy refills his water.

IVAN
Thanks.

He tops off Roger’s water.

IVAN
Thanks.

The bus boy picks up Roger’s napkin from the floor and puts it back onto the table.

IVAN
Thanks.

He overhears a girl, 13, talking to her father at the table to his right:

GIRL
I have a total love affair with Hawaii.

Ivan takes a sip of Roger’s scotch. He takes out his cell phone and checks -- no messages. A level of self-consciousness surfaces as he surveys the restaurant.

GREENBERG (O.S.)
I don’t find a lot of girls in LA attractive, do you?

Greenberg slides back into his seat.

IVAN
I do. Yeah.

GREENBERG
I said, I don’t.

IVAN
Oh. I do.

GREENBERG
She isn’t as pretty as Beth -- or her face is, but she’s rounder. Not fat. I find it sexy. But...you’ll see.

IVAN
I never found Beth as beautiful as everyone else did.
Greenberg hesitates, thrown for a brief moment.

GREENBERG
She was my girlfriend.

IVAN
Years ago. I didn’t think you’d take offense.

GREENBERG
Well, you like racist Portuguese women.

IVAN
She made one remark! And it’s really cultural. I mean, by our standards Fabula’s mother is a bigot.

(pause)
I know you never liked Fabula...

GREENBERG
Florence is... If you worked in an office with her, you’d definitely develop a crush on her. But outside of the office you’d start to wonder if she’s as cute as you imagined.

IVAN
You’re describing my experience of life.

Ivan looks at the table cloth.

GREENBERG
She’s young. But I said that already.

IVAN
I’m just saying, Fabula’s a lot less possessive than she used to be... You’d like her more now --

Greenberg flags a guy in a white smock.

GREENBERG
Can I get another scotch.

IVAN
That’s the bus boy.

GREENBERG
Fine, can I get another fork, this one has some food on it?
The bus boy takes the utensil. Greenberg looks at Ivan -- he relents:

GREENBERG
Fabula never got you. She thought she’d bagged some fancy British man rather than just Ivan... I know she helped with the addiction and everything, but... You’re over that. We have to find you someone. It’s too bad neither of us are the type to go whoreing.

IVAN
Is that her?

Greenberg startles and turns around. Florence hurries toward their table, smiling. She wears a heavy cardigan, denim skirt and sneakers. Greenberg half-stands.

GREENBERG
This is Ivan.

FLORENCE
Nice to meet you.

IVAN
You too.

She kisses Greenberg’s cheek and sits next to Ivan in the banquet -- Greenberg faces them. Silence.

GREENBERG
(pause)
I’ll be right back.

Greenberg gets up. We STAY with Ivan and Florence both facing forward in the banquet. We MOVE with Greenberg toward the back of the restaurant. He stops at the edge of the dining area and turns back: Florence and Ivan are still not talking.

YOUNG GIRL’S VOICE (V.O.)
(through the receiver)
Hello?

INT. PHONE AREA

Waiters and bus boys pass through in a hurry. A guy in track pants and a woman with frizzy hair wearing his jacket, type on their Blackberries. Greenberg is on his cell.

YOUNG GIRL’S VOICE
Hello?

GREENBERG
Beth?
YOUNG GIRL’S VOICE
What?

GREENBERG
Beth?

YOUNG GIRL’S VOICE
Who?

GREENBERG
Is...is this a child?

YOUNG GIRL’S VOICE
Yes.

GREENBERG
Is your mom there?

YOUNG GIRL’S VOICE
Who’s this?

GREENBERG
Roger.

YOUNG GIRL’S VOICE
Miller?

GREENBERG
Roger.

YOUNG GIRL’S VOICE
Hold on.
(shrieking)
Mom, it’s Miller!

The sound of the phone dropping. Some movement. Finally:

BETH
Hello?

GREENBERG
Beth?

BETH
Who’s this?

GREENBERG
Roger.

BETH
Oh, hi.

Laughter in the background on her end.
GREENBERG
What are you doing?

BETH
I’m sewing Charles’s pants.

GREENBERG
Uh huh. Is Charles your son?

BETH
Yeah. Hot stuff.

GREENBERG
You sewing his Flash suit? Is he the devil or the Flash? Did he ever say?

BETH
(vague)
Yeah.

GREENBERG
Do you want to have a drink or something sometime --

INT. RESTAURANT
Greenberg returns to the table. Ivan is sitting alone.

GREENBERG
What’d you do with her?

IVAN
She’s in the bathroom.

GREENBERG
(sitting)
You see what I mean about working in an office?

IVAN
Where’d you go?

GREENBERG
I called Beth.

IVAN
Really?

GREENBERG
Come on. I mean, Beth is a part of my life. She’s...
(MORE)
I don’t believe things happen for a reason, but me being out here at this particular time, maybe it’s happening for a reason.


We hear Greenberg and Ivan laughing -- high-pitched giggles escalate throughout the following:

GREENBERG (O.S.)
I can’t believe you still have this.

CLOSE on a photo of Greenberg, Ivan and Beller standing on a stage. They’re all around twenty. Ivan is in a baggy Italian suit with a guitar. Greenberg wears a turtleneck sweater and is on keyboards, Beller is in a soft black leather jacket and stands next to them.

FLORENCE
Look how cute you guys are.

IVAN
(funny voice)
“How is Lenny?”

GREENBERG
(another funny voice)
“Lenny not so good.”

Ivan now has a beer. The waiters clear what is left of their steaks and fries. Florence holds on to her fries.

IVAN
It really wasn’t that funny.

GREENBERG
No, I know, it wasn’t.

IVAN
(to Florence)
We opened for Fishbone.

FLORENCE
Cool.

IVAN
(to Greenberg re: photo)
You had kind of a mullet.

Florence laughs.
GREENBERG
(laughing)
No, that’s a shadow.

WAITERS/WAITRESSES (O.S.)
Happy Birthday to you...

Two waiters and three waitresses carry a piece of strudel with a candle in it.

GREENBERG
No...don’t have them do it. Don’t.

WAITERS/WAITRESSES
Happy Birth --

Greenberg furiously blows out the candles while the staff sings. They trail off. Greenberg turns to Ivan.

GREENBERG
You’re such a fucking asshole.

IVAN
Roger, relax.

GREENBERG
You know I hate this shit.

IVAN
Relax, man.

GREENBERG
Sit on my dick, asshole.

Greenberg shoves his chair back and walks out. Silence, the waiters disperse. Ivan looks at Florence with disbelief.

IVAN
What the fuck, right?

FLORENCE
Well, he just got out of a mental hospital.

IVAN
Right. I mean, really?

FLORENCE
Yeah.

IVAN
Wow. Well, now I feel guilty for saying that.

(MORE)
Greenberg marches briskly for about a block. He stops, a moment, aimless, then cuts into a bar.

“Africa” by Toto plays. Greenberg sits on a stool and runs his chapstick across his lips.

GREENBERG
Can I get a Stella?

Greenberg drinks the beer and watches a Laker game on the TV. He turns to a guy at the bar.

GREENBERG
How’s Shaq doing?

GUY AT BAR
Shaq’s on the Phoenix Suns.

GREENBERG
(chastened)
Oh...right. No, I know... I don’t know what...

He takes out his phone and dials.

FLORENCE
(through the receiver)
Hello?

GREENBERG
Hi.

FLORENCE
Where are you?

GREENBERG
At a bar. Where are you?

FLORENCE
We’re waiting to get the check.

GREENBERG
Can you pick me up.
Florence drives. Greenberg sits shotgun, still furious.

GREENBERG
I mean, who does that? Gets the waiters... I'm not one of these preening LA people who likes everything to be about them -- some dickhead who does karaoke at the Farmer's Market and hosts a running charades game every Friday night and swing dances. I like to keep a low profile. He knows that too. And this was a big thing for me, involving both of you together. I'm happier compartmentalizing everything. It just works better.

Florence laughs.

GREENBERG
What?

FLORENCE
You told Ivan to sit on your dick?

GREENBERG
(laughs despite himself)
Did I?

FLORENCE
(laughing harder)
Yeah.

GREENBERG
What the hell does that mean?

FLORENCE
I don't know.

Silence, both of them smiling. Florence quickly glances in the backseat.

FLORENCE
(suddenly)
Shit.

GREENBERG
What?
FLORENCE
I think I left my purse at the restaurant.

GREENBERG
Really?

FLORENCE
I'm sorry.

GREENBERG
Why...why don't you check these things?

FLORENCE
I was flustered. God. It was dumb. Is it okay if we go back? I can drop you at the house first if you want.

GREENBERG
Yeah, maybe.

FLORENCE
(distressed)
Really?

GREENBERG
(annoyed)
Fine, let's go back.

She hits the blinker and starts to make a U-turn.

INT. FLORENCE’S STUDIO APARTMENT - LATER

Florence, with her back to Greenberg, quickly wraps something in an Allure magazine cover. She spins around and hands it to him.

FLORENCE
Okay, now Happy Birthday.

He tears open the paper and holds the witch puppet up from his lap.

GREENBERG
Great. So, I got the witch.

FLORENCE
I made a snap judgement. If you'd rather the devil, you can switch it out.

The devil puppet sits on her bureau.
GREENBERG
No, I’m happy with the witch. Thanks.

Greenberg tries to manipulate the sticks.

GREENBERG
You’re right these are too old for your niece.

Florence opens a bag of crackers and pops one in her mouth.

FLORENCE
I’m impressed by you.

GREENBERG
In what way?

FLORENCE
I don’t know…I was telling my friend, Gina, how cool it is that…I mean, you seem really fine doing nothing. It’s like you don’t feel all that bullshit pressure to be successful…I mean by other people’s standards…

Greenberg’s face turns red.

GREENBERG
I’m… You know I almost had a record deal when I got out of college. I haven’t done nothing.

FLORENCE
Cool.

GREENBERG
I want to be doing what I’m doing. I’m doing nothing deliberately.

FLORENCE
That’s what I was saying. I don’t know if I could do nothing and be that cool with everything.

GREENBERG
(weakly)
Well, there’s so much crap out there.

Silence. She leans over and they kiss.
FLORENCE
Mahler’s not at home, you could stay over. Wink wink.

GREENBERG
I’m not supposed to get involved...I mean, I’m trying not to... But, fuck it, yeah, okay...

They kiss again.

FLORENCE
Ivan’s nice. Is he your best friend?

GREENBERG
Yeah, I guess so. I lost Ivan for a few years there to this racist he met in rehab. But their marriage is ending which is good for him. And me, to be honest.

FLORENCE
Oh. Good.

GREENBERG
You probably wouldn’t believe this, but in college we all looked up to * him. He was from England and he used * to be really handsome and stylish and * kind of great...

FLORENCE
I can believe that.

GREENBERG
I used to borrow his pants. You know, when you’re younger you wonder how do people become who they are. Who are those beaten, ex-junkie, out of work guitar players who end up fixing your computer? And then you realize: they’re Ivan. Sad.

FLORENCE
(mumbles)
Who are those personal assistants who sing at open mike nights...

GREENBERG
It’s not the same thing. You’re young.

(MORE)
I know it doesn’t feel that way, I mean, I wish I had felt more young when I was your age. I’m probably young now and don’t know it.

Florence nods.

Ivan and I call each other “man,” but it’s meant as a joke because it’s the kind of thing we wouldn’t call each other. It’s our imitation of other people.

I know what that’s like. This friend of mine, Marnie, and me, we went to this cheesy bar in Hollywood one night and we just thought, let’s pretend we’re kind of slutty girls looking to get picked up. Even though we weren’t. And we ended up talking to these two frat guys, but like 30, who were all into their bodies and cologne, very well groomed. And we ended up going back to one of their places -- and I think one of them was almost retarded or he was really drunk because he didn’t make any sense. And they got out a video camera and Marnie and I did this kind of strip tease...it was crazy because we were still playing these girls, but here we were showing our breasts and...

Greenberg looks stricken. She stops.

We ran out of there pretty fast. We were total freaks.

Greenberg, seething, gets up and goes to her computer.

What are you looking at?

I’m going to see if I can find the video of you.
FLORENCE
It’s not on the internet. And it wouldn’t be under my name if he posted it, which I’m sure he didn’t.

Florence watches as Greenberg types.

FLORENCE
There’s a Florence Marr who’s an ice skater who comes up a lot --

Frustrated, Greenberg marches over to the refrigerator and opens it.

GREENBERG
You never have anything good to drink.

He goes into a cupboard and pours himself cheap tequila. She comes up behind and puts her arms around his waist. He pushes her off.

GREENBERG
(furious)
That’s like the stupidest story I’ve ever heard. Are you sure you didn’t fuck these guys?

FLORENCE
Yes.

GREENBERG
Is there more? I just want to get it all out now so I don’t get any more disgusting surprises.

Silence. Greenberg shoves his hands in his jacket pockets.

FLORENCE
I feel like I just got beat up.

EXT. PICO BLVD - LATER NIGHT

Cars rumble by. We see Greenberg in the distance walking the pavement toward us. He removes his blazer and throws it over his arm. He clutches his witch puppet.

He looks around for a cab, but there are none. He reaches a bus stop and waits. Nothing is coming. He looks miserable. He holds the puppet tighter.
Greenberg and a stocky vet assistant slowly lift Mahler up. Ivan holds the leash.

    FEMALE VET
    We’ve basically gone past what we’re equipped to do here. We think it’s an autoimmune disorder.

    GREENBERG
    (swallows, uncertain)
    Uh huh.

She hands Greenberg a business card.

    FEMALE VET
    This hospital has more experience with internal medicine. I’ve called and they’re expecting you.

    GREENBERG
    You can’t do it here? I mean, you know him now... Don’t we get some say in this?

    FEMALE VET
    I know, but this is their area of expertise...

Greenberg shows the card to Ivan.

    GREENBERG
    You know where this is?

    IVAN
    I’ve got to pick up Victor at school in half an hour. Can you ask Florence?

    GREENBERG
    I’m trying not to call her! I’m just going to hurt her feelings, man. I’m trying not to do that to people anymore and I don’t want to be asking anyone for a ride anymore ever. I just turned 41, I should be able to drive!

    IVAN
    Why are you yelling at me?!
GREENBERG
(exhales, annoyed)
What a pain in the ass.

EXT. VET HOSPITAL - LATER

A tall modern office building. Greenberg carefully leads Mahler from the open door of a “Pet Taxi.” He grips a stack of oversized X-rays under his arm.

INT. VET HOSPITAL, HALLWAY - LATER

A new vet, a man, addresses Greenberg.

MALE VET
Survival rate is about 50/50. Hopefully with the right cocktail of drugs we’ll be able to get it under control and keep him stable. We’ll need to keep him at least a week.

GREENBERG
This is stupid but...I can’t catch it, right? I mean...

MALE VET
No. It’s something only dogs get.
(pause)
I’ll give you some time with him.

GREENBERG
(quickly)
Do you guys take volunteers?

MALE VET
What do you mean?

GREENBERG
Like if someone wanted to help out for a couple of hours once in a while.

MALE VET
No. If you want to volunteer, you should maybe go to a rescue center, but here you need a medical degree.

GREENBERG
Thanks.
INT. VET HOSPITAL, EXAMINING ROOM - LATER

It’s more high-tech and less homey. The X-rays are lit up on the wall. Greenberg sits stiffly on the cold linoleum floor. He pets the lethargic dog. He stares at a diagram of a dog’s anatomy hanging on the wall. He places his hand gently on Mahler’s torso at different spots.

GREENBERG
(consulting the diagram)
Heart...liver...pancreas...
He hesitates then moves his hand to his own stomach and chest.

INT. KITCHEN

CLOSE on feverish scribbling: “Dear Hollywood Pet Taxi Co., You would think a vehicle made expressly for the transportation of animals would have a soft floor…”

INT. PHILIP’S CLOSET

Greenberg looks through a series of suits and sport coats. He chooses a tan corduroy jacket.

INT. JAPANESE RESTAURANT

Greenberg, in a sport-coat, sits opposite Beth.

GREENBERG
I always felt bad about that night after we played the Viper Room and you were there with your sister and I wanted to go to that party and you were tired and I let you go home and --

Beth nods vaguely.

BETH
Which night was this?

GREENBERG
You were with your sister.

BETH
Uh huh. I don’t think I remember that night...
GREENBERG
I should have been straight with you. You know, I originally got into music to meet girls and I think when we started playing around LA and I was getting some attention --

BETH
-- from girls. I understand.

GREENBERG
But I wasn’t clear with you and I want to apologize for how I behaved. I kind of just let it end, left town, and was uncommunicative and I feel like I didn’t even give you a reason --

BETH
But I knew.

GREENBERG
Uh huh. Well, I’m sorry.

BETH
It’s okay. Like I said, I don’t remember that night.

GREENBERG
You had bought a new mattress that afternoon.

BETH
(shaking her head)
Yeah, sounds plausible. Was that like fourteen years ago?

Silence.

GREENBERG
You didn’t like the Sealy, you thought it was too mushy... We used to make that 1-800 Mattress joke, the extra S for extra sex...

BETH
(no idea)
Okay...okay.

Silence.

GREENBERG
We could’ve gotten married and...had kids...
BETH
You think? I don’t think we would’ve.

GREENBERG
I don’t know, it was a big relationship for me.

Silence.

BETH
So, you’re a carpenter now.

GREENBERG
Yeah, you know, I was always good at making things so...

BETH
Oh yeah?

GREENBERG
(exasperated)
Beth, I made you that bed! Don’t you remember? It was why we were buying the mattress to begin with.

BETH
I do remember that, I do remember that. Sorry. Totally. Go on...

GREENBERG
I work out of a studio in Bushwick I share with a few other carpenters and...that’s been pretty good. It’s political, though. Um, what else? Recently, I had this thing where I couldn’t move my legs. Literally. You know, but it was psychological.

BETH
God.

GREENBERG
Yeah, so that took some time dealing with and I think that brings us up to date.

BETH
Are you okay?

GREENBERG
Yeah...I think I just needed to let go, you know.

(MORE)
GREENBERG (CONT'D)
I had a shrink there who said you only missed by five percent. I’m not positive what it means, but in most things ninety-five is pretty good.

BETH
I had a shrink who said to me, “You’re of value.” It’s stupid but it always stuck with me.

GREENBERG
You look really pretty.

BETH
Thanks.

GREENBERG
My dog is sick.

BETH
Yeah? My mom’s sick.

GREENBERG
Philip’s dog, really, but I’m taking care of him. He has an autoimmune disorder. Since he got sick I keep thinking I have something.

(long pause)
I’m sorry about your mom.

BETH
Yeah...

Greenberg doesn’t say anything.

BETH
Well, I’m glad you’re feeling better.

GREENBERG
I get horrible anxiety sometimes still.

BETH
That I remember.

GREENBERG
Do you want to have dinner one night?

BETH
This week?

GREENBERG
Or next... I kind of meant like on a date.
BETH
(off-guard)
Oh. Oh. Yeah. No. Come on, you know that’s a terrible idea. No.
But...no. No.

Greenberg nods, mortified. Silence. Beth tries to find the waiter to signal for a check.

BETH
Shit, he didn’t see me...

GREENBERG
He looks harried even though no one’s here.

BETH
Yeah. I’m just going to go get him.

GREENBERG
I’m sure he’ll be by --

She’s up, walking into the back. We STAY with Greenberg.

EXT. RUNYON CANYON

Gina and Florence hike the dirt path.

GINA
Everyone does gross, disgusting things when they’re young.

FLORENCE
He said, disgusting. I don’t think it’s disgusting. It was just dumb. I was like twenty when it happened.

GINA
I’m sure he’s done much worse than flash his tits on video. Whatever got him in the lockdown ward.

FLORENCE
Lots of great interesting people have tried to kill themselves.

GINA
He tried to kill himself?

FLORENCE
I don’t know, I don’t think so, I’m just saying.

(pause)

(MORE)
FLORENCE (CONT'D)
He sent me a mix CD. Probably before our fight.

GINA
He’s 40 and still making mix CD’s.

FLORENCE
Should I call him?

GINA
No, I don’t like how he treats you. He acts like you work for him.

GINA
No, I don’t like how he treats you. He acts like you work for him.

FLORENCE
Well I do work for his brother. I mean, I should thank him maybe for the CD. I don’t want to be rude.

GINA
If you keep driving him places I’ll stop speaking to you.

FLORENCE
Okay.

GINA
I mean, who doesn’t drive?

BELLE (V.O.)
You didn’t even give it a second thought did you?

INT. MEXICAN RESTAURANT - DAY
CLOSE on Beller who talks heatedly.

GREENBERG (O.S.)
I gave it --

BELLE
You were uncomfortable and you dumped me.

GREENBERG (O.S.)
I didn’t dump you --

BELLE
You dumped me. I paid for us to record the demos. (getting further riled) ...you were sleeping on my floor. I paid for the lawyer to make the deal -- money which I didn’t have at the time.

GREENBERG (O.S.)
You were going to be reimbursed --
BELLER
So what! I believed in the thing.
And suddenly you bail --

GREENBERG
I didn’t like the deal.

BELLER
It was completely standard. It was a
record deal. It was a big thing for
us. We weren’t going to get any
better than that.

GREENBERG
It was corporate bullshit. I didn’t
want to be a slave to the A&R
department -- they’d fuck with the
songs. We had no control.

BELLER
You weren’t the only one in the band.
It’s morally reprehensible what you
did.

We now see Greenberg who is shoveling salad into his mouth with
a fork. Greenberg says, wiping his chin:

GREENBERG
I’m sorry, but... I didn’t want to do
it unless it was on our terms.

BELLER
Well, you got your way. There’s no
record...there’s no band! That’s your
terms!

GREENBERG
What do you care? You’ve done all
right. It doesn’t matter.

BELLER
It does matter. I was hurt by you.
You’re not who I thought you were.
(pause)
Ivan was counting on it. He co-wrote
the songs with you, he --

GREENBERG
(for the record)
Ivan wrote some of the music with me.

BELLER
Stop rationalizing.
Greenberg leans down to his glass of ice tea. He slurps from the wide red straw.

GREENBERG
Ivan can take care of himself --

BELLER
I’m surprised he still speaks to you.
(pause)
You know, you have these scenarios in your head of what’s going on and it’s all...a fabrication.

Greenberg sighs.

BELLER
What’s that, what’s that sigh?

GREENBERG
(irritated)
Nothing.

He sucks through the straw at the melted ice in the empty glass.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Greenberg scribbles furiously on a legal pad:

CLOSE: Dear Beller, What can you say to “morally reprehensible?” It’s this kind of LA speak where everything is absolutes. In New York we don’t have black and white, it’s grey...

INT. GREENBERG’S DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Greenberg looks at the concert flyer and the photograph of him, Ivan and Beller. A steaming styrofoam microwave soup and a tall glass of scotch in front of him. The phone lies next to him. He dials.

IVAN
(through the receiver)
Hello?

GREENBERG
(funny voice)
“How is Lenny?”

IVAN
(pause, different funny voice)
“Lenny not so good.”
They both laugh.

INT. IVAN’S HOTEL ROOM - INTERCUT

Ivan sits up in bed. The TV is on.

GREENBERG
Not too late to call, I hope.

IVAN
Nah. Watching Just My Luck with Lindsay Lohan on Starz.

GREENBERG
How is it?

IVAN
Kind of funny. She’s got charm.

Silence.

GREENBERG
Alright...
(pause)
I was thinking, we should maybe do something together again -- write some songs.

IVAN
Aren’t you going back to New York?

GREENBERG
Yeah, but... If we got something going... I could stay here possibly.

Ivan mutes the TV.

IVAN
I don’t think I have time really between the computer work and Victor...

GREENBERG
Uh huh. It’s funny, don’t you still think of yourself as a guitar player even though you don’t really do it anymore...

IVAN
No...not...I don’t. You know I hired a guy, Ezra, to help me with the company so... It’s a...I have to concentrate on that.
GREENBERG
Okay. Um, I think I’m having a party tomorrow.

IVAN
Tomorrow?

GREENBERG
A pool party. So, come. Bring Victor. After we hang up, I’m going to call some people.

66
EXT. JON’S - MORNING
Greenberg hurries out of the supermarket clutching two big brown paper bags.

67
INT. KITCHEN - LATER
Greenberg watches out the window: Peggy says something and Marlon laughs and claps. Eight year old Victor dog-paddles in the pool. Ivan glides next to him. Megan and her husband are there with two kids.

Greenberg scrapes the store-bought guacamole into a bowl. Ivan enters, in his wet trunks, and goes to the fridge.

IVAN
Megan’s husband wants to know...do you know what kind of tree that skinny one with the yellow flowers is?

GREENBERG
(immediately annoyed)
No. I mean, I wouldn’t even think to know something like that.

IVAN
Are you coming out? Victor wants to show you his dive.

GREENBERG
Is it okay, is it a dud? I do this, I throw a party last minute and then I’m disappointed no one can come.

IVAN
It’s fine. We’re having fun.

GREENBERG
(hesitates)
I need to put together the chips and guac and creamsicles I bought.
(MORE)
I got you ice tea and lemonade, but I didn’t know the right proportions so you’ll have to make it.

I see. Thanks.

I guess I’ll make an appearance.

Are you pulling a Gatsby and watching the party from afar?

I don’t know that I need to document the reasons how this isn’t like a Gatsby.

Ivan collects two beers and eyes the lemonade and ice tea mix. He hesitates and takes a third beer. He shuts the fridge door with his hip.

It turns out Marlon and Peggy have a ten year old who went to Victor’s school. It’s such a small world.

Why is that news to you? It is a small world, I’m surprised we all don’t run into each other more often. For instance, you and I went to school together.

Ivan heads back outside. The door slams behind him.

Greenberg walks the path toward the pool. He holds a tray with a bowl of chips and guacamole and stacked creamsicles. Through the brush we see: Marlon, Peggy, Ivan and Victor, playing volleyball in the water. Greenberg hesitantly and anxiously approaches. Marlon turns, sees him and waves.

Hey!

Greenberg sweats -- he waves back with his pinky, clutching the tray handles tightly. The phone rings inside. Greenberg -- relieved -- turns right around and hurries back toward the house, balancing the tray as best he can.
INT. LIBRARY

He enters the library. He stands over the machine, still holding the tray.

FLORENCE (V.O.)
(through the machine)
Hi, it’s me. Florence. I’m sorry to be calling, but I wanted to see how Mahler was...

Greenberg lays down the tray with a clank and picks up.

GREENBERG

EXT. REHEARSAL SPACE, STREET - INTERCUT

Florence sits in her car on the phone.

FLORENCE
Sorry, I wanted to check in on --

GREENBERG
We had to move him to another vet.

FLORENCE
(alarmed)
Really?

GREENBERG
Yeah, they do better with internal medicine there. I was going to call you, but --

FLORENCE
No, no. And I realize I don’t have your cell.

The vacuum turns on with a blast. Greenberg looks at the maid with disbelief.

GREENBERG
Can you --

The maid yanks the cord out of the wall. The roar quickly winds down. He walks into the bathroom and closes the door.

GREENBERG
Did you get anything in the mail?
FLORENCE
The CD. Yeah, it’s really good.
Thanks.

GREENBERG
My friend, Jason jokes that if they
gave MacArthur grants for mix cd’s I’d
get one.

FLORENCE
It’s got a lot of songs I love. I
love Ruth Etting. Thanks.

GREENBERG
(disappointed)
You know her? You know a lot of the
songs?

FLORENCE
Yeah, but not in that order.

Greenberg looks disappointed.

GREENBERG
I was limited to what my brother had
and I couldn’t figure out how to get
stuff off my iPod...

FLORENCE
Um, I’d like to visit him at the
hospital. If you can give me the
information. We don’t have to see
each other, we can go at different
times.

INT. VET HOSPITAL, VISITING ROOM - DAY

Florence and Greenberg sit on the floor on either side of
Mahler.

GREENBERG
I liked the old vet better.

Florence removes the worn Fiorucci T-shirt she wears over her
dress. She balls it up and places it by Mahler’s snout.
Greenberg gets a glimpse of her breasts as she leans toward the
dog.

FLORENCE
Gina told me it’s nice to leave them
something that smells like you.
Greenberg does a quick inventory, but has nothing he can take off. Mahler’s eyes blink helplessly.

FLORENCE
Sometimes I think he’s a human in a dog costume.

EXT. POOL - NIGHT

Florence’s shirt is open, but she still has on her green jacket. Greenberg’s pants are down, but his oxford is buttoned. They’re having sex on the grass.

FLORENCE
Should we stop?

GREENBERG
No. Why? What are you thinking?

FLORENCE
Nothing. I think I missed my chance to come.

GREENBERG
Okay.
(pause)
There’s probably still a chance for me.

He rolls her over on top of him. She hesitates.

GREENBERG
What’s wrong?

FLORENCE
I don’t know what to do on top.

GREENBERG
I guess do what feels good.

FLORENCE
But that’s embarrassing -- now that we’ve talked about it. I don’t know what I’m saying. Sorry.

GREENBERG
Don’t apologize.

She moves a little bit and then stops.

FLORENCE
(laughs nervously)
Moving fast reminds me of the movies.
Greenberg turns her over and is now on top of her.

FLORENCE
We don’t have to continue if you don’t want to.

GREENBERG
Why wouldn’t I want to?

FLORENCE
Because I’m being annoying.

Florence raises her legs up over his shoulders. He moves faster. She buckles and sucks in her breath. They both come. He opens his eyes: She’s crying.

FLORENCE
I’m sorry, I’m thinking of Mahler.

69A EXT. POOL - LATER 69A *

Florence sits on the grass, she’s naked and wrapped in a left-out beach towel. Greenberg is shirtless and in underwear. He drags his toes through the water. She holds a new mix CD.

FLORENCE
I don’t know any of this. I don’t know Karen Dalton. Very cool. Thanks.

GREENBERG
You sure you don’t know it?

FLORENCE
No, no. Thank you. Thanks a lot.

GREENBERG
You can tell me if you know it.

FLORENCE
I don’t!

GREENBERG
Karen Dalton was like a homeless junkie in the 70’s. You know, it’s a woman with sandals. Maybe there’s something you want to sing on there...

She reads track listing.

FLORENCE
You like old things.
GREENBERG
(shrugs)
A shrink said to me once, that I have
trouble living in the present so I
linger on the past because I felt like
I didn’t ever really live it in the
first place. You know?

Suddenly:

FLORENCE
Do you think you could love me?

Silence.

GREENBERG
I don’t know, Florence.

She winds up the toy girl who bangs on the vibes.

FLORENCE
I think I get excited to see you and
then I worry it might go too quick and
I just say things to get a reaction...

Greenberg sinks into a metal chair. She slides on her jeans.
Greenberg stares at her as she searches in her coat pocket for a
cigarette.

FLORENCE
Have the...orals been better?

GREENBERG
Yeah...much.

She blushes. He looks at her.

FLORENCE
What?

GREENBERG
We’ve got to stop this.

FLORENCE
(surprised)
Really?

GREENBERG
Yeah. You’ve got to stop calling me.
I’ve intentionally not called you.
Even when I needed to call you I
didn’t. You know, I took a Pet Taxi.
FLORENCE
(hurt)
I haven’t called you.

GREENBERG
You called today.

FLORENCE
That was for Mahler.

GREENBERG
Oh, come on, it wasn’t for Mahler. Florence, you... Take some responsibility. Don’t put yourself in this kind of situation.

FLORENCE
What situation? I like seeing you.

GREENBERG
No you don’t... You don’t like it. Why are we even having this conversation, we’re not really even dating and we’re seeing other people...

FLORENCE
I’m not seeing anyone.

GREENBERG
Neither am I, but...I want to.

Florence’s eyes pool.

FLORENCE
Who...

Greenberg hesitates. He blurts out in frustration:

GREENBERG
I don’t know! Anyone. I’m doing nothing! I’m not tied to anyone. How many times do we have to go over it? Jesus. I should be with a divorced thirty-eight year old with teenage kids who has low expectations about life. I don’t want to fucking do this anymore. God.

Florence quickly collects her things. Greenberg, addled, watches her walk away.
EXT. BACK YARD - MORNING

Greenberg primes a side of the near-finished dog-house.

INT. KITCHEN

CLOSE in long-hand: Dear New York Times ombudsman, The paper’s reporters -- or should I say stenographers -- continue to uncritically regurgitate the administration’s definition of “Al Qaeda” in Iraq...


Greenberg organizes various hand-written letters with their corresponding envelopes.

EXT. FAIRFAX BLVD

Greenberg hustles across the busy two-way street clutching the envelopes. He wears his down vest. He sweats.

EXT. POST OFFICE

Greenberg walks out. He licks at the corner of an envelope that hasn’t properly sealed.

EXT. FAIRFAX BLVD

A large blue wind-sock shaped like a man blows outside a Jiffy Lube. Using his sleeve as a buffer, Greenberg presses the button at the cross-walk a few times.

At a break in traffic, he hurries back across the street. Greenberg enters a Coffee Bean. We watch him through the window as he buys coffee.

EXT. OGDEN STREET

He walks quickly, holding his coffee. He stops, balances the cup on a hydrant while he takes off his down vest and sweater, exposing a damp T-shirt. He throws the clothes over his arm, and sits on the front lawn of a house. We MOVE IN on his face -- he drinks the hot coffee as the sun streams down. Sweat spills down his temples. Greenberg dials his phone and wedges it between his cheek and shoulder.

GREENBERG
(into phone)
Hi, this is Roger Greenberg. I’m calling to check on Mahler...
(listening)
(MORE)
GREENBERG (CONT'D)
Uh huh...Uh huh...Okay...Okay...
Yeah...

He hangs up and stares into space. A car slows down in front of him and a male driver leans across the passenger seat and says out the window:

    DRIVER
You okay?

    GREENBERG
Yeah.

The driver nods, satisfied. The car pulls away.

INT. VET HOSPITAL - DAY

Greenberg and Florence are at the front desk signing papers. The nurse is handing Greenberg different bottles of medication. Florence doesn’t look at Greenberg.

    VET RECEPTIONIST
Half a pill three times a day with food. The blood thinner just at night, that’s for blood clots and he’ll get prednisone, which is a steroid, twice a day for three days and then we’ll bring him down to one and a half a day and the blood thinner every other day.

Greenberg nods and nods and slides over his credit card. He says to Florence, apologetically:

    GREENBERG
I tried Ivan, but he had a birthday party.

Florence nods, refuses to look at him. A vet assistant hands a marginally healthier looking Mahler to Florence. She nestles into his fur.

    FLORENCE
Hi, little Mahler baby.

    GREENBERG
I didn’t want to cram him into a shitty Pet Taxi...
    (pause)
Thanks a lot for doing this.
FLORENCE
(coldly)
I’m here for Mahler. Gina said I’m
crazy to drive you anywhere.

GREENBERG
Gina -- who calls you in the middle of
the night crying about nothing -- Gina
who can’t even get your flyer info
correct. Yeah, listen to Gina.

Florence stares at him for a long beat.

FLORENCE
Don’t...you know don’t say anything
bad about...I can’t think anything bad
about Gina right now...
(to the dog)
Come, Mahler...

She carefully leads the dog to the door. The nurse passes the
credit card receipt back to Greenberg. He signs.

GREENBERG
Three thousand, eighty-four dollars.
Jesus.

INT. GREENBERG’S KITCHEN - DAY

Florence and Greenberg bring Mahler inside, he walks slowly and
stiffly over to his dog bed, circles it and lies down.

GREENBERG
He seems better.

FLORENCE
(all business)
Give me his pills I’ll mark them for
you so you don’t forget.

Florence grabs a sharpie and begins to code the pill bottles.
She takes out three pills, cuts one in half and puts them all in
little balls of peanut butter. She brings them to Mahler who *
eats them from her hand. The phone rings.

FLORENCE
If you put the pills in peanut butter *
they go down easier. *

She starts a pot of water on the stove and pours in rice. The
machine picks up.
PHILIP (V.O.)
Roger, it’s Philip. Pick up. Pick up. Piiicckkk uuuuppppp... Fuck it. I got an e-mail from Florence with her hours: market, dry cleaners, market, market, Rite Aid -- You can imagine, it goes on... I said you could use her for things, but not for everything. And I need to know how Mahler is. Call me.

He hangs up. Greenberg tries to find Florence’s eyes, but she won’t look at him. Finally:

GREENBERG
Are you cooking? You want to make Jello?

FLORENCE
The vet said the steroids might upset his stomach. I’ll just, I’ll cook this and then I’ll go.

GREENBERG
Are you going to make chicken too?

FLORENCE
(sighs)
I can pick up a roast chicken at the market. He shouldn’t have the skin it’s too rich.

GREENBERG
I can eat the skin. Why don’t we have chicken and rice with Mahler.

Florence looks at him with disbelief.

FLORENCE
You can walk to Ralph’s, it’s three blocks from here.

GREENBERG
Okay. Will you be here when I get back?

She marches across the floor and out the front door. Before the door swings shut, she reenters.

FLORENCE
I’ll get the chicken, but I’m going to call you when I’m pulling up and you can come out and get it.
Florence, in her car, hands Greenberg the shopping bag through the driver-side window. Greenberg lingers.

GREENBERG
I’m sorry about my...freak out by the pool. You know, I got to try not to do that. I get abusive. I’m working on that.
(pause)
Anyway, I apologize.

FLORENCE
(dryly)
Thank you.

Silence.

GREENBERG
I mean, it’s not just me...you do participate in it too, though. I mean, don’t you think?

FLORENCE
Then you’re not apologizing. You know, this isn’t a good day for me, I’m going to go --

GREENBERG
I’m apologizing for my side of it.

FLORENCE
That’s not an apology.

GREENBERG
Well, apologizing is hard.

FLORENCE
Not for me.

GREENBERG
Well, for me! You know what I think, Florence -- I think you’re transferring shit onto me. You’re looking to me for the mental and physical abuse of your father...and sexual molestation or whatever...

FLORENCE
(horrified)
I was not molested.
GREENBERG
Or whatever. He was withholding. I’m right about that, right?

FLORENCE
I was not molested.

She puts the car in gear.

INT. FLORENCE’S CAR

We HOLD on Florence as she drives. She dials her phone.

FLORENCE
Gina, call me when you get this.
Okay? Also, we have to be there at seven in the morning so you should pick me up at six-thirty.

INT. FLORENCE’S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Florence plays Blood, Sweat and Tears loudly on her small stereo. She’s drinking champagne and singing along. The phone rings.

FLORENCE
(casual)
Hey.

INT. GREENBERG’S KITCHEN - INTERCUT

Greenberg drinks a tall scotch and studies Florence’s instructions. He presses each pill into a ball of peanut butter. Mahler lies next to him.

GREENBERG
(taken aback)
Hey.

FLORENCE
(hesitates)
I thought you were Gina.

GREENBERG
No, it’s me. Roger.

He takes one of his own pills and chases it with the whiskey.

GREENBERG
(to Mahler)
This one’s for me.
FLORENCE

What?

GREENBERG

I’m talking to Mahler.

FLORENCE

Why are you calling me? You need more granola?

GREENBERG

I wanted to speak to you. (making herself laugh)

FLORENCE

Or ice cream sandwiches.

GREENBERG

(irritated)

Come on...

FLORENCE

(frustrated)

I mean, I’m just...are we seeing each other or not?

GREENBERG

Well, that’s what I want to talk about. I don’t know, I mean, I’m leaving in a like a week --

FLORENCE

That gives you enough time to find your thirty-eight year old divorcee.

Silence. Greenberg walks outside and across the yard.

FLORENCE

Hurt people hurt people.

GREENBERG

(confused, repeating it to himself)

“Hurt people hurt --”

FLORENCE

It’s something a singing coach of mine told me. Shit! Sorry... Sorry... I spilled...my champagne. Forget it.

GREENBERG

(suddenly suspicious)

Is somebody there?

FLORENCE

No.
She retrieves a sponge from the kitchen and wipes up the spill.

Greenberg enters the den at the other side of the yard.

**GREENBERG**
You never fucked that guy who plays guitar with you?

**FLORENCE**
No, he’s not even the same guy anymore! Sorry, I’m trying to get drunk. I don’t mean this to sound dramatic...and I wasn’t going to say anything. And Gina’s taking me... I mean it’s not yours...It’s...I found out a couple of days ago...and...I don’t know... It’s...it’s got to be my ex’s because I’m six or seven weeks and you and I only just... And you used a condom anyway... I didn’t want to tell you, I mean, it’s weird, I’ve been pregnant this whole time...

**GREENBERG**
Uh huh.

**FLORENCE**
I made an appointment for a D and C. I’m really sensitive to pain so I asked for anaesthesia. Sorry, I’m trying to get drunk now. And I can’t eat after ten.

**GREENBERG**
(pause)
I’ll take you to do it.

**FLORENCE**
(considers)
How is that going to work? Am I going to drive you to take me?

81 INT. IVAN’S CAR - DAY


**FLORENCE**
Can you turn it down?

He does.
FLORENCE
I’m sorry, it’s...my head is killing me.

GREENBERG
No, it’s fine, don’t worry. It’s your day. Or...you know what I mean.

INT. HOSPITAL HALLWAY - LATER
Florence is in a hospital gown. She sits in a wheelchair, her hair in a cotton shower cap. A nurse is behind her.

GREENBERG
We’ll be here when you get out.

FLORENCE
Okay. Thanks.

GREENBERG
Don’t be nervous.

She nods and looks distracted.

FLORENCE
I just don’t know what I’m doing with my life.

GREENBERG
(pause)
You’re of value.

FLORENCE
(irritated, dismissive)
I know that. You don’t have to say that.

Greenberg turns red. She’s wheeled away.

IVAN
We could go get her flowers.

GREENBERG
I thought since she couldn’t eat she might be hungry when it’s over.

They walk down the hallway.

IVAN
We had Victor in this hospital.
GREENBERG
Do you think they take volunteers here?

IVAN
In the hospital? I'd think you'd need some kind of training.

GREENBERG
She likes All American Burger.

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INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - LATER

Florence opens her eyes. Fuzzy images slowly come into focus. Greenberg sits at her bed-side. A burger wrapped in tinfoil in his lap. Ivan hangs back by the door.

GREENBERG
Here.

He holds out the burger. She tries to take it, but is too drugged. Greenberg places it on her stomach. He thinks better of it and takes it back.

GREENBERG
When you're ready.

FLORENCE
Thanks.
   (pause)
Can we go?

GREENBERG
They apparently won't let us go until you pee.

FLORENCE
Oh. I don't have to.

GREENBERG
Maybe when you get to the bathroom you'll feel like it.

FLORENCE
I need to lie for a little longer.

GREENBERG
Okay.

FLORENCE
I'm going to close my eyes for a second.
GREENBERG
Okay.

FLORENCE
(eyes closed)
You like me so much more than you think you do.

INT. HOSPITAL LOUNGE
Greenberg straightens a crinkled dollar on the edge of a candy machine. Ivan drinks a soda.

GREENBERG
It’s a stupid rule. I mean, what does peeing have to do with anything.

IVAN
I can’t remember why it’s important. I used to know.

GREENBERG
I wish it wasn’t too late to go to medical school.

IVAN
It’s not too late.

GREENBERG
I’d be over fifty by the time I got my degree.

IVAN
It’s four years, right?

GREENBERG
Yeah, but I know myself I’d procrastinate, take time off... Eight years at best. Who’s going to hire a forty-nine...let’s just call it fifty. Fifty year old vet.

IVAN
I’m confused, are you going to vet school or regular medical school?

GREENBERG
Neither, clearly.

Greenberg tears open a Doritos bag.

GREENBERG
I have to get back for Mahler’s pills.
IVAN
(eyes the snack)
Fabula makes this rice dish with raisins and pineapples that’s really delicious.

GREENBERG
I think you’ll find lots of girls will be able to make that dish.

IVAN
No, this is a Brazilian specialty.

GREENBERG
Still.

A nurse enters the lounge.

NURSE
Are you Florence’s friends?

GREENBERG
Yeah.

NURSE
She’s sleeping and she wants to stay the night.

GREENBERG
Did she pee?

EXT. GREENBERG HOUSE – DAY

Greenberg gets out of Ivan’s car. He looks back in the passenger window. Ivan is still in the driver’s seat.

GREENBERG
You want to come in? Watch a video.

IVAN
Nah, I should get going.

GREENBERG
Where?

IVAN
I think I’ll go back to the motel and take a nap. I didn’t sleep well last night.

GREENBERG
I’m leaving in like a week.
IVAN
We’ll hang out more, don’t worry...

Greenberg doesn’t move.

GREENBERG
You’re sure it’s okay I left? She might wake up and is scared...

IVAN
She’ll be fine. The nurse seemed nice. We’ll get her in the morning.

GREENBERG
I had to get back for Mahler.

IVAN
I understand.

GREENBERG
No, I know, I’m not explaining myself to you, I’m just —

IVAN
You’re just saying. Right.

GREENBERG
Come on, one drink.

IVAN
I really got to go.

GREENBERG
Okay.
(says awkwardly into his collar)
I appreciate your friendship...

Greenberg releases his grip on the open window. Ivan relaxes and reaches for the gear shift. Greenberg pokes his head back in the window.

GREENBERG
Can I ask... What do people say about me? Like...negative things I wouldn’t know.

IVAN
Let me go, man.

GREENBERG
Come on, I’m sure people must trash me when I’m not around.

IVAN
They don’t trash you.
GREENBERG
Okay, but what criticisms do they have?

IVAN
I don’t... You really want to know?

GREENBERG
Yes.

IVAN
I don’t know, I’d say the biggest criticism they have of you is that you have trouble making fun of yourself.

GREENBERG
(surprised)
Really? That’s incredible. I’m the funniest person I know.

IVAN
Well, not about yourself.

GREENBERG
Really?

IVAN
That’s what people say. I wouldn’t get too worried about it. These aren’t difficult things to fix.

GREENBERG
(backing away)
Right...

IVAN
Some people think you lie about things that you don’t need to lie about. That you don’t make any effort.

GREENBERG
Who says... Who are these people? That’s just totally insane.

IVAN
I’m just telling you what I’ve heard.

GREENBERG
If anything I’d say I’m too honest. Don’t you think?
IVAN
(vaguely)
Uh huh.

GREENBERG
I'm pretty up front with... No effort? I'm making my brother's family a dog-house. You know, I brought my tool belt from New York, I had to check my bag because of that. I always do carry-on. Look at my hands, I have callouses. Does Beller say this?

IVAN
I think he's said it, yeah. Others too... Maybe Johno once and Anna --

GREENBERG
(stung)
That's funny. Completely wrong, but funny.

INT. GREENBERG'S FOYER/LIVING ROOM - DAY
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Greenberg, alone, hangs his vest on the back of a chair. He looks upset. His attention turns to objects scattered on the floor: Small, bunched socks, an ice cream sandwich wrapper, a pair of jeans that look like their owner stepped right out of them. Greenberg turns a corner --

Two twenty year old girls sit on the couch drinking white wine. They both have wet hair. (Sara is recognizable from her photos.)

GREENBERG
Sara?

SARA
There's the strange man who's sleeping in my room.

She jumps up and hugs Greenberg. She's in a one-piece bathing suit with a sweat-shirt over it.

SARA
This is Muriel.

Muriel is tall, round and busty with an open face.

MURIEL
(Australian accent)
Hey.
SARA
I heard you killed our dog.

GREENBERG
No, no, not at all. He’s all better. We just brought him home.

SARA
Where is he? Mahler!

She runs out of the room, leaving Greenberg with Muriel. They stand in silence.

MURIEL
We leave for Australia tomorrow morning.

GREENBERG
Isn’t that like a twenty hour flight?

MURIEL
It’s fourteen.

GREENBERG
(does the quick math)
So that’s like seven movies.

INT. LIBRARY – NIGHT

Music blares. The house is filled with twenty year old boys and girls talking, dancing, drinking. Greenberg sits in a corner with a scotch, observing. He dials his cell.

IVAN
(through the receiver)
Hello?

GREENBERG
A party of twenty year olds has suddenly happened in my house.

IVAN
(vaguely)
Hey, man.

GREENBERG
Hey, man, you take your nap? (pause) Where are you?

IVAN
I’m...I’m having dinner with my family.
GREENBERG
Your parents?

IVAN
No...my other family.

GREENBERG
Fabula?

IVAN
Mm hm.

GREENBERG
Do you want me to come over there?

IVAN
No.

GREENBERG
Just don’t do anything.

IVAN
I’m not sure I know what you mean.

Two girls walk by Greenberg. He tries to draw their looks, but they don’t turn. Greenberg sighs.

GREENBERG
They’re really not interested in me.
I just look like some old guy to them.
It’s so insulting.

IVAN
I’ve got to go, man.

GREENBERG
In my mind I’m still the
youngest guy in the room...

IVAN
Okay --

GREENBERG
You should come here after.

IVAN
I really got to go.

GREENBERG
Okay, man, I’ll call you later.

INT. KITCHEN
A girl holds her red plastic beer cup down to the ground. Mahler laps from it.
GREENBERG

Hey!

The girl looks up guiltily. Greenberg in the doorway.

GREENBERG
He just got out of the hospital.

GIRL
I'm so sorry.

GREENBERG
You know, don't give him beer.

GIRL
I'm sorry.

She slinks away.

GREENBERG
He's got an autoimmune disorder.

Greenberg retrieves a pill container from the pantry. He opens the refrigerator and takes out a container of peanut butter. He presses the pill into a ball of peanut butter and brings it to * Mahler who gobbles it.

Greenberg picks up glasses, pours out cigarette butts, runs the water and starts doing dishes.

INT. LIVING ROOM

Greenberg enters. Two girls push a compact back and forth across the floor trying to get it to land in a square patterned portion of the wood.

A boy, Rich, 20, digs into the pocket of his corduroy jacket and produces a tinfoil ball.

RICH
You have a cool place.

GREENBERG
Oh... thanks... It's not totally mine, but...

RICH
What do you do?

GREENBERG
Oh, I'm kind of doing nothing for a while...
Rich peels the tinfoil back --

GREENBERG
Is that coke?

RICH
Yup.

GREENBERG
I’d heard coke was in again.

RICH
You want some?

Greenberg pulls up a chair. Sara, Jerry and two other girls, Olivia and Anita, also scoot over. Greenberg passes him a VHS of Gung-Ho and Rich cuts the lines on the box. He hands Greenberg a rolled dollar bill.

GREENBERG
Is it okay to mix coke and Zoloft?

RICH
Totally.

Greenberg does a line.

GREENBERG
I haven’t done this in like fifteen years. Since college or since a couple years out.

The kids nod politely, doing their lines in succession.

GREENBERG
This is very unlike me. I actually hate coke. I hate it politically and I hate how it makes me feel. But when it’s done I may have to kill one of you out of sheer frustration.

Anita looks at him, alarmed.

GREENBERG
(leaps up)
I’m going to change the record. We need better coke music.

RICH
Put on some Korn.

GREENBERG
I’ve got the perfect thing.
Greenberg runs across the floor, jumping over one of the compact sliding girls. He enters the den. He rifles through the jewel boxes. He takes out his cell and dials while he looks.

IVAN
(through the receiver)
Hello?

GREENBERG
Hey, man.

IVAN
Hey, man.

GREENBERG
I just did a line. I think the last time I did coke was with you.

IVAN
Uh huh.

GREENBERG
It was just a line, but I feel really wired. I guess my tolerance is less.

He finds Duran Duran’s “Rio” and puts it on the stereo. He advances the tracks -- the song, “The Chauffeur” plays.

JERRY (O.S.)
Oh, come on!

GREENBERG
Fuck off, Jerry.
(into the phone)
Are you done with dinner?

IVAN
No, we’re still eating.

GREENBERG
You sure you don’t want me there.

IVAN
Yes.

GREENBERG
I almost feel like I could get in a car and drive.

IVAN
Don’t do that.
GREENBERG
You got to come here when you’re done.

IVAN
Tonight’s not good, man.

GREENBERG
Man, you’ve got to come. I can’t believe you lied to me about your dinner.

SARA (O.S.)
Do you have ACDC?

GREENBERG
It’s actually a pretty fun party.

IVAN
Man, I can’t --

GREENBERG
I can’t decide if they think I’m really cool or totally pathetic. I’m not sure I know the answer to that either.

SARA (O.S.)
ACDC!

GREENBERG
I’ve got to go. See you soon.

Greenberg hangs up. He runs back into the living room. He’s about to jump over the girl again, but she throws up her arms:

GIRL
Don’t, okay.

Greenberg swerves around her and lands back in a chair.

SARA
ACDC.

GREENBERG
Are you kidding? Duran Duran is great coke music. Give it a chance.

JERRY
Let’s maybe not keep saying “coke” in every sentence.

Greenberg looks the group over.
GREENBERG
I read an article -- aren’t you guys all just fucking on the internet.

JERRY
Not all of us.

GREENBERG
But some?

SARA
I guess, some. No one I know, I don’t think. Well, maybe Paige...

ANITA
Yeah, Paige has a site. But it’s more art than porn.

JERRY
They shot a skin flic on my campus. Couple of guys and some townies and they acted in it.

GREENBERG
Sick.

RICH
Can’t we put on Korn?

GREENBERG
No, we can’t put on fucking Korn. Jesus. You guys smoke crack at all?

Greenberg massages his neck.

SARA
I haven’t.

JERRY
Once or twice.

GREENBERG
I might get back into drugs.

RICH
I’ve got a Vicodin, if you want?

GREENBERG
I could use that actually.

Rich takes a white tablet out of his pocket, breaks it in half, and hands part to Greenberg. Greenberg downs it with his scotch.
GREENBERG
Thanks.

SARA
You want a neck massage?

GREENBERG
Okay. Normally I’d say, no, cause I’m a little OCD. But okay.

Sara gets behind him and massages his neck.

GREENBERG
That’s great.
  (pause)
Are you kids really different from me? I mean, do the movies on the iPods and facility with MySpace pages make you guys really different?

JERRY
I don’t know.

GREENBERG
Every article I read seems to be saying that.
  (pause)
I definitely feel it. Good coke.

The girls laugh.

GREENBERG
What?

ANITA
Nothing.

OLIVIA
You’re funny.

GREENBERG
You’re mean. The thing is about you kids is that you’re all kind of insensitive. I’m glad I grew up when I did. Your parents were too good at parenting. All that Baby Mozart and Dan Zanes songs. You’re so sincere and interested in things.
  (surveying the group)
Would it kill you to use a coaster? There’s a confidence in you guys that’s horrifying.
  (MORE)
GREENBERG (CONT'D)
You’re all ADD and carpal tunnel --
you wouldn’t know agoraphobia if it
bit you in the ass. And it makes you
mean. You say things to someone like
me who is older and smarter with this
blithe air. I’m freaked out by you
kids. I hope I die before I end up
meeting one of you in a job
interview...

Greenberg turns around to Sara and puts his face in hers.

GREENBERG
Fuck or fight?

SARA
(laughs)
What?

GREENBERG
Fuck or fight?

SARA
What are you so angry about? What are
you fighting against?

GREENBERG
(vaguely quoting Marlon
Brando)
What do you got?

SARA
I don’t got much.

GREENBERG
Then that’s what I’m fighting against.
Not much.

The Duran Duran shuts off and hardcore music blares.

GREENBERG
What the fuck?!

He leaps up, grimaces in pain.

GREENBERG
Rich, you asshole.

RICH
I didn’t do anything.

Rich is sitting on the floor with the compact tossing girls.
Oh.

Greenberg marches toward the stereo. Two guys in knit caps look at liner notes and go through records.

Get off the stereo. I was listening to that.

The guys laugh. Greenberg makes a face and presses Stop.

Where’s the Duran Duran?

Careful, those are my brother’s records.

“Those are my brother’s records.”

(under his breath)

Fuck off.


Jesus, ow, fuck. *

There’s something in the pool!

Greenberg hobbles outside. A guy hands a slice of pizza to Mahler.

Don’t feed him!

Mahler snatches the pizza and runs. Greenberg chases after the dog with his arms outstretched.

Drop it. Drop. It.
He pulls the pizza from Mahler’s jaw, tearing it in half. Mahler gulps the rest of it down.

SARA (O.S.)
It was crazy, his mom was dying and he didn’t come to visit...

Greenberg stops in his tracks, and listens to Sara who speaks to Muriel.

SARA (O.S.)
I don’t know, I guess he couldn’t deal.

GREENBERG
(to no one in particular)
She told me not to bother, she was going to be okay.

A bunch of the kids surround the water. Greenberg approaches. The sound of the wind-up girl playing the vibes.

A dark animal floats in the middle of the pool. One eye is visible, bobbing above the water. Greenberg edges closer.

RICH
What is it?

GREENBERG
It’s a...

JERRY
I think it’s a bird or an opossum.

SARA
I think we had one of these once before...

Greenberg squints, tries to make out the creature. The single eye of the dead animal stares back. Muriel grabs him suddenly and fakes throwing him in. Greenberg jolts.

GREENBERG
Holy shit, don’t!

The kids laugh. Rich takes a pool net on a pole and starts to fish the animal out. A guy, Zach, hands Greenberg a joint.

ZACH
I’m sorry your dog has AIDS.
He doesn’t have AIDS. It’s an autoimmune disorder.

People squeal as Rich swings the animal toward everyone. He turns the net over and dumps the soggy creature on the grass. People gather around it.

Greenberg tokes on the joint and spies his dog-house in a corner of the yard. Two kids sit on it making out. Discarded cups and glasses lie atop the loose pine boards.

He rubs his cherry chapstick across his lips. A car door slams. Greenberg walks to the fence. Ivan approaches from the street.

(brightens)
Ivan...

Greenberg hugs his friend near the gate. The joint dangling from his lips.

How is Lenny?!

Are you okay, man? Is that pot, where’d you get that?

You want a puff?

Ivan shoos it away.

No, man, you know I quit that.

I know, man. I know. But you drink. What’s that?

But I shouldn’t be drinking.

Okay, man. Okay. Isn’t this weird? It’s so weird. How amazing is it that there really are palm trees in LA?

So, how’d it go?
IVAN
Fine.

GREENBERG
And...

IVAN
I think...we might give it another try.

GREENBERG
(appalled)
You’re shitting me!

IVAN
Please don’t make this hard for me.

GREENBERG
Oh, god, man. Don’t give in. I know it’s the harder, more painful decision to stay free, but that’s what adulthood is. I mean, I could just stay with Florence because it’s easy, but I don’t want easy.

IVAN
You’ve been dating Florence for a month, I’ve been married for ten years with a child. Don’t tell me what adulthood is.

GREENBERG
We weren’t dating exactly.

IVAN
That’s my point!

GREENBERG
You’re shouting at me, man.

IVAN
(sighs)
It’s been a really hard time for me, Roger. I mean... I miss my family. * I feel like...all the work I’ve done over the years, you know, kicking the drugs, being a dad. I feel like it’s all going away.

Greenberg massages his own shoulder with his fingers.
GREENBERG
It’s not going away... It’s transforming. You’re going through something. Which means...you’ll get somewhere.

IVAN
I don’t think you understand what it’s been like for me out here. How my...how the kind of life I had hoped for... It is huge to finally embrace the life you never planned on.

Ivan wipes a tear from his chin. Greenberg is at a loss.

IVAN
I wanted to make that record.

GREENBERG
We never would have survived at a major label with those restrictions --

IVAN
How the fuck do you know?

GREENBERG
Because that’s not how the world works!

IVAN
What could you possibly know about how the world works?! You’ve never entered the world.

GREENBERG
(hesitates)
Listen, man, I think you’re playing out some old family dynamic here. Apropos of what we were saying before about what people say about us -- people feel you hold onto petty resentments and --

IVAN
You asked me what people say about you. I don’t want to know.

GREENBERG
No, you should know. People think you play the victim. I don’t mean this in a bad way, but you let people feel sorry for you when it just protects your narcissism --
IVAN
I don’t want to know!

GREENBERG
Well, that’s why I didn’t want to be in a band with you! Because you won’t acknowledge any of your shit. You were fucked up all the time and -- What do you want me to say?! I didn’t know it was going to be our only offer. I didn’t know I had the power to blow it. I thought we were all just giving our two cents. I didn’t know the band would fall apart because of me. I just thought, “Fuck ‘em!” Maybe, obviously I’d do it differently now...

Greenberg is suddenly crying in sloppy, jagged sobs.

GREENBERG
Of course I know what it’s like to live a life I didn’t plan on. What do you think I’m doing right now?

He sputters and sobs. Ivan takes a deep breath.

IVAN
You know, the people I hang out with, we say, “Oh, I’ll lend you that graphic novel” we mean it. We do it. You don’t know how to do that.

Ivan starts to walk away then comes back.

IVAN
This is a small thing and I know it’s probably boring for you, but you know it would’ve been nice if you’d made an effort to know Vic.

GREENBERG
Who’s Vic?

IVAN
My son.

GREENBERG
Oh, Victor. I didn’t recognize the diminutive...
IVAN
Florence told me you were in a
hospital. You know, I understand that
kind of stuff. We could have talked
about it. Maybe made each other feel
better. And instead we don’t talk
about anything good...

GREENBERG
She knew? Who else knows?

Ivan shakes his head and walks away.

91  INT. SARA’S BATHROOM - LATER  91 *

Music booms through the floorboards. He’s on the phone. *

GREENBERG
Florence, I don’t know if you peed yet *
or you’re going to get this message *
tonight but I gave Mahler two of his *
pills but then he ate pizza and one *
he’s supposed to take on an empty *
stomach, and -- I don’t know what to *
do. I know so little about basic *
shit. I can’t even swim in the pool. *
My brother’s in Vietnam and I can’t *
swim in the fucking pool! We have the *
same parents, I can’t blame that. *
There was something else I wanted to *
tell you. You, know, I’m sorry I can *
be...whatever it is I can be. It’s *
half my fault and half the atmosphere. *
That’s a Leonard Cohen lyric. You *
should cover that song. You sing *
great. You should go on YouTube and *
all that stuff you guys do. Just do *
it. You go girl. I can’t believe *
they closed Tower Records. How did *
that happen? What was it I wanted to *
say -- *

(a knock on the door)
Occupied! I don’t understand what *
happened to me...You remember Charlie *
Sheen standing on his balcony in Wall *
Street saying “who am I?” Did you see *
that movie? Philip and I used to make *
so much fun of it. I’m thinking now it *
wasn’t so stupid. I like you.

(MORE)
GREENBERG (CONT'D)
I’m never going to be one of those * people who remembers people’s * birthdays or gives a shit about their * friends’ kids. I mean, you and Ivan * seem to get pleasure from that shit. * I could never get pleasure from that. * Oh, this is a good song. Someone once * said to me, “Hurt people hurt people.” * It’s kind of trite, but it stayed with * me...
(remembering) *
Was that... that was you like a few * days ago. I used to have a good memory * too... Anyway, we do. I do. Hurt * people. Hurt...
(pause) *
...people. I think Ivan and I broke * up. I wish I could remember what it * was I wanted to tell you. I told you * I liked you, it wasn’t that, Mahler * ate pizza, Mahler drank beer... Maybe * there wasn’t anything. Love, Roger. *

INT. BEDROOM - LATE NIGHT

Sara sleeps in her frilly bed. The witch puppet is on the night stand. There’s movement, she opens her eyes. Greenberg is next to her.

SARA
What are you doing?

GREENBERG
It’s my bed too.

SARA
Come on, get out -- I have to get up early.

Greenberg nudges his face right up to hers. She laughs.

SARA
You’re bombed.

He kisses her. She responds then pulls away.

SARA
Okay, go away now.
GREENBERG
Come on...

SARA
No, we’re practically related -- it’s really disgusting.

GREENBERG
We don’t share blood. My brother fell for your mother, why shouldn’t we --

SARA
Seriously, get out.

He gropes at her. She groans and kicks at him. He reluctantly slides out of the bed, grabs a pillow, and leaves.

INT. DEN – NIGHT

Muriel sleeps on the couch. Greenberg enters, holding his pillow and the witch puppet, and gets under the covers with her. His face glistens with sweat.

GREENBERG
God, my heart is racing. I hope I don’t die.

MURIEL
(laughs)
You won’t die.

She coughs -- it’s ragged and guttural.

MURIEL
I smoked too much tonight.

He presses his face into her soft, big bosom and closes his eyes.

GREENBERG
Can you just tell me I’m going to be okay?

The faraway sound of an alarm...

INT. DEN – MORNING

Greenberg opens his eyes. The phone is ringing. White sharp light fills the room. He climbs off the couch. He makes a face -- his body stiff and in knots. Greenberg massages his temples. Muriel’s bags are gone.

It’s morning.
Greenberg, in underwear and an old Steve Winwood "Back in the High Life" concert T-shirt, treads through the living room. Cups, cigarettes, stains, debris. He shakes his head in irritation.

Murmuring in the other room...

Greenberg enters the kitchen which is a disaster. Sara and Muriel, freshly showered, sit at the breakfast table drinking coffee. Mahler lies amidst their bags on the floor.

SARA
Good morning, Sunshine.

GREENBERG
(holds his head)
Holy shit.

Mahler hops up and approaches Greenberg.

MURIEL
(sly smile)
How are you feeling, Sunny?

GREENBERG
What’s...what’s Sunny?

They laugh, Muriel’s turning into a hacking cough.

SARA
We decided that’s our name for you.

Greenberg grins, he likes that. He scoops out a cigarette butt from Mahler’s drinking water. Out the window: Marlon and Peggy arrive at the pool. A gardener drags a brown garbage can in the grass.

GREENBERG
I think I’m still drunk.
The New York Times is spread out on the table. Greenberg grabs the A section. He flips to the back. His eyes search. He grins. He tosses the paper down between the girls.

GREENBERG
They printed my letter about Iran.

They both smile politely.

SARA
Cool.

GREENBERG
“Roger Greenberg, Hollywood California.”

For a moment, Greenberg is glowing. He arranges Mahler’s pills on the counter. The girls chat animatedly at the table.

SARA
I mean, I’ve got no problem with just giving some guy a blow job, but she takes it to the extreme...

Greenberg listens to the girls’ conversation. He opens the fridge and takes out the butter.

MURIEL
Why do guys like to do that -- (laughs)
SARA
come on you and spread it... They don’t all like it --

He collects the butter pads and crouches down. Mahler eats from his hand.

SARA
You’re really good with him. You have dogs?

GREENBERG
No. Florence showed me how to do it.

SARA
(grinning)
Did you start an affair with Philip’s assistant?

GREENBERG
No.

MURIEL
I’m jealous.

A slight smile breaks across Greenberg’s lips.
MURIEL
You should come to Australia with us.

GREENBERG
Yeah? There’s a great Kinks song called “Australia.”

SARA
Totally. You should totally come.

He licks the remaining butter from his fingers.

GREENBERG
Maybe I will.

SARA
But you better hurry we have to leave in like five minutes.

Greenberg’s face.

93F INT. SARA’S BEDROOM - DAY

Greenberg furiously throws clothes into a duffel.

SARA (O.S.)
What are we going to do about Mahler?!

GREENBERG
Fuck.

Greenberg hesitates.

94 EXT. POOL

Greenberg tears across the garden. Mahler galloping alongside him. Marlon, in his trunks, with blue tinted sunglasses is collecting his things. Peggy, disgusted, holds up a large black feather. Marlon turns -- Greenberg is almost upon him.

MARLON
(startled)
Woa, what’s happening?

GREENBERG
(panting)
Can I ask you guys a favor?

MARLON
Okay.

GREENBERG
I’m Roger by the way.
Greenberg’s foot kicks over a half-filled beer bottle -- the liquid seeps into the grass.

**GREENBERG**
*Sorry it’s such a mess.*

**PEGGY**
*Yeah, we’re going home.*

**GREENBERG**
*Um, can you take Mahler until Wednesday?*

**MARLON**
*(looks to Peggy)*
*Uh...yeah, I guess.*

**PEGGY**
*Sure. We love Mahler. Come baby!*

Mahler runs to Peggy. Greenberg hesitates a moment, seeing the dog eagerly rubbing against her legs. A sadness passes over him.

**GREENBERG**
*Um, wait a second.*

Greenberg removes his Steve Winwood concert jersey and hands it to Marlon.

**GREENBERG**
*You know, put it by his nose.*

**MARLON**
*No problem.*

**GREENBERG**
*Great. I’ll write this out for you, but...he gets prednisone, which is a steroid, twice a day for three days...*

Greenberg looks over at his near-finished dog-house in the *grass. Beer bottles on its roof.*

**MARLON**
*You make that? Nice craftsmanship.*

**GREENBERG**
*Thanks, man.*
Greenberg, in his sweater and down vest, hurries out, lugging his duffel. The girls wait in their rental car. The engine running.

SARA
Let’s go! We’re going to have to get you a ticket.

GREENBERG
I’m coming...

MURIEL
(to Sara) You saw sharks last time, it’s fucking peaceful is what right?
SARA
It’s fucking peaceful is what it is.

Greenberg reaches the vehicle, breathing heavily.

MURIEL
I love that you’re doing this. (to Muriel)
SARA
And we have to go surfing in Byron Bay...

Greenberg opens the back door and hits his knee.

GREENBERG
Ow, fuck...

He exhales in frustration and pain. Pause.

SARA
Come on!

Greenberg jumps in.

INT. RENTAL CAR - DAY

Sara drives, Muriel shotgun. Greenberg sits in the back, a giddy look on his face. Music plays on the radio.

MURIEL
I’ve seen a Great White. And there are some amazing wrecks --

SARA
I literally cannot wait.

Greenberg massages his temples.

GREENBERG
Is this completely crazy?
SARA
No!

GREENBERG
I mean, it’s what people do, right?

SARA
You’ll love Australia.

GREENBERG
For some people this is nothing.

MURIEL
Who knows how much longer the Reef’s going to be around. It’s these starfish that are killing the marine life.

SARA
Roger, are you certified?

GREENBERG
To what?

MURIEL
And the pollution.

SARA
Dive.

GREENBERG
No. I don’t really swim.

The girls laugh, Muriel’s turning into a cough.

MURIEL
You can go look at whales while we dive.

SARA
Sunny will look at whales!

GREENBERG
Okay, you can cut out the “Sunny” business...

The car stops at a light. Sun streams into Greenberg’s face. He squints and tries to move out of the way of the beam. He reaches into his pocket and fishes around. He frowns, irritated.

GREENBERG
Shit, I left my chapstick...

Greenberg looks outside. A blue wind-sock in the shape of a man billows outside a car dealership.
A look of discomfort crosses his face -- the hang-over settling in. His skin glistens, damp and pale. He considers something. He says quietly to himself:

GREENBERG
"Dear Florence..."

He takes a deep breath of anxiety. His hand grips the door handle:

GREENBERG
You know what --

He pulls the handle, but the door is locked. A helicopter passes overhead. The roar vibrates the car. The music is loud, the girls oblivious. Sara is checking out something on Muriel’s arm.

SARA
That’s so weird.

Greenberg takes deep, hoarse breaths.

GREENBERG
I’ve got...I’m supposed to get someone from the hospital --

The car starts to move.

GREENBERG
Ho...ho... Hold it!

Sara laughs.

GREENBERG
Open my door!

SARA
No, you’re our prisoner!

MURIEL
Exactly!

GREENBERG
Open it. Open the fucking door!

The girls are laughing.

GREENBERG
Come on, open it!

The car brakes. Sara presses the automatic lock just as he pulls the handle. It’s still locked. He yanks it again.
SARA
I’m trying. Stop pulling it.

She releases the lock. He yanks the handle and shoves it open.

MURIEL
Oh, come on, Roger!

He climbs out, dragging his duffel.

GREENBERG
You know... I can’t go. I can’t...afford it, I can’t... I have to pick up my friend -- (pause) Have a good time.

The car pulls into traffic.

SARA/MURIEL
Bye!

96A EXT. STREET - DAY

He’s left outside the car dealership. The blue man dancing. Greenberg sweats. Cars roar past. Using his sleeve as a buffer, he presses the button for the cross-walk. He pushes it a couple of times.

We HOLD on Greenberg’s face. The helicopter circles back overhead. The pavement shakes. Greenberg takes deep hoarse breaths -- his panic escalating with each intake.

97 INT. HOSPITAL WAITING AREA - DAY

A sleepy Florence scribbles her signature on a form. Greenberg, sticky and pale, stands next to her -- his duffel leaning against his legs. He points to another sheet of paper.

GREENBERG
I think you have to do that one too.

98 EXT. FLORENCE’S BUILDING - LATER

Greenberg helps Florence out of the taxi.

99 INT. FLORENCE’S APARTMENT - LATER

Greenberg lowers Florence into the bed.

FLORENCE
Thanks.
She’s still a little groggy from the drugs.

FLORENCE
I’ve got to get insurance. The anaesthesia was so expensive, I’m such a baby about pain. I stayed over night! I’m glad your brother’s coming back next week, I need to work more hours.

She runs her fingers over her dry lips.

FLORENCE
I really picked my lips in my sleep.
(sleepily feels a scab)
This was possibly about finding a pet in the canyons.

GREENBERG
Do you get the New York Times?

Florence shakes her head.

GREENBERG
It’s good to get the paper. I’ll pick you up one.

FLORENCE
Okay.

GREENBERG
Did...did you get my message?

FLORENCE
I haven’t checked yet. What did you say?

GREENBERG
Um...I reassessed the movie, Wall Street, among other things.

FLORENCE
I don’t know it.

Greenberg’s attention goes to a gift wrapped in a Marie Claire cover on the desk.

FLORENCE
I wasn’t going to give it to you because I was pissed, but you can open it. Happy Birthday again.
GREENBERG
Thanks.

Greenberg tears open the present.

FLORENCE
Hey, thanks for picking me up.

GREENBERG
It’s no problem.

It’s the devil puppet.

FLORENCE
Now you have the set. Not that they’re a set.

GREENBERG
What about your niece?

FLORENCE
Remember the sticks are too old... She’s coming over this weekend -- I framed her picture.

Her niece’s drawing is now framed and propped up on the floor.

GREENBERG
You have a tape measure?

FLORENCE
I think there’s a ruler in the desk drawer.

Greenberg opens the drawer and finds a foot ruler with each inch representing a different animal. He turns it and they dissolve into dinosaurs. He grabs a pencil.

GREENBERG
You want it on this wall here?

FLORENCE
Okay.

Greenberg measures in one foot intervals on the wall. He makes small marks with the pencil.

He stands on a chair, leans one foot on her desk and bangs a nail into the wall. He crouches down, lifts up the picture and hangs it on the nail.

FLORENCE
Cool. Like a professional.
He steps down from the desk.

    GREENBERG
    I am a professional. Well, I build things.

Florence smiles sleepily.

    GREENBERG
    I know you know I was in a hospital.
    I’m not hiding it. But it’s not what defines me, you know.

    FLORENCE
    I understand.
    (pause)
    I want to listen to my message.

She dials her voice-mail. Greenberg watches her.

    GREENBERG
    I’d...I’d had some to drink.

She listens.

    FLORENCE
    Gina...

They wait.

    FLORENCE
    My mom...

Silence.

    FLORENCE
    Okay. This is you.

She listens. We hear echoes of Greenberg’s ramblings. Greenberg tries not to watch, but can’t help peaking back at her. Their eyes meet briefly before they both glance away. Florence stares at the floor, Greenberg at the wall.

Someone leans on a car horn in the street. Florence laughs at something, her eyes now finding Greenberg and holding. He brushes away dust from a corner of the desk.

We STAY on Florence’s face.

Black.