

ONE LAST TIME

by

George Galanakis

ON BLACK:

"Death is one moment, and life is so many of them."

Tennessee Williams

FADE IN:

EXT. NEW YORK CITY SKYLINE - NIGHT

The city that never sleeps. A soaring view of New York's gleaming skyline. A recent rain has left the city shimmering in the dark.

INT. KERI'S CAR - MOVING - NIGHT

KERI HOLLOWAY (33, beautiful, sad eyes, unassuming) is driving down a rain-slicked street. Her face a mask of cold anger. Her eyes are brimming with tears. Keri stomps on the gas and the car speeds up.

EXT. UPTOWN STREET - NIGHT

The street is fairly crowded with PEDESTRIANS. PROSTITUTES and TRANSVESTITES prowl the sidewalks. Keri's car cruises by at great speed.

INT. KERI'S CAR - MOVING

Tears fill Keri's eyes, her vision is blurring. She makes an effort to keep the steering wheel straight and wipes her tears.

Keri sees a few PEDESTRIANS clustered on a sidewalk up ahead of her. A couple more, from the other side of the street, are trying to get across. Keri takes her foot off the gas and the car eases back.

As the car approaches them, PEDESTRIAN #1 stops frozen in the middle of the street. The car is heading straight at him.

Keri, without losing her nerve, jerks the wheel and slams on the breaks. Tires SCREAM.

EXT. UPTOWN STREET

Keri's car whizzes past the petrified man, spins 180 degrees and lurches to a stop in the middle of a crossroad. Keri closes her eyes and breathes a heavy sigh of relief.

A LOUD HORN alarms her. Blinding lights. A truck comes from her left side. Its tires SCREECH into a skid. Keri opens the door and takes her left foot out --

CRASH! The truck slams into Keri's car, propelling it sideways for fifty yards. A continuing HORN from the car ECHOES all over --

FLASH FORWARD - EXT. MIDTOWN STREET - NIGHT

It's pouring hard rain. DAVID ANGELOU (21, rugged good looks, tall, impulsive) is on his knees in the middle of the street.

He holds ERIC WARD (21, moderately attractive, supremely poised) in his arms, hardly recognizable with all the blood on his face. David looks up and shouts to someone:

DAVID
Don't stand there! Call an ambulance! Call a fucking ambulance!

INT. F TRAIN - NIGHT

A few PASSENGERS are in the car, rocking slightly as the train shudders through the tunnels.

LENA CHAREST (27, innocent face, skinny, fidgety) is one of them. She shifts uneasily in her seat, pulling down her tight mini-skirt to a more comfortable length.

BRIAN (32, charming, affable) sits across from her, looking at her square in the eye. A penetrating, unwavering stare. He smiles to her.

Lena is a little nervous, but manages a half-smile. Brian leaves his seat and goes to her.

BRIAN
Mind if I...?

He points to the vacant seat next to Lena. She shrugs. Brian sits down. Lena's face betrays a growing unease.

BRIAN (CONT'D)
So what's a pretty girl like you doing all alone in the subway at this hour?

LENA
Pretty girls have to go home, too.

Brian grins.

BRIAN
Is that right? Well, where's your stop?
(MORE)

BRIAN (CONT'D)
 Maybe I could walk you home, make
 sure you're all right.

LENA
 Where's your stop?

BRIAN
 Rockefeller Center.

Lena reacts.

LENA
 I get off at the Rockefeller,
 too.

BRIAN
 Talk about meant to be, huh?

Lena wears another half-smile.

BRIAN (CONT'D)
 Look, I hope I didn't freak you
 out or anything. I'm Brian.

LENA
 Lena.

They shake hands.

INT. SAINT MICHAEL'S CHURCH - NIGHT

Candlelight illuminates the altar and the sea of pews. MEL
 PETERSON (57, unshaven, gray hair, bitter) sits in the
 front row, staring at an open casket on the altar. A
 woman, ROSE PETERSON (54, adoring, demure) lies inside.

Mel's eyes are cold, raw. He gets up, moves over to the
 casket and stands above the dead woman. He reaches for her
 hand, leans in and kisses it. He smiles affectionately.

INT. LIMOUSINE - MOVING - NIGHT

JACK CAMPBELL (24, strikingly handsome, bright-eyed,
 athletic), dressed in a designer suit, is in the back seat
 of the luxurious vehicle. He gazes out the window, a
 cigarette between his lips, a reflective look on his face.

Next to him sits a man named BARRY (39, well-groomed, horn-
 rimmed glasses) also in a suit. His eyes are locked on
 Jack.

BARRY
 You all right?

JACK
 Fine.

BARRY
You don't look fine. What's the
matter? You nervous?

Jack snorts a laugh.

JACK
Why would I be nervous?

BARRY
Then what is it?

JACK
Forget about it, all right?

The limo pulls up.

JACK (CONT'D)
Now let's get this over with.

He puts out his cigarette and opens the door.

EXT. MOVIE THEATER - CONTINUOUS

A throng of FANS, REPORTERS and PAPARAZZI are waiting outside the theater. An epic war movie entitled "Brothers At Arms" is premiering.

As soon as Jack steps his foot out, fans start screaming out his name, reporters shouting, flashes going out.

Jack glances at them, anger building on his face. He makes his way along the red carpet towards the entrance of the theater. A FAN thrusts paper and pen at him for an autograph.

FAN
Jack, can I get an autograph?
Please! Jack!

Jack continues down the red carpet, oblivious. A FEMALE REPORTER cuts in front of him.

FEMALE REPORTER
Jack, what did you think of the
film? Was it difficult working
under --

Jack shoves her to the side and hurries to the entrance. Barry sprints to Jack. He catches up to him, puts his arm around his shoulder and whispers in his ear:

BARRY
What the hell are you doing?
Talk to the goddamn reporters!

Jack throws Barry's hand off his shoulder.

JACK
Fuck you! You talk to them!

He enters the theater. Barry is flabbergasted.

INT. DAVID'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

A tiny one bedroom apartment with just the essential furniture. David is on the phone and paces back and forth.

DAVID
Hey, man, how's it going?

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. FAIRWAY MARKET - LOCKER ROOM - NIGHT

Eric is getting dressed with his cell phone cradled between ear and shoulder.

ERIC
I'm just getting off work.

DAVID
Listen, I was thinking maybe if you wanna go get a drink later.

ERIC
Yeah, sure. What's up?

DAVID
Chloe came by today to pick up the last of her things.

ERIC
You okay?

DAVID
Well, you know...

He pauses.

ERIC
All right, look, I'll meet you at the Belmont in an hour.

DAVID
See you there. Thanks.

David hangs up and wears a thoughtful face.

EXT. BRIAN'S BUILDING - NIGHT

Brian and Lena arrive in front of the building.

BRIAN
Well, this is me.

LENA
You really don't have to walk me home. I live a few blocks away.

BRIAN
Hey, we're almost neighbors. Who would believe it, huh? Come on.

He offers his hand to Lena.

LENA
I'm not sure about this. I'd better go.

BRIAN
No, you don't have to go. Come up just for one drink. That's all, one drink.

Lena considers for a moment and takes his hand. Brian leads her up the steps.

INT. SAINT VINCENT'S HOSPITAL - CORRIDOR - NIGHT

PATRICK HOLLOWAY (35, alert, sinewy, well-dressed) runs through the long corridors of the hospital, clearly very wrought up, in a highly emotional state.

INT. SAINT VINCENT'S HOSPITAL - RECEPTION AREA - CONTINUOUS

Patrick lumbers in and dashes to the Information Desk. INFORMATION CLERK #1 is sitting behind the desk, working on her computer.

PATRICK
Excuse me? A woman was brought here earlier! Keri Holloway! Her name is Keri Holloway! I was called!

INFORMATION CLERK #1
Sir, please, calm down.

PATRICK
Don't tell me to calm down! Tell me where my wife is!

The clerk looks through her papers and then at the computer.

INFORMATION CLERK #1
Keri Holloway, car accident. She
was brought two hours ago, but --

PATRICK
But what?

INFORMATION CLERK #1
She's still in surgery. You
can't see her.

PATRICK
I'm her husband.

INFORMATION CLERK #1
I understand that, sir --

PATRICK
Then let me see her!

INFORMATION CLERK #1
I'm afraid that's not possible.
If you would just take a seat and
wait --

PATRICK
"Take a seat and wait?" Are you
out of your fucking -- I wanna
see my wife! Let me see my wife!

The clerk is raising her tone.

INFORMATION CLERK #1
Sir, if you don't calm yourself,
I will be forced to call Hospital
Security. Now please, keep your
voice down.

(pause)
You have to understand that when
the procedure is over, you'll be
able to see your wife and know
further news about her condition.
All you can do right now is sit
down and wait!

Patrick sighs in exasperation and takes a seat.

EXT. MEL'S BUILDING - NIGHT

Mel looks up at the windows on the fourth floor of the six-story building. The lights are off. He climbs up the steps and enters the building.

EXT. MEL'S BUILDING - STAIRWAY - NIGHT

Mel has almost reached the fourth floor. All of a sudden, he stops. He stares at the door opposite him and sits on the stairs.

Mel loses himself in his thoughts. After a while, he stands up and goes to his apartment.

INT. MEL'S ENTRANCE HALL - CONTINUOUS

Mel opens the door. He stands in the doorway and gazes at the empty apartment for a while. Then he steps inside and closes the door.

INT. BRIAN'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Lena is on the sofa, obviously uncomfortable. Brian comes in with two drinks. He gives one to Lena and holds on to the other.

BRIAN

Here you go.

He sits next to Lena.

BRIAN (CONT'D)

So how long have you been working as a counselor?

LENA

I was in an elementary school down in SoHo for about a year, and now I got transferred to a middle school uptown a few weeks ago.

BRIAN

And was school counselling always what you wanted to do?

LENA

Well, yeah. I know how this may sound, but school counselors are vital members of the education team. Vital. We help students in the areas of academic achievement, personal and social development, career development. I mean, we're basically ensuring that today's kids become the productive, well-adjusted adults of tomorrow and that's just amazing.

BRIAN
You always talk so much?

He places his hand on her leg.

LENA
Only when I'm nervous.

BRIAN
Then relax. Don't be so tense,
huh?

He kisses her. Lena goes stiff and pulls away. She looks deep into Brian's eyes for a second and kisses him back.

INT. MOVIE THEATER - NIGHT

The movie is playing. Everyone's eyes fixated on the screen. PAUL (45, Southern, gruff), the director, ELAINE (23, brunette, stunning, tall), the leading actress.

And there's Jack. He is distracted, his mind elsewhere. Elaine eyes him and grins. Jack forces a smile.

INT. BELMONT LOUNGE BAR - NIGHT

A chill Union Square lounge, packed with people sitting on the comfortable sofas, around the bar, standing on the floor. They drink, chat and have a good time.

At a table in the back, David and Eric are sipping beers and smoking cigarettes.

DAVID
You know, deep down I thought we
were gonna end up together, me
and her. I thought this would be
the one that stick, you know?
How could she do that to me?

ERIC
Hey, maybe it's for the best.
You know what they say.
Everything happens for a reason.

DAVID
Fuck that! That's bullshit!
That's fucking bullshit!

David drowns in his thoughts, looks at the people around.

DAVID (CONT'D)
You know what? Screw her! Yeah!
She wants to ditch me over some
asshole... then okay!

ERIC
You know him?

DAVID
I don't give a shit who he is.
Screw him, too!

They both smile.

DAVID (CONT'D)
And yet, how can you do that to
someone you love, huh? To
someone you care about? I mean,
three years. Jeez! I've
invested my whole life to her and
now she...

He shakes his head in disbelief. A short pause.

ERIC
I always knew it wouldn't last,
you know.

DAVID
What are you talking about?

ERIC
There was no love between you. I
know you loved her --

DAVID
Still do.

ERIC
No, David. You have to move on.
You've got to forget about her.

DAVID
I don't wanna forget about her.

ERIC
Listen to me, man. It's over.

DAVID
Fuck you, Eric! It's not over
yet, okay? It's not!
(pauses; calms down)
I'm going to the bathroom.

He stands up.

ERIC
David?

David turns around. Eric is about to say something, but
hesitates.

ERIC (CONT'D)
I'll tell you when you get back.

David moves away.

INT. MEL'S BATHROOM - NIGHT

Mel stands at the sink and splashes water on his face. He dries himself with a towel and looks at his reflection in the mirror --

FLASH FORWARD - INT. MEL'S BATHROOM - NIGHT

Dozens of medicine boxes and bottles arrayed inside the open medicine cabinet. Mel holds a paper bag close to the cabinet and pushes them inside.

Most of them fall in the bag, if not on the sink or the floor. Mel picks them up quickly and puts them in the bag. He rushes out of the bathroom.

INT. MEL'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Mel slips under the covers and turns off the lamp on his bedside table.

INT. BRIAN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

The lights in the room are dim. Brian and Lena are under the covers and kiss passionately. Brian turns on the light on his bedside table.

LENA
No light. Please.

Brian switches the light off. He starts to lick Lena's neck. He goes down to her chest, and then to her belly.

Lena is motionless. Expressionless. She closes her eyes and tries to enjoy the moment. Brian moves up to her face and kisses her, a long, deep kiss.

BRIAN
You're really beautiful.

He reaches out to the bedside table, opens a drawer and pulls out a condom.

BRIAN (CONT'D)
You want me to use one?

Lena runs her fingers across his jaw line.

LENA
That's okay.

A smile spreads across Brian's face as he throws away the condom. He kisses Lena passionately.

EXT. BELMONT LOUNGE BAR - NIGHT

David storms out of the bar. Eric runs behind him. He grabs David's hand, stopping him.

ERIC
Listen, I can explain --

DAVID
You can explain what, huh? What?

Eric lowers his head, embarrassed, guilty.

DAVID (CONT'D)
Jesus fucking Christ! How long?

Eric remains silent.

DAVID (CONT'D)
HOW LONG?!

A short pause.

ERIC
Two years. Nearly two years.

DAVID
Oh, my --! Two years?
(laughs sarcastically)
Why tonight, huh? Tell me, why tonight?

ERIC
I don't know. I just thought you should know and for some reason I had to tell you...
(pauses)
I don't know why tonight.

David stares daggers at him.

DAVID
Stay away from me! You hear? I don't ever wanna see you again!

David walks off. Eric watches him, disappearing into the night.

INT. SAINT VINCENT'S HOSPITAL - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Patrick stands in a corner. He is silent and thoughtful. All of a sudden, the doors to the O.R. fly open and TWO NURSES push out a gurney.

Keri rests on the gurney, her body covered with a white sheet. The only thing visible is her head. Patrick darts to her side. DR. PIES (45) comes out of the O.R., too.

PATRICK
(to Keri)
Oh, honey. I love you so much.

DR. PIES
She can't hear you, Mr. Holloway.
Can I confer with you?

PATRICK
(pointing to Keri)
But...

DR. PIES
They're taking her up to the
I.C.U. You'll see her later.

Patrick stays with the doctor, watching the gurney being moved down the hall.

DR. PIES (CONT'D)
Mr. Holloway, I'm doctor Pies. I
operated on your wife.

PATRICK
How is she? Is she gonna be
okay?

DR. PIES
Would you like to sit down?

Patrick reacts.

EXT. PAUL'S TERRACE - NIGHT

Jack is alone, leaning down on the terrace railing, overlooking downtown New York. He has a drink and a cigarette, while admiring the gorgeous view.

Jack has broken off the after party that takes place inside Paul's penthouse. In the b.g., many PARTY GUESTS are dancing, drinking and having fun.

Jack takes a last drag of the cigarette and flicks it down to the void. He watches it fall and fall --

ELAINE (O.S.)
Hey, don't I know you?

Elaine approaches Jack wearing a broad smile. Jack greets her with an imperceptible inclination of the head. She stands next to him, leaning down on the railing, too.

ELAINE (CONT'D)
What's the matter with you tonight? You're a lot quieter than usual.

JACK
It's nothing.

ELAINE
Right. You want me to fix you another drink? What are you having? Whiskey?

JACK
That's all right.

Elaine touches his hand.

ELAINE
Will I see you tonight?

JACK
I don't know, Elaine.

He pulls his hand away. Elaine looks at him, her eyes are searching his face.

ELAINE
Hey, what's going on? Talk to me.

Their eyes are very involved. A short pause.

JACK
I've got to go.

He rockets inside. Elaine sighs.

EXT. PAUL'S LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The massive living room is packed with guests. Jack shoves his way through them, heading to the front door.

Paul is on a couch surrounded by two beautiful WOMEN. He is chatting with Barry seated opposite him. Paul spots Jack and shouts to him:

PAUL
Jack, come sit with us!

Jack ignores him and crosses to the door.

PAUL (CONT'D)
 Hey, where are you going?
 (to Barry)
 Where is he going?

Jack exits and slams the door shut behind him.

INT. JACK'S PORSCHE - MOVING - NIGHT

Jack drives through the streets with a cigarette in hand. The driver's window is rolled down, cold night air hitting his face. He enjoys the ride.

EXT. DAVID'S BUILDING - NIGHT

A five-story walk-up on the Upper West Side. David unlocks the door and enters the building.

INT. DAVID'S LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

David walks into his apartment and shuts the door. He moves further into the room, passes past his answering machine. The message light is blinking: "4." He pushes the button.

DAVID'S ANSWERING MACHINE
 You have four new messages.

ERIC'S VOICE
 Hey, it's me. Look, I know how
 you must be feeling --

David presses the button.

ERIC'S VOICE (CONT'D)
 David, we need to talk. Please,
 call me as soon you get this --

David presses the button again.

ERIC'S VOICE (CONT'D)
 Listen, I think it would be
 better - for the both of us - if
 we just forget about the whole
 thing --

In a sudden rage, David smacks the machine off the table. It hits a wall, drops to the floor and breaks into pieces.

DAVID
 FUCK YOU! FUCK YOU!

INT. BRIAN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Lena crawls off the bed and starts getting dressed. She glances at Brian. He's still sleeping. Lena opens the door quietly and tiptoes out of the bedroom.

EXT. BRIAN'S BUILDING - NIGHT

Lena flees down the steps of the building. She signals to a cab that pulls up at the curb.

INT. CAB - CONTINUOUS

Lena gets in the back seat. The CAB DRIVER turns to her.

CAB DRIVER
Where are we going?

LENA
Way uptown. Just over Columbia.

The driver hits the gas and the cab speeds away. An eerie smile spreads across Lena's face.

INT. SAINT VINCENT'S HOSPITAL - I.C.U. - KERI'S ROOM - NIGHT

Keri is resting on her bed. She is connected to a respirator, her vital signs monitored by several machines. She has her left arm in a cast and a bandage on her head.

Patrick stands above her. He leans closer and takes her hand.

PATRICK
God, you look so fragile.
(pause)
Why, Keri? It didn't have to be like this.

EXT. NEW YORK CITY SKYLINE - DAWN

The impressive skyline glistens as dawn breaks the horizon. Rays of sunlight start to warm the city of New York.

EXT. CEMETERY - MORNING

A funeral service is in progress. A few MOURNERS, dressed in black, cluster around a gravesite. A coffin is lowered slowly into the excavation.

Mel, freshly shaved, with a red rose in hand, stares at the casket, barely composing himself. MARTHA HODGES (56, eloquent, bookish) stands next to him. The PRIEST conducts the service.

PRIEST

... for everything there is a season and a time for every matter under heaven. A time to be born and a time to die.

Mel watches the coffin sinking deeper and deeper into the ground with watery eyes.

PRIEST (CONT'D)

A time to plant and a time to pluck up what is planted. A time to kill and a time to heal.

Martha puts her arm around Mel's waist for support. Mel visibly begins to warm to her gesture.

PRIEST (CONT'D)

A time to break down and a time to build up. A time to weep and a time to laugh.

Mel is struggling inwardly with his emotions and breaks into silent sobs. Before the process is over, he throws the rose into the grave and dashes away.

The mourners look at him with deep concern and sympathy. The priest stops the service.

MARTHA

I'm so sorry, father.

Martha runs after him.

MARTHA (CONT'D)

Mel, wait!

She catches up to him. Mel shakes his head.

MEL

I can't do it, Martha. I can't say goodbye to her.

MARTHA

I know.

They hug.

MARTHA (CONT'D)

It's going to be all right.

MEL

She's gone and she's never coming back. What am I gonna do without her, huh? She was my whole life.

Martha tenderly caresses Mel's cheeks.

MARTHA

Life doesn't end here, Mel. I understand how hard it must be for you to see that right now, but you've got to remember. Life goes on.

Mel looks away. Martha brings his face to hers.

MARTHA (CONT'D)

Things are going to be okay. Trust me. They always are.

Mel reacts.

MARTHA (CONT'D)

Come on. Let's go back, huh?

She puts a comforting hand on his shoulder. Mel nods. They walk back to the gravesite.

EXT. DAVID'S BUILDING - MORNING

Eric is seated on the series of the steps. The door opens and David steps out of the building. He sees Eric and anger starts filling every cell of her body.

DAVID

What are you doing here?

ERIC

You don't answer my calls, you don't return my messages. I didn't know what else to do.

DAVID

You're pathetic, you know that?

He climbs down the steps. Eric stands up and follows him.

EXT. MIDTOWN STREET - CONTINUOUS

They walk down the street.

ERIC

Why don't you give me a chance?
One cup of coffee, that's all I'm
asking. We'll talk, we'll
straighten this whole thing out.

DAVID

There's nothing to straighten
out, okay? I told you, I don't
ever wanna see you again.

ERIC

I don't understand why can't we
still be friends. We never have
to mention this ever again.
It'll be like it never happened.

DAVID

I'm late for work. Leave me
alone.

ERIC

Will I see you at class tomorrow?

David doesn't respond and crosses the street. Eric watches
him and sighs sadly.

INT. SAINT VINCENT'S HOSPITAL - I.C.U. - KERI'S ROOM - DAY

Patrick stands in a corner of the room. Keri is sleeping,
hooked up only to an IV. She opens her eyes slowly. She
looks a lot stronger and healthier, but slightly
disoriented.

KERI

What happened?

Patrick darts to her.

PATRICK

How are you feeling?

KERI

Tired. Why am I here?

PATRICK

You were in a car accident,
sweetheart.

(pause)

You got hit by a truck and...
I'm sorry.

KERI

What are you sorry about? I
opened my eyes, didn't I?

Patrick smiles bitterly and nods slowly.

PATRICK
Yeah. Yeah, you did.

KERI
Was anyone else hurt?

PATRICK
No, just you.

Keri nods in acknowledgment. A long pause.

KERI
I have to go to the bathroom.
Can you help me up?

PATRICK
I don't think you're suppose to
move. I should call the nurse --

He turns to leave, but Keri grabs his hand, stopping him.

KERI
No, stay with me. Let me look at
you. I feel like I've missed
you.

PATRICK
I've missed you, too, baby.

Keri tries to sit upright.

PATRICK (CONT'D)
No, don't get up!

Keri looks at him oddly. Patrick moves closer to her.

PATRICK (CONT'D)
I should call someone!

KERI
What's going on, Patrick? Why
are you acting so weird?

Patrick glances at her for several moments, He turns
around and goes to the window.

PATRICK
The accident was pretty serious.

KERI
You told me no one else was hurt.

PATRICK
That's right.

He pauses.

KERI
What?

PATRICK
The doctors...

He pauses again.

KERI
(softly)
What?

Patrick goes back to Keri and removes the sheet that covers her body.

PATRICK
I'm sorry.

Keri glares down at the new shape of her body. An above-the-knee amputation has been performed on her legs --

FLASHBACK - INT. SAINT VINCENT'S HOSPITAL - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Patrick confers with Dr. Pies.

DR. PIES
Would you like to sit down?

Patrick reacts.

PATRICK
No, just tell me.

The doctor takes his time before he gives an answer.

DR. PIES
When your wife was admitted the wounds in her body were fatal. Her left arm and both of her legs were severely damaged. Injuries from which she would've been unable to recover.

PATRICK
What are you saying?

DR. PIES
We tried to repair the damaged vessels, and her hand responded well actually, but there were some complications with her legs.

Patrick listens intently.

DR. PIES (CONT'D)
 We had to preform an above-the-knee amputation on your wife's legs in order to save her life.

Patrick gasps in shock.

DR. PIES (CONT'D)
 You should know we were very lucky, Mr. Holloway. Things could've been a lot worse. A lot worse.

Patrick nods in understanding. He clears his throat.

PATRICK
 Thank you. Thank you, doctor.

The doctor paces away. Patrick is left alone in the hallway.

INT. SAINT VINCENT'S HOSPITAL - I.C.U. - KERI'S ROOM - DAY

Patrick is on the verge of an emotional release and he shoots out of the room.

Keri doesn't know how to react. She hesitatingly touches her wounds, tears come to her eyes.

INT. MEL'S ENTRANCE HALL - DAY

Mel opens the front door. He stands in the doorway and gazes at the empty apartment. He steps inside and closes the door.

INT. FAIRWAY MARKET - DAY

In a cramped aisle, Eric unloads boxes of perfumes from a cart to the shelf. His movements are mechanical, his mind elsewhere.

INT. NOIR CHAMPAGNE BAR - DAY

Noir champagne bar is designed as a 20's speakeasy with low ceilings and intimate alcoves. A BAND is playing. CUSTOMERS enjoy their drinks.

Jack sits at a table with Paul on his left side and Elaine on his right. A few ACTORS and ACTRESSES are also around the table.

They all enjoy a friendly talk, laughing and having a good time. Jack is distant. He doesn't talk to anyone or take part in any of the conversations.

Paul stands up, takes a bottle of champagne from an ice bucket and pops the cork -- MOS

Nothing can be heard. The champagne sprays everywhere, making everyone erupt with laughter. Everyone but Jack. He glares at the people around the table. They all grab their glasses and try to catch the champagne that's flowing all over.

Paul fills his glass and raises it in the air. As he purposes his toast, the people around the table laugh. They raise their glasses and have a sip.

Jack is lost, a fish out of the water. Paul pats him on the shoulder. He talks to him, trying to cheer him up.

Jack springs up. Everyone stares at him oddly. He stares back at them each individually. They seem to tell him: "Are you all right?" Jack closes his eyes.

INT. MEL'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

Mel sits on his sofa, staring blankly at the turned off TV. He's abstracted by his thoughts. Mel drifts his eyes out the window, overlooking Central Park.

TIME-LAPSE

Day turns into night.

INT. MEL'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Black has devoured the room. Mel is sitting in the same spot, still staring at the blank TV screen.

INT. SAINT VINCENT'S HOSPITAL - I.C.U. - KERI'S ROOM - NIGHT

Patrick confers with a DOCTOR outside the room. Keri watches them through the windows. The doctor strides away and Patrick steps into the room.

KERI

What did the doctor say?

PATRICK

He told me to ask you how you feel about...

(pauses)

... prosthetics.

Keri shakes her head.

KERI
That's outta the question.

PATRICK
Hey, that's not something to be ashamed of. Prosthetics will improve your quality of life --

KERI
I said forget it, okay?

PATRICK
Keri, maybe that's what you say now, but you may end up feeling differently --

KERI
And I can't stay here any longer. This place is horrible.

She looks deep into her husband's eyes.

KERI (CONT'D)
Take me home, Patrick. Please, take me home.

Patrick nods solemnly.

FLASHBACK - INT. ENTERTAINMENT SHOW #1 SET - NIGHT

A cheer and applause goes up from the AUDIENCE. The set is busy with TECHNICIANS, CAMERAMEN. Cameras whirl around.

In the center stage, behind a desk, sits the HOST (45) of the show. Jack is seated on a couch next to the desk. The applause quiets down.

HOST
Welcome back, everyone! This is another edition of "The Entertainment Show." Tonight with us we have the most promising actor of his generation, a star before he even turns 25 years of age. His name? Jack Campbell!

The audience applauds again. Jack lifts his arm in appreciation and grins.

HOST (CONT'D)
Jack, Jack, Jack. How are you feeling? You okay?

JACK
Good. I'm good.

HOST
So you seem to be the next best thing -- Actually, not seem to be, you are the next best thing for Hollywood. That's one of the reasons that you're here!

The audience laughs.

JACK
Thank you, glad to be here. Before we begin, let me tell you that I do terrible interviews. Just terrible.

HOST
That's another reason that you're here!

The audience laughs and applauds.

JACK
Good to know.

HOST
Jack... Hollywood, huh? Is true they have coconuts down there?

The audience laughs.

HOST (CONT'D)
No, seriously now, Jack, tell us everything. You've got a new movie coming up. Your fourth movie if I'm not mistaken, a war epic... Hmm... "Brothers At Arms." The premier is in...?

JACK
Three weeks.

HOST
Whoa! Three weeks? You nervous?

JACK
No, not really.

HOST
And why would you be? From what we hear, the movie is great and it is going to rock! Now, let's take a sneak peak at the upcoming movie "Brothers At Arms" and we'll be right ba --

The IMAGE FREEZES on Jack smiling.

WE PULL BACK to reveal --

INT. JACK'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Jack is laying comfortably on his sofa, watching an old interview on his flat screen TV. He has just hit pause on the DVD remote control.

Jack leaves the remote on the table and picks up a bottle of whiskey. He has a sip and wears a thoughtful face. He rises and moves away.

Suddenly, he whips around and throws the bottle to the TV screen, which smashes into pieces. Jack walks towards his bedroom like nothing happened.

INT. MEL'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Mel picks up the phone, dials a number and holds. A moment later:

MEL

Hey, Martha. It's Mel.

(pause)

No, everything's fine. Listen, I, uh, I don't know why I called... I know it's late, but I could really use someone to talk to. You mind if I came over --?

(pause)

Okay. I'll be right there.
Thank you, Martha.

INT. IRISH BAR - NIGHT

A dark and smoky bar. A few PATRONS sit at their tables, drinking and talking. Lena is over at the bar. She is a little drunk and calls to the FEMALE BARTENDER:

LENA

Bartender! Another one, please!

She holds up her empty glass. A MAN (38), also sitting at the bar, stares at her. He picks up his drink, stands up, and takes the seat next to Lena. The bartender offers Lena her drink.

MAN

(to the bartender)
Put it on my tab.

The bartender nods.

MAN (CONT'D)
(to Lena)
Having fun?

LENA
Not yet.

A sexy smile creeps across her face. Her response takes the man by surprise.

INT. ERIC'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Eric lays on his bed, staring into space. His focus drifts to a cell phone on the bedside table. He grabs it and looks through his Contacts. "David." He puts the phone back and closes his eyes.

INT. JACK'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Jack stands by the window, holding a glass of whiskey. He downs his drink. He fires up a smoke and gazes out the window at the traffic on the street below.

INT. TAXI CAB - NIGHT

Mel is in the back seat of a taxi and looks out the window at the city gliding past. The buildings, the cars, the people. An ELDERLY COUPLE strolls down the street hand to hand. He sighs sadly.

INT. IRISH BAR - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Lena stumbles down the poorly lit hallway of the bar. The man follows her. She kisses him passionately as she opens the door to the Women's restroom.

INT. SAINT VINCENT'S HOSPITAL - KERI'S ROOM - NIGHT

Keri rests on her bed. Patrick has fallen asleep on a chair beside her. She glares at him and a bitter smile creeps across her face.

INT. IRISH BAR - WOMEN'S RESTROOM - NIGHT

Inside a stall, Lena holds up against the wall, sweat pouring over her face. The man makes love to her from behind roughly.

MAN
Does it hurt, huh? Tell me it
hurts!

Lena doesn't respond.

MAN (CONT'D)
TELL ME!

With a low and urgent voice:

LENA
Yeah... It hurts so bad...

MAN
Ooh, yeah! Oh, fuck! You're a
dirty little whore, aren't you?

In the full of sweat, painful face of hers, there is
satisfaction. Her lips curl into an eerie smile.

EXT. IRISH BAR - NIGHT

Lena emerges from the bar and races away.

EXT. MIDTOWN STREET - CONTINUOUS

Lena rounds the corner and halts. She leans against a wall
and looks back at the bar. She puts her hands over her
face and bursts into tears.

INT. MARTHA'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The doorbell RINGS. Martha opens the door. Mel is waiting
in the hallway.

MEL
Thank you so much, Martha.

MARTHA
Don't mention it. Come on in.

Mel enters the apartment.

MARTHA (CONT'D)
You want a drink?

MEL
I'll have a little bourbon if
you've got some.

MARTHA
Of course.

Martha motions to the mini-bar and starts fixing Mel's drink. Mel takes a seat on the sofa.

MEL

Again, I'm sorry for barging in so late.

MARTHA

I told you, Mel, there's no problem. Honestly.

(pause)

So when are you thinking of going back to work?

MEL

Maybe tomorrow.

MARTHA

Work will help you a lot. More than you might think.

She goes to Mel and gives him his drink. She sits on the sofa across from him. Enough small talk.

MARTHA (CONT'D)

How you holding up?

MEL

What can I say? "I'm fine? I feel better? I'm over it?"

(shakes his head)

I'm not fine, I don't feel any better and, to tell you the truth, I don't think I'm ever going to be over it.

MARTHA

Mel, I don't want to hear you talk like that.

MEL

I didn't sleep at all last night. Not for a second. I couldn't stop thinking... of her.

(pause)

I try to understand, I try to realize what happened, but it's too hard, you know? I can't believe I'm never going to see her again, or touch her, or talk to her. I just can't.

MARTHA

Look, Mel, the grieving process takes time and healing usually happens gradually.

(MORE)

MARTHA (CONT'D)

The intensity of grief may be related to how sudden or predictable --

MEL

Don't give me that, Martha! Why do you always have to do that? I'm not one of your students! I am your friend! I called you tonight because I was in need of a friend.

MARTHA

You're right, Mel. I'm sorry.

She sits next to him and touches his hand tenderly.

MARTHA (CONT'D)

I know exactly what you're going through. I lost James when I was 45 and it was tough and it was painful, but I got over it. And so will you. It may have been a little different for me because I had the kids, but...

(pauses)

Look, you and Rose didn't have any children, but your love for one another filled that void. Now, you're going to have to let your love for her fill her void. It's the only way.

MEL

How is that possible? I thought our love would last forever.

MARTHA

It can, Mel... in here...

She puts her hand on Mel's chest.

MARTHA (CONT'D)

You keep her alive in here.

Mel's eyes fill with a storm of emotions. They embrace.

FLASHBACK - INT. LENA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Lena has a restless sleep. She stirs, troubled by uneasy dreams. She looks very feverish, her face bathed with sweat, her pajamas all wet.

Lena wakes up and sits bold upright. She gasps for air, swallows hard, tries to come around.

Lena reaches over to the bedside table and takes a bottle of water. She has some, rolls out of bed and sits on the side. She loses herself in her thoughts.

FLASHBACK - INT. LENA'S BATHROOM - NIGHT

Lena stares at herself in the mirror. She is frightened of her own image.

LENA

What's happening to you? Who are you, huh? WHO ARE YOU?!

EXT. COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY SOCIAL WORK CAMPUS - DAY

A few STUDENTS, laden down with books, make their way up the stairs. Eric moves along with them and enters the building.

INT. COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY SOCIAL WORK CAMPUS - AMPHITHEATER - DAY

Students are chatting and laughing on the steps. Eric takes a seat in a middle row.

David walks in and scans the amphitheater. His eyes meet Eric's. Eric grins. David is oblivious and sits in the front.

Martha comes in from a side door.

MARTHA

All right, people! Please, take your seats! Come on!

The students obey at once.

EXT. PATRICK AND KERI'S BUILDING - DAY

A taxi is parked before the building. The TAXI DRIVER takes a suitcase out of the trunk. Patrick lowers Keri in a wheelchair left on the sidewalk.

PATRICK

There we go.

He pulls out his wallet and pays the taxi driver.

PATRICK (CONT'D)

Thanks. Keep the change.

The driver nods in response, gets in his taxi and drives off.

PATRICK (CONT'D)
Home, sweet home, huh?

Patrick and Keri share a bitter smile.

INT. PATRICK AND KERI'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

Patrick pushes Keri through the front door. She looks around the apartment. She and Patrick exchange a glance.

INT. LENA'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

The doorbell RINGS. Lena goes to the front door. There is a noticeable rash on her neck. She fixes her hair to cover it up.

Lena opens the door. MARTIN (55, still handsome, hearty) and VIRGINIA CHAREST (49, cold, hard face, prudent) stand in the hallway with wide smiles on their faces. Virginia holds a bag of groceries and Martin a big wrapped up box.

MARTIN
Look who it is!

Lena is surprised to see them and smiles nervously.

LENA
Mom? Dad? Hey!

Martin and Virginia come in.

LENA (CONT'D)
What are you doing here?

VIRGINIA
Well, since you don't call or visit, we thought it would be nice to come for your birthday. You didn't forget, did you?

Virginia heads to the kitchen. Martin gives his daughter the present.

MARTIN
This is for you. Happy birthday, honey!

LENA
I don't know what to say.

MARTIN
A "thank you" and a kiss will do just fine.

LENA
Thanks, daddy.

She hesitates at first, but then she kisses him on the cheek. Martin closes the door.

INT. LENA'S KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Virginia empties the bag of groceries on the table.

VIRGINIA
Your sister's coming, too. She was supposed to be here actually, but you know Becky. "Wait 'till the last minute."
(shouts)
Can I get some help around here?

Lena steps into the kitchen.

LENA
What's all this?

VIRGINIA
You can't have a birthday party without a birthday cake, now can you?

INT. COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY SOCIAL WORK CAMPUS - AMPHITHEATER - DAY

Martha is lecturing the amphitheater full of students.

MARTHA
... we will work in three groups to plan these sessions. Research, Intervention, and Evaluation. The first group will study juvenile delinquency, skill deficit problems, intervention theory, and conduct research to determine the best type of intervention.

Eric stares at David, waiting patiently for a look of his, but doesn't get it. Eric is disappointed.

MARTHA (CONT'D)
The second group will conduct the actual intervention, using recommendations created by the research group...

Eric's mind is drifting back...

FLASHBACK - INT. BELMONT LOUNGE BAR - NIGHT

David comes back to the table. He sits down and lights up a cigarette.

ERIC
You feeling any better?

David nods.

ERIC (CONT'D)
Listen, about before, I was only trying to --

DAVID
I know.

Eric takes his time before he speaks.

ERIC
You're a great guy, David. If Chloe can't see it, then to hell with her.

David smiles sadly, but soon his smile fades into thoughtfulness.

DAVID
Yeah...

ERIC
No, it's true.

He moves closer to David. They now sit next to each other.

ERIC (CONT'D)
Don't let anyone hurt you like that. Never. You don't deserve it. You deserve so much more.

DAVID
What did you wanna tell me?

ERIC
Chloe wasn't the one for you. I knew that the minute I laid eyes on her. She wouldn't love you.

His face comes closer to David's. David shifts uneasily in his seat.

DAVID
Hey...

A short pause.

ERIC
I love you.

He plants a kiss on David's lips. David bolts up, shaken and repulsed.

DAVID
What the fuck?! What --? You
fucking crazy?

He wipes his lips with his hand.

DAVID (CONT'D)
What the fuck are you doing?

ERIC
I'm sorry.

DAVID
What the --? Why did you do
that?

ERIC
Take it easy, okay?

DAVID
What are you? You a fag?

ERIC
Please, don't do this.

DAVID
Are you?

Eric remains silent.

DAVID (CONT'D)
ARE YOU?!

ERIC
No. Calm down.

DAVID
Then what? What the fuck was
that?

ERIC
I don't know -- I don't know
what to say.

Eric shakes his head.

DAVID
Fuck this! I'm going home!

He leaves the table.

ERIC

I'm sorry. Please, don't go!

Eric bolts up and goes after him.

INT. COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY SOCIAL WORK CAMPUS - HALLWAY - DAY

Students come out of the amphitheater and head down the hallway. David and Eric cross paths. Eric smiles weakly. David throws him a cold glance and continues down the hallway. Eric shows once again his disappointment.

INT. PATRICK AND KERI'S BEDROOM - DAY

The suitcase is open on the bed. Patrick unpacks the clothes to the wardrobe. Keri is in her wheelchair, watching him.

KERI

What are you gonna do about work?

PATRICK

I'll take the week off, the month. Whatever's necessary 'till we figure things out.

KERI

You can't leave your work.

PATRICK

Fuck work, okay?! You need me right now. I'm gonna be here no matter what.

(pause)

Look, I don't want you to worry about that stuff, okay?

Keri nods solemnly.

PATRICK (CONT'D)

You want to lie down? You tired?

KERI

That'd be good.

Patrick puts the suitcase on the floor. Then he lifts Keri from her chair and eases her down on the bed.

PATRICK

I'll make myself something to eat. You hungry?

Keri shakes her head.

PATRICK (CONT'D)
Is there anything you need?

KERI
I just wanna get some rest.
That's all.

PATRICK
Okay.

He leans over her, kisses her forehead and goes to the door. He halts in the doorway and turns around.

PATRICK (CONT'D)
We'll get through this. You'll
see.

Keri acknowledges with a smile. Patrick opens the door --

FLASH FORWARD - INT. PATRICK AND KERI'S BUILDING - HALLWAY -
NIGHT

Patrick emerges from his apartment, starts pounding furiously on the door across the hall, while shouting in panic:

PATRICK
A phone! I need to use the
phone! Please! Let me in!

The door doesn't open. He darts to the apartment next door and pounds on the door. He keeps screaming:

PATRICK (CONT'D)
Call 911! For God's sake, call
911! Somebody!

INT. LENA'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

Martin opens the door. BECKY CHAREST (29, slightly plump, dapper) rushes inside.

BECKY
Sorry I'm late! Traffic was
crazy!

She gives a kiss to Martin.

BECKY (CONT'D)
Hi, dad. Where is she?

MARTIN
They're making a cake in the
kitchen.

BECKY
 (sarcastically)
 Oh, great!

She heads to the kitchen.

INT. LENA'S KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Lena is leaned against the refrigerator, watching her mother making a cake.

BECKY
 Hey, birthday girl! Mom.

VIRGINIA
 Finally.

Becky leans over to kiss her sister. Lena pulls away.

BECKY
 I know I'm a little late, but you don't have to be like this. Come on, kiss your big sister!

Lena fakes a smile and kisses Becky.

VIRGINIA
 Becky, can you help me? Your sister doesn't want to touch a thing.

BECKY
 Give it a rest, mom. It's her birthday.

She kisses Lena once again. Lena is agitated. Becky sees it and flashes her a quizzical look.

INT. SUN FLOWERS - DAY

A small flower shop. Mel sits behind the register. JENNY (35) comes from the back with a bouquet of sunflowers in her hands.

MEL
 How you doing, Jenny?

JENNY
 Fine.

She leaves the flowers on the counter.

JENNY (CONT'D)
 I'm really sorry to hear about your wife. My sympathies.

MEL

Thank you, Jenny.

He attempts to regain his composure. He starts counting the flowers.

MEL (CONT'D)

Sunflowers today, huh? Wonderful choice.

JENNY

Mel, are you okay?

Mel nods in response. He wraps the flowers, hands them to Jenny and manages a smile.

MEL

Here. It's \$12 even.

Jenny pays Mel. He gives her her change.

MEL (CONT'D)

Have a nice day.

JENNY

You, too.

She exits the store. Mel lowers his head for a moment, and lifts it up again. Tears streak down his face.

INT. LENA'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

The Charest family is around the table. A wonderful lunch is set before them. Martin offers his hands to Virginia and Lena.

MARTIN

Lena, do you still remember that beautiful grace you used to say when you were little?

Lena nods. She hesitates at first, but finally she takes her father's hand. As Becky touches her sister, Lena winces. Becky looks at her suspiciously. Everyone bows their head.

LENA

Dear Lord, we thank thee for the night, and for the glorious morning light...

Becky steals looks at Lena. She knows something is wrong.

LENA (CONT'D)

... for rest and food and loving care, and all that makes...

(MORE)

LENA (CONT'D)
 (pauses)
 ... the world so fair. Amen.

A short pause.

MARTIN
 All right, dig in.

Becky keeps her eyes glued to her sister.

FLASHBACK - INT. TEA CAFE - AFTERNOON

Jack and Barry are having coffee at a stylish and relaxed SoHo cafe. Jack is reading a screenplay entitled "Brothers At Arms."

BARRY
 Can I talk to you for a second?

JACK
 Sure, what's up?

He doesn't put down the screenplay.

BARRY
 Can you at least look at me?

JACK
 I've got a whole scene to learn by tomorrow. I thought agents wanted what's best for their clients.

BARRY
 They do, Jack. That's why I wanna talk to you.

Two young girls, BETTY (13) and SANDRA (13) approach their table hesitatingly.

BETTY
 Excuse me? Are you who we think you are?

Jack smiles and nods. The girls cheer. Betty hands him a piece of paper and a pen.

BETTY (CONT'D)
 Oh, my God! Could you sign me an autograph, please? It would mean so much --!

JACK
 What's your name?

BETTY
 I'm Betty, and this is Sandra.

He takes the paper and pen and signs two autographs for the girls. Betty takes the paper and pen.

BETTY (CONT'D)
Thank you so much. You're even
more handsome up close.

The girls walk away, while giggling. Jack watches them leave and grins.

BARRY
Jack.

Jack drifts his eyes to Barry.

BARRY (CONT'D)
I'm worried about you, Jack.

Jack reacts.

BARRY (CONT'D)
I've noticed that you've been
having these mood changes the
past few weeks and I just wanna
know how you are. I mean, is
everything --

Jack snorts a laugh.

JACK
What is this?

BARRY
Well, something's wrong, Jack.
Sometimes you go on days without
even talking to anybody, and
others you're partying like an
animal --
(pause)
And your weight! You've lost
like ten pounds the last two
months! Have you been eating at
all?

Jack laughs sarcastically.

JACK
I don't believe this!

BARRY
Look, I'm just saying that if
something's bothering you and you
wanna talk to someone...

He pulls out a business card from his jacket and slides it across the table.

BARRY (CONT'D)
 This is a very good friend of mine. He's a therapist and I believe he could help you.

JACK
 Bar, look into my eyes.

Their eyes are very involved.

JACK (CONT'D)
 I'm fine. Really. There's nothing to worry about.

FLASH FORWARD - INT. ENTERTAINMENT SHOW #2 SET - NIGHT

In SLOW MOTION, Jack's body lands on the floor. Blood is streaming freely down his temple, forming a pool. His eyes are lifeless, but there is a look of satisfaction on his face.

FLASHBACK - INT. TEA CAFE - AFTERNOON

Jack's eyes are alive, bright like stars.

JACK
 I promise.

He takes the card and crumples it.

INT. LENA'S LIVING ROOM - AFTERNOON

Lena is seated at the table with her father. Virginia and Becky come out of the kitchen with the cake. The candles on the cake say: "28"

Virginia and Becky start singing the "Happy Birthday" song as they walk in.

VIRGINIA AND BECKY
 (simultaneously)
 Happy birthday to you! Happy
 birthday to you!

Lena stands up to blow the candles. Martin sings along.

EVERYONE
 (simultaneously)
 Happy birthday, dear Lena!

Lena is losing the battle against her emotions. She tries to retain her composure.

EVERYONE (CONT'D)
 (simultaneously)
 Happy birthday to you!

Lena blows out the candles. Everyone cheers. Lena starts to cry and darts to her bedroom. Her parents and sister are worried.

INT. LENA'S BEDROOM - AFTERNOON

Lena is seated on the edge of her bed and cries. A knock on the door. Lena doesn't answer. After a while, the door opens. Becky stops in the doorway.

BECKY
 Can I come in?

Lena nods and tries to shape up. She wipes her tears and fixes her hair. Becky goes to her sister and sits next to her. She puts her arm around her waist affectionately.

BECKY (CONT'D)
 What's the matter, baby? Why are you crying? Everything okay at the new school?

LENA
 I quit.

BECKY
 You quit? Why?

LENA
 I have AIDS.

Becky is shocked beyond belief and pulls her arm right off. Lena starts crying again.

BECKY
 What --? How do you know --? I mean, how can you be sure?

LENA
 I took the test. I was found positive... twice.

BECKY
 Jesus! Oh, Jesus!
 (pause)
 How? How did this happen?

LENA
 Remember uncle's funeral? I got really drunk that day.

BECKY
Yeah, I remember.

LENA
Afterwards, me and my friends
went out to a club, and I met
this guy...
(pauses)
... and I had sex with him in the
restroom. I don't remember much.

Becky puts her hand over her mouth and starts to sob.

LENA (CONT'D)
I don't know how I got home.
I...
(pauses)
I can't even remember his face!
How could I be so stupid?

BECKY
No, honey. No.

She reaches for Lena's hand. Lena flinches.

LENA
DON'T TOUCH ME!

BECKY
(softly)
Okay, okay...

A long pause.

BECKY (CONT'D)
What are you gonna do now?

LENA
There's only one thing left for
me.

BECKY
What are you talking about?
There must be something we can
do.

She bolts up.

BECKY (CONT'D)
I know this doctor over at Saint
Vincent's. He's a surgeon.
Maybe he'll know someone we could
talk to. I'll go give him a call
right now --

LENA
You won't do a goddamn thing!

BECKY
How can you say that? Don't say that.

LENA
It's my life, Becky! My life.

BECKY
You can't do this.

LENA
(softly)
My life.

BECKY
You can't do this to me! To them! We're your family. You have no right to do this to us.

Lena shakes her head.

BECKY (CONT'D)
What then, Lena? Sit around and wait to die, huh? Is that it?

Lena doesn't respond. Becky shakes her head, both angry and disappointed.

BECKY (CONT'D)
I have to get outta here.

She rockets to the door.

LENA
Becky?

Becky turns around.

LENA (CONT'D)
Don't tell them.

Becky looks at her sister for a second and leaves the room.

INT. PATRICK AND KERI'S BATHROOM - NIGHT

Keri is naked in the hands of Patrick. He eases her down in a bathtub filled with water. He bends down and removes her head bandage slowly. She grimaces in pain.

PATRICK
Sorry.

He throws the bandage away in the trash below the sink, takes a sponge and starts giving his wife a bath. After a long pause:

KERI

Are we gonna talk about what happened before the accident or we're gonna keep pretending like nothing ever happened?

Patrick remains silent, overcome by guilt.

FLASHBACK - INT. MEL'S ENTRANCE HALL - NIGHT

Mel steps into his apartment. He leaves the keys behind the door and his jacket on the coat rack. Dim light coming from the living room. SOULFUL MUSIC is playing. Curious, Mel heads to the living room.

MEL

Rose?

FLASHBACK - INT. MEL'S LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Mel steps in. His expression turns from curiosity to surprise. A beautiful candle-lit dinner is set on the table.

Rose stands next to the table, wearing a gorgeous dress. Candles all around illuminate the room. The mood is very romantic. Mel glances around, bewitched.

MEL

What's all this?

ROSE

Shh... Come here. Sit down.

Mel smiles in disbelief. He motions to the table.

MEL

I thought you couldn't come to the store 'cause you were sick.

ROSE

I'm not sick, Mel. Happy anniversary.

She gives him a present, leans closer and plants a kiss on his cheek. Mel takes the present awkwardly.

MEL

Our anniversary is not for another week.

ROSE

I wanted this to be a surprise.

Mel nods in understanding, a wide smile on his face.

MEL

You're simply amazing.

Rose beams. They kiss. Rose pulls up a chair for him. Mel sits down. Rose goes to the other side and takes her seat at the table. She picks up her glass and raises it in the air. Mel raises his.

ROSE

People say the hardest part in a marriage is that you have to fall in love with the same person over and over again. I fell in love with you once and never had to do it again, Mel.

Mel grins. They have a sip and put down the glasses.

MEL

Rose, we've been together for 35 years and there isn't one thing I don't know about you, but you still manage to surprise me in ways I can't possibly imagine.

(pause)

After 35 years I feel comfortable and safe with you, but I still get weak knees when you step into the room and smile at me. I love you. I wanna spent every moment of my life with you.

Rose becomes very emotional. She holds back her tears and manages a smile.

INT. PATRICK AND KERI'S STUDY - NIGHT

Patrick is at his computer going through some pages on the Internet about prosthetic technology.

The pages have headlines such as: "OPPORTUNITIES FOR AMPUTEES, REVOLUTIONIZING PROSTHETICS, ANOTHER GIANT STEP IN PROSTHETIC TECHNOLOGY."

INT. PATRICK AND KERI'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Patrick comes out of the study, drained. He makes his way to the sofa, which is made into a bed. He takes a seat, looks at the bedroom door and sighs.

INT. PATRICK AND KERI'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Keri is in bed, hopelessly trying to get some sleep.

INT. JACK'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Jack has a sleepless night, too. He is seated on the side of his bed. Once again his thoughts are taking over him.

He takes his cigarettes from the bedside table, lights one and rises. He starts walking restlessly around the room, while having his smoke.

INT. LENA'S BATHROOM - DAY

Lena stands under the stream of water in the shower. She's touching a major rash on her left leg and another one on her ribs and breaks into tears.

FLASHBACK - INT. METROPOLITAN HOSPITAL - DR. MILLAR'S OFFICE - DAY

DR. MILLAR (40) is sitting at his desk. The door opens and Lena makes a hesitant step into the office.

DR. MILLAR
Ms. Charest, come in.

Lena paces inside.

DR. MILLAR (CONT'D)
Have a seat. Please.

Dr. Millar goes through his papers, clears his throat.

DR. MILLAR (CONT'D)
Ms. Charest... I'm afraid I have bad news.

Lena closes her eyes and bows her head.

DR. MILLAR (CONT'D)
Your ELISA test results came back positive... again. It is now definite that you have been infected with HIV.

Lena reacts.

DR. MILLAR (CONT'D)
Look, I understand this is probably not what you want to hear right now, but I would like to talk to you about your options.
(pause)
(MORE)

DR. MILLAR (CONT'D)
An early treatment of the
infection can improve a long-term
health and --

Lena springs up and heads to the door.

DR. MILLAR (CONT'D)
Ms. Charest? Ms. Charest!

She exits the office.

FLASHBACK - INT. METROPOLITAN HOSPITAL - HALLWAY - DAY

Lena waits for an elevator, immersed in her thoughts. Dr. Millar runs to her.

DR. MILLAR
Ms. Charest, please!

He approaches her.

DR. MILLAR (CONT'D)
Please, you have to listen to me.
Your condition is critical. You
must be hospitalized immediately.
The time in our hands --

The elevator beeps and the doors open. Lena shoves the doctor aside and boards the elevator.

FLASHBACK - INT. METROPOLITAN HOSPITAL - ELEVATOR -
CONTINUOUS

A few PASSENGERS are already inside. One of them is GREG (28, attractive, bright, charismatic), wearing pink scrubs.

DR. MILLAR
Ms. Charest!

The doors slide closed. Lena is obsessed by her thoughts. She looks up. Greg stares at her and flashes her a smile. Lena doesn't return it.

A few moments later, the elevator doors open. Lena hurries out of the elevator.

FLASHBACK - INT. METROPOLITAN HOSPITAL - RECEPTION AREA -
CONTINUOUS

Mel and Rose are waiting at the reception desk.

ROSE
There must be another
cardiologist on call.

Mel sees Lena disappearing out the main doors. Rose notices Mel is distracted.

ROSE (CONT'D)
What is it, honey?

MEL
I thought I just saw Lena.

Rose turns around.

ROSE
Martin's daughter?

MEL
Yeah, she looked pretty upset. I better give him a call, find out what's going on.

INFORMATION CLERK #2 comes from the back room.

INFORMATION CLERK #2
Dr. Hawkins will be here in 45 minutes. Now, if you're willing to wait, he will see you.

Mel and Rose exchange a glance.

MEL
We'll wait.

He plants a kiss on her cheek.

FLASHBACK - INT. BURGER KING - DAY

David, CHLOE (20, girl next door, short, black hair) and Eric are at a corner table. The couple is making out, while Eric has his burger and fries quietly, stealing looks at them. They pull away and whisper to each other:

DAVID
Shall we tell him?

CHLOE
Yeah, okay.

David looks up.

DAVID
Eric, me and Chloe have some news.

Eric listens with great interest.

DAVID (CONT'D)
We decided to move in together.

Eric is surprised among other things. David and Chloe kiss.

ERIC
Are you serious?

DAVID
Yeah! Isn't that great?

Eric manages a smile.

DAVID (CONT'D)
Yeah, most of her stuff are already in my apartment, so there's no reason for her to move back and forth all the time. So we talked about it and said we'll give it a try and see how it goes.

Eric clears his throat.

ERIC
That's good -- Good for you guys.

A long pause. Eric is struggling inwardly with his emotions. Suddenly, he bolts up.

DAVID
Where're you going?

ERIC
Home.

DAVID
You all right?

ERIC
Yeah. I've gotta be at work in, like, an hour.

His attempt to mask his distress actually worked. David and Chloe didn't understand a thing.

DAVID
Cool. We'll catch up with you later, huh?

Eric nods and walks off.

INT. FAIRWAY MARKET - LOCKER ROOM - AFTERNOON

Eric is seated on the floor, his back against the wall, and cries. He wipes his tears, rises and leaves the room.

INT. PATRICK AND KERI'S KITCHEN - AFTERNOON

Keri is in her wheelchair and has a glass of milk. Patrick steps in. He has a few papers in his hands.

PATRICK

Listen, I know how you feel about this, but I found these on the Internet. I think you should take a look.

He leaves a few printed Internet pages of prosthetic technology on the table.

KERI

I told you, I'm not gonna do that. Not now, not ever.

PATRICK

These guys are making miracles. Just do me a favor and think about it, huh?

KERI

I've got nothing to think about.

PATRICK

Keri, please, just --

KERI

No, Patrick, I'm not gonna live a lie! This is who I am now. I'm trying to accept that. You should do the same.

She puts down the glass, grabs the papers and throws them in the wastebasket. She wheels herself out of the kitchen.

PATRICK

I'm not doing this for me, Keri!

FLASHBACK - INT. PATRICK AND KERI'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Keri is on the sofa, staring blankly at the TV. She flips through the channels almost mechanically. Her face betrays a growing anxiety. Her eyes drift to the clock on the table beside her. It's 01:34 a.m.

The front door opens and Patrick paces in. He is tearful and bitter. He moves further inside the living room.

Keri bolts up and sprints to him.

KERI
 Oh, my God! Where were you?
 I've been worried sick. Where
 have you been?

Patrick doesn't respond. He goes to the bar and makes himself a drink.

KERI (CONT'D)
 Goddamn it, Patrick, answer me!

Patrick remains silent. He slugs his drink down. He makes another.

KERI (CONT'D)
 Why won't you answer me? What
 happened?
 (sweet)
 Darling, why don't you tell me
 what happened, huh? What's
 wrong?

Patrick gazes into her eyes.

PATRICK
 I've cheated on you.

Keri is shocked beyond belief.

KERI
 What?

PATRICK
 You heard what I said.

He pours himself another drink. Keri is trying to resist bursting into tears. She is at a loss for words and can only ask the obvious question:

KERI
 Why?

PATRICK
 I don't know.

KERI
 What do you mean you don't know?
 How can you not know?

Patrick doesn't respond.

KERI (CONT'D)
 Did I do something? Is this my
 fault?
 (pause)
 Say something, damn it!

PATRICK
It's not your fault.

KERI
For God's sake give me a decent
answer!

Patrick takes the bottle of whiskey and makes his way to the front door.

KERI (CONT'D)
Where are you going?

She runs and blocks the door before Patrick has a chance to open it.

KERI (CONT'D)
You're not going anywhere! Not
before you tell me why!

PATRICK
Step aside, Keri.

KERI
Why did you do it? Why? WHY?!
Who was she? Was she younger
than me, huh? Was she more
beautiful? Did she have bigger
tits than me? WHAT?!

Patrick shoves her aside gently.

PATRICK
Let me go. Please, let me go.

Keri won't move an inch.

KERI
If you think you're getting out of
this house without an answer,
you're mistaken.

Patrick turns his back on her.

PATRICK
I don't want to hurt you, Keri.

KERI
You can't hurt me. Now, tell me.
What was it about this woman that
worth throwing away our marriage?
Huh?

She turns him around so he can look at her.

KERI (CONT'D)
What?

Patrick is silent. Keri is digging into his eyes.

KERI (CONT'D)
 (softly)
 What?

PATRICK
 I don't love you anymore.

Keri fights with her emotions.

PATRICK (CONT'D)
 This is how I feel. I'm sorry.

He exits the apartment. Keri falls against the door and bursts into tears.

INT. FAIRWAY MARKET - NIGHT

A line of CUSTOMERS in one of the checkout counters. Lena waits for her turn, holding a basket of products.

A few moments later, her turn comes. She moves forward to the counter and leaves her basket. A CHECKOUT GIRL asks her:

CHECKOUT GIRL
 Paper or plastic?

LENA
 Paper.

The girl hands Lena two paper bags and begins to scan the products. Lena puts the stuff in the bags.

Greg is next in line. He leaves his things on the register and goes to Lena. He starts helping her fill her bags.

LENA (CONT'D)
 That's okay, I got it. Thanks.

They share a glance.

CHECKOUT GIRL
 That'll be \$35.49.

Lena pulls out the wallet from her purse and pays the checkout girl. Greg keeps his eyes glued to her.

GREG
 Excuse me? Have we met before?
 You look so familiar.

CHECKOUT GIRL
 And you, sir? Paper or --?

GREG
Cash, cash.

Lena picks up her bags and strides away.

GREG (CONT'D)
Wait! Let me help you with
those.

Lena continues towards the exit. In the b.g., Greg pays the checkout girl, grabs his things and chases after Lena. The doors slide open and she walks out.

EXT. UPTOWN STREET - CONTINUOUS

Lena strolls down the street. Greg emerges from the store. He sees Lena and bullets to her. He catches up to her.

GREG
Listen, are you sure you don't
want any help? Since we're
heading the same direction --

Lena halts.

LENA
I said, I got it, all right?

GREG
I'm sorry, I didn't mean to -- I
was only trying to help.
(pause)
I just have this feeling that I
know you. Don't I...?

LENA
I don't think so.

GREG
Let's change that! I'm Greg!
You wanna go out with me?

Lena is amused by his confidence and his dazzling smile. She throws a sexy look at Greg.

LENA
You wanna go to your place or...?

Greg checks his watch.

GREG
Unfortunately, I have to be
someplace.

LENA
You married?

GREG
(laughs)
No!

LENA
Girlfriend?

GREG
I'm working on it.

He crosses his fingers. Greg and Lena share a smile.

GREG (CONT'D)
I've got the night shift at the
hospital. I'm a nurse -- Male
nurse.

Lena grins.

GREG (CONT'D)
I tell you what. Why don't you
give me your phone number and
I'll call you first thing
tomorrow.

Lena stares at Greg and considers for a moment. Then she
pulls a pen from her purse and writes her phone number on
Greg's arm.

LENA
Don't wash me out.

GREG
I'll never shower again!

Lena laughs hard.

GREG (CONT'D)
I gotta go.

He points to the other direction.

LENA
I thought you said --

GREG
No, I actually live that way.

They share another smile.

GREG (CONT'D)
See you.

Lena watches him leave and smiles in disbelief.

FLASHBACK - INT. PATRICK AND KERI'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Keri is sitting on her sofa, hands in head, crying. She looks up, emotionally numb, and springs up from her seat. She rockets to the front door.

FLASHBACK - EXT. PATRICK AND KERI'S BUILDING - NIGHT

Keri exits the building and sees her car parked on the side of the street. She races to it.

FLASHBACK - INT. KERI'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Keri gets inside the car and slams the door shut. She stays there, shaking and crying. After a few moments, she starts the engine and accelerates away.

EXT. MEL'S BUILDING - NIGHT

Mel nears his building, holding a bouquet of sunflowers. He looks up at the windows of his apartment. The lights are on. He climbs up the steps and enters the building.

INT. MEL'S BUILDING - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Mel puts the key in the lock and holds. He stands there for a moment. Then he opens the door.

INT. MEL'S ENTRANCE HALL - CONTINUOUS

Mel steps into the apartment.

MEL

I'm home!

He takes off his coat and hangs it on the hall coat rack. He moves further into the apartment.

INT. MEL'S LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Mel crosses the living room. No one there.

MEL

You didn't come to the store today. Are you feeling okay?

(pause)

Oh, all right.

He goes to the bedroom.

INT. MEL'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Mel glances inside. There's no one in the room. He holds up the sunflowers.

MEL

I got you your favorite.
Sunflowers. I'll put them in
water, okay?
(pause)
What's there to eat?
(pause; laughs)
Really, you didn't cook? That's
all right, I'll make myself a
tuna salad or something.

He exits the bedroom.

INT. MEL'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

Mel enters the kitchen, fills a vase with water and puts the flowers inside. He places the vase in the middle of the kitchen table.

MEL

How was your day?
(pause)
You hang out in the apartment and
watched T.V. all day?
(laughs bitterly)
Anything good?

Mel opens the fridge and takes out the ingredients to make a tuna salad. He starts making his dinner.

MEL (CONT'D)

Yeah, I've seen that one. It's
the one with the poker, right?
The... uh...
(pause)
"The Cincinnati Kid," that's it!
Yeah...

He stops and glares at the flowers. His eyes are rimmed with tears.

INT. JACK'S STORAGE ROOM - NIGHT

Jack steps in and flicks on the light. He starts searching through the storage room. He comes up with a cardboard box. He sits on the floor and leans back against the wall.

Jack opens the box and pulls out a photo album. He flips through the pages.

YOUNG JACK in posed portraits, high school yearbook photos and family vacation photos. Memories of a past life. A simpler life.

A smile crosses Jack's face. He pulls out a photograph of him and his GRANDMOTHER. He looks at the photograph for a long moment.

JACK
 Are you proud, grandma? Are you
 proud of me?
 (pause)
 I wish you could be here.

Tears come to his eyes, but he fights them back.

INT. MEL'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Mel is resting on the right side of his bed. His gaze is frozen on a picture frame sitting on the bedside table. A photograph of him and Rose, taken 35 years ago, on their wedding day. He smiles bitterly.

MEL
 I miss you. I miss you so much.

He takes the picture in his hands and kisses it. Then he holds it against his chest and closes his eyes.

MEL (CONT'D)
 How could you leave me? We were
 meant to be together forever.

He reaches over and touches the empty side of the double bed.

INT. PATRICK AND KERI'S ENTRANCE HALL - DAY

A new day. The doorbell RINGS. Patrick opens the door. A few friends of the couple, JESSIE (32, shrewd, fit), TINA (30, dowdy, skinny), and VIC (35, compact, very matter-of-fact) are waiting in the hallway. Patrick is surprised to see them.

PATRICK
 Oh, my! I can't believe it!

The women hug him.

JESSIE
 I'm sorry. We came as soon as we
 heard.

TINA
 Patrick, we're so sorry.

VIC
How is she?

PATRICK
She's hanging in there. She's tough.

They all acknowledge with a smile.

PATRICK (CONT'D)
Let me go get her, huh? Come on in. Make yourselves at home.

He goes to the bedroom. Vic shuts the door.

INT. PATRICK AND KERI'S BEDROOM - DAY

Keri sits glumly in her wheelchair and gazes at the bedazzling Manhattan view out the window. Patrick walks in and closes the door.

PATRICK
You're never gonna believe who's here.

Keri doesn't react.

PATRICK (CONT'D)
Jessie and your old friends from college.

KERI
Tell them to go away.

PATRICK
What are you talking about?

KERI
I don't wanna see anyone.

PATRICK
They're your friends. They're came all this way to see you. I can't just ask them to leave --

KERI
I don't care!

PATRICK
Keri, please.

They hold a look.

INT. DEPARTMENT STORE - DAY

David talks to a couple of CUSTOMERS, trying to make a sale. In the distance, he spots Eric walking around the store.

DAVID
(to the couple)
Would you excuse me for just one moment? I'll be right back.

He makes his way towards Eric, overwrought with anger.

DAVID (CONT'D)
What are you doing here? This is where I work. Are you out of your mind?

ERIC
I missed you. I had to see you.

He runs his fingers down David's jaw line. David pushes Eric's hand away.

DAVID
Get your hands off me! What do you want?

ERIC
I told you, I wanted to see you.

DAVID
You're crazy!
(whispers)
You're crazy.

Eric laughs sarcastically.

ERIC
Why are you whispering? You hate this fucking job!

DAVID
(whispers)
What are you trying to do? You wanna get me fired? Come here. Come here!

Furious, he grabs Eric's arm and pulls him through a door labeled: "EMPLOYEES ONLY."

INT. DEPARTMENT STORE - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

David pushes Eric against the wall.

DAVID

Now, I want you to listen very carefully and I want you to try to understand, all right?

Eric doesn't respond.

DAVID (CONT'D)

I'm not gay. I don't know what you thought might happen between you and me, but it's not. It's not gonna happen, okay?

(pause)

I'm getting back with Chloe. Now for the last time, stay out of my life.

Eric lowers his head.

DAVID (CONT'D)

Don't ever come here again.
Don't ever come to my house again. Don't ever come near me again. I don't wanna know you. You understand me?

Eric remains silent. David is suddenly angry.

DAVID (CONT'D)

DO YOU?!

Eric answers with a low and urgent voice:

ERIC

I understand.

David storms out of the hallway and shuts the door behind him.

INT. PATRICK AND KERI'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

Keri wheels herself out of the bedroom. Patrick is behind her. Jessie, Tina and Vic watch her compassionately.

VIC

There she is.

TINA

Hey, you.

Jessie darts to Keri, kneels beside her and gives her a warm hug.

JESSIE

Oh, babe! How have you been?

Keri manages a smile.

INT. LENA'S LIVING ROOM - AFTERNOON

Lena is seated on the couch --

FLASH FORWARD - INT. LENA'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The cordless phone is RINGING on a table. Lena is seated on the couch and stares at it. A cold, impassive expression on her face.

INT. LENA'S LIVING ROOM - AFTERNOON

Lena's cell phone is RINGING on the table. She answers it.

LENA

Hello?

(pause; laughs)

Yeah, I remember.

(laughs)

Okay. Uh-huh. No, it's fine.

(pause)

All right, I'll meet you there.

I know where it is.

(pause)

No, no, I'll meet you there.

Okay. Bye...

(laughs)

Okay, I'm gonna hang up now. See you in a few hours.

She hangs up the phone and breaks into a smile. For the first time she seems genuinely happy.

INT. PATRICK AND KERI'S LIVING ROOM - AFTERNOON

Patrick, Keri and their guests have just finished dinner and listen Jessie telling a funny college story:

JESSIE

... and Keri - without any hesitation whatsoever - picks up her pen and says: "Do you mind?"

Everyone erupts with laughter. Keri forces a smile. Jessie takes her hand.

JESSIE (CONT'D)

You remember that, babe?

Keri nods slowly. She glances around the table. Everyone looks at her, pity in their eyes.

MONTAGE:

1. Greg is seated at a table in a Chinese restaurant. He is anxious, impatient. He checks the time and looks up. Lena stands above him, smiling. Greg beams.
2. Greg and Lena are enjoying their meal and time with each other.
3. Greg and Lena ride in the back seat of a cab and playfully hit one another. Lena seems careless, free.
4. The cab pulls up before a three-story building in Chelsea. Greg and Lena get out and enter the building.
5. Greg prepares a couple of drinks in his kitchen. Lena sneaks up from behind him and plants a kiss on his cheek. Greg grins, spins and glances at her. Their eyes are locked.

END MONTAGE

INT. ERIC'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

MUSIC is playing way TOO LOUD on the stereo. Eric is laying sullenly on his sofa. He picks up the remote control and kills the music. Then he takes his cell phone and dials a number.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. WARD RESIDENCE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

ERIC'S MOTHER (48) picks up the phone.

ERIC'S MOTHER

Hello?

ERIC

Hey, mom.

ERIC'S MOTHER

Eric?

ERIC

How are you?

ERIC'S MOTHER

You know, just like always. Are you okay?

ERIC

Yeah, I just needed to talk to someone, you know? I feel so alone lately.

His mother reacts.

ERIC (CONT'D)

Listen, remember how I told you
I'm --

ERIC'S MOTHER

Yeah.

ERIC

There is this guy in school that
I'm in love with and I don't know
what I'm gonna do. When I told
him --

ERIC'S MOTHER

I'm sorry, Eric. I can't do this
with you. I'm sorry. It's too
much. It's...

Eric nods understandingly. A long pause.

ERIC

Have you told dad?

ERIC'S MOTHER

Are you crazy? I'm never gonna
tell him! He'll kill you and me
both! I think it would be better
if we keep this between us, huh?
Like a secret.

ERIC

You always told me not to be
ashamed of who I am.

ERIC'S MOTHER

You know your father. You know
how he is. He could never
understand.

ERIC

Understand what? That his son is
a freak? A monster?

ERIC'S MOTHER

That's not what I meant.

ERIC

Thanks for the talk, mom.

ERIC'S MOTHER

Eric?

Eric hangs up.

INT. MARTY'S BAR - NIGHT

Jack comes through the door to a fairly empty bar. The BARTENDER (40) has a smoke and wipes down the bartop with a rag.

Jack takes a seat on a stool. The bartender throws him an odd look, puts out his smoke and springs to serve him.

BARTENDER
Hey, you look kinda familiar.
You that actor, right?

JACK
Not tonight.

The bartender acknowledges with a smile.

BARTENDER
What can I get you?

JACK
J.D. on the rocks.

He lights up a cigarette. The bartender gets him the drink.

BARTENDER
Here.

JACK
Get me the bottle, too.

BARTENDER
That kind of a night, huh?

He gives Jack the half-full bottle of Jack Daniels. Jack takes it and stands up.

JACK
Yep. That kind of a night.

INT. PATRICK AND KERI'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Patrick tucks Keri into bed.

PATRICK
Sleep well.

KERI
I don't want you to bring anyone
here again.

PATRICK
It's good for you, Keri.

KERI

Don't pretend to know what's good
for me.

PATRICK

I try to understand.

KERI

You don't know what it feels like
to see yourself through their
eyes. They talk about me like
I'm already dead.

PATRICK

Keri, don't say that.

KERI

I see how they look at me. How
you look at me...

Patrick glares at Keri's naked body. She realizes she's making him uncomfortable and covers her body with the sheet. Patrick grabs her hand, stopping her.

PATRICK

Don't.

He kisses her lips and gets on top of her. He continues his kisses down Keri's body. First her neck, then her chest.

KERI

You don't have to do this.

PATRICK

I want to.

He touches his wife's wounded legs, takes off her underwear, then his, and start making love to her.

He glares down at her body and keeps going. Keri enjoys it. All of a sudden, Patrick stops.

PATRICK (CONT'D)

I can't do this. I'm really
sorry. I just -- I'm sorry.

He rolls out of bed and hurries out of the room.

INT. MARTY'S BAR - NIGHT

Jack is half-way drunk, gazing blankly at nothing, an expressionless look frozen on his face. He stands up and staggers slowly towards the bar. The bartender is worried.

JACK
Get me another... bottle. And
ice...

BARTENDER
You feeling okay, man?

JACK
(laughs sarcastically)
What's with you people? I'm
fine. Fine! Can you stop caring
so much and look at your own
miserable fucking lives? I've
got all I need.

BARTENDER
What's that like?

JACK
Having everything?

The bartender nods. Jack sits on a stool.

JACK (CONT'D)
I don't know what to tell you.
It's fucking great! It's...
great. Yeah.
(pauses)
It feels like you have nothing,
you know? Absolutely nothing.

BARTENDER
I know what you mean.

Jack is suddenly angry.

JACK
You don't, all right? You don't!

BARTENDER
All right, man. Just calm down.

A short pause.

JACK
Can I bump a smoke?

BARTENDER
Go ahead.

Jack takes one. The bartender lights a Zippo and tries to fire up Jack's cigarette. Jack shakes his head and snatches the Zippo from the bartender's hands.

JACK
Only let a woman do that.

He lights up the cigarette and takes a drag. The bartender grins and lines up two shot glasses. He fills them up with Jack Daniels.

BARTENDER

Cheers!

They knock the shots back.

JACK

I don't know anymore. I don't know why I'm doing this for, or who I'm doing this for. It's all so... meaningless, you know? Money, women, friends, work.

BARTENDER

I don't understand you hotshots. You've got everything, you've got the world in your hands and yet you're still complaining.

Jack's face is hard with fury.

JACK

Don't even try to compare your life with mine. You don't know what it's like being me. You don't even know.

They have two more shots.

JACK (CONT'D)

So what's the point?

BARTENDER

What do you mean?

A short pause.

JACK

How much do I owe you?

He pulls out the wallet from his pocket.

BARTENDER

Wait. What are you talking about?

JACK

Forget about it. How much for the drinks?

BARTENDER

Hey, man, tell me.

JACK
Listen, I'm not gonna beg for
this check. How much?

BARTENDER
Tell me what you mean.

JACK
Go fuck yourself!

He disappears out of the door. The bartender glances at
the bartop. A hundred dollar bill sits under a shot glass.

INT. PATRICK AND KERI'S KITCHEN - MORNING

Patrick and Keri are having breakfast at their kitchen
table. There's ice in the air. Then:

PATRICK
You feel like going out today?
Maybe for a stroll down the park,
huh?

KERI
No.

An uncomfortable silence.

PATRICK
How are the eggs?

KERI
They're fine.

Another uncomfortable silence. Keri puts her fork down and
drills a glance at Patrick.

KERI (CONT'D)
Why do you stay with me?

PATRICK
What?

KERI
What's in it for you? What do you
get out of all... this?

Patrick reacts.

PATRICK
I'm... happy.

KERI
You're happy? You're --?
(snorts a laugh)
You call this happiness?

PATRICK

What do you want me to say, Keri?

KERI

The truth! How you really feel!
Tell me that you stay with me out
of necessity! Tell me that you
don't love me anymore and can't
walk away out of guilt! Tell me
that you would rather be anywhere
else than here... with me.

(pauses)

Tell me the truth, Patrick. I
wanna hear it.

Patrick stands up and goes to her. He bows down and takes her hand.

PATRICK

There is no other place I would
rather be than here... with you. I
love you and I'll never leave you.

He kisses her hand and gives her a hug. Keri smiles affectionately.

INT. GUN SHOP - DAY

Various guns are displayed on a wall rack behind a glass counter. A GUN SELLER (37) is in the back of his store, attending his work. Jack steps in and paces to the counter.

GUN SELLER

Morning. What can I do for you?

Jack greets the seller with an imperceptible inclination of the head. He scans the guns on the wall rack.

GUN SELLER (CONT'D)

I suppose you're looking for a
gun.

Jack doesn't talk.

GUN SELLER (CONT'D)

What kind of a gun are you
looking for, huh? .38, .45, 9
millimeter? What?

JACK

That one.

He points to an Airweight .38 Special Smith & Wesson revolver.

GUN SELLER
The Smith & Wesson, huh?

He takes the gun from the wall rack.

GUN SELLER (CONT'D)
Don't let size fool you, my
friend. That's a strong gun.
Accurate, controllable, easy-to-
carry --

JACK
Let me see it.

The seller hands the revolver to Jack. He checks it --

FLASH FORWARD - INT. TELEVISION STUDIO A - DRESSING ROOM -
NIGHT

Jack glares at his reflection on a dressing mirror as he reaches for something in his waistband. He draws the Smith & Wesson and slams it on the table. He takes a long look at the gun and then looks up at himself.

INT. GUN SHOP - DAY

Jack hands the gun back to the seller.

JACK
All right.

The seller takes a form and gives it to Jack.

GUN SELLER
I need you to fill out this form
and I'm gonna have to see some ID
and a valid Driver's Licence.

JACK
That's kind of a problem. Maybe
we can work something out.

He spreads a thousand dollars on the counter. The seller's eyes go wide in greed.

GUN SELLER
I, uh, I don't know. Maybe. I'm
gonna have to think about --

JACK
No, you don't.

He spreads another thousand. The seller gulps, his eyes still wide.

JACK (CONT'D)
What do you say?

The seller drifts his gaze to Jack. Jack nods vigorously. A grin breaks into the seller's lips.

INT. ERIC'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

Eric is at his desk and writes what seems to be a letter. He battles to keep himself together and keeps writing.

EXT. SAINT PAUL'S CHURCH - DAY

Mel is in front of the series of steps leading up to the spectacular church. He stands there for a moment and then climbs up the steps.

INT. SAINT PAUL'S CHURCH - DAY

Mel treads down the center aisle past the sea of the empty pews, heading towards a curtained confessional.

INT. SAINT PAUL'S CHURCH - CONFESSIONAL - CONTINUOUS

Mel steps inside the booth and takes a seat. He crosses himself and sits quietly for a while. Then the partition window slides open and a CONFESSOR appears.

MEL
Father, it's been three months since I last confessed. I come here today -- I've never been in this church before.

CONFESSOR
Don't matter, my child. Please, continue. What is it that burdens your soul?

Mel takes his time.

MEL
I, uh, I have recently lost my wife. She is... was... suffering from some type of heart disease and she...

He can't finish the sentence.

CONFESSOR
I see.

MEL

I loved her, father. I did. She left me...

(pauses)

I was left alone when she died and now I can't even find the courage to go home.

Tears fill his eyes.

MEL (CONT'D)

I'm sorry.

CONFESSOR

You have nothing to be sorry about, my son.

MEL

I've been having these thoughts, father. I've been thinking of... killing myself.

CONFESSOR

My son, listen to me! That is not the answer! That is never the answer!

MEL

What if it is, father?

CONFESSOR

I understand that you suffer from the loss of your wife in a way that only you can feel.

Mel starts to sob. His cry is silent and yet heartbreaking.

CONFESSOR (CONT'D)

The strong feeling of sorrow shows that what was lost had an exceptional value, but it was God's will. It had to be that way. Why? Only He knows.

A short pause.

MEL

Is it a sin to choose death over life?

CONFESSOR

It is.

MEL

Why?

CONFESSOR

Suicide is an expression of lack of faith and an act of rebellion. God gives and God takes, my son.

Mel nods understandingly.

CONFESSOR (CONT'D)

Suicide usurps the power that belongs only to Him.

MEL

Will I be forgiven?

The confessor remains silent.

MEL (CONT'D)

Father?

CONFESSOR

You will be.

A hint of a smile crosses Mel's face.

CONFESSOR (CONT'D)

God's grace is without prejudice. Whoever believes will be saved. But the fact that His grace is sufficient and that forgiveness is obtainable - even in the case of suicide - it should never be taken as permission to follow through with that temptation. Life is a gift from God, my son. Honor it.

MEL

Thank you, father.

He is instantly up, launched out of the booth.

INT. SAINT PAUL'S CHURCH - CONTINUOUS

The confessor comes out, too, trying to stop him. Too late. Mel is already gone.

EXT. TELEVISION STUDIO A - PARKING LOT - NIGHT

A black limo is parked outside the studio. The passenger door opens and a BODYGUARD gets out. He walks to the back and opens the door.

Jack gets out of the limo, Barry follows. They pick their way towards the studio's entrance where the FLOOR MANAGER (42) of the show is waiting for them. He warmly greets Jack, who gives him a surly smile.

FLOOR MANAGER
Jack, you're right on time! Now
if you just follow me.

INT. BECKY'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The phone RINGS. Becky answers it.

BECKY
Hello?

There's crying on the other end of the line.

BECKY (CONT'D)
Who is this?

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. LENA'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Lena is laid on her couch and sobs.

LENA'S VOICE
It's... it's me.

BECKY
Lena? Is everything all right?

LENA
Becky, I have to tell you
something.

BECKY
What is it, baby?

A short pause.

LENA
I, uh, I've done some things...
Some horrible things. I didn't
tell you the other night. I
wanted to, but I couldn't tell
you.

BECKY
What are you trying to say,
sweetie?

LENA

Listen to me! I had sex... I had sex with a lot of men. I don't know how many. 20, maybe 30... without protection. I seduced them in bars, clubs, the subway, any place you can imagine... and I killed them.

Becky puts her hand over her mouth in shock.

BECKY

Jesus Christ...

LENA

I don't know why I did it. I guess I was angry. I guess I wanted to share my pain... my misery... my death...

Becky starts to cry.

LENA (CONT'D)

And there was this guy. This wonderful guy and I...

FLASHBACK - INT. GREG'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Images come fast and sharp, unfolding like a nightmare.

Lena and Greg make love on Greg's bed. They glare at each other and smile.

INT. LENA'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Lena is fighting for composure.

LENA

I killed him, too.

BECKY

Oh, my God, Lena...

LENA

I hope God forgives me for what I did, 'cause I never will!

BECKY

Lena, hold on!

Lena hangs up the phone.

BECKY (CONT'D)

Lena? Lena! LENA!

INT. TELEVISION STUDIO A - HALLWAY - NIGHT

The floor manager, Jack, Barry and the bodyguard arrive at the dressing room. The floor manager opens the door.

FLOOR MANAGER

Jack, I'll go let everyone know that you're here. In the meantime, you get yourself comfortable. Whatever you need, just call for me, okay?

Jack nods.

FLOOR MANAGER (CONT'D)

The show starts at nine, which means you have about...
(checks his watch)
... forty minutes for yourself.
All right?

Jack nods again. The floor manager strides away.

INT. TELEVISION STUDIO A - DRESSING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Jack steps into the room and stops in the doorway, blocking Barry's way.

JACK

Barry...

BARRY

What?

JACK

I wanna be alone.

Barry is concerned.

JACK (CONT'D)

I'm fine. Look, I just don't feel like being around anyone right now. Okay?

Barry is not convinced. Jack puts on his finest poker face.

JACK (CONT'D)

Bar, look into my eyes. I'm all right. I promise. I just wanna be left alone. That's all.

BARRY

I'll be on the set if you need me.

He exits the room. Jack closes the door and locks it. He moves to the dressing table and stands in front of the mirror.

Jack glares at his reflection as he reaches for something in his waistband. He draws the Smith & Wesson and slams it on the table. He takes a long look at the gun and then looks up at himself.

INT. PATRICK AND KERI'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Keri is on the sofa and stares blankly at the TV. Patrick comes in from the kitchen.

KERI

Patrick, can you do something for me?

PATRICK

Anything.

KERI

Play our song.

A smile moves Patrick's lips. He picks up the remote control and clicks off the TV. Then he goes to the CD player, takes a CD out of its case and slides it in the machine.

A LOVE SONG starts on the player. Patrick sits next to Keri and wraps his arms around her.

KERI (CONT'D)

Hold me close to you. Hold me as if it were the last time you'd ever hold me.

Patrick strokes her hair and gives her a tender kiss on the forehead. They stay hugged as the song plays.

INT. MEL'S BATHROOM - NIGHT

Mel is facing his bathroom mirror, his eyes glazed and unblinking. His mind reeling.

INT. LENA'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The cordless phone is RINGING on a table. Lena is seated on the couch and stares at it. A cold, impassive expression on her face.

INT. TELEVISION STUDIO A - DRESSING ROOM - NIGHT

Jack pulling out the photograph of him and his grandmother. He glances at it for a moment and leaves it on the dressing table.

EXT. MIDTOWN STREET

A light rain is falling. Eric paces down the street, tearful. Raindrops and teardrops blend into one, streaming down his face.

INT. MEL'S BATHROOM - NIGHT

Mel opens the medicine cabinet. Dozens of medicine boxes and bottles arrayed inside. He scans the bathroom and storms out.

A few moments later, he comes back inside with a paper bag in his hands. He finds a box of antiemetic and throws it in the bag. Mel holds a paper bag close to the open cabinet and pushes the boxes and bottles inside.

Most of them fall in the bag, if not on the sink or the floor. He picks them up quickly, puts them in the bag and rushes out of the bathroom.

INT. MEL'S LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Mel darts to the mini-bar, grabs a full bottle of Vodka and stuffs it in the bag. He hastens to the front door.

Mel wears his jacket and opens the door. He stands in the doorway and takes one last look at the empty apartment. Then he walks out and shuts the door behind him.

INT. LENA'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The phone is still RINGING. Lena stands up slowly and goes to her bedroom.

INT. LENA'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Lena goes to her bed, kneels before a picture of St. Christopher on the wall above the bedside table and assumes a prayer position. She crosses herself and starts saying the prayer:

LENA

Dear Lord, we thank thee for the night, and for the glorious morning light, for rest and food and loving care, and all that makes the world so fair. Amen.

She crosses herself again.

INT. DAVID'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Outside the rain pours down in torrents. David and Chloe are seated comfortably on a sofa and watch TV. The phone starts to RING. The machine picks up. David mutes the TV.

DAVID'S VOICE

This is David. Leave your message after the beep and I'll get back to you ASAP. Thanks.

The machine beeps. There is long silence on the other end of the line. Then a MAN'S CRY is heard.

ERIC'S VOICE

It's Eric... Please, don't answer. It'll make things easier for me. I know that you're home and you can listen...

INTERCUT WITH:

EXT. PHONE BOOTH - NIGHT

Eric is at a phone booth, soaking wet from the rain.

ERIC

I have so much to tell you, I don't even know where to begin. I understand that you probably hate my voice right now, so I'll try and make this quick.

(pause)

I'm gonna do something for you tonight. I'm gonna kill myself... for you. To show you how much you mean to me.

David and Chloe are listening, shocked.

ERIC (CONT'D)

But first you're gonna have to do something for me. You have to help me find out how. I want you to really pay attention now.

Eric takes the piece of paper from his pocket, holds it up and reads:

ERIC (CONT'D)
 Drown. Hang myself. Poison myself. Slit my wrists. Jump off a building. Jump off a bridge.
 (smiles bitterly)
 That's kinda the same...

David bolts to the phone.

ERIC (CONT'D)
 Fall into the path of a subway train. Electrocution...

David picks up the receiver.

DAVID
 Why are you doing this?

Eric keeps reading non-stop.

ERIC
 ... Cut my throat. Burn myself. Gun shot in mouth. Cut myself up and bleed to death...

DAVID
 What did I ever do to you, huh?

Eric tries to maintain his composure.

ERIC
 ... Asphyxiation. Take pills and drink alcohol. Strangle myself...

David paces back and forth like a caged animal.

DAVID
 Can you stop so we can talk?

ERIC
 Ingest toxic substances. Pay a professional --

DAVID
 STOP! STOP! ERIC, STOP! For God's sake, stop! Please...

Eric does.

DAVID (CONT'D)
 Listen, you're not gonna do anything stupid tonight, are you?
 (MORE)

DAVID (CONT'D)
Promise me you're not gonna do
anything stupid.

ERIC
I'm afraid I can't do that.

DAVID
Okay, look. Here's what we're
gonna do. Tell me where you are
and I'll come pick you up. You
and me are gonna sit down and --

ERIC
(smiles bitterly)
It's too late for "you and me."
It doesn't matter what you say
now. I've already made my
decision.

David stands by a window.

DAVID
Man, listen to me! Don't do
something you're gonna regret!
You hear me? Just tell me where
you are --

He gazes out the window. Through the heavy rain, he catches sight of Eric at the phone booth across the street. David drops the phone and storms out the apartment. Chloe is worried.

CHLOE
What's happening? David?

INT. PATRICK AND KERI'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Patrick is sleeping. Keri rests beside him. Her eyes are watery. She dries her tears.

Keri glances at Patrick. His face is turned towards her. She turns on her side. Now they are face to face. Keri leans in closer and gently kisses Patrick's eyes.

KERI
(softly)
Remember how I used to kiss your
eyes before we went to bed? You
always loved it. I haven't done
that in a long time.
(pause)
I'm sorry for everything that
happened. It wasn't your fault.
I just want you to be happy.
(pause)
I loved you.

She tries to sit on the side of the bed. She reaches over for her wheelchair. Keri slowly pulls herself onto the chair. Patrick opens his eyes.

PATRICK
(sleepily)
You need help?

KERI
No, I'm okay.

She rolls her wheelchair towards the door.

PATRICK
(sleepily)
You sure?

KERI
Yeah, just...
(pauses)
... just go back to sleep.

Patrick falls back to bed. Keri opens the door and takes one last look at him. A bitter smile moves her lips as she exits the room.

INT. BACKSTAGE - NIGHT

Jack is waiting behind a curtain, paralyzed with anxiety. His face cold, expressionless. The audience APPLAUDS and CHEERS indistinct.

MALE HOST (O.S.)
Hello! Thank you!

FEMALE HOST (O.S.)
You are fabulous! Thank you very much!

INT. ENTERTAINMENT SHOW #2 SET

The cheers and applause continue.

MALE HOST
(to female host)
That is one lovely audience we have here today. Don't you think?

FEMALE HOST
Certainly!

The audience grows silent.

MALE HOST

And as for you watching us from home, welcome! We hope you're all right.

FEMALE HOST

What do we have for you this amazing evening?

(to the Male Host)

Shall we tell them?

MALE HOST

Of course! Let's see why it would be a mistake to flip that channel!

EXT. DOWNTOWN STREET - NIGHT

Mel strolls down the street with the bag in one hand and the bouquet of sunflowers in the other.

EXT. LENA'S BUILDING - STAIRWAY - NIGHT

Lena is coming up the stairs, her eyes brimming with anger and despair. She reaches the last floor and opens a door.

EXT. LENA'S BUILDING - ROOF - CONTINUOUS

Lena steps out to the roof. A lightning crashes in the horizon and a distant PEAL of THUNDER is heard.

EXT. DAVID'S BUILDING - NIGHT

The rain buckets down. David flies down the steps of his building.

EXT. MIDTOWN STREET - CONTINUOUS

David sees Eric across the street, leaning over the booth. Eric looks up. His eyes meet David's. He immediately runs away.

DAVID

No, Eric! Goddamn --!

He crosses the street. Eric looks over his shoulder and sees David closing in on him. He picks up a quicker pace. David chases after him and shouts:

DAVID (CONT'D)

Eric, come on, stop!

David catches up to Eric.

DAVID (CONT'D)
Wait! Just wait.

He reaches for Eric's shoulder, pulling him back. Eric whips around.

ERIC
WHAT?! WHAT DO YOU WANT?!

DAVID
Calm down, okay? I just wanna talk to you.

ERIC
There's nothing to say.

Eric turns to leave, but David cuts in front of him, blocking his path.

DAVID
Yes, there is! Eric, what you said... did you really mean it?

Eric nods emphatically.

DAVID (CONT'D)
I think we should talk about that, don't you think?
(pause)
Come on, let's go upstairs. I'll make us a cup of coffee and we'll talk this whole thing out. Huh? What do you say?

Eric laughs hysterically.

ERIC
"We'll talk this whole thing out?"

Eric laughs again. He glides his eyes at the light on the window of David's place.

ERIC (CONT'D)
She's up there, isn't she?

David doesn't answer.

ERIC (CONT'D)
I know she's up there. Do you have any idea what it's like to see the person you... love... with someone else? For two years I've watched you kissing her, touching her...
(MORE)

ERIC (CONT'D)
 (starts to sob)
 ... loving her... without being
 able to do anything about it,
 knowing I could never have you.
 Two years! I saw you eat shit
 from her, but always coming back.

DAVID
 You were my friend.

ERIC
 You're right. I was your friend.

He plants a kiss on David's lips. David doesn't react,
 stands there, frozen.

INT. BACKSTAGE - CONTINUOUS

The hosts talk indistinct. Jack is frozen, taking deep
 breaths to calm himself. Barry comes from the side.

BARRY
 Hey, Jack. You ready?

Jack breathes in and out.

JACK
 Yeah. I think so.

BARRY
 Ahh, you're gonna be great!

Jack nods. A cheer and applause goes up from the audience.

FEMALE HOST (O.S.)
 Come out, come out wherever you
 are!

MALE HOST (O.S.)
 Ladies and gentleman, please
 welcome Jack Campbell!

The audience cheers and applauds.

BARRY
 Go. Talk to you later.

Jack takes a deep breath and pulls the curtains aside.

INT. ENTERTAINMENT SHOW #2 SET - CONTINUOUS

Jack waddles towards the side of the hosts.

MALE HOST
 There he is! Come here, Jack!

Jack shakes hands with the hosts.

MALE HOST (CONT'D)
How you doing, Jack? Good to
have you here.

FEMALE HOST
Nice to meet you, Jack.

Jack looks around in a daze.

INT. PATRICK AND KERI'S BATHROOM - NIGHT

Keri wheels into the bathroom, locks the door behind her. She stays there for a second and rolls to the sink.

Keri looks at her reflection in the bathroom mirror. She thinks for a minute, then opens a cabinet and takes something.

Keri opens her hand, revealing three razor blades. She stares at them for a long moment. After a while, she leaves them on the side of the sink.

EXT. CEMETERY - NIGHT

Mel paces among the graves in the dark. He nears a tombstone engraved: "Rose Peterson, Beloved wife and sister, You will be with us forever."

Mel bends down and touches the engraving.

MEL
Forever.

He leaves the bouquet of sunflower on the grave and puts down the bag.

EXT. MIDTOWN STREET - NIGHT

David breaks the kiss. He takes a step backwards, unable to hide his disgust. Eric smiles bitterly. Their eyes lock.

ERIC
(mouths)
I love you.

He runs towards the street and leaps in front of a moving bus, driving through.

His body crashes onto the bus and flings far ahead on the street. Tires SQUEAL as the bus brakes. David puts his hands over his mouth, his eyes wide with terror.

INT. ENTERTAINMENT SHOW #2 SET - NIGHT

Jack's eyes drift from people to people and from camera to camera. Suddenly, he pulls out the gun from his waistband and puts it to his temple.

The female host screams. The male host watches bug-eyed. The audience grows silent. Jack squeezes the trigger --

BANG! Blood splatters all over. The female host keeps screaming. The male host is frozen in shock. The floor manager yells orders to the crew. People from the audience spring up from their seats, horrified.

In SLOW MOTION, Jack's body topples backwards. Blood is streaming freely down his temple.

JACK (V.O.)

Where have you come to? Is this
it? Is this the time you'll die?

EXT. LENA'S BUILDING - ROOF - NIGHT

Lena stands frozen at the edge of the rooftop. She gapes down. The height of 15 floors is fearful.

LENA (V.O.)

How does it feel? Hmm. You
don't know. You are moments away
from your death and you can't
even describe how it feels.

Lena takes a few breaths for courage and a long, hard look at the beautiful skyline. She closes her eyes and simply steps off.

EXT. CEMETERY - NIGHT

Mel opens the bottle of Vodka and has a sip. He breathes deep, opens the box of antiemetic and takes a couple of pills. He has another sip of the Vodka.

MEL (V.O.)

Fear? Affliction? Regret? No.
Impatience. Impatience for
something simpler, something
better, something... greater.

After a few breaths, Mel opens a box of medicine and devours the pills. Then another and another. He has a sip of the Vodka.

INT. PATRICK AND KERI'S BATHROOM - NIGHT

Keri takes a razor and puts her head back. She opens her mouth and holds up the blade. She places it on her tongue, closes her mouth and tries to swallow. The pain is immeasurable.

KERI (V.O.)

Don't be afraid. Be strong. It will only hurt for just a little while. Just a little while.

Keri is trying, but cannot down the razor blade or spit it out. Her head becomes all red and sweaty as she struggles to swallow.

Keri finally manages to knock the blade back. There is the relaxation of relief in her face. She breathes deep. She leans back and rests for a moment. Then she picks up another razor and holds it up.

EXT. MIDTOWN STREET - NIGHT

David raises a scream and darts to Eric who lies crumpled. His face is bruised, torn and covered in blood. His arms and legs are broken.

David kneels down and takes his friend in his arms. Blood bubbles from Eric's mouth. He is trying to say something, but can't.

ERIC (V.O.)

Any last wishes? Any last words? I didn't think so. You've got all you want... all you need... right here. You don't have to be impatient any more.

INT. ENTERTAINMENT SHOW #2 SET - NIGHT

In SLOW MOTION, Jack's body lands on the floor. Blood is streaming continuously down his temple, forming a pool. His eyes are lifeless, but there is a look of satisfaction on his face.

JACK (V.O.)

This is it. The moment you've been waiting for. Your moment. Take it all in. Live it to the fullest. Now close your eyes.

Jack closes his eyes and slowly exhales. His face looses and rests completely peaceful.

EXT. MIDTOWN STREET - NIGHT

The BUSDRIVER (48, bovine, white hair) steps out of the bus in a state of shock.

DRIVER

He jumped --! He jumped in front
the --! I, uh, didn't have the
time to --! Dear Lord, did I
kill him?

David looks up and shouts to him:

DAVID

Don't stand there! Call an
ambulance! Call a fucking
ambulance!

The driver hurries back inside.

INT. BUS - CONTINUOUS

The driver gets on the bus just as a scream is heard. A few PASSENGERS have been gathered around a seat.

PASSENGER #1

She's having a heart attack!
Give her some room, people! Come
on, she can't breath!

The bus driver stares, perplexed. The passengers move away. Rose lays on the seat, her breathing slow and shallow. She puts her hand on her chest.

ROSE

I have... a weak heart...

Passenger #1 springs up and shouts:

PASSENGER #1

Is anybody here a doctor?

Passenger #2 comes forward.

PASSENGER #2

I'm a medical student.

PASSENGER #1

You know what to do?

Passenger #2 nods emphatically. Passenger #1 gives him the room he needs. Passenger #2 leans above Rose and proceeds with CPR. The bus driver grabs the radio.

BUS DRIVER

Center, this is vehicle 3563,
come in! We need an ambulance
right away! Center, do you read
me?

INT. PATRICK AND KERI'S HALLWAY - NIGHT

Patrick yawns and knocks on the door to the bathroom. No answer. He knocks again.

PATRICK

Keri? Keri, everything all right
in there?

He tries to open the door. It's locked.

PATRICK (CONT'D)

Keri? Keri, talk to me! What's
going on?

He nudges the door.

PATRICK (CONT'D)

Keri! Keri! KERI! KERI!

He breaks the door down and bursts into the bathroom.

INT. PATRICK AND KERI'S BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Keri lies on the floor, blood coming out of her mouth. Patrick gasps in horror, kneels beside her and takes her in his arms.

PATRICK

Oh, Jesus! Jesus, Keri! What
happened? What did you do, baby?
What did you do?

EXT. CEMETERY - NIGHT

A single flashlight beam cuts through the darkness. A GUARD (35) paces through the trees and graves, shining his flashlight around.

In the distance, he spots a man laying next to a grave. The guard approaches him.

GUARD

Hey, you! Wake up! Come on,
wake up!

No movement.

GUARD (CONT'D)

Come on, man. You're going to get me into trouble. Go home, buddy --

As he approaches, notices the empty Vodka bottle and the medicine on the ground. He looks a little closer at Mel's face. It is pale-white. The guard bends down next to him.

GUARD (CONT'D)

Oh, no, no, no, no, no!

He feels Mel's pulse. Nothing.

MEL

Please, buddy! Don't do this to me!

He shakes him gently. Mel does not move. The guard shakes him harder. Again, no movement. The guard springs up and runs away.

INT. PATRICK AND KERI'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Patrick shoots to the phone, picks up the receiver. No dial tone.

PATRICK

What --?

He follows the wire. It's been cut. He darts to a near table, starts searching for something. He notices a smashed cell phone on the floor.

PATRICK (CONT'D)

Goddamn it, Keri!

He dashes out of the apartment.

FLASHBACK - INT. ENTERTAINMENT SHOW #1 SET - NIGHT

The host and Jack are chatting.

HOST

Jack, I've got a question. When did you first realize you wanted to be an actor?

Jack grins.

JACK

Oh, that's easy. It's like one of those moments of your life that you never forget, you know?

HOST

Let's hear it.

JACK

Well, it was a couple of days after my 18th birthday. Me and my grandma, may she rest in peace, used to live in this apartment on 44th street. Anyway, one night I heard screams coming from the apartment next door, so I got out to see what was going on.

FLASHBACK - INT. PATRICK AND KERI'S BUILDING - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Young Jack comes out to the hallway. Patrick emerges from his apartment, starts pounding furiously on the door across the hall, while shouting in panic.

JACK (V.O.)

There I saw a man storming out of his apartment, screaming for a phone. He banged on every door, shouting: "A phone! I need to use the phone! Please! Let me in!"

The door doesn't open. Patrick darts to the apartment next door and pounds on the door. He keeps screaming:

JACK (V.O.) (CONT'D)

"Call 911! For God's sake, call 911! Somebody!" he shouted!

Patrick spins and sees Jack staring at him.

JACK (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Then he came to me. He rushed into our apartment, screaming: "Where's your phone!"

Jack is frozen in shock. Patrick rushes in, scans the apartment, spots the phone and sprints to it.

FLASHBACK - INT. ENTERTAINMENT SHOW #1 SET - NIGHT

Jack is clearly in an emotional state.

JACK

Apparently, his wife had just committed suicide and he wanted to call for an ambulance.

(pause)

(MORE)

JACK (CONT'D)

I don't know, there was something so fascinating, so enchanting about that, you know? The human drama, it moved me. Well, that was it. The next day I signed up for acting classes.

FLASHBACK - EXT. DEPARTMENT STORE - NIGHT

David stands by the storefront and looks at the wall of television sets all tuned to the same channel. Local news. The news report: "KNOWN ACTOR KILLS HIMSELF LIVE ON TV."

Eric walks down the street and stops next to David. His eyes glide through the TVs.

ERIC

What's that about?

DAVID

An actor blew his brains out live on TV.

ERIC

You serious? Who?

DAVID

Jack Campbell, something like that.

ERIC

Shit, I know him! He's the guy from -- And he's dead?

David nods.

ERIC (CONT'D)

Did he say why he did it?

DAVID

No, he just pulled out a gun and bang! That's it.

ERIC

Damn.

A long pause. Eric steals a look at David.

ERIC (CONT'D)

Hey, I think I remember you. You go to Columbia, right? Social Work?

DAVID

Yeah, that's right.

ERIC
You're in Mrs. Hodges class.

DAVID
Oh, yeah, I remember now. Yeah.

ERIC
I'm Eric.

DAVID
David. Nice to meet you.

They shake hands and share a smile.

FLASHBACK - EXT. CEMETERY - MORNING

A considerable number of MOURNERS are clustered around the gravesite. The Charest family stands together.

Mel's grave has been excavated. The casket has been lifted above the excavation.

FLASHBACK - INT. CHAREST RESIDENCE - LIVING ROOM -
AFTERNOON

A photograph of Mel is on a table. Mourners are standing in the living room talking, others are eating, drinking.

At the bar, Lena is filling a glass of champagne. She is half-way drunk. Becky approaches her.

BECKY
You wanna take it easy with the champagne? How many glasses did you have so far?

LENA
Not too many.

BECKY
Maybe we should just take you up to your room.

LENA
What are you talking about? I'm going out with my friends.

BECKY
Look at you. You're already drunk. You can't go out like this.

LENA
I feel great. Never better.

BECKY

What about mom and dad?

LENA

You won't tell them anything,
right?

She is digging into her sister's eyes for an answer. Becky slowly nods.

LENA (CONT'D)

I love you, sis.

She hugs her sister. Becky holds her tight and whispers in her ear:

BECKY

Just be careful, okay?

Lena moves away.

EXT. LENA'S BUILDING - NIGHT

TWO TEENAGE BOYS and a GIRL stroll down the street. All of a sudden, the girl lets out a scream. The boys turn their heads.

Lena's dead body is laying face down on the sidewalk in a blood pond. Arms and legs broken, head crushed.

The three teenagers are jolted. The girl falls into the arms of Teenage Boy #2, so she can no longer look at the horrible sight.

TEENAGE BOY #1

Oh, fuck! Shit!
(to Teenage Boy #2)
Call an ambulance! Now!

TEENAGE BOY #2

What the --?

TEENAGE BOY #1

Did you hear what I said? 911,
now!

Teenage Boy #2, shocked, reaches for his cell phone. The girl keeps crying.

TEENAGE BOY #1 (CONT'D)

And get her away from here!

Teenage Boy #2 drags the girl away, until they round the corner. He pulls out his phone and dials the number. After a while:

TEENAGE BOY #2

Yeah, listen! We found a woman
on the sidewalk! She's hurt
pretty bad and --!

(pause)

We don't know! There's blood all
over!

(pause)

At the corner of 121st street and
Broadway! Near Columbia
University!

(pause)

No! Just get an ambulance here
as fast as you can!

He hangs up the phone and turns to the girl.

TEENAGE BOY #2 (CONT'D)

You stay here, okay?

He goes back to his friend. Teenage Boy #1, terrified,
motions towards the side of Lena's body. He stands above
the body, stepping on the blood. He bends down.

TEENAGE BOY #2 (CONT'D)

What are you doing?

TEENAGE BOY #1

Shut up! Did you call?

TEENAGE BOY #2

Yes, I fucking called!

Teenage Boy #1 grabs the body's wrist and feels for a
pulse. He turns to Teenage Boy #2 and shakes his head.
"She's dead." He tries to roll Lena's body over. It's
difficult. The body is heavy.

Suddenly, Lena's body rolls over. The sight that greets
their eyes is very dismaying. A face in blood, crushed
skull, shattered limbs.

Teenage Boy #1 jolts backwards, startled. Teenage Boy #2
notices a few people walking past on the sidewalk across
the street. He shouts to them:

TEENAGE BOY #2 (CONT'D)

Hey! Help us! We need help!

Pedestrian #2 sees him. He crosses the street and goes to
the boys.

PEDESTRIAN #2

What happened?

TEENAGE BOY #2
We don't know. We found her like
this.

The pedestrian checks the pulse on her neck.

PEDESTRIAN #2
Did you call 911?

TEENAGE BOY #1
Yeah.

The man lifts his head.

PEDESTRIAN #2
I think... I think she's dead.

A couple pedestrians, from the other side of the street,
are trying to get across.

Keri's car approaches them, when Pedestrian #1 stops frozen
in the middle of the street. The car is heading straight
at him. The car breaks. Tires SCREECH.

Keri's car whizzes past the petrified man, spins 180
degrees and lurches to a stop in the middle of a crossroad.

A moment later, a LOUD HORN is heard. Blinding lights. A
truck comes from the left side of the car. Its tires
SCREECH into a skid. The door of the car opens and a foot
comes out --

CRASH! The truck slams into Keri's car, propelling it
sideways for fifty yards. A continuing HORN from the car
ECHOES all over.

FADE OUT.

ON BLACK:

"In the last 50 years suicide rates have increased by 60%
worldwide. Last year, approximately one million people
died from suicide. A global mortality rate of 16 per
100.000, or one death every 40 seconds."

THE END