

POTATO MAN

FADE IN:

INT. CAFETERIA LINE - DAY

"Office workers" are lined up, trays in hand, waiting to order and be served breakfast. The background music is gentle, dreamy.

A black woman with large round glasses steps forward to order. Behind the glass counter, POTATO MAN, a forty-something man with a thick moustache, sourpuss expression and super high paper hat, awaits her order.

The woman starts to sing.

WOMAN IN LINE

(to the tune of Poetry Man)

You're the Potato Man
You make everything
Ri-i-ight...

With that, the Potato Man scoops up a large helping of French fried potatoes, and dumps them onto a plate. He hands the woman her potatoes. She moves on, a contented look on her face.

Potato Man turns towards the camera and does a little rap. The background music picks up the tempo.

POTATO MAN

Potatoes come to life with special seasoning
But I specialize in seasons of the heart
Just like perception from above
I sense evaporated love
Reheating romance is my culinary art

Next up in line is a young man in a dress shirt and tie.

YOUNG MAN
(rapping to Potato Man)
Potato man, you rock the house
Ya got more magic than
Mickey Mouse
Ya servin' it UP!
Ya layin' it down!
No sucker chef cholo
Gonna take ya crown!

The still dour-faced Potato Man slaps a pile of potatoes onto a plate, and hands it to the young man.

Next up is a nervous-looking woman with weepy eyes.

POTATO MAN
Julia?

JULIA
Yes.

POTATO MAN
I've been expecting you.

Potato Man slaps a pile of potatoes onto a plate and hands it to Julia. Then, he takes another plate, slaps potatoes onto it. He sets down his serving spoon and picks up his plate of potatoes.

POTATO MAN
Shall we?

Julia nods. The studio audience applauds.

Potato Man and Julia walk over from the serving line to a table set up on center stage of a TV talk-show set.

Together, they sit down to eat, talk.

POTATO MAN
How are you this morning, Julia?

JULIA
Not good, actually.

POTATO MAN
Let's talk about it.

Julia takes a deep breath.

JULIA

My husband.. has just left me for a younger woman. After 25 years of marriage.

Potato Man nods.

JULIA

He's 46. This other woman.. is 22. He basically told me that he doesn't find me attractive anymore. That his new girlfriend..

(voice breaks into sobs)

...makes him feel alive. Happy..

POTATO MAN

Let me stop you there. I sense that a part of you feels that perhaps you should step back. Allow him to have this happiness, because he didn't find it with you.

JULIA

I do feel that way sometimes, yes.

POTATO MAN

Julia, somewhere along the line, you bought into the notion that if you can't have the sirloin, you can at least have the sizzle. Now look where that's brought you. Your husband devalued you. He devalued your marriage. In the process, he wound up with the sirloin and the sizzle. What are you left with?

JULIA

I- I don't know.

Potato Man snaps his fingers. A waiter in a tuxedo appears. He replaces Julia's plate of potatoes with an empty plate.

POTATO MAN

That. That's what you're left with.

Julia bursts into sobs. Potato Man snaps his fingers again. The waiter now returns the plate of potatoes to Julia.

POTATO MAN

Think you're walking out of here today with an empty plate, Julia? Not in my kitchen.

The crowd applauds wildly.

POTATO MAN

Let's have some potatoes.

Potato Man and Julia partake of their potatoes, as the audience continues to applaud.

POTATO MAN

How are your potatoes, Julia?

JULIA

They're... all right.

POTATO MAN

Be honest with me.

JULIA

Um.. well, they could use a little..

POTATO MAN

They're dry, aren't they?

JULIA

Yes.

POTATO MAN

A little under-cooked?

JULIA

Yes.

POTATO MAN

Now we're getting somewhere. Tell you what. We're going to make them better. Together.

Really loud applause from the audience as Potato Man and Julia rise from the table, carrying their plates of potatoes to the kitchen, where a full staff, adorned in aprons, await them.

Potato Man takes Julia's arm and introduces the other "chefs."

POTATO MAN

Julia, your fellow chefs. Brad. Susan. Kylia. Charlene. Kevin. All like you. All recovering from relationships broken by betrayal. And all here to surround YOU with support! This morning, we're ALL going to find the recipe for recovery.

There is a quick group hug, followed by more applause. Then, the group breaks and each heads to their station as Potato Man fires up the stove.

There is the sound of a doorbell. Potato Man looks up, a baffled look on his face. A crew-person directs Potato Man's attention to the teleprompter.

POTATO MAN

(reading)

Uh.. Who could that be?

VOICE-OVER (O.S.)

A potato soufflé is a tall order for any kitchen.

A door swings open, and standing in the doorway is the shadow of a figure with his head lowered.

VOICE-OVER (O.S.)

So today we've brought in some world-class help. Please welcome to our kitchen the esteemed head chef of the award-winning Parsley-What Restaurant in Soho: the honorable, Chef Randall, otherwise known as.. The Chef From The Bowels Of The Pits Of Hell!

The lights come up and the chef raises his head. He's a middle-aged man with a rough face, hip tossed blonde hair. He marches down the steps into the kitchen.

A still baffled-looking Potato Man extends his hand.

POTATO MAN

Welcome.

CHEF RANDALL

SHUT IT!!

Chef Randall storms over to Julia.

CHEF RANDALL

Look at you, you broken-down tart! The water's boiling and you've not even got spaghetti on! Come ON, you donkey!

Whimpering, Julia tries to break out the spaghetti.

CHEF RANDALL

Get it open, you [BLEEP]!!! How long does it take to break open a [BLEEP] bag of [BLEEP] spaghetti?!!!

Chef Randall rushes over to where Kevin is frantically stirring the risotto.

CHEF RANDALL

Oh, come ON, you! What IS this?!

KEVIN

It's almost ready, Chef!

Chef Randall dips a wooden spoon into the risotto, tastes it.

CHEF RANDALL

You're going to bloody kill someone!

Chef Randall runs the risotto-covered spoon down Kevin's face.

CHEF RANDALL

DO IT OVER YOU FAT [BLEEP}!!!

[WHAT FOLLOWS ARE A SERIES OF QUICK SHOTS]

Charlene has started a small kitchen fire.

CHARLENE

Fire, Chef!

CHEF RANDALL

Aw, [BEEP} me! Step back, you useless tart!

Chef Randall puts the fire out.

CHEF RANDALL

You're going to burn the whole place down!

CHARLENE

No, Chef!

CHEF RANDALL

You. PEE OFF!!

He sprays her in the face with a fire extinguisher.

CUT TO:

Chef Randall smashes a bowl of potatoes into Brad's chest.

CHEF RANDALL

Do it over!!

CUT TO:

Potato Man confronts Chef Randall

POTATO MAN

Sir, you've crossed a boundary.

Chef Randall pulls Potato Man's hat down over his eyes.

CHEF RANDALL

Now MOVE your arse!!

CUT TO:

CHEF RANDALL

(to Kevin)

You can't make a [BLEEP] risotto!!

Smashes a bowl of risotto into Kevin's face.

CUT TO:

Kyshia is weeping as she slices tomatoes.

KYSHIA

My mother died last week!

CHEF RANDALL

Shut it, you stupid cow!!

CUT TO:

Chef Randall dumps Susan's scrambled eggs onto the floor and stomps on them.

CUT TO:

Chef Randall confronts Dave and Julia.

CHEF RANDALL

You! YOU! BOTH OF YOU!! GET OUT!!

He slams a custard pie into both their faces. Potato Man rushes in and shoves Chef Randall.

POTATO MAN

I've had enough! Now I'm shutting you down!

Chef Randall clocks Potato Man over the head with a roller pin. Potato Man falls backwards into a cart of silverware.

CHEF RANDALL

You want to have at it, big boy?! Get up!
What kind of man are you?!

POTATO MAN

(between deep breathes)

I'll tell you what kind of man...

Potato Man slowly gets to his feet.

POTATO MAN

The kind that dices up the opposition...

Potato Man grabs a small pan with a long handle.

POTATO MAN

..and deep-fries the competition!

Potato Man clocks Chef Randall over the head with the pan. A battle royal ensues with both chefs taking turns clocking the other over the head with their chosen cooking utensil.

CUT TO:

CAMERA CREW AND STAFF GRINNING EAR TO EAR, WATCHING MELEE

BACK TO SCENE

Chef Randall and Potato Man roll on the floor, gripping each other by the throat.

VOICE OF CREW PERSON

And that's a wrap!

[END SERIES OF CUTS]

Dazed and disheveled, Potato Man gets to his feet. Chef Randall comes over, gently smiling, subdued. He shakes Potato Man's hand.

CHEF RANDALL

Good show, mate. Excellent.

Exit Chef Randall.

INT. OFFICE - DAY

Potato Man storms into the office of JOSH CANCUN, a hot-shot programming exec in his early twenties.

JOSH

Dude! Yo!

POTATO MAN

Let's cut the bull, Josh. What are you trying to do?!

JOSH

Dude! It was hot!

POTATO MAN

You went behind my back and brought in that... HORROR of a man to destroy my show!

Josh's cell phone rings. Josh holds up his finger.

JOSH

Hold on, dude.

JOSH

(answering phone)

Dude! What's up!

Josh listens for a moment then lets out a big, long dumb laugh.

POTATO MAN

EXCUSE me?!

JOSH

(to Potato Man)

Dude. Chill!

(back to phone)

So what did she have on? Was it hot?

Ok.. later, dude.

(shuts off phone)

POTATO MAN

Do you even realize how unbelievably
rude that is?!

JOSH

Oh.. yeah. Hey...!

Josh whips out his cell phone. Quickly dials.

JOSH

Dude! Yeah... Just wanted to say 'What
up, you?! ...Huh?...

Josh lets out a long, dumb laugh. Potato Man rips the phone out
of Josh's hand, throws it out the window.

JOSH

Dude...!!

POTATO MAN

Now you're going to listen to me! Those people
came on the show for help! For support! You
humiliated them on a public stage!

JOSH

What do you WANT, dude?

POTATO MAN

What have I been talking about for the
last five minutes?!

JOSH

That's so ten minutes ago, dude. I've moved on! Give me an idea that's HOT!

POTATO MAN

I don't know how you got YOUR job, but I graduated from the School of Culinary Arts in New York...

JOSH

Katy Upton! She's HOT!

POTATO MAN

What?!

JOSH

Get me her number, dude! Then we'll talk!

Josh immediately pushes his chair back, grabs another cell phone. He starts texting madly, then, starts laughing stupidly.

Potato Man storms out of the office.

INT. HEAD EXEC OFFICE - DAY

Potato Man storms into the office of Josh's boss, station director, ED STONE, a man in his late fifties or so.

POTATO MAN

One question—did you authorize this?

ED

I did. Yes.

POTATO MAN

You realize my guests came to the show with hope in their hearts. They left in tears!

ED

Sacrifices sometimes have to be made in the interest of riveting television.

POTATO MAN

Did Josh put you up to this?

ED

Yes. I trust his judgment.

POTATO MAN

What even remotely qualifies him to make programming decisions! He's an IDIOT!

ED

You know someone who could do better?

POTATO MAN

Me! For one!

ED

I'll tell you what qualifies him: he's a sponge of current pop culture trends. He has a limited vocabulary. And he has no attention span whatsoever. I don't think you want any part of that.

POTATO MAN

This show is about nurturing hurting people!

ED

This show is about ratings! Nurturing went out with the seventies! This is the age of humiliation. The public smack-down!

POTATO MAN

Well I want no part of it!

ED

You don't have to.

POTATO MAN

You're canning me?!

ED

What can I do? Even as we speak, you're exploring other business opportunities!

POTATO MAN

Who said?!

ED

I prefer not to answer that question.

POTATO MAN

Well I'm NOT!

ED

I'd like you to.

POTATO MAN

So you ARE canning me!

ED

I prefer to call it.. an amicable parting of ways. I wish you only the greatest success in the future.

POTATO MAN

Well if I do go on to have the greatest success in the future, you'll look bad and you'll be out of a job!

ED

You want truth?! Go to Tibet!

Potato Man turns and storms towards the door. He stops, turns, glares at Ed.

POTATO MAN

You little man. You little... LITTLE man!

Potato Man exits, slamming the door behind him. Ed glances down at his crotch area, a worried look on his face.

INT. SHOW SET

The set for the Potato Man show is being broken down. Potato Man walks onto the set where Josh is loitering about, texting madly.

Potato Man lifts the cover of a portable grill setting on a table top on the set.

POTATO MAN

(to Josh)

Wanna party with P-Diddy?

Josh drops his call.

JOSH

HOT!!

POTATO MAN

Place your right hand here.

Potato Man motions to the grill. Josh places his hand inside.

In one quick motion, Potato Man closes the grill on Josh's hand. Searing smoke shoots out from both sides of the grill. Josh screams in pain.

Potato Man lifts the cover, calmly walks away.

JOSH

That was HOT... YAAAAAA...!!

(to young co-worker next to him)

.. But it sucked! I dunno—I think it sucked!

INT. THEATRE HOUSE - NIGHT

A Renaissance-Era play is taking place in front of a packed audience. Most of the actors are in their early twenties.

In the scene being acted out, a beautiful young couple clasp hands. They are surrounded by townspeople, onlookers.

The "magistrate", played by a young man wearing a fake white beard, is in the midst of a grand speech. He speaks powerfully, making grandiose gestures.

MAGISTRATE (DARYL)

What say you? Does so pure a love cause so
great an offense? Shall it be hid thus?

The "magistrate" turns and points an accusing finger at the gathered townspeople.

MAGISTRATE (DARYL)

May your condemnation be so hid! For what YOU
would condemn as the wanton desire of youth, is
the very river of life that waters the soul!

The magistrate turns to the lovers. His eyes meet that of the young maiden (WENDY).

MAGISTRATE (DARYL)

May it EVER thus!

The magistrate turns and walks offstage. The onlookers bow their heads in shame. The lovers kiss. The curtain comes down.

The crowd erupts into enthusiastic applause.

BACKSTAGE

The cast comes running offstage back to the dressing area. Giddy laughter, congratulations and flowers abound.

The young maiden (WENDY) is surrounded by well-wishers, many of whom are young men. Standing off to the side by himself, in a corner, is Daryl, (sans fake white beard). He eyes Wendy.

Finally, when the crowd of well-wishers thin out a little, Daryl approaches Wendy. He seems fearful, hesitant, but resolute.

DARYL
(awkwardly)

Closing night!

There is a pregnant pause.

WENDY
Uh.. yeah.

DARYL
Great crowd!

WENDY
Ok. Sure. Whatever.

An outgoing young male cast member approaches. Wendy's face lights up as she greets him. They go walking off together, leaving Daryl standing there, blushing profusely.

EXT. POTATO MAN'S HOUSE - DAY

Shot of Daryl pulling up in front of Potato Man's house.

EXT. FRONT PORCH - DAY

Daryl rings the doorbell. Potato Man answers the door. He still wears his tall chef's hat.

POTATO MAN

Hey hey! How are ya, nephew?

INT. POTATOMAN'S HOUSE - DAY

Daryl and Potato Man sit together in the living room.

DARYL

I don't know what I'm gonna do! I'm crazy about her! But I can't talk to her! She's so beautiful, so hot. And I'm just a regular guy. I've got nothing to offer her. I'm a loser!

Potato Man leans back in his recliner, looks up at the ceiling, takes a deep breath.

POTATO MAN

Daryl, what kind of world do we live in, when Crème du Brule has to bow before Thousand Island dressing?

DARYL

Huh?

POTATO MAN

I'm sorry. I guess I've been a little distracted by my own troubles lately.

DARYL

Troubles? With the show?

POTATO MAN

There is no show. I got fired yesterday.

DARYL

No way! Aw man, and here I am bothering you with my stupid female problems.

POTATO MAN

Your problems aren't stupid. When the pilot light goes out on the front burner of love, it's no joke.

DARYL

That's it. That is SO it! So what do I do?

POTATO MAN

You have a problem. We're going to fix it.
Together. That's what I do.

DARYL

I KNEW you'd help me!

POTATO MAN

All right. Let's get down to business.
What do you know about this young woman?

DARYL

Uh.. Not much.

POTATO MAN

Well then, step one is a no-brainer.

DARYL

What's step one?

EXT. WENDY'S HOUSE - MORNING

Shot of Wendy leaving her apartment building. She's dressed in chic office attire.

VOICE OF POTATO MAN (O.S.)

Surveillance.

Wendy climbs in her car and pulls away from the curb. Seconds later, a car parked not far behind her also pulls away from the curb. That car is driven by Potato Man.

EXT. STARBUCKS DRIVE-THRU - MORNING

WENDY

(ordering)

Carmel latte grande, please.

She gets her order and drives off. Potato Man pulls up next.

POTATO MAN

Surprise me.

A split second later, a young man with an ultra-conservative blow-dried, parted-to-the-side haircut and wearing a white

button up short sleeve shirt with tie, comes walking out. He has a beaming, Osmond-like smile.

DAN FROM STARBUCKS

I'm Dan. I'm a young conservative Republican.
And I work behind the counter at Starbucks.

POTATO MAN

You guys are good. VERY good!

Potato Man drives off.

INT. WENDY'S CAR (MOVING) - DAY

Wendy drives, singing along to the radio, oblivious to Potato Man, who can be seen following her in her rear window.

EXT. INEPCO CORPORATE OFFICE - DAY

Wendy pulls into a space in the parking lot of a big company. It reads "INEPCO" over the entrance.

Wendy gets out of the car, briskly walks in.

INT. POTATO MAN'S CAR (NOT MOVING) - DAY

Potato Man has pulled into a space not far behind Wendy. He wears a look of shock on his face.

POTATO MAN

(softly to himself)

INEPCO! She works for INEPCO!

With that, Potato Man hops out of the car, whips out his camera and takes a number of quick flash stills of Wendy walking in.

INT. THEATRE AUDITORIUM - DAY

A group of drama students rehearses a scene from Phantom Of The Opera. Stepping center stage is Daryl. He motions for his "love" to come to him. She does. He sings.

As he sings, majestic images of nature appear on a big screen behind them.

DARYL
(singing)
No more talk of darkness
Forget these wide-eyed fears
I'm here
Nothing can harm you
My words will warm and calm you
Let me be your freedom
Let daylight dry your tears...

Suddenly, Potato Man's image appears on the big screen.

POTATO MAN
I'm here.

Daryl jumps back with a start, turns, sees Potato Man looking down on him. There are hushed whispers of awe:

ACTORS IN THEATRE
Potato Man..!

POTATO MAN
(to Daryl)
Meet me on the commons.

DARYL
Why?

POTATOMAN
Wine gone bad
A change of venue
Either way
We tweak the menu

EXT. UNIVERSITY CAMPUS COMMONS - DAY

Daryl and Potato Man stroll together on the campus green.

POTATO MAN
You told me you knew her from drama class.

DARYL
I did. Last year. But she graduated.

POTATO MAN

Now she's gone corporate. Interesting.

DARYL

What do you mean?

POTATO MAN

She works at INEPCO.

DARYL

Oh, I knew that.

Potato Man stops, fixes a hard look on Daryl.

POTATO MAN

You knew that?!

DARYL

Well.. I still have three semesters to go before I finish up my drama major.

POTATO MAN

Ah. Great. You'll have your degree. Only, there's one thing you WON'T have.

DARYL

What's that?

POTATO MAN

Wendy.

Daryl lets out a cry of anguish.

DARYL

I don't want to HEAR any more!

Daryl takes off running, but he crumples to the ground, sobbing, after just a few yards. Potato Man calmly walks up behind him.

POTATO MAN

I think Grover Washington Jr. said it best. 'Heaven's there for those who wait. But not for those who wait too late.'

DARYL

So you're saying.. I should drop out?

POTATO MAN

Not drop out. Just delay school. For a while. Your drama degree will still be there for you. But if you want to win Wendy's heart, you have to unleash Cupid NOW!

DARYL

By going to work at INEPCO?!

POTATO MAN

Exactly. That's where I got MY start. I was line chef there for ten years. The rest is history.

DARYL

But I'm not a corporate office type!

POTATO MAN

There's only one thing you need to know about INEPCO. That's where SHE is.

DARYL

(staring off into space)

That's where she is..

POTATO MAN

And where she is, that's where you need to be.

Daryl lowers his head, starts to whimper.

DARYL

I can't do it! What if I fail?

Potato Man kneels down and puts his hand on Daryl's shoulder.

POTATO MAN

Burning the roast is regrettable. Letting it freeze over is unforgivable.

Daryl nods through his tears.

DARYL

You're right. You're SO right!

EXT. INEPCO - DAY

Shot of Daryl driving up into the INEPCO parking lot.

POTATO MAN (O.S)

Now what you're going to do, is go to
INEPCO and apply. They're always looking
for people in tech support.

Daryl gets out of his car. He wears a business suit. He takes a
deep breath.

DARYL (O.S)

But I've never worked in an office before.

POTATO MAN (O.S)

You know computers. You know software.
That should be enough to get you in.

Daryl heads inside.

INT. MANAGER'S OFFICE - DAY

SHOT of a very nervous-looking Daryl being interviewed. The
manager is talking. Daryl nods.

EXT. INEPCO - DAY

Daryl comes walking out of the interview. He is clearly happy.
Before climbing into his car, he does a clenched-fist "YES!"

INT. DARYL'S CAR (MOVING) - DAY

As he drives home, Daryl whips out his cell phone. He dials.

[BEGIN INTER-CUTS]

POTATO MAN

Hello?.

DARYL

Guess who starts Tuesday!

POTATO MAN

You got the job!

POTATO MAN

Tech support!

POTATO MAN

You're halfway home, Bud.

DARYL

I still don't know what department
Wendy works in though.

POTATO MAN

You'll find out soon enough. So, feel
confident, lover boy?

There is a pause.

DARYL

No.

INT. DARYL'S BEDROOM - EARLY MORNING

CLOSE-UP SHOT OF ALARM CLOCK. READS: 5:30

Camera slowly pans away from the alarm clock. The shadowy
bedroom makes it clear that it is pre-dawn. The bed is empty.

The SHOT comes to a stop showing Daryl standing next to the bed,
dressed in his business suit, and staring bug-eyed into space.

DARYL
(softly)

I can't do it.

Daryl again whips out his cell phone, dials.

[BEGIN INTERCUTS]

INT. POTATO MAN'S BEDROOM - MORNING

Potato Man answers the phone, groggy, in his bed.

POTATO MAN

Hello...?

DARYL

I can't do it. I can't go in there. I'm gonna screw up! I'm gonna make a fool of myself! In front of Wendy! I know it!

POTATO MAN

Do you know it's not even 6 AM?

DARYL

I'm sorry, but I need advice. Bad!

POTATO MAN

No you don't. You need to go in there. Do what they tell you to do.

DARYL

But I don't KNOW what to do!

POTATO MAN

Of course not! No one does on their first day. That's why they're going to train you!

DARYL

(growing more frantic)

No. That doesn't work. I worked in a McDonalds once. They said they would train me. They threw me on the front counter and just said stuff real fast and left me alone! It was a nightmare! I kept asking questions and it just mad them more mad!

POTATO MAN

You're panicking. Stop. Take a deep breath. It's never as bad as you project it to be. Just keep telling yourself: *I'll be fine.*

DARYL

No! I won't be...!

POTATO MAN

Daryl. Go in there. Be confident.

DARYL

Ok. Ok. I'm sorry I woke you.

POTATO MAN

It's ok. Just don't make a habit of preheating the oven before you've prepared the pasta.

DARYL

You're right. Bye.

[END INTERCUTS]

INT. DARYL'S CAR (MOVING) - EARLY MORNING

DARYL

It's going to be ok. Have confidence.

EXT. INEPCO PARKING LOT - EARLY MORNING

Daryl pulls into a space, close to the building. The parking lot is completely empty.

INEPCO sits on a hilltop, thus the parking lot is on a sloped hill, a ravine at the far edge of the lot.

INT. DARYL'S CAR (STOPPED)

Daryl turns off the engine. He bends down to the floor to gather up some CD's. As he does, a car pulls up in the space next to him, and comes to a stop.

Daryl is so busy with the CD's, he does not notice the car. Now ready to get out, Daryl flings his door open. The door slams into the side of the car next to him.

Daryl jumps out of his car, frantic. He sees the horrible dent he has put in the side of the other car. The car's driver, a well-dressed executive type, stands there, staring at the dent.

Highly flustered, Daryl does a little panic dance, then:

DARYL

I'm sorry! I'm sorry! I can fix it!
Just.. hold on!

Daryl rushes back to his car trunk, rustles around. He comes back with a 'dent remover' tool.

DARYL

This usually does the trick!

Daryl rushes over to the dent, and with his tool, drills a small hole in the center of the dent.

DARYL

That hole can be covered up. I'll pay for the covering and the paint...

The whole while, the executive stares at Daryl, saying nothing.

Now the drill bit is plugged into the dent. Daryl grips the handle tightly.

DARYL

Takes a couple of tries sometimes...

Daryl gives a couple of hard jerks, trying to pull out the dent.

DARYL

..but it should...

Two more hard jerks.

DARYL

C'mon...!!

Daryl puts his whole body into it, tugs, rips the door off its hinges. The door bounces across the hood of Daryl's car.

Now REALLY flustered, Daryl runs around to the other car's driver side and climbs in.

DARYL

Ok! Let me just move your car...

Daryl climbs into the driver's seat, pops out the clutch. He hops out of the car.

DARYL

No, wait-- I'll move my car. Give me some more room to...

As Daryl runs around back to his car, the executive's car, now out of gear, starts rolling backwards down the steep hill.

DARYL

NO...!!

Daryl runs after the car, tries to climb in, but the backwards momentum makes that impossible. Daryl is flung backwards.

The car continues rolling backwards, careens over the back parking lot curb, and does a flip back into the ravine. An explosion follows.

For a moment, Daryl and the executive stare in the direction of the flaming ravine. Finally, Daryl turns to the executive:

DARYL
Here's my insurance information..

INT. INEPCO - LATER THAT MORNING

A dejected-looking Daryl trudges up the stairs of the office building, then goes through the double doors.

INT. OFFICE AREA

Daryl steps into the wide-open office area, a sea of cubicles with offices along the walls.

Daryl looks around, perplexed, as everyone is hard at work. Looking lost, Daryl goes over to the first door he sees. He pushes the door open.

INT. MANAGER'S OFFICE

Daryl gently pokes his head inside the office to see Company Manager, DAVID TAGGART, speaking with a distraught man.

DARYL'S P.O.V.

FIRED EMPLOYEE
How can you do this to me?!

MR TAGGART
It's business, Harvey. You know that. We appreciate your contributions to the company over the years.

FIRED EMPLOYEE
Well, that's great! What am I gonna tell my wife?!
What am I gonna tell my kids?! How can I face those people out there when they know I'm being fired for

poor performance?! How can I show my face again?!

MR TAGGART

(calmly)

They don't have to know the reason we're letting you go. This goes no further than this office.

At that moment, David Taggart looks up. The Fired Employee turns and looks up. They spot Daryl poking his head in.

DARYL

Oh... hi! I'm Daryl!

MR TAGGART

Close the door.

(with measured words)

Close.. the door!

Daryl quickly ducks out of the office, closes the door.

INT. HALLWAY OUTSIDE OFFICE

Daryl stands there, a mortified look on his face. A moment later, Mr. Taggart pops out of the office.

MR TAGGART

(to Daryl)

Is there someone you need to see?

DARYL

I'm... starting today.

MR TAGGART

Susan! Susan!

SUSAN, an intense, all-business supervisor comes over.

MR TAGGART

Take care of him, will you?

SUSAN

Absolutely, Mr. Taggart.

MR TAGGART

Thank you.

Mr. Taggart disappears back inside his office. Susan starts flipping through a roster.

SUSAN

You do not want to get him upset. Ok.
You are..?

DARYL

Daryl Mask.

SUSAN

(gazing at roster)

Mr. Mask. We were expecting you about
a half hour ago.

DARYL

I'm sorry. I had a little trouble out in
the parking lot. I was opening my car door..

SUSAN

Whatever, Mr. Mask. Follow me.

Susan leads Daryl over to a large pool of data entry operators.

SUSAN

We're actually going to start you off with
a little cross-training today. We'd like you to
sit in with our data entry department for a while.

Susan calls out to one of the data entry operators.

SUSAN

Walt?

WALT OWEN, a hip, too-cool-for-the-room young man in his twenties, seated in the first chair at the head of the data entry pool, looks up. His droopy-eyed expression betrays a slight annoyance.

SUSAN

This is..

(reads the roster)

..Daryl Mask. He's a new hire starting today. Could
you get him started on some data entry training?

Walt closes his eyes, flips his head back.

WALT
(softly)

Awwwwwww, shhhh.....

He holds that position a beat, then turns to Susan.

WALT
Sure.

SUSAN
Good.

(to Daryl)
Walt will take care of you. And one thing to keep in mind: if you don't understand something, ask questions. We don't want you to just plow ahead if you aren't sure.

Susan eyeballs Daryl for emphasis.

SUSAN
There are no dumb questions. When in doubt, ASK. Comprendo?

DARYL
Yes. Yes, I do. Ask.

Susan leaves. Walt turns back to his computer, pecks away at his keyboard.

WALT
(without glancing at Daryl)
C'mon, pull up a chair.

Daryl looks around. Not an empty chair in sight.

DARYL
I don't see.. any empty chairs..

Walt stops his typing, throws up his hands. He storms over to a cluster of cubicles across the room. He storms back with a chair and basically shoves it at Daryl.

WALT
Chair! Sit.

Daryl sits. Walt heaves an exasperated sigh as he sits down.

WALT

You can't see the screen from over there.
Move up.

Daryl scoots his chair closer. Walt doesn't relinquish control of the keyboard. He pecks furiously at the keyboard as he talks. He never looks at Daryl as he speaks in rapid-fire sentences.

WALT

We still work off an MVS mainframe until they bump us up to PH-3, but you don't need to know that as long as you log on half-caps, half-lower-case. Log on with all caps, you're screwed. First you log on with EPco09, hit F3..then TRANSitSIT82 is the temporary password I'm setting you up with- don't forget it-- and you hit F9. Boom, you're in. Now set up your station code and that's your last name in upper case plus four numerals, most people use the last four digits of their social..

DARYL

I'm sorry, but I don't set up my regular log-in? It's set up for me already?

Walt just stares blankly at Daryl.

WALT

What did I just say?

DARYL

Uh.. Didn't quite catch it.

WALT

Know what would help? Pay attention.

DARYL

Sorry.

WALT

Tell you what, I'm going to let you sign on.
You learn by doing.

Walt furiously pecks at the keyboard and clicks with his mouse.

WALT

All right, I'm clearing off the screen.

(hits a key, screen is cleared off)

Slide over.

Walt moves over, Daryl slides up to the keyboard. Daryl sits there, awaiting instruction. He looks over at Walt.

WALT

So. What did I just show you?

DARYL

Log on?

WALT

Log on, yeah. That would be cool.

Daryl hesitantly hits a key.

WALT

Ok, you've just knocked yourself off the login screen. What do you do now?

DARYL

I don't think you told me.

WALT

Um. Yeah. I think I did.

DARYL

Yeah?

WALT

So what do you do?

Daryl hesitates, clearly unnerved. He reaches over to hit one of the PF keys.

WALT

NO...!

It's too late. All computer screens in the data entry area go blank. There's a huge outcry. Walt drops his head.

DARYL

What did I do?!

WALT

You knocked everybody off the mainframe.
That's what you did.

DARYL

You told me to go ahead.

WALT

Did I tell you to do THAT?

DATA ENTRY GIRL

Walt, I need to enter in this customer! They
need their order sent out today!

WALT

What can I tell you? System's down.

DATA ENTRY GUY

Can't you bring it back up?

WALT

Yeah. I can bring it back up. It'll take me
two hours, but I can get it back up.

There is loud moaning, whining. Walt commandeers the keyboard
again.

DARYL

Wow, I'm sorry.

WALT

Yeah. You are.

DARYL

Can I help you with anything?

WALT

No. I don't think you can help me
with anything.

DARYL

Uh.. What should I do?

WALT

Take a break.

DARYL

But I just started.

WALT

Well, you can't do anything now, can you?
Take a break.

DARYL

Um.. All right.

Daryl sheepishly gets up. Ignoring the dagger stares of those in the data entry pool, he wanders down the hallway, finds the break room. He enters.

INT. BREAK ROOM

Daryl self-consciously takes a seat at one of the break tables.

An elderly man at the next table, an Andy-Griffith-like character, munches on some Ritz Crackers.

ANDY

How are ya, son?

DARYL

Good. I'm pretty good.

ANDY

How 'bout some crackers?

DARYL

Oh. Uh.. Thanks. But I'm ok.

ANDY

Ya sure now? Goooooooooooooood cracker!

DARYL

Thanks. That's really nice of you, but
I'll pass.

ANDY

Ohhhhh, all right then.

At that moment, Susan enters the break room. Seeing Daryl sitting, she stops, her jaw dropping slightly.

SUSAN
Daryl?

DARYL
Oh. Hi!

SUSAN
What are you doing here?

DARYL
Just.. Um..

SUSAN
I don't think I like this, Daryl. You've been here, what, less than twenty minutes? Why are you here?

DARYL
Walt said.. Uh..

SUSAN
Walt said what?

DARYL
Maybe I'll go see what he wants me to do next.

SUSAN
I think that would be a good idea.

Daryl gets up, starts for the door. Susan intercepts him.

SUSAN
Just so you know, this doesn't leave a good impression. Word to the wise.

INT. DATA ENTRY DEPARTMENT

Daryl returns as Walt continues pecking madly away on the keyboard.

DARYL
I just got busted!

Walt stops his typing momentarily. He turns to Daryl.

WALT

What are you talking about?

DARYL

Miss Dierkes! She caught me in the break room!
She said taking a break makes me look bad!

WALT

Well, yeah, if you make it obvious!

Walt leans back in his chair.

WALT

(calling out)

Hey, yo, Susan?

Susan comes over.

WALT

(to Susan as he types away)

It's like, I gotta get these computers back
up. Can you, like, take him somewhere?

SUSAN

(to Daryl)

Ok, Daryl. Walt needs some space. Let's
you and I take a walk.

INT. TECH SUPPORT DEPARTMENT

Susan takes Daryl to the tech support cubicles. There, a portly,
white-haired man, FLAVELL, is busy on the phones. He waves
cheerily to Susan Daryl.

SUSAN

This is our tech support area. This is where
you'll mainly be working. That's Flavell. He's
been her the longest so he'll probably be showing
you the ropes. When you're ready.

Daryl and Flavell shake hands. Susan and Daryl press on.

INT. SALES DEPARTMENT

Susan and Daryl stop next to a cubicle where ANTHONY, sounding just like Al Pacino in *Glengarry Glenn Ross*, is on the phone with a customer.

ANTHONY

(bellowing into headset)

Fuck me? FUCK YOU! I'm sittin' on a back order since Tuesday and you're gonna burn my ass with.. FUCK you, Dave! How did YOU become a manager, asshole?! And I gotta lose out on a lead... FUCK you! Oh, I'm gonna have your ass, Shithead! Here I gotta take your.. FUCK YOU you stupid F..!!

Susan leads Daryl away.

INT. HALLWAY

SUSAN

At first, you might be "offended" by that sort of expression. But you need to get past that. In today's pluralistic society, we need to think outside the box. Anthony's New York City clients have a language culture. We need to value that culture. In turn THEY feel valued. Respected. We take pride in that.

INT. BREAK ROOM

Susan and Daryl enter the break room.

SUSAN

And of course, this is our break room.
As you know.

Andy is still seated at his table, eating crackers. A plastic tray of cheese, lettuce, carrots, sauce is also on hand.

ANDY

Y'all sure you don't want some fine crackers?

DARYL

Y'know, I might have one.

ANDY

Come on over, son.

Daryl takes a couple of crackers, puts some cheese slices, lettuce and pepperoni on one.

ANDY

Hey, now! That's a ten yard penalty for pilin' on!

Daryl laughs. He follows Susan out the door, but not before waving goodbye to Andy.

ANDY

You stop by again now, hear?

INT. HALLWAY OUTSIDE BREAK ROOM

DARYL

I like him!

SUSAN

Sure. That's Andy. Our Human Resource.

DARYL

Oh, he works in Human Resources?

SUSAN

No. He's our human resource. He helps employees come down from technology overload by facilitating stress-reversing inter-personal engagement. Take advantage of his skills. He's here for you.

INT. TECH SUPPORT AREA

Susan and Daryl return to the tech support area and stop by Flavell's cube. FLAVELL, (based entirely on the REVEREND FLAVELL character from *Porky's 2*) has his headset on, chatting happily with a customer. Soon, he is off the call.

SUSAN

Flavell, could Daryl sit in with you on some calls for a little while?

FLAVELL

Why sure. Pull up a chair, young man.

Daryl pulls up an empty chair, sits down.

FLAVELL

(to Susan)

He's in good hands.

SUSAN

Excellent.

Susan departs.

Flavell grabs an extra headset. He starts connecting it to his.

FLAVELL

Now what I'm gonna do is splice you in here, so you can listen in. But don't worry, I'm gonna mute you out so the customer can't hear you.

Soon, Daryl is spliced in with Flavell. Daryl puts on his headset.

FLAVELL

As long as there's no calls at the moment, let me just kinda give you an overview. As you probably already know, we have educators all over the country using our website.

A call comes in to Flavell's phone.

FLAVELL

And when they have trouble, they call us.

Flavell clicks on the call.

FLAVELL

INEPCO Tech Support, this is Flavell. How can I help you?

(listens)

Yes M'am.. you should have received your upgrade by now. If you can hold on a minute, let me check.

Flavell clicks HOLD.

FLAVELL

(to Daryl)

I'm kinda pulling triple duty today. Three of our techs called in sick-- of course, long weekend, right? So I'm covering their phones AND mine!

Flavell brings up tracking, clicks the caller back in.

FLAVELL

Miss Carroll, it looks like that went out second day on Friday. If you don't get it by 4 PM give me a call back, ok?

(listens)

Well.. Not sure. Let me see if I can get that tracking number for you.

(puts her on HOLD)

Flavell brings up another screen.

FLAVELL

You don't have to remember this now, but this is where we go to find..

Line 2 Rings. Flavell clicks it.

FLAVELL

INEPCO Tech Support, how can I.. Dr. Eisner!
How are you! Can you hold just a moment?

Flavell puts DR EISNER on MUTE.

FLAVELL

(to Daryl)

Dr. Eisner and I have what you might call, a love-hate relationship. I've know him for fifteen years. He'll give you a hard time. I know him well enough so I give him a hard time right back.

(clicks Dr. Eisner back in)

(listens)

Those files should have worked.. Did you do it in the order we told you.. It STILL didn't fix it?!.. Tell you what, hold on a second.

Flavell brings up another screen, clicks furiously.

FLAVELL

He screwed those files up. I know he did!

Line 3 goes off. Flavell clicks it, still scouring his screen.

FLAVELL

INEPCO Tech Support, can you hold please?

Flavell hits Hold and turns to Daryl.

FLAVELL

You'll find that the MUTE and HOLD buttons are your friend. Any time things seem to be veering out of control, put the customer on Hold. Take a deep breath. Then when you're ready, punch them back in.

With that, Flavell click back onto Line 1.

FLAVELL

M'am, I'm still searching for that tracking number, All right? I do apologize.

(clicks back into Line 3)

Thank you for holding, my name is Flavell. How can I help you today?

(listens)

Yes, we can walk you through the installation. Do you have the CD with you..? Can you grab it, please?

(clicks back to Line 1)

Ok M'am, that tracking number—you might wanna write this Down—is FA30054. That's FA30054. All right..?

Flavell hits the MUTE button and turns to Daryl.

FLAVELL

That lady's an idiot!

Flavell unclicks MUTE.

FLAVELL

(slumps in his chair)

Not sure if it was one box or two-- let me check that for you, M'am. Can you please hold?

(clicks back to Line 2)

Dr. Eisner, did you unclick the Read Only box? You did. Are you SURE you did..? No. No, I'm not. Hold on.

(Line 5 is going off, Flavell clicks it)

INEPCO Tech Support, can you hold please?

(clicks back to Line 3)

Do you have the cd, Sir? Good. Put it in the drive. Other way..Good... So your pc is kinda slow huh? Can I put you on hold a minute?

(clicks Line 5)

This is Flavell. What can I help you with?

Flavell listens, then shakes his head.

FLAVELL

I can just email you those steps, M'am... Yes. Yes, I can fax them too. What's your fax number..? While you're getting' that, let me put you on hold.

(clicks Line 2)

I'm back.. No, I TOLD you the right folder to put those in, Dr. Eisner..Don't you...! Come again..?! Oh, you wanna get personal then...Hold on!

(clicks Line 1)

Thanks for holding, M'am. Two boxes. Yes. Thank you.

(clicks back to Line 2)

YOU SON OF A BITCH...!!

(Line 6 goes off, Flavell clicks it)

INEPCO Tech Support, please hold!

As his sweat, anger, frustration mounts, Flavell leaps from his seat (taking Daryl with him since they're spliced together) and grabs a white folder. He wrestles with it, flipping madly through the pages.

Finding the page he wants, he clicks Line 5

FLAVELL

Thank you for holding, M'am, now what is your fax... Hold on I gotta grab a pen!

As Flavell lunges for a pen, the binder comes open and all the pages come flying out, falling all over the place. Now ALL the incoming lines are lit up.

Flavell leaps back to the phone and clicks on Line 4.

FLAVELL

Hello..?! Hello..?!

Flavell clicks on another line.

FLAVELL

Hello..Did I lose.. HELLO..?!!

At this point, Flavell steps out into the aisle, throws his hands wide open and lets out a primal bellow:

FLAVELL

AWWWWWWW SHI-I-I-I-I-I-Y--U-U-U-T!!!!

EXT. OUTSIDE PATIO - DAY

Finally on break, a distraught Daryl is on his cell phone:

[BEGIN INTER-CUTS]

DARYL

It's terrible. This is the worst day of my life.
And I haven't even seen Wendy yet.

POTATO MAN

Just remember this, Daryl: if you get through
the knocks, and get through the blows, that's
when your snails turn to escargot.

DARYL

Yeah, I guess.

POTATO MAN

What was that? Didn't hear ya.

DARYL

You're right. You're right!

POTATO MAN

That's more like it. Now lift your head
high. It gets better from here. I promise
you that.

Daryl clicks the phone off.

INT. OFFICE AREA

Re-entering the large open office area, Daryl at last spots
Wendy. She is walking past a line of cubicles. She is a vision
of beauty. Daryl is stopped dead in his tracks. He seems to be
gathering his courage to approach her.

Suddenly, Mr. Taggart appears and intercepts Wendy. He kisses
her on the cheek.

MR TAGGART

How's it going, honey?

WENDY

Hi, Daddy!

SHOT: DARYL REACTS, CRUSHED AT WHAT HE SEES

Daryl ducks into a back hallway.

DARYL

(to himself)

It's over. It's over! How does it get any worse than that?

At that moment, Wendy comes down the hallway-- arm and arm with Walt. Walt leers, paws at her.

WALT

Me and you? Tonight? Hot tub?

WENDY

(giggling)

Uh huh!

WALT

You are so hot. Hey, would you get with another chick? Aw, that would be SO hot!
(emits stupid laugh)

They walk past Daryl as if he's not there. Daryl virtually sinks to the floor.

INT. TECH SUPPORT AREA

Daryl is spliced in with Flavell again. Flavell talks to the customer while Daryl types.

FLAVELL

(to customer)

..So if it gives you anymore trouble, you call us right back and we'll go to Plan B. All right? Thank you for calling INPECO Tech Support. Bye.

Flavell turns to Daryl who finishes up typing.

FLAVELL

Getting' more comfortable logging in the calls to tracking?

DARYL

I think I'm getting' the hang of it.

FLAVELL

Well next week, I'll have you actually talking to customers. But don't worry, I'll be on the other line and I'll jump in if things get too hot.

At that moment, a young woman enters the tech support area and motions for everyone to listen to her.

BRENDA

Hey! Everybody..!

All eyes turn to Brenda. She basically huddles everyone together in the center area.

BRENDA

You all, today is Mr. Taggart's birthday. I've arranged with Mrs. Taggart for us to surprise him at his house. So put your phones on 'Meeting' mode, and we'll all carpool over there!

TECH SUPPORT GIRL

But he doesn't leave the office for another two hours!

BRENDA

No! His wife asked him to come take care of something at the house in 45 minutes. But she asked him to pick up something at Target first. So we have to get going NOW if we're going to get to the house before him!

Everyone logs out, then hurries to their cars. Daryl is pushed along with the crowd.

EXT. INEPCO PARKING LOT -DAY

Daryl squeezes into a mini-van, along with half a dozen others.

EXT. MR TAGGART'S HOUSE - DAY

A caravan of cars pull up in front of Mr. Taggart's impressive home. Employees pile out of the cars and vans.

BRENDA
(to drivers)
Park around the corner! Park around the corner!

INT. LIVING ROOM - TAGGART HOME - DAY

Mrs. Taggart holds the front door open as the employees pour into the house.

MRS TAGGART
Come on in! Quick! This is so great!

BRENDA
Everyone spread out! Find a place to hide where he won't see you!

Employees start making mad dashes to their prospective hiding spots.

Self-conscious and hesitant, Daryl is rooted in place for a few moments, then tries to find a place to hide. Every good spot is taken and he is continuously shooed away.

EMPLOYEE
(looking out front window)
His car's pulled up! He's here!

Panicked, Daryl dashes upstairs.

INT. UPSTAIRS BATHROOM

Daryl quickly dashes inside the bathroom and hides in the shower.

INT. DOWNSTAIRS LIVING ROOM

EMPLOYEE
Wait! He's leaving!

BRENDA
What..?!

Mrs. Taggart quickly picks up her cell phone and dials. She reaches her husband. After a few moments:

MRS TAGGART

Ok.. Bye.

(to employees)

He's going back to the office. He just remembered a client from Chicago Archdiocese is coming to see him, so he's gone back to the office.

The employees groan.

MRS TAGGART

I'm sorry you all went to this trouble. It would have been so fun.

BRENDA

That's ok. Thank you so much for trying to set this up for us.

Brenda and others give Mrs. Taggart a hug. Then, everyone files out of the house.

INT. MR TAGGART'S CAR (MOVING) - DAY

Mr. Taggart suddenly throws back his head and groans. He's just remembered something else. He abruptly stops his car, makes a U-turn, and zooms back in the direction he came.

INT. BATHROOM SHOWER - TAGGART HOUSE - DAY

Daryl is still in his shower hiding place. The house is very quiet. Daryl appears puzzled at the long delay.

EXT. TAGGART HOUSE - DAY

Mr. Taggart pulls up in the driveway of his house. He hops out of his car, rushes into the house.

INT. TAGGART HOUSE

MRS TAGGART

Honey...!

Mr. Taggart bounds upstairs.

MR TAGGART

I left my presentation packets here!

MRS TAGGART
(calling up after him)
Do you have time to...?

MR TAGGART
(calling back down)
No! Goin' to the john, grab the packets, then
I'm outta here!

INT. BATHROOM

Breathing a tired, exasperated sigh, Mr. Taggart enters the bathroom. As he heads towards the john, he is unbuckling his belt, unzipping his pants.

MR. TAGGART'S P.O.V. - SHOWER

Just as he bends down to plant himself on the throne, he glances up. There, staring back at him from the darkened back corner of the shower, is Daryl.

BACK TO SCENE

Mr. Taggart virtually leaps ten feet in the air as he cries out. He rips open the shower curtain all the way.

DARYL
(meekly)
Surpri...! Uh...
(clears throat)
Surprise?

EXT. GOLF DRIVING RANGE - DAY

Daryl and Potato Man talk as they hit balls at the driving range. Of course, Potato Man still wears tall chef hat.

DARYL
Game over.
(swings, hits ball)

POTATO MAN
What does that mean?

DARYL

It's over. Done. I'm not going back.

POTATO MAN

Why?

DARYL

For one, Wendy is Mr. Taggart's daughter.
And Mr. Taggart hates me already.

POTATO MAN

Mr. Taggart's daughter?

DARYL

Yeah. Daughter.

(hits ball)

Secondly, Wendy is dating the company jerk.
And he happens to be the head techie.

POTATO MAN

What's his name?

DARYL

Walt.

POTATO MAN

Don't know him.

DARYL

You wouldn't. He's new. Some techie hot shot.
(hits ball)

DARYL

But on top of everything, my first day was a
disaster. I made a complete fool of myself. I'm
not sure how much Wendy saw, but she'll know soon
enough how bad I screwed up at work. Not to mention
that her dad caught me in his bathroom.

Potato Man ponders all this a moment. Finally:

POTATO MAN

Daryl, contrary to what people will tell you, the
secret to Cajun roasted potatoes isn't finding the
right mix of spices and vegetables. It's knowing just
when to stick in your fork and say, 'It's done.'

Daryl tosses down his golf club.

DARYL

I knew it! I'm finished!

POTATO MAN

Hear me out. You aren't at that point.

DARYL

I'm not?

POTATO MAN

Not even close. Plan A went awry. No need to shut down service.

DARYL

(brightens up)

Yeah! So we got a Plan B?!

POTATO MAN

You don't need Plan B when Potato Man peels the prickles off the Pompatus Of Love.

DARYL

Yahooo!!

POTATO MAN

Now, listen. From here on out, you follow my recipe. To the letter. Got that?

DARYL

Uh.. Yeah. I think so.

POTATO MAN

Three words to live by: Trust the Potato Man.

DARYL

You got it! So what are you gonna do?

POTATO MAN

Watch.

Potato Man whips out his cell phone and starts dialing.

POTATO MAN

I didn't want to do this, 'cause I've been mulling over other offers. But for your sake...

DARYL

You're not serious!

POTATO MAN

(talking into phone)

Mr. Taggart? Sorry to disturb you at home. I'll be brief. Could INEPCO use another chef?

Loud bellowing can be heard coming from Potato Man's phone. Startled, he jumps back. Finally:

POTATO MAN

All right. Thank you for your time, sir.

DARYL

He was P.O'ed, huh?

POTATO MAN

Not at all.

DARYL

What was all that I heard?

POTATO MAN

Him falling over himself to say, "yes".

With that, Potato Man calmly places a ball on the tee, then sends it sailing far out onto the green.

Daryl stares at Potato Man in disbelief, then erupts into a loud, celebratory WHOOP!

EXT. INEPCO - EARLY MORNING

A large crowd of employees have gathered in front of the outside entranceway to the office building. It's a foggy morning. Everyone is gazing anxiously out at the parking lot.

SHOT: MR. TAGGART AND V.P

MR TAGGART
He's gotta show. He's gotta!

V.P
He will, sir. I'm sure he will.

SHOT: GROUP OF EMPLOYEES

EMPLOYEE 1
(almost in tears)
If they've lied to us, man...!

EMPLOYEE 2
It's still early! Maybe.. Maybe the traffic
is bad.

EMPLOYEE 3
At 7 A.M?! It's OVER, man!

EMPLOYEE 2
(pointing out at foggy parking lot)
Wait a minute.. Look!

EMPLOYEES P.O.V. - FOGGY PARKING LOT

With a dramatic drum beat background, a shadowy figure, wearing
a tall chef's hat, dramatically emerges through the fog.

The gathered employees erupt into wild cheering.

Mr. Taggart steps out to meet Potato Man.

POTATO MAN
Reporting for duty, sir.

MR TAGGART
(choked up)
It's been a long time.

POTATO MAN
It's good to be back.

MR TAGGART
As you can see...
(motioning towards the throng of gathered employees)
..you've got some hungry customers here.

POTATO MAN

Not for long.

At this, there is an even greater outburst of cheering. Potato Man strides into the building.

INT. OFFICE CAFETERIA

Potato Man enters the cafeteria ahead of the ecstatic employee throng. He makes his way behind the service line, into the kitchen. He is confronted by BRUNO, the current head chef.

Potato Man and Bruno have a brief stare-down. No words are exchanged.

Then, Bruno genuflects, drops to one knee, and bows his head. He presents his spatula to Potato Man on outstretched palms. The crowd bursts into cheers—again.

POTATO MAN

Fire up the grill!

INT. CAFETERIA LINE

Employees are now coming through the breakfast line, with Potato Man serving up his beloved potatoes.

Potato Man scoops up a pile of potatoes, piles them on a plate, then hands them to the first man in line.

FIRST MAN IN LINE

How does it feel to be back?

POTATOMAN

It's a five-star feeling.

FIRST MAN IN LINE

Three cheers for Potato man! Three CHEERS for Potato Man!

EVERYONE IN LINE

Hooray! Hooray! Hooray!

SECOND WOMAN IN LINE

The romance is gone from my marriage.

Potato Man dishes up a plate of potatoes. Hands it to her.

POTATO MAN

Peel. Skin. Boil. The three basic steps of potato preparation are also the steps to rekindling the fires of marriage romance.

SECOND WOMAN IN LINE

I don't understand.

POTATO MAN

Peel off the clothes. Body is revealed. Within seconds, he'll come to a boil.

The woman whispers a grateful 'thank you,' while the crowd behind her cheers.

THIRD MAN IN LINE

Man, when I turn up my game, the chicks all dodge me! What's wrong?!

Potato Man hands him a plate of potatoes.

POTATO MAN

Turn down the heat.

THIRD MAN IN LINE

I don't feel you.

POTATO MAN

The juices of love will flee and escape.
So heed my warning: DON'T OVERBAKE!

The line crowd cheers again.

THIRD MAN IN LINE

I feel you, brother! I FEEL you!

An executive type steps forward. He slumps.

FOURTH MAN IN LINE

Chicks don't dig me. I'm too old.

POTATO MAN

Why do you care if GIRLS think you're a leper?
(points at the man's grey hair)
Women dig the salt and pepper!

The man's face brightens up as Potato Man hands him a plate of potatoes. Next up in line is Daryl.

DARYL
(whispering)
That's Walt, back there.

Daryl nudges his head in the direction of Walt, who is a few people back in line. He has his arm draped around Wendy.

POTATO MAN
(loudly)
So, young man! You'd like potatoes?!
(whisper voice)
Are you sure he's that bad a guy?

DARYL
He's a sleazy jerk!

POTATO MAN
Well, I need to find out for myself.

DARYL
How?

Potato Man hands Daryl a plate of potatoes.

POTATO MAN
(loudly)
Here you are, young man!
(whispering)
I'm cooking up the plan as we speak.

INT. KITCHEN- LATER

ASSISTANT CHEF
(to Potato Man)
Good service, Chef.

Potato Man removes his apron.

POTATO MAN
I'm gonna take five. Be back in time for
lunchtime vegetable prep.

INT. EMPLOYEE LOCKER ROOM

Potato Man dashes in, throws his chef garb in the locker, then grabs a duffle bag of civilian clothes and accessories.

INT. HALLWAY OUTSIDE LOCKER ROOM DOOR - A LITTLE LATER

Potato Man sticks his head out the chef locker room door. He checks to make sure the coast is clear.

Disguised in white shirt and tie, slacks, slicked back and fake turtle shell glasses. He carries a briefcase. Thus, he strides quickly down the hallway.

INT. TECH SUPPORT AREA

Walt is at his desk, surfing the net. Daryl comes over. Daryl stands by, waiting for Walt to acknowledge him. Walt doesn't.

DARYL

Walt?

WALT

(annoyed, not looking up)

Yeah?

DARYL

Miss Checkish is on the line.

WALT

And..?

DARYL

Well, she said you were going to walk her through the class reorganization process.

WALT

So walk her through it.

DARYL

I haven't been trained on that yet.

WALT

You've got a manual, right?

DARYL

Yeah.

WALT

Well then LEARN how to do it.

DARYL

Could we maybe conference call on it?
That way, I could..

WALT

No.

Dejected, Daryl starts to slink back to his desk. At that moment, a super attractive woman in her early twenties sticks her head out of her cubicle:

CHRISTY

(whining)

Walt, I need heeeeeeeelp!

Walt lights up, turning his full attention to her.

WALT

You want ME to help YOU?!

CHRISTY

Pleeeeeeeeease..?

WALT

What are you gonna GIVE me?!

Christy giggles.

CHRISTY

Ohhh, I don't know.

WALT

You don't KNOW?! Oh, you're in TROUBLE!

Walt leaps up from his chair and dashes over to give "hands-on" help to Christy. Daryl looks on, slack-jawed.

DARYL'S CUBICLE

Daryl sits back down, clicks the customer back in.

DARYL
(speaking into headset)
Thanks for waiting Miss Checkish. Well, it
looks like I'm going to be the one to...

At that moment Daryl looks up and sees Potato Man walk past in
his "office worker" get-up. Potato Man winks at Daryl.

CHRISTY'S DESK

Potato Man approaches Walt who is still cozing up, flirting
with Christy.

POTATO MAN
Mr. Walter Owen?

Walt looks up, a look of thorough contempt in his expression.

WALT
Kinda busy!

POTATO MAN
I'll take that as a 'yes'.
(extends his hand)
My name is Frank Furter. New temp. I was told to
report to you for data entry training.

Walt responds with a quick limp-rag handshake.

WALT
I said.. Kinda busy here, dude!

POTATO MAN
I'll let you finish up there. Meanwhile, I'll take
that empty desk there. How's that.

WALT
Yeah, whatever.

Potato Man pounds his briefcase.

POTATO MAN
I'm anxious to get started.

Potato Man moves over to the empty desk and starts emptying supplies out of his briefcase: pen, notebook, White-Out, etc.

Finally, a perturbed-looking Walt comes over.

WALT

WHO said I was supposed to train you?

POTATO MAN

I'll gladly take you over to his office.
We could straighten it all out.

Walt waves a dismissive hand.

WALT

Forget it. Move over.

Walt plops down in the second chair and starts typing and clicking like mad. Finally:

WALT

Ok. Sign in.

POTATO MAN

Should I use upper case letters?

WALT

(deep, annoyed sigh)
Whatever you want, dude.

POTATO MAN

Can I use numbers and letters?

WALT

Look dude, just type in a login and password! Duh!

POTATO MAN

Sir, I prefer to be spoken to respectfully.

WALT

Yeah? And I should do that... Why?

POTATO MAN

Because I'm your elder for starts.

WALT

A dude in his fifties still doin' temp data entry. Oh yeah, I got MAD respect for you, dude!

Potato Man throws his supplies back in his suitcase.

POTATO MAN

I think I've seen enough.

WALT

Go ahead. Quit. Good luck getting' another temp job after you bail on this one.

Potato Man hurries off. Walt sneers in his direction.

WALT

Loser.

Walt jumps up, hurries back over to Christy. He pokes her in the sides. She squeals happily.

WALT

Thought you got rid of me, huh?!

INT. CAFETERIA LINE

Walt waits his turn in the lunch line with Wendy. He continues to paw her, his attitude even more over-the-top cocky.

Finally, it's almost their turn. Wendy hops out of the line.

WENDY

No, Walt. I don't want anything. I'm just going to get some soup.

WALT

Well hold up, I'm gonna get me some serious quesadillas.

Walt steps up to the ordering counter. There, behind the glass, he is startled to see Potato Man, still in his "temp" get-up.

POTATO MAN

Remember me?

WALT

You're.. You're that Potato Dude!

POTATO MAN

You got it. And your name is, You're Wanting.

(holds up mobile phone)

And I got it all on video.

WALT

You don't know me!

POTATO MAN

I know a rotten potato when I see one.

Walt makes a swipe for the phone.

WALT

Give me that you little...!

POTATO MAN

Ah ah! I think an apology is in order.

To me, and to the managerial staff of

INEPCO.

WALT

Oh, yeah- I'll apologize. Right after I come over there and kick your potato butt!

Walt dashes around the counter. As he does so, Potato Man grabs a huge sack of potatoes and rips it open.

POTATO MAN

I think it was Paul Simon who once said,

"The nearer your destination...

As Walt rounds the corner into the kitchen area, Potato Man chucks the potatoes onto the floor.

POTATO MAN

... the more you're slip slidin' away!"

Walt's feet slip and slide over the avalanche of potatoes, and soon, he is feet up on the air, followed by a thud landing on his back.

In an instant, Potato Man is on top of Walt, pouring cartons of milk over Walt's face, followed by a dousing of mustard.

Walt manages to get to his feet, but Potato Man clamps a huge salad bowl over Walt's head.

POTATO MAN

Welcome to the Salad Bowl Of America!

Walt runs blindly through the kitchen before finally crashing into a rack of pots and pans.

WALT

This is what I call my Baker's Dozen.

With that, Potato Man takes off his gloves and gives Walt twelve lightning-fast slaps across the face.

Potato Man ties up Walt's hands, then wrestles him onto a tray cart. He pushes the tray cart out the back passage way. A loud crash of kitchen dishware is heard.

POTATO MAN

You've been served.

INT. MR TAGGART'S OFFICE

A petulant Walt stands before Mr. Taggart. Two uniformed security guards stand at the ready.

MR TAGGART

Mr. Owen, we're done talking. Your time with INEPCO is done. As of today.

WALT

Yeah? Well, I'll sue.

MR TAGGART

Fine. We'll win.

(to security guards)

Escort Mr. Owen out, please.

WALT

Hey, I ain't getting' escorted out!

MR TAGGART

Mr. Owen, you have two choices. You can be escorted out by our security team. Or you can be escorted out by Tim and Tofer of The Outrageous Escort Service.

At that point, Tim and Tofer, two slim, colorfully dressed men in high heels and neck scarves, lovingly wrap their arms in Walt's arm.

INT. OFFICE LOBBY

Shot of Walt being escorted out by INEPCO'S security guards. Daryl watches from around a wall corner.

INT. CAFETERIA LINE

Stepping up to the counter, Daryl fills in Potato Man.

DARYL

It worked! He was escorted out half an hour ago.

POTATO MAN

Good. Now we move on to the next phase.

DARYL

What's that?

Potato Man reaches down, pulls out a small basket filled with dark red rose petals. He flings a few petals towards Daryl, the petals flitting down atop his head.

POTATO MAN

The shower of rose petals is the ultimate appetizer preceding the Main Course of Love.

DARYL

That's.. kinda nice. I think.

POTATO MAN

Yes. It is.

INT. HALLWAY OUTSIDE BATHROOMS

Once again, Daryl is spying from around the corner. He watches as Wendy hurries towards the LADIES room. She is met there by the custodian who has his yellow WATCH YOUR STEP pylon set up.

WENDY

(to Custodian)

Ohh, can I just.. real quick! Then you'll have it all to yourself.

The custodian shakes his head wearily, but exits the restroom. Wendy dashes in.

When the coast is clear, Daryl hurries to the LADIES room door with his basket of rose petals. He seems to wrestle with himself as to what to do, but finally, he goes inside.

INT. LADIES BATHROOM

CLOSE-UP SHOT of Wendy in her stall. Suddenly, her eyes look up.

WENDY'S P.O.V. - TOP OF BATHROOM STALL

Red rose petals come floating over the top of the bathroom stall. Daryl's voice can be heard.

DARYL'S VOICE

Mi amour.

Another handful of petals flits over the top of the stall.

DARYL'S VOICE

Mi amour.

BACK TO SCENE

Shot of Daryl standing outside the stall with his basket of rose petals. Suddenly, the stall door flies open with a BANG.

Coming out of the stall is not Wendy, but a very angry Big Bertha-type. With one swift, strong backhand, she sends Daryl flying back against the corner wall. Daryl's body ricochets against each corner like a rag doll.

Daryl gets to his feet and flees the bathroom. Big Bertha takes off after him. A few moments later, a very puzzled Wendy emerges from her stall.

INT. DARYL'S CUBICLE

Daryl (now sporting a shiner) is on the phone to Potato Man.

[BEGIN INTER-CUTS]

DARYL

I bombed out, man!

POTATO MAN

You get an A for effort, an F for execution. But that's ok, because we're just getting started. The next plan: Operation Cheap Trick Meets *Pretty In Pink*.

DARYL

Cheap Trick Meets *Pretty In Pink*??

INT. DEPARTMENT WITH ROW OF COMPUTERS

Wendy is at work on her PC. She sits in a long double row of computers lined up next to each other.

WENDY'S P.O.V. - COMPUTER SCREEN

An "E-MAIL" icon pops up. Wendy clicks onto it.

It's an anonymous message with an attachment. Wendy clicks on the attachment. It's a video message.

A video clip of Daryl appears on the screen.

DARYL

(sounding like lead singer of Cheap Trick)
I want you.. to want.. ME!

BACK TO SCENE

SHOT: WENDY'S ASTONISHED EXPRESSION

Slowly, Wendy rises from her chair to look around. She doesn't have to look far. Rising slowly from his chair at the PC

directly across from her (much like Andrew McCarthy in *Pretty In Pink*) is Daryl. He gives Wendy his best smoldering look.

Wendy reaches across and slaps Daryl, sending him flying backwards.

INT. POTATO MAN'S HOUSE - EVENING

Daryl sits on the sofa looking utterly defeated. Potato Man counsels him.

POTATO MAN

Ok. That last plan might have been a tad under-cooked.

DARYL

Aw, what's the use.

POTATO MAN

Time to get back to basics. The secret to customer satisfaction is knowing what they're going to order BEFORE they look at the menu. So.. what kind of guy does Wendy go for?

DARYL

Guys with serious game.

POTATO MAN

Speak normally.

DARYL

You know. Guys with looks. Guys who strut. Guys with attitude- who, like, take control of the room. But that's not me.

Potato Man gets up, walks over to the window and looks out.

POTATO MAN

The answer to your problem is relatively simple.

DARLY

It is?

POTATO MAN

You're painfully shy. We both know that.

DARYL

I know. That's why I've got no chance with Wendy.

POTATO MAN

But you ARE an actor.

DARYL

Yeah. So?

POTATO MAN

That means you have the proven power to speak. To be eloquent. Passionate.

DARYL

But I can't do that in real life!

Potato Man walks over to the bookshelf. Grabs a book.

POTATO MAN

I want you to read this.

He tosses the book to Daryl.

DARYL

'Growing Up Brady'??

POTATO MAN

There's an interesting anecdote in there. It might interest you.

Potato Man takes a seat across from Daryl.

POTATO MAN

As it turns out, one of the guests on the show was a wacky comedienne. But only onstage. Once the cameras stopped rolling, it turns out this gifted comic actress was painfully shy!

DARYL

Really?!

POTATO MAN

Really.

DARYL

So.. how does that help me?

POTATO MAN

Simple. You're an actor. A good one.

DARYL

I feel you.

POTATOMAN

Well, don't. You say you're shy and awkward when you're not onstage?

DARYL

Yeah! Exactly!

POTATO MAN

Son, LIFE is a stage.

DARYL

I'm... I'm GETTING' you! But I'm not sure how.

POTATO MAN

You don't think you can be outgoing around Wendy? Then ACT it. Daryl, there's an old saying.. It's true in life, it's true in the kitchen.

Potato Man stands up, walks across the room. Then, he turns to Daryl.

POTATO MAN

Fake it 'till you make it.

DARYL

(in a soft voice)

Fake it.. till you make it. Fake it..

POTATOMAN

You get what I'm sayin' to you, son?

DARYL

(eyes lighting up)

..TILL YOU MAKE IT! FAKE IT TILL YOU MAKE IT! I CAN DO THAT!

POTATO MAN

That's right. When I get through with you,
you're going to be Mr. Personality!

DARYL

When do we start?! I'm hyped!

POTATO MAN

We have our recipe. Tomorrow she's gonna smell
what the Potato Man is cooking.

DARYL

YES!!

[BEGIN SERIES OF SHOTS]

As *(You've Got) Personality* or some such number plays in the background, there are a series of quick scenes showing Potato Man training Daryl how to be a lively "personality."

SHOT 1: Daryl watches episode of Jay Leno on TV. Potato Man stands by with his pointer, pointing out Jay's lively manner.

SHOT 2: Daryl practices going up to Potato Man and giving him a lively greeting. Potato Man keeps making him do it with more energy.

SHOT 3: In a restaurant, Potato Man lifts up a wine glass, throws back his head and laughs. He then makes Daryl repeat it.

SHOT 4: At a social gathering, Daryl shadows Potato Man, observing as Potato Man works the room.

SHOT 5: Daryl reads from a script book, then practices his lively "personality" attitude

[END SERIES OF SHOTS]

INT. INEPCO CAFETERIA LINE

EDDIE CLAYTON, enters the cafeteria line to applause from the employees in line.

EMPLOYEE IN LINE

Mr. Olympian!

Somewhat bashful, Eddie acknowledges the applause.

EMPLOYEE 2 IN LINE

Hey, let Eddie go first! He's representing our country! AND INEPCO!

Everyone applauds and parts so Eddie can grab his tray and go to the front of the line. Eddie approaches the ordering window, where Potato Man awaits him.

POTATO MAN

So how soon before you head to Colorado?

EDDIE

One week.

POTATO MAN

Excited?

EDDIE

(leans closer)

Just between you and me, man, I'm not feelin' good.

POTATO MAN

Why?

EDDIE

Man, I'm just not fast enough! You know Sean Trinidad of Venezuela? Jacques Henri of France?

POTATO MAN

They're good.

EDDIE

Man, they SMOKED me in Helsinki! Those dudes are at least a length faster than me! I'll be lucky if I get bronze!

Potato Man is silent for a moment. Then:

POTATO MAN

I can help you.

EDDIE

You'll do that for me?! Man, you dah bomb!

INT. DARYL'S CUBICLE

Daryl's cell phone rings. He picks up.

DARYL

What's up?

[BEGIN INTER-CUTS]

POTATO MAN

I'm helping Eddie Clayton with his running.

DARYL

Aw, come on! You're supposed to be working on ME!

POTATO MAN

Don't worry-- you're going to benefit. We're throwing a pre-Olympics party for Eddie this Friday at Mr. Taggart's house. Right after I run Eddie through some workouts.

DARYL

Yeah, great. So what?

POTATO MAN

Everyone's going to be there. This is YOUR chance to put your Mr. Personality skills to use. And wow Wendy in the process!

DARYL

(eyes light up)

Yeah..!

POTATO MAN

Now this is what you're going to do in the meantime. You're going to call in sick the next couple of days. Go up to the mountains. Rent a cabin. Get focused. Commune with nature. Then come back ready to romance!

DARYL

You got it! Oh man, THANKS!

POTATO MAN

The pot's boiling, Daryl. Now we stir.

EXT. MOUNTAINS - DAY

Shot of Daryl hiking up in the mountains. He stops atop a peak, takes in the vista. He breathes in the air.

EXT. PINE TREE - DAY

Daryl sits yoga-style, under the cool shade of a large pine tree. His eyes are shut. He meditates.

EXT. MOUNTAIN CABIN - DAY

Shot of Daryl pacing the front porch of a mountain log cabin. He practices his "personality" moves.

EXT. OUTDOOR TRACK - DAY

Family, friends, well-wishers have gathered to watch Potato Man put Eddie through one final pre-Olympic training session.

Eddie Clayton comes jogging up to the track starting line where Potato Man awaits. Fans and friends cheer Eddie.

Eddie looks down and jumps back with a start. At Potato Man's feet is a snarling Cheetah in a cage.

EDDIE

What's up with that?!

POTATO MAN

You want to get faster? You need to be pushed.
(pats top of the cage)
Our spotted friend is here to help.

Potato Man points to the track. There are two lanes, side-by-side. Each lane is lined by a small barrier.

POTATO MAN

You take Lane 2. Naksheeta here, will be
in Lane 1.

Eddie Clayton strips off his warm-ups, steps up to the starting line. At the same time, Potato Man wheels the cheetah's cage up to Lane 1.

Eddie gets into his runner's crouch, but keeps looking warily back at the cage, position a couple of lengths back of him.

A ref fires the starting gun. Eddie takes off running. After a couple of seconds pass, Potato Man opens the cage door. The cheetah takes off running down Lane 2.

Moments later, the cheetah springs.

CLOSE-UP SHOT: EDDIE'S HORRIFIED EXPRESSION AS HE TURNS

CLOSE-UP SHOT: SNARLING, LONG-FANGED CHEETAH LEAPING

Potato Man and fans race to Eddie's aid as he screams, twisting in the clutches of the ferocious big cat.

INT. FUNERAL HOME - DAY

Potato Man (still wearing tall chef's hat and white uniform) is at the podium, speaking in front of a roomful of mourners. In front of the podium, Eddie lays in an open casket.

POTATO MAN

Eddie Clayton was a good boy. He would have
made a good man.

EDDIE'S MOTHER, seated in the front row, wails loudly. Family members put their arms around her.

INT. DARYL'S CAR (MOVING) - DAY

Daryl is speeding through the city streets. He is anxious, rattled, checking his watch.

DARYL

Oh, man..! I can't believe I'm gonna be this late!

EXT. MR. TAGGART'S HOUSE - DAY

Daryl's car pulls up in front of the house. He shuts off the engine, takes a deep breath, then hops out and rushes to the front door. He rings the doorbell.

INT. MR. TAGGART'S HOUSE - DAY

VERONICA, the Taggart family maid, answers the door.

DARYL

(breathing hard)

I'm here.. the thing for Eddie..

VERONICA

Oh no, no. It's not here. Wait.

Veronica ducks inside the house a moment, then returns to the door. She hands Daryl a card.

VERONICA

(pointing to card)

That's where they are.

DARYL

Thanks. Nobody told me!

VERONICA

(softly)

It's all right. Goodbye.

(she closes the door)

INT. FUNERAL PARLOR - DAY

Potato Man continues his eulogy.

POTATO MAN

Life's a lemon—it's sour at best. But
Eddie brought the lemon zest.

More emotional wailing.

EXT. FUNERAL HOME - DAY

Daryl's car screeches to a stop outside the funeral home. He switches off the engine, hops out of the car, and dashes towards the front porch of the large two-story Victorian house.

Daryl is in such a hurry he doesn't even glance at the "MARTIN FUNERAL HOME" sign out front.

INT. FUNERAL HOME

A funeral home attendant opens the door for Daryl.

DARYL
(to attendant)

Thank you!
(calling out to the crowd)
DID SOMEONE SAY... OLYMPIC GOLD?!

All heads turn towards Daryl, but Daryl is too "on" to be self-conscious. He is now "Mr. Personality" and nothing is going to stop him.

FUNERAL HOME ATTENDANT
Your name?

DARYL
You can call me Daryl. You can call me Ray!
Just don't call me late for supper!

Daryl spots a man standing near the door smoking a large cigar.

DARYL
(to cigar-smoking man)
Is that a cigar you're smoking or a
BASEBALL BAT?!

A matronly-type woman approaches Daryl.

MATRONLY WOMAN

You seem distraught. Were you close to Eddie?

DARYL

Listen, when Eddie farts, NOBODY wants to be close to him!

A uniformed policeman steps forward.

MATRONLY WOMAN

(to Daryl)

Um.. This is Sergeant McSweeny.

Daryl shakes his hand.

DARYL

Sergeant McSweeny..?

Then Daryl reaches down and pats Sgt. McSweeny's ample belly.

DARYL

I think you better lay off Captain Linguini!

Daryl swings into the main room where most of the mourners are seated. He gazes around the room.

DARYL

(loudly)

What gives?! It looks the FTD Florist Man threw up!

Daryl turns to the man next him.

DARYL

Gotta tell ya, that's one tie-dye tie!
I don't like it... I LOVE it!

Daryl looks up, sees Potato Man at the podium. Potato Man is gesturing down at the casket.

Daryl's jaw drops. He now focuses on the faces glaring back at him. Then, he sees Wendy, seated just a few feet from him.

DARYL'S P.O.V. - WENDY'S MURDEROUS GLARE

BACK TO SCENE

As Daryl shrinks back in horror, a large middle-aged black man approaches the casket.

UNCLE MELVIN

Hold on, y'all!

As gasps of shock and disbelief come from the onlookers, Uncle Melvin walks up to the casket and holds smelling salts under Eddie's nose.

Eddie stirs, shakes his head, sits up. There are screams, cries.

EDDIE

(groggily)

What's... up?

UNCLE MELVIN

I knew that boy ain't dead!

EDDIE'S MOTHER

(shrieking)

My baby!!

Eddie's mother rushes up to the casket, throws her arms around her punchy son. She squeezes him with all her might.

UNCLE MELVIN

You know that boy's a fainter! Always fallin' down faint since he was a child! And I always wake him up with the salts!

MR TAGGART

You mean he's...!

UNCLE MELVIN

He ain't dead! All he need's a whiff of these!

EDDIE'S MOTHER

You just NOW gonna tell me THAT?!

UNCLE MELVIN

And you not even gonna invite ME to the funeral?!

EDDIE'S MOTHER

You come up here with the salts after I go on
and pay for all these flowers?!

Eddie's Mother and Uncle Melvin continue to jaw; Eddie continues to look about the room, dazed and confused. Some mourners quietly file out, while others stay and brawl.

Potato Man comes down from the podium and faces the camera.

POTATO MAN

At the bottom of the deepest hole
We sometimes find egg casserole
Such life reversals, I have found
Turn sad expressions upside down.

Potato Man turns and heads out the door as the melee continues.

INT. POTATO MAN'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Daryl pours out his heart to Potato Man.

DARYL

It's over. This time it's really over. I
didn't 'wow' Wendy. Now she thinks I'm the
idiot of all time. She'll never go for me!

POTATO MAN

Look at the bright side. You can build
on this.

DARYL

Oh, come on I'm finished. And tonight Wendy's going
out to Planet Gemini with her friends. She's gonna
hook up with more jerk guys like Walt. I'm so
depressed.

POTATO MAN

Planet Gemini, you say?

DARYL

Yeah. And don't try and talk me into going out
to the club. I have even less game there than
I do at work or at drama school.

Potato Man leaps to his feet, goes to his closet, pulls out a leather jacket. He puts it on.

DARYL

Where are you going?

POTATO MAN

Planet Gemini.

DARYL

What?! Why?!

POTATO MAN

It's not a matter that concerns you. At least not at this point.

Potato Man departs out the front door.

INT. PLANET GEMINI DANCE CLUB - NIGHT

There is dancing and young people everywhere, all dressed in their hippest, trendiest clothes. Wendy is at a table with her friends.

BRITTNEY

There's a lot of cool guys here tonight!

Wendy looks around, unimpressed.

WENDY

Whatever. Same guys. All the time.

BRITTNEY

Well you're not with Walt anymore so you have to go out there and mingle.

LISA

What kind of guy excites you, Wendy?

WENDY

Someone who's DIFFERENT. A guy who takes control. Who stands out. Strong. Intelligent. Hot. Has Ambition-- you know, going places in life. A guy who treats me like a queen but isn't so wimpy that I can just walk over him. He has to stand up for himself, but I don't want a control freak, you know? And he's gotta be a hot dresser. No geeky car either.

BRITTNEY

Not me. I'm picky.

WENDY

I'm gonna get something from the bar.

Wendy gets up, goes up to the bar, orders a drink. A young guy in a crew cut comes over.

CREW CUT GUY

What's up? Can I buy you a drink?

WENDY

Uh, no.

The guy goes away dejected.

A young guy with a goatee comes over.

GUY WITH GOATEE

Hey! Wanna dance?

Wendy makes an 'L' shape with her fingers and places it on her forehead. The goatee guy goes away dejected.

A guy with long blonde hair comes over.

BLONDE GUY

Hey, what's up? Anybody tell you you're hot?

WENDY

Oh, that is SO lame!

Wendy turns her back on the dejected blonde guy.

SHOT: POTATO MAN

Potato Man casually leans against the bar, just a few feet away from Wendy, who does not notice him.

POTATO MAN
(to Wendy)

Uh.. excuse me.

Wendy turns to Potato Man.

POTATO MAN
Mind giving me some space? You're standing just a little too close, you know?

Wendy lets out an insulted gasp.

WENDY
Excuse me?!

POTATO MAN
What. Did I stutter?

WENDY
And YOU are?!

Potato Man turns and gives Wendy the once-over.

POTATO MAN
Not Interested.

Potato Man coolly walks off, leaving Wendy standing there, with disbelieving bulging eyes and slack jaw.

INT. TABLE IN ANOTHER PART OF CLUB

Potato Man sits at a small round table at the edge of the dance floor, quietly and coolly sipping his drink. Wendy storms over.

WENDY
Where does a loser like you get off walking away from me?!

POTATO MAN
(turning to Wendy)
The hair's nice. Fashion sense needs work.
Later.

Potato Man turns his attention back to the dance floor.

WENDY

I'm not just going to be IGNORED!

POTATO MAN

Listen, I didn't come here to hang out with some chick from work.

Wendy's jaw drops.

WENDY

You're that.. guy from the kitchen!

POTATO MAN

Oh. So you know me.

WENDY

Well, I don't eat. But I've heard of you! You're that.. that...

POTATO MAN

I'm the Potato Man. Say it. It'll do you no harm.

WENDY

Are you.. alone?

POTATO MAN

I'd like to be.

INT. POTATO MAN'S CAR (NOT MOVING) - NIGHT

Shot of Potato Man and Wendy making out in Potato Man's car.

WENDY

Oh.. no.. stop. Just for a minute. I need to catch my breath!

POTATO MAN

I don't think that I can take it. 'Cause it took so long to bake it!

Wendy lets out a high-pitched giggle. They return to making out.

[BEGIN ROMANTIC MONTAGE]

As TWO SO IN LOVE (or some such song) plays in the background, there are various romantic Potato Man & Wendy shots.

SHOT 1: POTATO MAN AND WENDY STROLLING ON THE BEACH

SHOT 2: POTATO MAN AND WENDY DINING AT FANCEY RESTAURANT

SHOT 3: POTATO MAN AND WENDY SHARING A PICNIC BASKET IN A MOUNTAIN MEADOW AT SUNSET

SHOT 4: POTATO MAN AND WENDY SNEAK A KISS IN THE AN EMPTY CORRIDOR AT INEPCO

SHOT 5: WENDY COMES THROUGH THE INEPCO CAFETERIA LINE. POTATO MAN WINKS AT HER AS HE SCOOPS A GENEROUS HELPING OF POTATOES ONTO HER PLATE. WENDY BEAMS

SHOT 6: POTATO MAN AND WENDY KISSING ON PIER BENCH OVERLOOKING THE HARBOR

[END MONTAGE]

EXT. POTATO MAN'S HOUSE - DAY

Daryl bounds up onto the front porch of his uncle's house. He's happy, excited. Without knocking or ringing the doorbell, Daryl bursts in through the front door.

INT. POTATO MAN'S HOUSE

DARYL

Hey, Uncle! Guess what...?!

Daryl stops in his tracks. Potato Man and Wendy are on the couch, their arms wrapped around each other.

POTATO MAN

Easy, boy. This isn't what it looks like.

Daryl staggers back.

DARYL

All this time. All this time..!

POTATO MAN

I did it for your own good!

DARYL

For my own GOOD?!

WENDY

Dude. Chill out!

POTATO MAN

(to Wendy)

Please. There's a fire in the kitchen. I need to put it out.

WENDY

Whatever.

DARYL

So this is your idea of helping me!

POTATO MAN

The smell of garlic might offend. Baked in for richness, it's a friend!

DARYL

Aw what's that supposed to mean?!

POTATO MAN

Trust me. The eggs you ordered are coming out sunny-side up!

DARYL

Looks more to me like a helping of Eggs Benedict!

POTATO MAN

Now that's sour grapes!

DARYL

You know, when I was a kid, I looked up to you. Dinner at your place always meant getting the best steaks. Well guess what. You're still serving up the steaks. Only now, you're driving them through my heart!

Daryl storms out the door. Potato Man turns to Wendy.

POTATO MAN

I'll be right back.

Potato Man goes out after Daryl.

EXT. POTATO MAN'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Before Daryl can get into his car, Potato Man catches up to him.

DARYL

Get away from me!

POTATO MAN

Don't you see? It's all part of the prep work!
The yeast is still rising!

DARYL

Leave me alone!

(starts to get in his car)

POTATO MAN

Ok, I didn't want to give away the plan this
early. But here's how it's gonna go down.

Potato Man hands Daryl the 'Growing Up Brady' book.

DARYL

'Growing Up Brady' again?

POTATO MAN

Turn to page 238. Read the description of
Episode 76.

Daryl flips the book open to page 238.

DARYL

(reading)

"Episdoe 76: Cyrano de Brady." Hey, I
remember that one!

POTATO MAN

That's right. Remember? Peter thinks Greg has stolen
his girl...?

DARYL

But then Greg pretends to be a creep to the girl,
and Peter looks good by comparison!

POTATO MAN

Bingo!

DARYL

I get it!

POTATO MAN

NOW do you trust me?

DARYL

(tearing up)

You had it planned all along.

POTATO MAN

Never mind that. You just chop up the
carrots. Leave the rest to me.

INT. SET OF TALK SHOW - DAY

Shot of the set of the MARTY KOVITCH TV talk show. The studio is empty, except for a crew technician leading a scantily-dressed young woman through the paces.

The crew technician is a large man in his fifties with thick sideburns and a huge gut. He wears a headset.

CREW MAN

(to young lady)

Now the important thing is to make Marty look good, and to have an entertaining show. So let me kinda walk you through how it's gonna go down.

The crew technician leads the young lady up to the stage.

CREW MAN

Ok. You'll be the first to come out. You'll tell Marty your story. Then on the big screen back here...

(points to big screen back of stage)

..your boyfriend is gonna tell his side.

Then, he's gonna come out on stage, you two

will jaw for a while, then one of our people is gonna hand Marty the card with the results.

YOUNG WOMAN

I got it.

The crew man sits in the guest chair.

CREW MAN

Now of course, YOU'RE sure that the baby is his even BEFORE Marty reads the results.

YOUNG WOMAN

Right.

CREW MAN

So you're gonna wanna stand up...

The crew man pulls himself up out of the chair.

CREW MAN

..and do your premature in-your-face dance.

With that, the crew technician does a ridiculously long, protracted jiggy dance all over the stage. Finally:

CREW MAN

BUT.. You then find out that the baby is NOT his! I mean, come on-- I read your bio. It could be one of thirty or forty guys, right?

YOUNG WOMAN

Right.

CREW MAN

So you hear the results. You've just been punked on national TV. So what you're gonna do now...

The crew technician motions for the young woman to follow him as he jogs offstage to the backstage area.

BACKSTAGE ROOM

CREW MAN

..is run back backstage here...

The crew technician crumples to the floor next to a wall.

CREW MAN

..and fall face-first to the floor like so.
(starts hollering, sobbing, pounding the floor)
No! No! IT HAD TO BE HIS BABY...!!!

As the crew technician is acting out, Potato Man walks by out to the main sound stage.

INT. SET OF MARTY KOVITCH SHOW

Potato Man comes walking out onto the set. Marty Kovitch comes out to greet him. There is a quick hug, backslaps.

MARTY

Potato Man! As I live and breathe!
How long has it been?

POTATO MAN

Too long, Marty.

MARTY

Hey, listen. I'm sorry about your show.

POTATO MAN

It's all right. I've got other scallops
in the saucepan.

MARTY

Well you gave me my start when you let me
co-host your show in '03.

POTATO MAN

You earned your success, Mary. But I need
a favor.

MARTY

You name it.

INT. POTATO MAN'S CAR (MOVING) - DAY

Potato Man pulls out his cell phone as he drives.

[BEGIN INTER-CUTS]

POTATO MAN

The plan is in motion.

SHOT: DARYL SITTING AT HIS WORK DESK

DARYL

Yes! So what do I do?

POTATO MAN

This Tuesday, I want you to follow my
instructions to the letter.

EXT. INEPCO OFFICE BUILDING- TUESDAY - EARLY MORNING

Shot of Potato Man's car pulling up in the parking lot. Potato Man and Wendy exit the car. They walk up to the front entrance, arm in arm.

INEPCO LOBBY

Once they enter the lobby, Potato Man and Wendy turn and face each other, their hands gripped tightly together.

POTATO MAN AND WENDY
(singing to each other)

Lemon tree very pretty
And the lemon flower is sweet
But the fruit of the poor lemon
Is impossible to eat

POTATO MAN

Miss me?

WENDY

Yes.

POTATO MAN

I'll miss you more.

They kiss, then go their separate ways.

INT. WENDY'S CUBICLE - LATER

Wendy is working at computer. Her phone rings. She picks up.

WENDY

This is Wendy Taggart.

CUT TO:

CLOSE-UP SHOT: DARYL TALKING ON HALLWAY PAY PHONE

DARYL

(in harsh, disguised voice)

Watch the Marty Kovitch Show in the break room
at 12:30. You WON'T want to miss it.

With that, Daryl hangs up and hurries off down the hall.

CUT BACK TO:

WENDY AT HER DESK

A puzzled-looking Wendy stares at her phone, now ringing with a
dial tone.

INT. BREAK ROOM - LATER

Wendy enters the break room, switches on TV set.

WENDY'S P.O.V. - TV SET SHOWING 'MARTY KOVITCH SHOW'

Marty is interviewing a sobbing young red-haired girl.

RED-HAIRED GIRL

(crying)

Marty, I know he's the father!

MARTY

Well let's find out what he has to say!

CUT TO:

VIDEO CLIP

Now a film clip comes up of the accused father—it's Potato Man,
wearing an over-sized T-shirt and wool hat.

BACK TO SCENE

SHOT: WENDY'S SHOCKED EXPRESSION

CUT BACK TO:

WENDY'S P.O.V. - VIDEO CLIP

POTATO MAN
No WAY I'm the baby's father!

QUICK CLIP OF POTATO MAN WAVING HIS HANDS IN THE "NOT ME" MOTION

CUT TO:

CLOSE-UP OF POTATO MAN RAPPING INTO THE CAMERA

POTATO MAN
When I go to the club
They know I'm a playa'!
I shut down my man
'cause I'm a defenda'!
They give me mad props
'cause they know I'm a gangsta'!
Put cream in my coffee
It betta' be Splenda!

CLOSE-UP SHOT: POTATO MAN MUGGING FOR CAMERA

POTATO MAN
Marty, HER kitchen is ALWAYS open for service!

Crowd gasps in disbelief and boos.

QUICK CLIP OF POTATO MAN GLARING AT CAMERA, ARMS FOLDED

POTATO MAN
I ain't the father'cause there ain't no chance!
And I'll PROVE it when I do my Humpty Dance!

Louder audience gasps and boos. The clip of Potato Man ends.

MARTY
(speaking into the camera)
Let's bring him out right now!

Potato Man walks out onto the stage to a chorus of boos and catcalls.

POTATO MAN
(to audience)
Boo you! Boo you!

Marty ushers Potato Man into his chair, at which time the Red-Haired girl jaws at him for a time.

MARTY

(to audience)

Are you ready for the results?

The audience cheers its approval. Marty goes to the edge of the stage. The result cards are handed to him. Marty takes a seat.

MARTY

(reading the card)

In the case of two year-old Brianna, three year-old Justin, six year-old Tracy, Fifteen year-old Brad.. and all nine kids in Row B of our studio audience..

SHOT: 9 KIDS OF MULTI-RACES AND NATIONALITIES

MARTY

Shady.. you ARE..

The crowd erupts. The red-haired girl leaps to her feet and jaws in the face of Potato Man.

MARTY

..the father!

Potato Man jumps to his feet and jaws at the audience.

POTATO MAN

You don't know me! You don't know me!

BACK TO SCENE

Wendy shuts off the TV and runs sobbing from the break room.

INT. KITCHEN LOCKER ROOM

Potato Man speaks into his cell phone as he rips off his apron.

[BEGIN INTER-CUTS]

POTATO MAN

Did you see it?

DARYL

Yeah. Wow, I didn't know you were a player like that!

POTATO MAN

Daryl, it was fake! All faked! But keep it under your hat, because Marty could lose his license.

DARYL

Oh. Yeah. Yeah.

POTATO MAN

Now Wendy is pretty upset. She's crying over by the copier room. I'm gonna go over there. You get over there too. And do it just like we rehearsed it!

DARYL

Right! I'm there!

INT. OFFICE COMMON AREA

A number of women hover around a sobbing Wendy, trying to comfort her.

CO-WORKER 1

I knew he was a creep from the beginning!

WENDY

I trusted him!

CO-WORKER 2

You can do better!

Potato Man pops up.

POTATO MAN

Hey baby, what's wrong?!

CO-WORKER 3

Get out of here, you creep!

POTATO MAN

Wendy! Baby! Tell me what's wrong. Let me kiss your troubles away.

WENDY

Get away from me!!

At that moment, Walt comes charging in, a security guard chasing after him.

GUARD

You're no longer an employee, Mr. Owen! You can't come in here without a badge!

An unkempt, unshaven Walt runs up to Wendy.

WALT

Wendy! I saw it too! I am so sorry!

Daryl comes running into the common area. It's too late. Walt has gotten to Wendy first.

WENDY

Walt! What are you doing here?!

POTATO MAN

(to Walt)

Pssst. Get outta here! Scram!

WALT

(to Potato Man)

How can you treat her like this?! I had my faults and maybe I deserved to lose her! But to have this beautiful woman, who thinks the sun, moon and stars of you— and you play her like that?! How COULD you?!

POTATO MAN

Well.. uh.. It's like this and like this and like that and uh...

WALT

How can you not value her like the treasure she is?! If I had the chance again, I would treat her like... like...

WENDY

Like what, Walter?

WALT
(takes two deep breathes)
I would treat her like a queen!

WENDY
Oh, Walter!

Wendy rises to her feet, throws her arms around Walt, and they exchange a long passionate kiss.

DARYL
(chiming in from the back)
Me too!

Everyone turns and fixes a "how lame" look upon Daryl.

INT. INEPCO HALLWAY

Shot of two security guards and Mr. Taggart escorting Potato Man and Daryl out of the building. Potato Man and Daryl both hold boxes containing their personal items.

MR TAGGART
I never thought I'd see the day when I'd take the spatula from the hand of Potato Man.

INT. LOBBY FRONT DOOR

MR TAGGART
But it is my daughter, you understand.

POTATO MAN
I understand completely. I would have done the same thing.

Mr. Taggart and Potato Man shake hands.

MR TAGGART
Good luck.

POTATO MAN
Thank you, sir. No hard feelings.

Mr. Taggart turns to Daryl, winces, then shakes his head. Mr. Taggart walks away. Potato Man and Daryl exit the building.

EXT. PARKING LOT - DAY

Potato Man and Daryl walk together out to their cars.

POTATO MAN

Think of this as a valuable life lesson.
You've just been force-fed a mouthful of
sour cream. How does it taste?

DARYL

(choking on emotion)

Not good, man. Not good.

POTATO MAN

I thought as much.

Potato Man stops in his track. He turns to Daryl, and slowly,
pulls out a potato from his box. He holds it up to Daryl.

POTATO MAN

One humble, dry potato.

DARYL

Yeah?

POTATO MAN

In and of itself, hardly a delight for the taste buds.
Just like your sour cream. But...

Potato Man pulls out a container of sour cream from his box.

POTATO MAN

..once you find a way to bring them
together: Magic!

Daryl's expression lightens. He smiles. He nods.

POTATO MAN

Go get'em!

Potato Man and Daryl exchange high-fives, then part ways.

INT. LARGE ORNATE BALLROOM - SEVERAL WEEKS LATER - NIGHT

A large wedding reception is taking place. Many are dining on
round tables with beautiful white tablecloths, glistening
silverware, wine glasses, etc.

INT. BALLROOM KITCHEN

Potato Man is, once again, masterfully running a kitchen and churning out the culinary delights.

POTATO MAN
(shouting out)
Pork loins are up! How are we comin'
on the crab cakes?!

Potato Man's cell phone rings. He moves to a quiet spot in the kitchen to take the call.

[BEGIN INTER-CUTS]

POTATO MAN
Hello?

SHOT: DARYL BACKSTAGE IN PLAY COSTUME

DARYL
How's the reception going?

POTATO MAN
Great! How was opening night?

DARYL
Aw, it was fantastic! Packed house,
standing ovation. It was awesome!

POTATO MAN
I wish I could have been there. But
Saturday night, I am definitely there!

DARYL
Cool! Hey, and guess what! There's a
a girl in the cast-- I'm really into her!

POTATO MAN
Really! Terrific! Have you talked to her yet?

DARYL
Not yet, but I'm going to. And you know what?
This time I'm relaxed. I have confidence!

POTATO MAN

All right! Go win one for the Potato Man!

DARYL

You got it, Uncle! Bye!

[END INTER-CUTS]

Potato Man returns to his work, smiling and shaking his head.

INT. BACKSTAGE AT PLAY HOUSE

Daryl moves slowly through the packed throng of actors and well-wishers. He spots the woman of his dreams: LYNETTE. She is talking to a girl friend.

Finally, the girl friend leaves, leaving Lynette by herself for a moment. Seeing his chance, Daryl walks right up to Lynette.

Daryl stands there, staring at Lynette.

LYNETTE

Uh.. Yeah?

DARYL

Opening night!

Lynette waits for more. Nothing more is forthcoming. Lynette rolls her eyes, walks away, leaving Daryl standing there.

INT. BALLROOM KITCHEN

Potato Man is dressing up the dessert plates. A woman walks into the kitchen. Potato Man stops what he's doing, giving her his full attention.

POTATO MAN

Can I help you?

The woman seems slightly distracted, out of sorts.

RECEPTION WOMAN

Oh.. Hi. The food is.. just wonderful!

POTATO MAN

Thank you.

RECEPTION WOMAN

Such a lovely wedding, don't you think?
Everyone is so happy.

POTATO MAN

Yes.

RECEPTION WOMAN

It must be so wonderful. To share love like
that. To have a life companion...
(her voice starts to choke with emotion)
Two souls joining together as one..

Potato Man sets down his cooking utensils. He turns to the woman, giving her his undivided attention. He looks deep into her eyes.

POTATO MAN

I see a heart that's searching. You're looking
For someone. But it's not Potato Man.

The woman nods her head, starts to weep.

POTATO MAN

Let's talk about it.

Potato Man takes her hand, leads her to a quiet place.

FADE OUT