

PEOPLE'S PARTIES

BY

Ben Clifford

cliffordben502@gmail.com

FADE IN

EXT. PETER'S HOUSE - NIGHT

DAN (22), skinny and awkward, unsure of himself, stands by the front door of a small house early in the evening. He knocks timidly.

PETER, in his late forties, balding and chubby, answers the door probably too quickly.

PETER
Hey. Dan?

DAN
Yeah.

PETER
Come in.

INT. PETER'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM

The pair sit on an aged sofa in a "bachelor-decorated" house. Peter turns to Dan, looking him up and down. Dan exudes literally no confidence in the situation.

PETER
(cheeky)
So, do you often go on Grindr
looking to score prescription meds?

DAN
It's just so hard to get a
prescription. I don't have the
charisma to fool doctors.

Peter laughs.

PETER
I just filled my prescription.

Peter reaches into a coffee table drawer, revealing a small bottle of prescription medication. He tears the ID label off and gives it to Dan.

PETER (CONT)
Fifteen milligrams...all yours.

DAN
Thanks.

There is silence.

PETER

Do you want some wine?

Dan inspects the bottle.

DAN

Do you want, like, money?

PETER

Are you serious? No, it's fine.

Dan is deeply uncomfortable.

DAN

I'll just pay you, like, 30 bucks
or something.

He reaches into his pocket.

PETER

(smiling)

That wasn't the deal, sweetie.

Dan gulps.

PETER

I'm gonna get some wine.

Dan shakes his head.

DAN

I'm not too sure about this.

Dan stands.

EXT. FAST FOOD DRIVE-THRU - NIGHT

SAMMY (early 20's), charming and off-kilter, with a stylish pixie cut and business attire, drives her shitty car through the shitty fast food drive-thru.

INT/EXT SAMMY'S CAR

Sammy accepts a paper bag of greasy food from the ATTENDANT.

SAMMY

Thank-you.

ATTENDANT

We didn't have any hash browns so I
put in fries, hope that's OK.

SAMMY
Well..no, not really.

LATER

Sammy is driving down the highway, distractedly eating from the bag.

INT. PETER'S BEDROOM - LATER

Dan is at Peter's crotch, who lays on the bed with his pants down. Dan ungracefully and uncomfortably performs fellatio, before stopping and looking at Peter.

DAN
What the fuck is that?

Peter looks down.

PETER
What?

Dan calmly gestures to Peter's genitalia, confused.

PETER
That? You seriously don't know what that is?

Peter smiles, bemused.

PETER (CONT)
How old are you?

DAN
22. Why?

Peter is still grinning.

PETER
It's a cock-ring.

DAN
Okay.

Dan stares at the offending body part.

PETER
It helps me stay hard.

DAN

Okay.

Dan uncomfortably returns to the job at hand.

EXT. PETER'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Dan is let out the front door by Peter.

PETER

Nice to meet you.

DAN

Yeah. You too. Thanks for
the Valium.

Peter smiles and waves. Dan starts walking towards his car.

INT/EXT DAN'S CAR - NIGHT

Dan drives.

He is crying over the OPENING CREDITS.

INT/EXT SAMMY'S CAR - NIGHT

Sammy throws the empty fast food bag from the window.

INT. SAMMY'S HOUSE - FOYER

Sammy enters, dropping her purse on a sofa.

SAMMY

Hey.

TED, Sammy's age but not obviously, pokes his head out the door of the bathroom.

TED

Hey, Babe?

SAMMY

Yeah?

TED

You get dinner?

Sammy has the "deer in headlights" look.

SAMMY

Oh. Sorry. I had something to eat at work, completely forgot.

TED

Oh, I'll just heat something up.

SAMMY

Cool. Hey, wanna watch some Netflix with me?

TED

Give me fifteen minutes?

SAMMY

Why? What are you doing in there?

TED

I'm shitting.

Ted closes the bathroom door.

LIVING ROOM - LATER

Ted and Sammy sit on the couch silently watching a television show on Sammy's computer.

SAMMY

When I was at work today, I rang a client, right? He didn't answer so I left a message.

Ted's eyes are affixed to the computer.

TED

Mhm.

SAMMY

And after I hung up, I made this joke to Helen. And like, the client's name is Daikan. So I was like, "Who would name their kid after an air conditioner?".

Ted, barely responsive, smiles.

SAMMY (CONT)

Anyway, he rang me back and goes "you didn't hang up the properly, the message you left...an *air conditioner*".

Ted finally looks up at Sammy, smiling some more.

TED

No way.

SAMMY

Yeah. How mortifying.

Ted returns his attention to the computer.

SAMMY (CONT)

So he made a formal complaint and I
have to go into a meeting tomorrow.

Sammy is no longer amused by her story, reflecting on this.

TED

That's some shit.

Ted turns the volume up on the laptop.

BEDROOM - LATER

Under the covers, Ted and Sammy have sex vigorously. It's too dark to see.

TED

I'm coming.

SAMMY

OK.

Ted climbs further up Sammy's body, towards her face.

SAMMY

No. Chest. Always chest!

Ted groans as he follows Sammy's instructions, ejaculating on her chest.

SAMMY

(disgusted)

It's on my pillow...

Ted grabs his t-shirt from beside the bed and wipes Sammy's chest and the pillow.

He lays down next to Sammy; she grabs him to spoon.

Ted is openly disgusted, and pushes Sammy's hands away from his body.

TED
I think we need to talk.

SAMMY
We do?

TED
Yeah. Look, it's been a year now.

SAMMY
Yeah?

TED
And...I think it's done.

Sammy sits up.

SAMMY
Me and you?

TED
I wish it weren't, but that's just
how it is.

SAMMY
You're breaking up with me? We've
never even -

Sammy is absolutely shocked.

SAMMY (CONT)
Where's the discussion?

Ted seems a little confrontational now.

TED
Alright, let's discuss it.

Sammy is silent.

TED (CONT)
If I thought there was any chance
at all that you'd fight for us, I'd
have let you.

Sammy appears to acknowledge this.

SAMMY
This can't be it. We *live together*.

TED
I'm not saying this is fun. But it
needs to happen.

SAMMY
So what will we do?

Ted squirms a little.

TED
Look...my mum owns this house. It makes more sense for me to stay.

SAMMY
Are you fucking serious?

TED
I'll give you a week or two to find a place. I'll help you move, I'll pay your deposit...I want this to be easy for you.

SAMMY
I can pay my own bond, you fuck!

TED
Don't get aggressive.

Sammy gets out of bed, incensed.

SAMMY
You can't break up with me in the *same minute* you came on my tits! That's not how an adult relationship works.

TED
I'll talk to you about this when you calm down.

There's a pause.

TED (CONT)
Get back in bed. Come cuddle.

Ted rolls over, his back facing Sammy. Sammy looks dumbstruck at this absurdity.

SAMMY
Have I sustained a fucking head injury? No! I'm sleeping on the couch.

Sammy grabs her pillow.

TED

Oh...

She walks to the door.

TED (CONT)

Can you leave the pillow? I need
the back support or I get achey.

Sammy violently throws the pillow on the bed.

SAMMY'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM

Sammy lays on the sofa, no pillow. She has a blanket over
her, and she cries quietly.

INT. COUNSELOR'S OFFICE - DAY

Dan sits in a comfy chair across from his trainee
psychologist, SUSAN. Susan is about Dan's age, professional.
Dan is dressed in work clothes, and speaks slowly to Susan.

DAN

I don't know why I did it.

SUSAN

Did what?

DAN

Blew that guy.

Susan nods.

SUSAN

Were you attracted to him?

Dan screws up his face.

DAN

No, he was all...dad-like.

SUSAN

Dad-like? So he looked like your
father?

DAN

No - he looked like everyone's
father.

Susan nods.

SUSAN

So you made a bit a rash decision there. Shame is normal, but it's important that you remember it shouldn't be debilitating.

DAN

OK.

SUSAN

Do you remember our work with distress tolerance?

Dan nods, distracted.

DAN

I was at work the other day and I came across some journal articles about other therapy modalities that might work for me.

SUSAN

Are you unhappy with what we're doing now?

DAN

No, I don't think so. I just think...y'know, as a fellow professional, I have some ideas, too.

Dan appears shocked at his own arrogant statement, and embarrassed. Susan shuffles some papers in her lap aimlessly.

SUSAN

I was going to wait until the end of this session for this.

DAN

For what?

SUSAN

I don't think it's appropriate for our therapeutic relationship to continue.

DAN

Why?

SUSAN

We're in similar...professional places in our lives. You and I

(MORE)

SUSAN (cont'd)
 share a lot of knowledge, which is great, but it also throws the typical dynamic out of balance.

Susan observes Dan's reaction.

SUSAN (CONT)
 I don't think I have the professional skills to work with your particular...mental illness, as well manage as the dual relationship at play here. It is not a reflection on you.

DAN
 So...the therapist, with whom I discuss my abandonment issues, is abandoning me?

Susan smiles, as if this is a joke. Dan appears deadly serious.

SUSAN
 Dan, I have referred you to a colleague of mine upon the recommendations of my supervisor. My colleague Donald - he's great with complex cases like your's.

Susan reads Dan's face.

SUSAN (CONT)
 You've made some great strides and I'm confident you'll deal with the change maturely.

EXT. CLINIC - PARKING LOT - DAY

Dan furiously walks to his car, lighting a cigarette. He is unable to get the lighter to ignite due to the breeze. He throws the cigarette on the ground as he enters his car, slamming the door.

INT. CHILD PROTECTION OFFICE - LATER

Dan walks through the office, which is abuzz with activity. Fellow WORKERS answer ringing phones and several crisis phone calls are overheard.

Dan sits at his desk, a small shared cubicle. His cubicle-mate JANET, a twenty-something with a relaxed, un-serious demeanor, turns to him.

JANET
Hey, sexy.

DAN
Ew.

JANET
Coming with me to the drop-in this morning?

DAN
Yeah.

JANET
Don't even turn your computer on, we're late.

INT/EXT COMPANY CAR - DAY

Janet drives while Dan, in the passenger seat, looks over some official looking documents.

DAN
Please don't let me forget to send all this shit through to Trisha after. And *before* the meeting.

JANET
Yeah, yeah. Oi, are you coming to my housewarming tonight? My housemate has a cute gay friend. His name's Morro.

Dan is bemused by this name, before deciding to ignore it.

DAN
Is this like the fat guy with the belly that hung out of his shirt? Because - and I'm sorry - but you are no longer allowed to play a part in my sex life.

JANET
No, he's young and pretty. Apparently. And George was a *bear*. I thought gays liked bears.

DAN
Who even told you that?

JANET
I read it on Buzzfeed.

Dan is bewildered.

DAN
You have a *Master's degree*.

Janet grins.

EXT. CLIENT'S HOME - DAY

A run-down duplex in an inner city neighbourhood. Janet knocks on the screen door, Dan standing by.

A young woman, KYLEAH, in her late teens, appears at the door in a tank top and sweat pants.

KYLEAH
Fuck.

Kyleah opens the door.

JANET
Hi - my name's Janet and this my colleague Daniel. We're from the Department of Child Safety. May we enter?

INT. CLIENT'S HOME - LIVING ROOM

Dan holds a young female INFANT, maybe 12 or 18 months old, in his arms, who sleeps.

Janet sits across from Kyleah on the sofa, both perusing forms and information sheets. Kyleah looks up.

KYLEAH
I knew you's were coming.

JANET
Why do you say that?

Kyleah isn't sure. She looks at her sleeping daughter.

KYLEAH
It's just been a shitty couple years.

Janet nods, looking at Kyleah warmly.

Dan looks down at the sleeping baby.

Janet and Kyleah's conversation continues, re: the paperwork - but it is made inaudible by Dan's focus, which is on the baby.

The child wakes, looking up at Daniel.

She smiles.

INT. EXECUTIVE OFFICE - LATER

Sammy sits across from her boss, JOAN, a woman in her fifties, and another management person, MATTHEW, similar age.

MATTHEW

So, Samantha.

SAMMY

Look - I just want to say...I was so unprofessional yesterday. I'm more than happy to ring Mr. Sterling and apologise for my remarks.

JOAN

How would you feel if you were in the client's position?

SAMMY

I would feel terribly offended. Which is why I am going to apologise whole-heartedly and hope he can put it behind him.

JOAN

Unfortunately, that's really not enough.

MATTHEW

We value our clients and we want them to feel like we're a family.

Sammy nods, realizing what is happening.

MATTHEW

What kind of family would we be if we just let anyone say anything?

INT. SAMMY'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - LATER

Sammy wanders through the house; she is in a daze of shock. She looks out a bay window.

OUTSIDE: Her car has driven up the driveway haphazardly, parked diagonally, half on the grass.

Sammy approaches the bedroom.

INT. SAMMY'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - LATER

Sammy goes through a drawer full of her clothes and some of Ted's.

She opens a large closet, and removes a large plastic bag with solid items inside.

She STAMPS on the bag, crushing it's contents.

From another shelf, she throws a bottle of perfume on the ground, smashing it.

Sammy sits on the bed, calm now.

The FRONT DOOR opens OS. Footsteps are heard approaching.

TED (O.S)
Sammy? Why you home so early?

He enters the bedroom, and sees the destruction.

TED (CONT)
What the fuck?

He inspects the bag with its broken contents.

TED (CONT)
Did you do this? This is a present
for my nephew's birthday!

Ted steps back, standing in the broken glass.

SAMMY
There's glass there...

TED
Fuck!

Ted sits on the ground and grabs his bleeding foot.

TED (CONT)
There's a big bit, help me pull it
out...

SAMMY
Oh my god.

TED
Help! It's bleeding so much!

Sammy gets up and looks at Ted's foot.

SAMMY
I think I'll faint.

TED
Don't fucking faint, pull it out!

Sammy grabs Ted's foot, covering her hand in blood.

SAMMY
Oh my god...

Sammy begins to waver on her feet.

TED
Don't faint!

SAMMY
I'm going down.

INT. AMBULANCE - DAY

Ted's lies on the recliner, foot haphazardly bandaged by
PARADEMIC 1. PARADEMIC 2 fusses over a pale Sammy.

PARADEMIC 1
You'll need stitches.

TED
God.

PARAMEDIC 2
(to Sammy)
Are you OK? You're still pretty
white.

SAMMY
Yeah.

INT. EMERGENCY ROOM - NIGHT

Night has fallen out the window. Ted, nearly asleep on painkillers, shares a room with another emergency PATIENT, and is watched over by Sammy.

Sammy looks at the time on her phone. She nudges Ted from his half-slumber.

SAMMY

Babe - Ted? I gotta go.

TED

What...? You can't wait? They said maybe an hour.

SAMMY

I have to go to a party.

TED

(not making sense)
I need an X-ray on my bones.

SAMMY

I'm not your girlfriend, Ted.

Sammy kisses Ted on the cheek and departs. Ted buzzes for a nurse.

EXT. JANET'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Sammy approaches the party house. She looks down at her hands - one has a splotch of Ted's blood.

INT. JANET'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM

Sammy enters, the party is roaring. Shitty music plays and mostly STRANGERS mill about, holding drinks.

Janet - Dan's friend from work - runs to Sammy, stumbling, and hugs her.

JANET

Sammy! Oh my god I knew you'd come.

SAMMY

That's what I promised.

JANET

Have a drink!

Janet scoops, from someone's discarded plastic cup, some punch. She passes it to Sammy.

SAMMY
What's in this?

JANET
(not listening)
This is great, huh?

A lull.

JANET
Where's Ted?

SAMMY
We broke up and he needs stitches.
And I'm fired.

JANET
That sucks. Come meet someone!

EXT. JANET'S HOUSE - BALCONY

More subdued. A GROUP sits around a table setting overlooking Janet's backyard, drinking.

Dan sits among them, not speaking.

Janet leads Sammy to HEATH, in his late twenties, preppy and energetic.

JANET
This is Sammy. She just got her
heart broken, so be nice.

Janet disappears immediately. Heath stands to greet Sammy.

HEATH
I'm Heath. Nice to meet you. That
sucks to hear.

SAMMY
It could be worse. But I am
homeless.

Heath giggles.

HEATH
Grab a chair, join us. We're
playing never-ever-have-I-ever.

LATER

Sammy has joined the group.

HEATH
 Never ever, have I ever...fucked
 someone in the arse.

A few, including Dan, take a drink. Heath looks to Sammy.

HEATH (CONT)
 Your turn.

SAMMY
 (reading Heath)
 Never ever have I ever...been
 fucked in the arse.

Fewer people take a drink, Dan still included.

Sammy, unrelated to this thrilling game, scans the table.

She notes Dan, and Dan noted her. There is clearly
 some history between the two, and it's not pleasant. It is
 awkward.

A much drunker party-goer, DUDE-BRO, animatedly leaps into
 action and gestures towards Dan.

DUDE-BRO
 Lemon! It's your turn.

DAN
 "Lemon"? And how is it my turn?

Everybody, excluding Sammy, now chants "LE-MON, LE-MON",
 etc.

DAN
 (looking at Sammy)
 Fine. Never ever, have I ever,
 vomited during oral sex.

Dan continues glaring at Sammy. Sammy timidly sips. A chorus
 of "ewwwwws" and "wows".

PARTY-GOER
 (to Sammy)
 Were you the giver or the receiver?

SAMMY
 (unsure whether to respond)
 I was the giver. I was fifteen.

More disgusted sounds. Everyone turns to Dan.

DUDE-BRO
 (to Dan)
 You must be fuckin' psychic, dude.

Sammy, upset, quickly gets up and leaves.

INT. JANET'S HOUSE - BATHROOM

Janet is using the toilet, the sounds of the party muffled. Sammy quickly enters, shutting the door behind her.

JANET
 (drunkenly)
 Woah...I don't think we're close
 enough for this yet.

Janet notices Sammy is in tears.

SAMMY
 He's being such a dick.

JANET
 Who? Heath?

SAMMY
 No, Dan.

JANET
 Oh, cool, you know Dan?

SAMMY
 Yeah...we were friends for like,
 years, after high school.

JANET
 Oh, I only invited him because he's
 such a drag at work. I wanted to
 see if he's autistic.

Sammy is still sobbing.

JANET (CONT)
 I hope that makes you feel better.

INT. JANET'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM

Sammy exits the bathroom, drying her tears. Heath approaches, a warm and calm look on his face. He grabs Sammy by the shoulders and rubs her arms, comfotingly.

HEATH

Hey, that stuff doesn't matter. I don't care if you spewed on a guy's dick.

Sammy laughs.

SAMMY

Thanks.

HEATH

Can I show you something?

INT. JANET'S HOUSE - GARAGE

A cluttered, car-less, garage, filled with moving boxes and packing materials. The party is still audible, but barely.

Heath THRUSTS upon Sammy's bare buttocks, who is bent over a storage shelf.

HEATH

(fumbling his words)

Now...you have...ever.

SAMMY

Yes.

Sammy winces.

SAMMY (CONT)

This really fucking hurts, like a lot, can we just...

Sammy moves away and spins around. Heath doesn't stop thrusting despite no longer being inside Sammy.

Sammy pushes herself onto Heath.

SAMMY (CONT)

Be normal.

HEATH

I am.

Heath "finishes", pulling his pants up.

HEATH (CONT)

Cheers.

Heath exits the garage, rejoining the party.

EXT. JANET'S HOUSE - BALCONY

The drinking game has subsided. Dan and MORRO, in his early twenties, and super flamboyant, engage in solo conversation. Dan is distracted but Morro is very enthusiastic and genuine.

MORRO

I'm a performance artist.

DAN

Oh.

MORRO

Like...have you heard of "The Artist is Present?"

DAN

No.

MORRO

MOMA exhibit by Marina Abramovic.

DAN

I still don't know.

MORRO

Well basically, this lady, the artist...she sat at a table at MOMA for like days at a time, wore a diaper, and people could come and sit across from her. They could make eye contact but not touch or talk.

DAN

So that's what's inspired you?

Morro is thrown off by this question.

MORRO

No, I just wanted to tell you about it.

Dan stands.

DAN
Look...Morro...I'd love to talk
more but I have to go find someone.
Can Janet give you my number?

EXT. JANET'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Sammy lays on the grass, looking up at the sky. A few stragglers from the party exit, drunkenly, and hop into their cars and drive away.

Dan exits the house and lays next to Sammy.

DAN
Hey.

Sammy looks to Dan.

SAMMY
What's up?

DAN
I'm sorry. That was kind of...mean.

Sammy shrugs.

SAMMY
(re: the sky)
I thought I saw the Southern Cross
but it was just a satellittle
re-entering orbit.

DAN
I don't think that happens. Ever.

A pause.

SAMMY
Why did we stop being friends?

DAN
You know why.

SAMMY
I got fired today. And Ted dumped
me last night.

Dan laughs, an inappropriate reaction.

DAN
So what did you do?

SAMMY

I abandoned him at the hospital. I can't go home. He'll be there.

DAN

You can stay with me tonight.

SAMMY

His mum...his *awful* mother...she owns the house. I need to move out anyway.

DAN

I've got a spare room.

INT. DAN'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM

A sparse, barely lived in, not-quite-modern, apartment, is entered drunkenly by Sammy and Dan. Sammy flops onto the couch, still wearing shoes.

SAMMY

Goodnight, my love.

INT. DAN'S APARTMENT - DAN'S BEDROOM

Dan sits on his bed, checking his phone. He has a text.

It reads: "Hey, its Morro from Janets. If youre up for it i'm in your part of town tonight".

Dan ignores the text. He recieves another:

"i'm verse".

Dan opens his dresser drawer. It reveals typical single dude detritus: clothes, phone chargers, spare lightbulbs. He places his hand in the drawer --

SLAMMING it hard.

Dan, wincing silently, cradles his hand and switches off the lamp, climbing into bed.

DARKNESS

The door opens, OC.

DAN'S BEDROOM

Sammy stands in the door way.

SAMMY
I can't sleep on that couch.

DAN
I don't have a spare mattress, I'm
sorry.

SAMMY
It's fine. I'm moving my stuff as
soon as muster up the guts to face
him.

Sammy climbs into bed with Dan, kicking off her shoes.

SAMMY
Is this OK?

DAN
Just don't touch me.

Sammy grabs Dan's recently hurt hand, examining the
developing bruise. Small specks of blood envelop the
knuckles.

SAMMY
You still do that?

Dan doesn't reply.

SAMMY (CONT)
It's OK. Happened to me, too,
today.

Sammy shows the blood stain on her hand.

SAMMY (CONT)
Of course, it's Ted's blood.

Silence.

DAN
Do you remember how we became
friends?

SAMMY
Yeah - we were in class, Grade Ten,
and you thought I was the baddest
bitch alive.

Dan laughs.

DAN
Y'know, you're re-writing history.
But only a little.

Sammy cuddles Dan.

SAMMY
I missed you.

DAN
Me too.

Sammy looks around the room, her eyes having adjusted to the darkness.

SAMMY
What happened to Joel? His stuff's gone.

DAN
We...he moved. To Melbourne.

SAMMY
Oh.

DAN
He's with a girl now.

SAMMY
That's hard, man. I'm so sorry.

DAN
(smiling)
Hey, at least I didn't send him to hospital.

Sammy laughs and kisses Dan on the cheek.

SAMMY
Goodnight, Dan.

DAN
Goodnight, Sammy.

EXT. OFFICE PARK - DAY

Sammy, dressed in a nice blouse and business-ey eye-glasses, steps out of her car into the parking lot of an office building.

She begins to walk towards the door. Other BUSINESS PEOPLE mill about, heading to work.

Suddenly, Sammy --

-- VOMITS

loudly and ungracefully on the concrete. She looks around. People stare. Wiping her mouth, Sammy straightens her blouse and continues onwards to the building, unfazed.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

Sammy is interviewed by a HIRING MANAGER and a SUPERVISOR, both middle aged, serious men, dressed very business casual. She sits across from both of them, who are reading from a folder clearly containing Sammy's CV and credentials. If this were a cartoon, Sammy would be green with nausea.

SAMMY

Just off the bat, I'm not feeling too well today so I apologise in advance if I'm a little...slow.

SUPERVISOR

Darling, we all have our off days.

He offers a sipid smile.

HIRING MANAGER

We like to start by saying that we think of our workplace like a big family.

Sammy's heard these words before.

HIRING MANAGER (CONT)

We have a very relaxed culture here, even for a design firm. We don't want button downs or pencil skirts, unless that's what you're into.

Sammy is confused.

SAMMY

I'm sorry?

HIRING MANAGER

No dress code, outside the obvious. No client contact. Very few co-workers. It can get a little lonely here.

SAMMY

Oh, that's fine. I work great alone.

Both interviewers nod, and jot something down on Sammy's CV.

SAMMY (CONT)

But I also work great in a team.

HIRING MANAGER

We have inside applicants for this role, to be forthcoming. But we did love your application and your portfolio. Very modern.

SAMMY

Thankyou.

SUPERVISOR

We expect a high level of self-directed work here. As your line manager, I like to see to finished products, and nothing at the draft stage. Can you handle the lack of direction?

Sammy smiles.

SAMMY

Of course.

INT. DESIGN OFFICE - DAY

A small modern office interspersed with cubicles; perhaps three or four people, tops, work here.

The Hiring Manager and Supervisor lead Sammy to computer. The three other EMPLOYEES don't even look up from their desks, all frantically using design programs or sketching in notepads.

SUPERVISOR

No pressure here, especially if this is new software. But we'd like to see your font work.

Sammy nods, sitting at the desk.

SUPERVISOR (CONT)

There's some copy in the text file; do your best, and we'll be in the conference room waiting.

He smiles and the executives leave. Sammy gets to work, reading the file.

One of the mute employees, KYLE, a little older than Sammy, full beard, high-top hair and an air of arrogance, approaches Sammy.

KYLE

You being interviewed?

SAMMY

Yeah, I'm Sammy. Nice to meet you.

KYLE

Kyle. I applied for the position as well.

Sammy isn't sure how to respond.

SAMMY

Well...I wish you the best.

KYLE

Against my better judgment...I have a tip. They like minimalism. They don't want to know you went to design school. They're stuck in the nineties.

SAMMY

Noted. And I didn't go to school.

KYLE

(ignoring Sammy)

But don't make it look effortless, either. Take a little longer than you would have.

SAMMY

I like your beard.

Kyle smiles.

KYLE

Good luck.

Kyle passes Sammy a note. She reads it. It has a phone number on it.

EXT. OFFICE PARK - DAY

The interviewers have walked Sammy to the front door.

SUPERVISOR
You'll be hearing from us.

SAMMY
I hope so. It was nice to meet you
both.

They all shake hands like robots, and the executives re-enter the building.

Sammy heads off to her car.

She steps over her, now sun-dried, pile of puke, and hops into the driver's seat.

INT. CHILD PROTECTION OFFICE - LATER

Dan sits at his desk, typing. Janet sits across from him, absorbed in her work. Dan is pained by his hand, stopping momentarily to inspect it.

Janet turns to Dan.

JANET
I'm either going to shit myself or
throw up.

DAN
You sick?

JANET
I think so. I might head home.

DAN
My housemate just texted me. She
was sick at her job interview.
Maybe it was something at your
party going around.

JANET
That was like three weeks ago.

Janet burps.

JANET (CONT)
Tell Trisha I'm off for the day.
Handle my walk-ins?

DAN

Okay. Feel better.

Dan keeps typing as Janet grabs her purse and departs.

INT. DAN'S APARTMENT - BATHROOM

Sammy stands in front of the full-length mirror, completely nude. Her interview clothes are piled on the ground by her.

She inspects every inch of her visible body; fondling her breasts and pondering her pubic hair.

She looks down at her belly. She has a slim frame, but a barely noticeable belly.

She spins around turns the shower on, testing the water with her hand.

INT. CHILD PROTECTION OFFICE - LATER

Dan, still at his desk.

A RECEPTIONIST, sartorially stuck in the eighties, approaches.

RECEPTIONIST

Daniel, a Kyleah Watts is here to see Janet. I'm told you're taking her appointments.

DAN

Thanks Marge. Give me a minute. Can you put her in a spare crisis room for me?

INT. CHILD PROTECTION OFFICE - CRISIS ROOM

Kyleah, the client Janet and Dan visited earlier, watches as her infant quietly plays with a set of baby toys on the ground. The "crisis room" is simply a counseling office with two lounges.

Dan enters.

DAN

Kyleah, I'm so sorry. Janet's gone home sick.

KYLEAH

Oh.

DAN

If you're comfortable, her and I share a caseload. If not, I can wait for a female worker to become available.

KYLEAH

It's fine.

Dan sits.

DAN

So what's been happening? Have you been completing the program all good?

KYLEAH

It's been fine. Very informative.

There's a pause.

KYLEAH (CONT)

I'm nineteen.

Dan nods.

DAN

I'm aware. June (re: the infant), she's 18 months, right?

KYLEAH

I had her in high school.

Dan nods, and another beat.

KYLEAH

Someone I graduated with just climbed Mount Kilimanjaro. Another girl...she went to Rio for the Olympics.

DAN

To compete?

KYLEAH

To watch it. She just got on a plane to Brazil to watch fucking sports.

Dan can see where this going. Kyleah has begun to tear up, but regains her composure.

KYLEAH (CONT)

I sleep whenever she sleeps. I had a dream where I wake up and she doesn't. She just stays sleeping. And I put her in the pram and I push her around, and she keeps sleeping. And I go to the movies. I meet a guy.

Dan calmly places a hand on Kyleah's shoulder.

DAN

Do you know what our dreams are, Kyleah?

KYLEAH

(continuing)

I met a guy, at the cinemas. I fucked him. He went home. June kept sleeping.

DAN

Our dreams are random...neurons, little cells...in our brain. Firing. Like little specks of memory, just bursting while we sleep. Randomly. It means nothing.

Kyleah nods, but is sobbing now.

KYLEAH

(through tears)

I don't know where I fit anymore. The mums I know, they don't want to climb mountains or go to the Olympics.

June, the infant, is blissfully unaware of what is happening around her.

KYLEAH (CONT)

They just want this. And one day...just once. I send June to daycare hungry. I couldn't produce and I hadn't pumped. She was sick. So they rang you guys. And now it's all in my face. I don't fit in. I don't do it well. I can't be a mum and I can't be a child.

Dan is a consummate professional, but this clearly hits home for him somehow.

DAN

You can feel shame, or remorse.
It's normal. I've heard nothing but
glowing reports from our psycho
educational workers. June is
thriving. I'm worried about you,
Kyleah.

KYLEAH

Really?

DAN

Of course.

Kyleah smiles.

DAN (CONT)

I'm going to refer you to our
clinical team. But first, I want
you to do something for yourself.
Anything.

KYLEAH

Like what?

DAN

Can you leave June with someone?
Maybe go to the movies?

KYLEAH

I think my Mum.

DAN

There you go.

Kyleah wipes her tears.

KYLEAH

I feel stupid. I don't know why I
came here.

DAN

I'm glad you did.

INT. GYNECOLOGIST'S OFFICE - WAITING ROOM

Sammy sits among other patients in a modern clinic waiting
room. She looks across a coffee table.

A BELEAGUERED MOTHER and her young DAUGHTER, probably about
3, sit across from her. The daughter plays with magazines
while the mother, ignoring the child, reads one.

Sammy, seeking distraction, looks upon a birthing magazine in front of her.

The front page reads: "100 REASONS WHY CHILDBIRTH DESTROYS YOUR CAREER, RELATIONSHIPS AND THE SPACE BETWEEN YOUR ANUS AND VAGINA".

She turns to another magazine. It is open to an editorial article: "THE JOYS OF MOTHERHOOD".

A MEDICAL RECEPTIONIST speaks up to the crowd.

RECEPTIONIST

Samantha?

Sammy stands.

RECEPTIONIST (CONT)

The doctor will see you now.

INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE

Sammy sits by a reclining chair with stirrups, across from an older, serious, lady doctor, DOCTOR COSGROVE, in her fifties. Dr. Cosgrove approaches all of life the same way, regardless of context.

COSGROVE

So, you were booked in for a pap smear, correct?

SAMMY

Right.

COSGROVE

But you're thinking you might be pregnant.

SAMMY

Yeah.

COSGROVE

There's an easy way for us to find out. Have you taken a home test?

SAMMY

Yeah, it was negative. Or inconclusive. I'm not sure.

COSGROVE

Well, why are we here?

SAMMY

I've been feeling nauseous, and just like...off. I've had big few life events recently...a breakup, so I guess that could be it. I put on a little weight.

COSGROVE

Has your period been regular? Have you missed your period?

SAMMY

I was on and off the pill for a while, so it's always been a bit light. Here and there, it comes, but nothing eventful.

Dr. Cosgrove writes something down.

COSGROVE

I won't waste your time with another urine test. Climb in the saddles here and we'll take a look.

Sammy stands, and the doctor grabs a gown.

COSGROVE (CONT)

Undress, put the gown on, no underwear. I'll step out of the room.

The doctor departs, leaving the gown and sliding across a curtain.

Sammy undresses dutifully and puts the gown on.

INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE - LATER

Sammy lays on the reclining seat, gowned up. Her feet are in the stirrups. The Doctor walks around her, holding medical tools.

TECH

This will feel strange.

Dr. Cosgrove heads "down there" with the tools, and Sammy winces.

Dr. Cosgrove is busy at work while Sammy seems deep in thought.

SAMMY

I was thinking about chickens the other day.

Dr. Cosgrove does not respond.

SAMMY (CONT)

They have this thing, you probably know, the cloaca. They poop, pee, and lay eggs from it. The same hole. How much easier would this stuff be?

The Doctor pops her head up, as if she's made a discovery. It seems almost certain she will shout "eureka!".

DOCTOR

You are with child.

Sammy deflates.

SAMMY

Fuck. Fuck.

Dr. Cosgrove stands, finishing the examination.

Sammy is panicking.

DOCTOR

So, this is strange. And hard to tell you. You're six months pregnant.

SAMMY

Six months?

Sammy panics moreso; chest heaving.

DOCTOR

You will be able to complete an ultrasound. Do you want to know the sex?

SAMMY

I'm six months pregnant? With a baby?

DOCTOR

A human baby.

SAMMY

I was on the pill six months ago. We...pulled out. Every time. Shouldn't I be fatter?

DOCTOR

The pill is not one hundred percent effective. *Coitus interruptus*, as you say, even less so.

The doctor notes something down.

DOCTOR (CONT)

Everybody wears the baby differently. You clearly have an enviable uterus.

SAMMY

I want it out of me. Can we do that now? Murder it. Make it go away.

Dr. Cosgrove shakes her head.

DOCTOR

I perform medical abortions. I don't plan on stopping.

SAMMY

Good. Good. Give me the drugs.

DOCTOR

You don't understand. You require a surgical abortion. There's no doctor in the region...the state, even...who'll perform a surgical abortion on a six month old fetus.

SAMMY

So in three months I have to shit out a baby I didn't even know I have? I've been eating sushi, like, every day.

Sammy is clearly having a panic attack.

DOCTOR

There's doctors I can refer you to. But they're not nearby.

SAMMY

I'm like one of those morbidly obese women...giving birth on the toilet.

DOCTOR

Oh sweetie.

Dr. Cosgrove rubs Sammy on the arm.

DOCTOR (CONT)
You're far from obese.

INT/EXT SAMMY'S CAR

Sammy drives down a suburban street. She has a greif-stricken, morose expression.

DOCTOR (V.O)
I'll refer you to a doctor in
Melbourne who provides late-term
abortions.

Sammy pulls the car over.

DOCTOR (V.O)
This is a time-critical decision.
If we wait any longer, it becomes a
legal thing. An appointment will
need to be made for the weekend
coming up. Are you able to travel?

Sammy BAWLS, sobbing openly and loudly, as traffic flies past her.

INT. CHILD PROTECTION OFFICE - LATER

Dan exits the crisis office, waving Kyleah and June off as they exit.

Dan scurries back to his desk; he appears distracted by the conversation he just had.

A fellow worker, ARNOLD, stands from his desk with his belongings as Dan passes.

ARNOLD
I'm off for the day. See you next
week Daniel.

Dan doesn't make eye contact.

DAN
Bye.

Dan reaches his desk. He grabs his phone. It has TWO MISSED CALLS, and a text from Sammy. It reads:

"Please come home. Please".

INT. DAN'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM

Sammy paces, smoking a cigarette. Dan enters through the front door, home from work.

DAN
Oh my god, do that outside.

SAMMY
(blurting)
I'm pregnant.

Dan smiles.

DAN
(faux outrage)
We only kissed! How can that be?!

Sammy shakes her head, stubbing the cigarette out on the sofa. Dan cringes.

SAMMY
I'm *six months* pregnant. It's
Ted's.

DAN
Well...fuck.

SAMMY
I have to go to Melbourne for it to
get sucked out of me. Tomorrow.
You're coming. I bought you a
ticket.

Dan guides Sammy to sit on the sofa, rubbing her shoulders.

DAN
Melbourne?

SAMMY
No one's going to kill a viable
fetus in North Queensland, Dan! And
I have it do it soon or no one will
at all.

DAN
OK, OK. I'll come. OK? Are you
calm? Will you be calm, please?

Sammy nods.

SAMMY

I'm calm.

DAN

By Monday, this will all be done.
Forgotten. You'll have gotten a new
job, got your furniture back, maybe
re-thought your birth control
practices a little?

Dan smiles. Sammy smiles too, a little.

Suddenly, Sammy hugs Dan.

SAMMY

I wish you'd been here for the last
year. I needed you so much.

Dan is taken aback.

DAN

(disingenuous)

Yeah, me too.

EXT. MELBOURNE AIRPORT - DAY

Dan and Sammy stand outside the arrivals terminal a huge,
busy airport. They both carry a weekend's worth of luggage.
They await a taxi.

DAN

Does Uber work here?

SAMMY

Not from the airport.

A TAXI pulls up. The pair hop in.

INT. TAXI - LATER

Sammy and Dan sit in the backseat of the cab. The driver is
having an intense and serious conversation in Hindi through
speaker phone.

DAN

I think I'm sitting on a sex
slave's passport.

SAMMY

My appointment's in...three hours.
They need you there to drop me and

(MORE)

SAMMY (cont'd)
especially to pick me up. I'll be
 on a local anesthetic and I guess
 they don't trust me to hail a cab
 on my own.

DAN
 Do you get to keep it in a mason
 jar?

SAMMY
 (answering the question
 seriously)
 I dont know, I'll have to ask.

Sammy checks her phone.

SAMMY (CONT)
 From now until then, I can't have
 anything to eat and I can only have
 ice chips, no water.

DAN
 Got it.

SAMMY
 The whole thing, with recovery,
 takes a few hours. Will you be
 alright?

DAN
 I'm in the only cool place in
 Australia. I'll be fine.

INT. MELBOURNE CLINIC - DAY

Sammy sits and waits to be called, next to Dan. They are
 both seated amongst other NERVOUS WOMEN, with their partners
 or friends. A sign above reception reads "MARCH AND DELILAH,
 FOR WOMEN."

Dan nudges Sammy.

DAN
 (whisper)
 Do you think everyone here is
 getting an abortion?

SAMMY
 What? No. They do other things
 here.

Dan subtly points to a YOUNG WOMAN quietly sobbing behind a magazine.

DAN
What about her?

SAMMY
Yes, her.

RECEPTIONIST
Samantha?

Sammy stands. Dan stands with her. They embrace.

DAN
Good luck. Remember - the mason
jar.

Sammy smiles.

SAMMY
Sure.

Sammy is led by the receptionist to an examination room.

EXT. CITY STREET - MELBOURNE - DAY

Dan walks through a bustling inner-city neighbourhood, filled with cafes, lane ways and stores, dodging fellow pedestrians.

Dan looks at his phone.

He scrolls through a list of phone numbers entitled "blocked numbers". He comes to one. It reads "Joel".

Dan dials the number, putting the phone up to his ear.

DAN
(into phone)
Hey. It's Dan. No, I'm in town.
Melbourne.

A pause.

DAN
(cont)
With a friend, but I've got some
time. Oh. Can you meet me
somewhere? I don't think I'll be
able to figure out the trams.

Dan has stopped walking in the middle of the street. Pedestrians now have to maneuver around him; Dan is unaware of his surroundings.

DAN
(cont)
Okay. Sounds good.

INT. OPERATING ROOM

Sammy lays on an operating table; a sheet has been erected at her midsection, blocking her view of the lower half of her body. She looks foggy; doped up.

A team of NURSES and DOCTORS fuss over equipment surrounding her.

NURSE
You should be feeling a little more relaxed now, I hope.

SAMMY
(smiling)
Oh yeah.

NURSE
That's good. This is Doctor Smallwood, he'll be performing your surgically-induced termination today.

DOCTOR SMALLWOOD reveals himself from the crowd, passing by Sammy.

SMALLWOOD
Hello. We'll be giving you a local anesthetic so you won't feel much of anything, but you will be conscious.

SAMMY
Right.

SMALLWOOD
We'll use a tool, like a small vacuum, to exhume the fetus from your womb. You will feel a pressure in your cervix and vaginal opening.

SAMMY
Makes sense.

INT. RECORD STORE - DAY

Dan peruses the wares of a small, vintage record store in the same intercity street as earlier. It is proliferated with HIPSTERS and TOURISTS, and a single disinterested CASHIER.

Dan pores over the cardboard covering of one particular record, yellowed with age.

JOEL (OS)

Hey.

Dan spins around. He smiles, seeing JOEL, perhaps 25, with olive skin and handsome features. He is dressed well, but casual, and reaches out for a hug. The pair hug.

DAN

Oh my god.

JOEL

Oh my god, indeed.

Joel peeks at the record that interested Dan so much. It's Joni Mitchell's "*Court and Spark*".

DAN

(re: record)

Remember how much I used to love this one?

JOEL

I do. Drove me crazy.

They both grin.

JOEL (CONT)

Why don't you buy it?

DAN

Don't have a record player. I guess I'm not a real Melbournite.

Joel smiles again. There's quite a significant, pregnant, pause.

JOEL

So why are you visiting?

DAN

Oh, a friend of mine...she's getting a procedure done.

JOEL
Sammy?

DAN
Yeah! How'd you know?

Dan suddenly laughs, as Joel searches for an answer.

DAN (CONT)
I guess I never had too many
friends.

JOEL
So, are you hungry? Do you wanna
get something to eat?

DAN
Nah...

JOEL
I was going to make something. I
live here in the city, we could
have lunch.

DAN
Are you sure?

JOEL
Of course - are you still a picky
eater?

INT. OPERATING ROOM

As earlier. A nurse stands by Sammy, gripping her hand.

A WHIRRING noise is heard as the doctor goes to work behind
the sheet. The nurse looks down at Sammy, smiling warmly.

The doctor speaks, barely audible over the noise and behind
the sheet.

DOCTOR (OS)
Please let me Ms. Hollings if
anything doesn't feel right.

SAMMY
Sure.

INT. JOEL'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN

Joel's apartment isn't spacious, but it's stylish with a view of the city. Joel prepares a green, leafy-looking meal at the island counter and Dan watches on.

DAN

To be honest, that doesn't look appetizing.

JOEL

I know, I know. But I promise you'll like it.

Dan looks around. There's nothing really to note in his surroundings; motel art hanging on the walls, a sofa visible in the next room, and an open door to the bedroom.

DAN

Where are you working?

JOEL

I'm a surgical resident at a private hospital in Carlton.

DAN

Oh, that's awesome. I graduated about six months ago.

JOEL

I saw on Facebook. Are you working?

DAN

I'm a child safety officer.

JOEL

That's so good. You were always good with kids.

Joel looks up from the food prep, smiling.

JOEL (CONT)

So good.

Dan takes a deep breath. He's about to say something he's been trying to say for quite a while.

DAN

How's Maria?

JOEL

She's good. She's in Adelaide at the moment visiting her nanna.

(MORE)

JOEL (cont'd)
She's gonna pass away soon, I
think.

DAN
Maria?

JOEL
No, her nanna.

Joel presents two plates of chicken salad, with forks, and sets them down at an artisan, free-trade table.

JOEL (CONT)
Just try it.

The pair sit to eat. Clinking of cutlery as Joel and Dan take bites of the food.

Joel stands up.

JOEL
Some wine?

Dan shrugs.

Joel produces a bottle of wine and two glasses from a cabinet in the kitchen. He pours him and Dan a glass, sitting down.

DAN
(re: the food)
It's not too bad.

JOEL
I always said, I can get anyone to eat vegetables. Your parents just didn't try hard enough.

He smiles.

DAN
Do you ever think about me?

Joel sips his wine, looking out the window.

JOEL
You know, I miss Queensland all the time. It gets so cold here. I miss the wet summers and being a uni student. Nothing to worry about.

Dan isn't having it.

DAN
Do you ever miss me?

JOEL
I really hoped you were better by now.

DAN
Who says I'm not better? I'm just asking a question.

JOEL
(sighing)
You're not a part of my life anymore. Neither is Queensland, or the wet summers, or being a young guy...I'm an adult now.

DAN
And I'm not?

JOEL
No, you're not. You're still fucking around with Sammy, coming to Melbourne, what, on a whim?

DAN
Not on a whim.

JOEL
Then why? Why come see me? It's been a year. I have a girlfriend.

DAN
You're playing house.

JOEL
You're a fucking child. You need to a grow up.

Dan stands up.

INT. OPERATING ROOM

The whirring has stopped, and the nurse continues to hold Sammy's hand.

DOCTOR (OS)
This will, again, probably feel a little strange. I'm going to use forceps to dilate your cervix.

SAMMY
Why? Isn't it gone?

The doctor is silent. The nurse searches for words.

INT. JOEL'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM

Dan is angrily headed for the door. Joel stops him, grabbing him by the shoulders.

JOEL
Tell me I'm wrong.

Dan is silent.

NURSE (V.O)
The doctor is making sure no
materials remain in you uterus.
Sometimes that happens.

Dan attempts to kiss Joel on the lips. Dan, instead, kisses Joel on the cheek - what was likely intended as a grand gesture appears like a sterile act of affection from an uncle or aunt.

Joel LAUGHS loudly. He kisses Dan on the lips.

JOEL
You're an idiot.

INT. RECOVERY ROOM

Sammy sits among other women in the throes of recovery from anesthetics, seated on reclining chairs and reading magazines. An ASSISTANT watches on.

Sammy picks up a lifestyle magazine from in front of her. Her hands, trembling, turn the pages to a cover article.

It reads: "LIFE-RUINING MISTAKES YOU CAN MAKE BEFORE AGE 25".

She turns a page. Another reads "HOW TO APPROPRIATE INDIGENOUS CULTURE: DIDGERIDOOS AND DIDGERIDONT'S".

INT. JOEL'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM

Dan lays on his back on Joel's bed. Joel takes off his shirt manically, likewise removing Dan's. Dan turns to his side, taking his pants off. From this angle, he spies a framed photo on Joel's bedside. It features Joel and a pretty young woman, presumably MARIA, standing in some holiday destination.

Joel puts a condom on eagerly, and squirts lubricant from a bottle.

JOEL
On your back.

Dan complies. Joel lifts Dan's legs up, and enters him.

DAN
Ow.

JOEL
Stop?

DAN
No.

Joel thrusts more. As he does, he clearly notes a number of prominent straight white razor SCARS on both of Dan's upper thighs. Joel is seen to note this, before gripping Dan by the throat.

JOEL
You still like this?

Dan nods. Joel strangles Dan, who gags. Joel keeps thrusting.

Dan's phone, in his pants on the floor, rings. Joel and Dan ignore it.

INT. RECOVERY ROOM

Sammy puts the phone up to her ear, after dialing. She is frazzled. Most of her fellow patients have moved on from recovery.

She gets Dan's message bank.

DAN (V.O)
It's Dan. Leave a message.

SAMMY

They won't let me leave without
you, you fuckwit! Where are you?

INT. JOEL'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM

Joel is leading Dan to the door, both having messy hair and being a little sweaty.

JOEL

Alright, bye.

Dan goes to kiss Joel goodbye - Joel stops him.

JOEL (CONT)

What are you doing?

Dan is confused.

JOEL (CONT)

It was a mistake. I don't want to
hear from you.

DAN

What?

JOEL

I know what you're like. For old
time's sake, OK? Please just let it
be.

Joel opens the door.

EXT. CITY STREET - MELBOURNE - DAY

Dan, seeing his texts from Sammy, rushes down the street. He is clearly distressed by what just happened, but distracted by needing to rush.

INT. TAXI - LATER

On the way to airport, with their luggage in their laps, Sammy and Dan sit silently, staring out the window. Both are pre-occupied with thoughts.

DAN

(un-enthusiastically)
How do you feel?

SAMMY
Like I got impaled.

DAN
Are you mad at me?

Sammy shakes her head.

EXT. KARA'S HOUSE - DAY

Sammy walks to the front door of a typical suburban house. She doesn't knock; just enters.

INT. KARAS HOUSE - LIVING ROOM

Two young children, FREYA (4) and DARLA (5), play energetically in a sea of toys which is Kara's living room.

Sammy approaches the children, who turn to her.

FREYA & DARLA
Auntie Sammy!

Sammy smiles and kneels down to greet the children.

SAMMY
(silly voice)
Freya, Darla. How do you do?

FREYA
(laughing)
You're talking silly!

The children's mother, KARA, in her late twenties, a chubby and overworked woman, heads in from the kitchen. She is Sammy's sister, but you couldn't tell.

KARA
Sammy, what are you doing?

SAMMY
I thought I'd pop by and see the kids.

Kara nods.

KARA
Well, come have some coffee.

Sammy turns to the girls.

SAMMY
I'll come and play with you guys
soon, OK?

The children nod enthusiastically and return to being little tornadoes.

INT. KARA'S HOUSE - KITCHEN

Kara and Sammy drink tea at the table, the children audible in the other room.

SAMMY
How's Mum?

KARA
She is...existing. A whirlwind of
destruction.

SAMMY
Can I smoke?

Kara gestures to the window.

KARA
By the window.

Sammy stands, lighting a cigarette.

KARA (CONT)
Is that all you wanted to know?

SAMMY
I just got a new job. Found out
today.

KARA
What happened to your old one?

Sammy takes a drag of her cigarette, not responding.

SAMMY
Ted and I broke up. About a month
ago.

KARA
Oh, good.

SAMMY
I'm living with a friend of mine.

KARA
So it's like the old days, huh?

Sammy shrugs.

SAMMY
I like it.

KARA
You would.

Sammy looks at pictures on the wall; kitschy family portraits featuring Kara, her HUSBAND, and the kids, children's drawings on the fridge.

KARA (CONT)
Are you going to ask how I am?

SAMMY
How are you, Kara?

KARA
Tired.

Sammy nods.

SAMMY
I got an abortion.

Kara almost does a spit-take, spinning around to stare at her sister.

KARA
Again?

SAMMY
It was Ted's.

KARA
Is that why you broke up?

Sammy shakes her head.

SAMMY
He doesn't know. I found out after.

KARA
I'm having trouble understanding the time-frame here.

SAMMY
It was a late-term abortion.

KARA
How late term?

SAMMY
Six months? I had to go to
Melbourne for it.

Kara is disgusted.

KARA
Did you not know you were pregnant?

Sammy shakes her head.

KARA (CONT)
Are you a retard?

SAMMY
You know my period's always been
weird.

A beat.

SAMMY (CONT)
I barely gained any weight.

KARA
But didn't you feel like shit?

SAMMY
I always do.

Kara takes a deep breath.

KARA
It's probably a good thing. You're
not ready.

SAMMY
You were my age.

Kara looks at Sammy as if to say "and?".

KARA
What are you doing, Sammy?

SAMMY
What do you mean?

KARA
I mean - you're nearly 23. You're
living with a friend. You're here
at 11 on a weekday.

SAMMY

Spare me.

Sammy stubs the cigarette out in the sink.

KARA

And which friend? Is it Dan?

SAMMY

Yeah.

KARA

The one who tried to hang himself?

SAMMY

He's better now.

KARA

I thought you cut him out.

Sammy sighs.

SAMMY

I tried.

INT. CHILD PROTECTION OFFICE - LATER

Dan is at his work computer. He scrolls through Facebook.

In the search bar, he types "Joel Westbrook" and clicks the first profile. A page displays "This user is no longer available".

Dan whips out his phone. He writes a text "Why have you blocked me on Facebook?".

EXT. KARA'S HOUSE - BACKYARD

Sammy runs around playing with Darla and Freya. Freya "tackles" Sammy to the ground and the children pounce on her.

SAMMY

(theatrical)

Oh no!

FREYA

Got you!

DARLA
You smell like cigarettes.

SAMMY
Do I?

DARLA
Mummy said you're her sister, like Freya's my sister.

SAMMY
That's true. Me and your mum were just like you two once.

DARLA
If you're Mum's sister, why don't you live with her?

Sammy sits up, and grabs Darla in a cuddle.

SAMMY
Because, my little friend, when you grow up, you don't live with your brother and sister anymore.

DARLA
That's stupid.

SAMMY
Maybe it is.

DARLA
You should live with us.

FREYA
Stupid Darla, there's not enough rooms!

Sammy grins. She looks at the house. Through the window, she can see Kara cleaning up the mess from the children, probably in vain.

INT. DAN'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM

Dan enters from work.

DAN
Sammy?

No response. Dan lounges on the sofa, taking his tie off. He turns the TV on. He checks his phone. His text remains unanswered.

Dan has an idea - we can almost see the lightbulb.
He rings someone off his phone.

DAN
Hey, it's Dan. From Janet's party.

INT. BAR - NIGHT

Sammy sits at the bar - a typical regional Queensland pub on a quiet weeknight, populated only by the regulars.

She is approached by Kyle - the guy from her job interview - who sits next to her.

KYLE
Hey.

SAMMY
Hey.

KYLE
It's so weird you called.

SAMMY
You gave me your number.

KYLE
Yeah but, you're my boss.

Sammy grins.

SAMMY
So is this inappropriate?

Kyle looks around at the drab surroundings.

KYLE
No, but the setting leaves a lot to be desired.

The BARTENDER approaches.

KYLE
(to Sammy)
What'll you have?

SAMMY
Schooner.

KYLE
 (two bartenders)
 Two schooners.

The bartenders pours two beers, producing them with a smile.

KYLE
 So, creative director, huh?

SAMMY
 Stop it, you make me sound old.

KYLE
 How old are you?

SAMMY
 I'm twenty-two.

KYLE
 God. My boss is eight years younger
 than me.

SAMMY
 I'm sorry I got the job over you.

KYLE
 No, it's OK. I'm thinking about
 moving on. There's not a lot of
 design work up here. Maybe south,
 Sydney or Melbourne?

SAMMY
 I was just in Melbourne.

KYLE
 Oh, cool, how come?

INT. MORRO'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Morro greets Dan as he enters the house. The house, once a family home, is now converted to something of a shrine to Morro's (terrible) art.

MORRO
 Welcome to my humble abode.

DAN
 It's nice.

MORRO
 I live with my brother.

DAN

Oh.

MORRO

But he's cool.

Morro leads Dan to the bedroom.

INT. BAR - NIGHT

Same as before. Sammy ponders Kyle's question, testing the waters.

SAMMY

I had to have a procedure done.

KYLE

Ah, say no more. Nose job?

They both laugh.

SAMMY

No, I had an abortion.

They both stop dead in their tracks.

KYLE

Why would you tell me that?

SAMMY

Well, it's the truth.

KYLE

And you can't do that here?

SAMMY

Not the kind I needed done.

KYLE

Oh.

Kyle sips his beer.

KYLE (CONT)

I'm so sorry.

SAMMY

Why? You didn't do it.

KYLE

Should you even be drinking?

SAMMY

Of course I should! Do you understand the concept? I'm baby free.

Sammy is joking, but Kyle is incredibly uncomfortable.

KYLE

Well...as long as you're OK.

SAMMY

I'm A-OK.

Sammy gives a cheesy grin.

INT. MORRO'S HOUSE - BEDROOM

Dan and Morro watch a loud, seizure-inducing anime show on a plasma screen TV whilst lying on top of the bed. Something about the situation has made Dan uncomfortable - Morro's room, again, is filled with posters related to art, anime, comic books.

MORRO

You like anime?

DAN

I liked Pokemon when I was a kid.

MORRO

Oh, Pokemon is like...entry-level anime.

DAN

(re: TV)

This stuff's all in Japanese.

Morro says something in Japanese, then smiles.

MORRO

It was a joke.

DAN

I don't speak Japanese...so I didn't get it.

OS, YELLING is audible.

MORRO

(re: yelling)

My brother, Rich.

RICH (OS)
Get the fuck in here Morro!

MORRO
(yelling out the door)
I'm with a friend!

RICH (OS)
I don't give a fuck! You didn't
flush, you pig. There's shit in the
toilet!

Morro turns beet red.

MORRO
Give me a minute.

Dan is mortified. The anime on screen continues to scream at him. Morro gets up and leaves the room.

EXT. BAR - NIGHT

Kyle and Sammy leave the bar. Sammy is considerably more drunk than Kyle, and exaggeratedly leans on him, flirting hard.

KYLE
I'll call you a cab.

SAMMY
Come home with me, I live close.

KYLE
Nah.

SAMMY
My roommate'll be asleep, it's
fine.

KYLE
It's not that.

SAMMY
(slurring)
I won't tell if you don't.
Workplace sexual harassment, ya'll.

Kyle cringes. He begins to dial his mobile phone for a taxi.

SAMMY
(now enraged)
You're too good for me?

KYLE

What?

SAMMY

You leave me your number while I'm interviewing for a job -- and now you won't fuck me, what, cause I had a baby in me last week?

Kyle is shocked.

KYLE

You're drunk.

SAMMY

Fuck off.

KYLE

Whatever.

Kyle walks away.

SAMMY

I'll see you at the office.

INT. MORRO'S HOUSE - HALLWAY

Morro and his brother are heard arguing elsewhere in the house. Dan sneaks through the hallway, a daring escape.

MORRO (OS)

It wasn't me! I didn't even shit today. It was your dirty fucking friend.

RICH (OS)

Fuck you, liar. You're such a pig.

MORRO (OS)

Stop embarrassing me!

Dan walks into the living room.

LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

...right into Morro and RICH (30's) argument. They both stop to see Dan, mid-sneak.

MORRO

The bathroom's the other way.

RICH
 (sneering)
 Yeah, it'll be the one with the big
 shit in it.

MORRO
 Fuck you, Rich.

Dan is caught. His first instinct - run - leads him to
 SPRINT past the brothers, out the front door.

EXT. MORRO'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Dan runs and hops into his car, in the driveway.

INT/EXT DAN'S CAR - NIGHT

He puts the car in reverse frantically.

EXT. MORRO'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Morro steps out the front door.

MORRO
 Dan?

Dan reverses the car out the driveway, likely flooring the
 accelerator. As a result, he --

SMASHES

-- into a tree across the road, damaging the rear of his
 car. No worries -- Dan drives off into the night, no
 tail-lights.

Morro stands in the doorway, bewildered.

EXT. SUBURBAN STREET - NIGHT

Sammy walks down a quiet suburban street in the dark of
 night. Sometimes a car passes, but not often. She is
 stumbling.

She stops at one particular house. It's Ted's (and Sammy's)
 house.

EXT. SAMMY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Sammy BANGS with both hands on the door.

SAMMY

Ted! Wake up! I want my shit!

She knocks again with all her force.

SAMMY

TED!

A neighbour's front light comes on. Clearly, no one is home.

Sammy reaches into her pocket. She still has the keys.

INT. SAMMY'S HOUSE - FOYER

Sammy enters the house and switches on the light.

SAMMY

Ted?

There's nothing.

LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

She switches more lights on. She heads to a stack of CD's and DVD's. She shoves as many she can, drunkenly, into her tiny purse.

She grabs a laptop - her's - that lay dusty next to the sofa, carrying it in her arms.

Finally, she turns to leave. But stops.

Sammy crouches down in the middle of the living room rug, pulling down her underwear.

She begins URINATING on the floor.

EXT. DAN'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Dan's badly damaged car pulls into its spot. He hops out. He exhibits some sort of disappointed, angry energy.

INT. DAN'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM

Dan, on his laptop, types into Google:

"How many valium does it take to die".

Results pop up.

Then, he types:

"How did Sylvia plath kill herself".

INT. DAN'S APARTMENT - BATHROOM

Dan opens up the bathroom drawer. He reveals the bottle of Valium gifted to him by Peter, unopened.

He opens it.

INT/EXT TAXI

Sammy rides a taxi, next to her full purse and laptop.

The CABBIE engages in polite conversation.

CABBIE
Had a good night?

SAMMY
Terrific.

INT. DAN'S APARTMENT - BATHROOM

Dan puts a handful of pills in his mouth - the whole bottle - and takes a swig of water from the faucet. He struggles to swallow, coughing. He splutters up a few of the pills.

Disgracefully, he fishes them off the floor and places them back in his mouth. He takes another big drink of water and, with aplomb, finally SWALLOWS the whole thing.

INT. DAN'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - LATER

Sammy drunkenly enters, and throws her belongings beside her. She sees the lights are on.

SAMMY
Oh my god, Dan. What happened to your car?

She walks towards Dan's bedroom.

BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Sammy enters Dan's bedroom to see Dan, lying with half his body on the bed and half off. A puddle of VOMIT is stuck in the carpet next to him.

SAMMY
What the fuck happened?

She shakes Dan. He responds with a gurgle, and some slurred words.

SAMMY (CONT)
Fuck.

BLACK

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

Dan awakes, alone, in a single-bed hospital room. He wears a hospital gown. The lights are dimmed, but the entire room has a dream-like glow emanating from the corner.

Dan looks over to the beside seat. In it sits Dan's mother, GLEN. Glen in is her forties and has a warm, motherly glow. However, her expression is one of great sadness.

GLEN
My boy.

DAN
Mum? What are you doing here?

GLEN
I thought you were better.

DAN
I am, I promise.

Glen lights a cigarette.

DAN (CONT)
You know you can't smoke in hospital.

GLEN
Who says we're in hospital?

Glen takes a long drag of the cigarette.

GLEN (CONT)

When I was your age, I'd never had a job. I went straight from high school to your father.

DAN

I know.

GLEN

The first time I ever let your father inside me -

DAN

Mum, gross.

GLEN

- we made your sister. Then you, a year later.

DAN

Your happy accidents.

GLEN

(smiling)

That's right.

DAN

Who told you to come here?

GLEN

(ignoring)

I've only ever wanted my babies to be happy. Please, just be happy.

There's a long silence. Dan takes another look at the room. Strangely, the hospital seems silent.

DAN

I love you, Mummy.

GLEN

I love you to, my little man.

NURSE (V.O)

He's gonna vomit again. Sit him up.

Suddenly, the hospital takes on a more harsh and realistic lighting.

HOSPITAL ROOM

Back to reality. Glen is gone. Dan is supported to sit up by a YOUNG NURSE, as he vomits into a tray.

YOUNG NURSE
No more pill fragments. That's good.

Dan is groggy. Sammy sits in the corner of the room, gressed out.

SAMMY
They pumped your stomach.

A PSYCHIATRIST and his MEDICAL STUDENT enter, holding charts. The nurse exits.

PSYCHIATRIST
Daniel. I remember you.

DAN
I'm in hospital...

PSYCHIATRIST
Indeed. Your friend here told us she found an empty bottle of Diazepam in your bathroom. Can you tell me how that happened?

Dan is silent.

PSYCHIATRIST (CONT)
You're being held for observation due to suicide risk. (To Sammy) The nurses will escort you to leave once visiting hours are over. (Back to Dan) You and I will have a chat tomorrow, my boy, bright and early.

The psychiatrist pats Dan on the shoulder. The student looks on uselessly. They both exit.

DAN
Did you tell anyone what happened?

SAMMY
Just the paramedics, why?

DAN
Good, let's get out of here.

SAMMY

What, why?

DAN

They'll put me in the acute ward again, you don't want to see that.

Sammy sits and ponders.

SAMMY

I think you really need to be here, Dan.

DAN

How the fuck would you know? You left last time, remember? I didn't see you for a year.

Sammy is taken aback, guilted.

SAMMY

The nurse will be back soon. They won't leave you alone.

DAN

They've got my clothes somewhere around here, find them.

Sammy searches the room - drawers, under tables, the bed. Nothing.

SAMMY

I don't remember what they did with them, I followed the ambo's and when I got here you were already in a gown.

DAN

Fuck it. Let's go.

SAMMY

Now?

Dan gets out of bed. He is suddenly very dizzy, and swaying. He sits down.

SAMMY

(cont)

Just wait a minute.

DAN

Go!

Dan stands. Sammy grabs her purse.

INT. HOSPITAL WING

Dan and Sammy surreptitiously walk down the hall. Early morning - fewer staff about, but some AIDES are seen serving breakfast.

Sammy walks in such a way to "cover" Dan, and his obvious out-of-place-ness.

EMERGENCY ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Sammy and Dan reach the emergency room. A lone EMERGENCY NURSE staffs the desk, and a few potential PATIENTS sit waiting. The nurse looks, seeing Dan.

NURSE

Sir?

Sammy and Dan BOLT out the front doors.

EXT. HOSPITAL - PARKING - NIGHT

The sun is rising. Danny and Sam reach the visitor car park. The wind blows Dan's gown, revealing his bare arse.

DAN

Where'd you park? It's cold.

Sammy looks back and sees the nurse exiting the emergency entrance, following them, but not in a rush.

The pair sprint.

INT. DAN'S APARTMENT

The pair enter, still on an adrenaline high (and Dan still in his gown).

DAN

Are you as tired as I am?

SAMMY

I really doubt it.

DAN

Come to bed with me.

INT. DAN'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM

The pair spoon in bed, daylight now creeping in from outside. There's still Dan's vomit caked on the carpet.

SAMMY

Can I ask a question?

DAN

I bet I know what it is.

SAMMY

Why?

Dan shrugs.

DAN

It's like, what else is there to do?

Sammy giggles.

SAMMY

I don't understand.

DAN

Nothing else goes right. I don't like my job...I don't fit in anywhere. I don't know what to do. It just felt right, at least at the time.

SAMMY

The time being...earlier tonight?

DAN

It doesn't make sense to you.

SAMMY

You're right.

DAN

That's OK.

SAMMY

I don't like my job either.

DAN

You haven't even started your new job yet.

SAMMY
I don't think I was meant to have a
job.

Dan thinks.

DAN
Me neither.

Sammy moves around a bit in bed, getting comfortable.

SAMMY
I'm sorry.

DAN
For what?

SAMMY
Last year. Everything. I totally
ditched you after everything that
happened.

DAN
You were here this time. And I was
never upset with you about it.

SAMMY
You seemed upset before, at the
hospital.

Dan ponders this.

DAN
I was just trying to hurt you.

SAMMY
Why do we do that?

DAN
You mean, why are we so mean to
each other?

They look at one another.

SAMMY
I think we're toxic together.

DAN
As people?

SAMMY
As friends.

Dan isn't upset by this, but he doesn't like hearing it.

DAN
You're my only friend.

SAMMY
Bad things happen when we're
together.

DAN
That's true.

SAMMY
(laughing)
Even the way we met.

DAN
We're too old to be new people now.
We can't just go to a new school
and redefine ourselves, cut our
hair different, or something.

SAMMY
I know.

DAN
This is it, forever.

Sammy kisses Dan on the neck.

SAMMY
I think I'm going to move in with
my sister.

DAN
Did she ask you to?

SAMMY
No...but I think she'll let me.

Dan shrugs.

DAN
OK.

Dan closes his eyes.

SAMMY
Hey Dan?

DAN
Yeah?

SAMMY

I really think - really,
swear-to-God - the years I spent
being around you were the best of
my life. No matter how shitty we
are together.

DAN

Me too.

SAMMY

I love you.

DAN

I love you too.

EXT. CHILD PROTECTION OFFICE - DAY

Dan pulls his damaged car into a parking lot outside work.
He hops out, ready for the day.

INT. CHILD PROTECTION OFFICE

Dan enters, one of the first few in the office. He passes
reception - and notices a POLICE OFFICER, an older male,
speaking to the Receptionist. Dan stops to overhear the
conversation.

RECEPTIONIST

(to cop, gesturing to Dan)
Daniel? He just walked in.

The Officer spins around.

EXT. CHILD PROTECTION OFFICE - DAY

Dan quickly walks to his car, trialled by the police
officer. Neither are running but the police officer is
serious.

POLICE OFFICER

(towards Dan)
Mr. Allen, please stop. I'm here to
detain you under Section 8 of the
Mental Health Act in this state,
which empowers me to -

Dan gets in his car and closes the door, casually.

INT/EXT DAN'S CAR

Dan drives to exit the parking lot at a slow speed - again, calm and casual.

EXT. CHILD PROTECTION OFFICE

The police officer walks towards the car park exit, blocking it. He stands in front of Dan's car.

POLICE OFFICER
Sir, please stop.

INT/EXT DAN'S CAR

Dan looks towards the office. A small crowd of his coworkers has gathered by the door. The police officer approaches his window.

Dan, cool as a cucumber, rolls the window down.

DAN
What seems to be the problem?

INT. DESIGN OFFICE - DAY

Sammy sits at her new desk, dressed well for her first day at work. She types an email, which we see parts of -

"To the office" "thank-you for being so welcoming" "hope to get to know you all", etc.

Kyle approaches, walking over from his desk.

KYLE
Samantha?

SAMMY
Yes, Kyle?

KYLE
When's everyone due in the meeting?

SAMMY
After lunch, say 1.30?

KYLE
Great.

SAMMY

I'm sending out an email anyway.

Kyle smiles politely and walks away. The entire exchange was completely professional, and Sammy appears proud of herself.

INT. EXAM ROOM

Dan sits across from the Psychiatrist in a mental health examination room. It has motivational posters on the wall as well as the classic "hang in there kitty", but nothing can kill the sterile vibe.

PSYCHIATRIST

So what happened Daniel?

DAN

I escaped hospital.

PSYCHIATRIST

Yes, and how come?

DAN

I'm sorry, I didn't want to spend three days in the acute ward.

The psych reads Daniel's chart.

PSYCHIATRIST

We have glowing reports here from a psychologist who worked with you for six months, saying you completed a DBT program and had made excellent progress. So I'm stunned that we're back here.

DAN

Me too.

PSYCHIATRIST

And you demonstrate such a high level of insight. Certainly not a patient who needs a community treatment order.

DAN

Okay.

INT. MUSIC STORE - DAY

Dan walks through a record store - albeit much less hip than the one in Melbourne - looking for one record in particular.

PSYCHIATRIST (VO)

You need to keep seeing this new psychologist you're referred to. I don't want to see you here again.

DAN (V.O)

You won't, I promise.

Dan stops. He's found it.

INT. KARA'S HOUSE - KITCHEN

Sammy carries a few bags of belongings through her house, helped by Kara.

SAMMY

Are you sure its OK for the girls to share a room?

KARA

Are you kidding? They end up together most nights anyway.

SAMMY

It's just temporary.

Kara puts down Sammy's bags. She hugs Sammy warmly. Sammy embraces Kara, and is now crying.

SAMMY (CONT)

I didn't even realise how much I missed you.

INT. DAN'S APARTMENT - DAY

Dan plugs in his brand new RECORD PLAYER, fumbling with the wires, before setting it on a bookshelf.

He reaches into a plastic bag and pulls out a record - Joni Mitchell's *Court and Spark* - which had been admiring in the record store.

He places the record on the player when the door KNOCKS.

Dan walks over and opens the door. It's Sammy.

SAMMY
Hey.

DAN
Hey.

SAMMY
Can I come in?

DAN
Yeah, definitely.

Sammy enters.

SAMMY
What are you doing?

DAN
I just bought this. Listen. It's
how you're meant to hear it, I
promise.

Dan drops the needle onto the record, playing the album.

Dan and Sammy sit on the sofa and listen as it plays loudly.

FADE OUT