

THE ROTH EXPEDITION

by
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EXT. SUBURBAN STREET - DAY

DIXON COOPER (V.O.)

My name is Dixon Cooper, and I'm a
writer.

We follow a tall, thin man in his early twenties with a mop of brown hair dressed in a hooded sweatshirt and jeans, as he walks down the driveway of your typical suburban house to the mailbox. He pulls the box open, reaches in, and pulls out a small stack of letters. Fumbling through the mail - past those to Resident and Mr. and Mrs. Mason Cooper he finds what he has been looking for - a letter from *The New Yorker* magazine addressed to Dixon Cooper. He rips it open and pulls out a single sheet which reads:

Dear Mr. Cooper: At this point we do not feel that your short story "Seven Blows from Thursday's Song" is appropriate for inclusion in our magazine. We thank you for your continued interest in our publication and your desire to contribute to its pages.

DIXON (V.O.)

Correction - My name is Dixon
Cooper, and I'm an unsuccessful
writer.

EXT. THE QUAD OF BUCKNELL UNIVERSITY (GRADUATION) - DAY

(FLASHBACK) Students in cap and gown mill around the verdant pastures while families are filing into seats and take pictures. Dixon, younger and looking like a preppie high school student, sits with his mother, who is shielding her eyes while trying to find her daughter, and his father, who is checking and rechecking his camcorder to make sure he'll catch the big day. Dixon rolls and unrolls the program in his hands.

DIXON (V.O.)

It all started during my junior year of high school when I went to my sister's college graduation. In the middle of that four hour long ceremony I was witness to a man that would change the course of my life, and party to, what my dad would later say, 'the worst speech he's ever heard.'

As the voice-over ends we hear the last few words of the University president's introduction of the keynote speaker.

UNIVERSITY PRESIDENT

And now it gives me great pleasure to introduce one of our university's most distinguished alumnus and world renowned author - Philip Roth.

PHILIP ROTH, an elderly if spry man, rises from his seat and walks over to the podium. He clears his throat and begins:

PHILIP ROTH

I'm assuming a great number of you here today are expecting me to congratulate you on all your hard work, and offer up the world as a small child that needs to be saved by each and every one of you. Well I'm not here to bullshit you, the world was spinning before you were born and it will keep on spinning long after you are dead. And while you might think that your degree in Business Administration, Education, or God forbid *English Composition* makes you prepared for what life has to offer, you're wrong - you'll be lucky if you ever even find one shred of happiness. The best I can say is good luck.

Finished, Roth turns from the podium and heads back to his seat. There is a smatter of applause and he eases himself into his chair.

DIXON (V.O.)

And with that he was done. I'm not sure why that speech had such an effect on me - maybe it was the way he took the air out of the entire audience's false hope of tomorrow's better days, or maybe it was the look on the president's face as he tried to hide his anger at such a short and disrespectful speech - but I decided to check this Roth guy's writing out.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Dixon is sitting on his bed reading *Goodbye, Columbus*.

DIXON (V.O.)

I read one, then two, then pretty soon I was reading every one I could find whenever I could find the time.

CUT TO:

EXT. PARK - DAY

Dixon is sitting Indian style reading *Portnoy's Complaint*.

CUT TO:

INT. HIGH SCHOOL GYMNASIUM

Dixon, dressed in his gym shorts and T-shirt, is reading *American Pastoral*. A volley ball comes sailing in and hits him in the head. Although momentarily dazed, he picks up the ball and launches back in the direction from which it came.

EXT. SUBURBAN STREET - (DAY)

Dixon walks down the street with a book in his hand.

DIXON (V.O.)

I read somewhere that Roth started off all his stories from a page full of random thoughts and sentences that he happened to discover one day. I always held out hope the same thing would happen to me.

A rolled up ball of paper skips across the ground. Dixon bends down, picks it up and opens it. It reads: "Milk, Bread, Tampax, Cereal."

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

Fate didn't seem to be quite so kind to me however.

He crumples the ball back up and tosses it into a garbage can.

EXT. MAIN STREET - DAY

DIXON (V.O.)

My obsession with Roth even got to the point where, whenever I passed a book store I would have to go in and buy a Roth book, whether I had it already or not.

We see Dixon walk past a small store named *Books Ahoy!* from right to left and off screen. After a beat he walks from left to right and off screen. After another beat he walks up and into the store.

INT. *Books Ahoy!* Bookstore

Dixon walks with purpose weaving in and out of aisle, as it's obvious he knows exactly where the Roth books are held. Once in the appropriate spot he reaches his hand out and lets it hover over a group of Roth paperbacks. Finally he selects *The Human Stain* and heads to the cash register. At the register the cashier gives him a knowing look and picks the book up and touches to his head a-la Johnny Carson's *Carnac*.

CASHIER

Philip Roth.

Dixon gives him a slightly bemused look and pays him with a twenty, as the cashier bags his purchase.

INT. DIXON'S ROOM

Dixon walks in, takes the book out of the bag and carefully shelves it with three others of the same title. His shelf is overrun by Roth titles.

DIXON (V.O.)

From that point on the only thing I've ever wanted to be was a writer like Philip Roth. Of course the trouble with being a writer is that you have to convince someone other than yourself that you have talent, which is something that I've never quite been able to pull off.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL CLASSROOM

Dixon is handed back a paper. Hand-written on the front cover are the teacher's comments "Too Crude" and the grade B-.

DIXON (V.O.)
Not in high school.

INT. COLLEGE CLASSROOM

Dixon is once again handed back a paper. Hand-written on the front cover is the professor's comments "Too Predictable" and the grade C-.

DIXON (V.O.)
Not in college.

EXT. SUBURBAN STREET - DAY

We return to Dixon at his mailbox holding the rejection letter.

DIXON (V.O.)
And not today. This one makes thirty seven straight rejections for me - 33 short stories, two novels, and two screenplays that absolutely no one has liked. It's enough to make you wanna give up.

Dixon carefully places the letter back in the envelope, and then rips it to shreds. After this is done to his satisfaction, he heads back into the house.

INT. BASEMENT OF THE COOPER HOUSE

Dixon sits on an old threadbare sofa watching Public Access airings of old Bob Ross *The Joy of Painting* episodes while taking hits from a hash pipe. Between hits he is talking to the screen.

DIXON (CONT'D)
No Bob, don't do it - that tree is gonna mess up your whole painting.

Dixon watches as Bob adds, with a flourish, a huge tree to the front of his painting. Once the painter has put on the finishing touches it looks simply stunning. Dixon lets out a big cloud of smoke.

DIXON (CONT'D)
(voice cracking)
Damn, well done Bob.

The basement door opens and Dixon scrambles to hide his drug paraphernalia in the front pocket of his hooded sweatshirt as his MOM, a professional in her late 40's comes down the stairs.

DIXON (CONT'D)
Oh hey mom - how was work?

MRS. COOPER
Stressful, how was whatever you did today?

DIXON
No complaints.

MRS. COOPER
Did you write any masterpieces today, or better yet, look for a job?

DIXON
No to both, but I did get rejected again by *The New Yorker*.

MRS. COOPER
Oh Dixon...

DIXON
I know what you're gonna say mom - that I have more ambition than talent and I'm just setting myself up to fall here, but... let me ask you this - do you know how many times Philip Roth was rejected before he sold his first book?

MRS. COOPER
No I don't.

DIXON
Me either, but I'm sure it must have been a lot, (beat) either way I feel confident that the next story I write will be published.

MRS. COOPER
I've heard that before.

DIXON

(slightly hurt)

You're lack of faith hurts just a bit.

MRS. COOPER

Dixon, honey, it's not lack of faith, its just that: you're 22 years old, you don't have a job, you aren't even looking for one, you spend all your time in this basement, and your dad and I have to foot all your bills - medical, car, life insurance... These things add up.

DIXON

I know mom, I'll make it up to you one day I swear.

MRS. COOPER

(resigned)

Okay fine honey, so what is this next story that you're sure will be published?

DIXON

Not sure, I haven't written or even thought of it yet, but you know...

MRS. COOPER

(annoyed)

Yeah I know. So are you planning on coming to Grandma's tonight for dinner or not?

DIXON

Nah, I'm going over to Marc's after he gets off work.

MRS. COOPER

Ah that's interesting...

DIXON

(confused)

What?

MRS. COOPER

Just that Marc, your best friend, has a job - maybe that's something you should try.

DIXON

Funny.

MRS. COOPER

Okay, well I'm going to hit the treadmill for a while. Have fun at Marc's and stay out of trouble.

DIXON

Will do.

Mrs. Cooper starts to head up the stairs. Dixon soon calls after her.

DIXON (CONT'D)

Hey mom, can you do me a favor and not tell dad that I got rejected again?

MRS. COOPER

Sure thing.

EXT. MARC'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Dixon, wearing his same hooded sweatshirt and jeans knocks on the door of Apartment #420, your average crappy starter apartment in your average crappy apartment complex.

MARC (O.S.)

It's open.

INT. MARC'S APARTMENT

Dixon opens the door and steps inside a rather bland and under-furnished apartment with a stained sand-colored shag carpet. Once inside we hear the computerized bleeps and bloops of a video game being played at a loud volume. MARC, also white and in his early 20s, but with a more manicured and professional look than Dixon, is sitting on a torn green futon playing the video game *Street Fighter* on a 64-inch flat screen TV.

MARC

Dickie! What's up?

DIXON

Eh, nothing. What's up with you?

MARC

Did you bring my medication?

Dixon pulls out the pipe and a small dimebag of pot and shows it off.

DIXON

Sure did.

MARC

Nice! Load it up while I beat this fucker.

Marc continues to play while Dixon packs the pipe. After he's done he taps Marc on the shoulder and the two share a few hits.

MARC (CONT'D)

(exhaling)

I tell ya man, after a week at the crap factory I need this shit bad.

DIXON

Haha that seems about right, you know just before I left my mom was telling me how I should be like you and get a job.

MARC

(laughing)

No way man, I'm telling you, hold out on getting a job as long as you possibly can - work sucks. Every day is exactly the same. I clock in, sit at my cubicle, move paper from one side of my desk to the other, clock out and get ready to do it all over again the next day. It's a slow form of torture. (beat) Life really seems to suck once you get out of college.

DIXON

Yeah, it's a lot tougher to get drunk everyday and sleep til two in the afternoon when you've got a job to go to.

MARC

Exactly.

DIXON

So, is Sarah coming over tonight?

MARC

Nah, she's got this wedding shower thing for her cousin.

DIXON

Oh boy - nice knowing ya, with her cousin getting hitched you two'll be married in no time.

MARC

Nah, no way. I'm not ready to get married.

DIXON

To Sarah or in general?

MARC

Hmm, both - I mean I'll probably end up marrying her because I guess I love her and, let's face it, I doubt I'll do much better, but man - I still feel like I'm 16 years old or something.

DIXON

Well, I give you four months before she starts showing off that ring.

MARC

Fuck you and pass that shit over here.

Dixon takes another hit and passes it over to Marc who takes a long hit. They both exhale huge clouds of smoke at the same time.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. MARC'S APARTMENT

Marc and Dixon are both sitting on the futon watching *Gilligan's Island* reruns in a drug-induced haze. They both stare blankly at the screen.

DIXON

So wait, they can't ever get off the island right?

MARC

(giggling)

Haha, of course not you fuck, it's *Gilligan's Island*.

DIXON
Oh really?

MARC
What did you think we were
watching?

DIXON
A documentary or something.

Marc's laughter grows louder until he is hysterical.

DIXON (CONT'D)
I was getting all depressed
watching these poor people thinking
it was real.

MARC
(laughing uproariously)
Haha, you... thought... *Gilligan's*
... *Island*... was... real...

DIXON
Okay, okay calm down, you're gonna
piss your pants or something.

MARC
(calming down)
Whew, well you've ruined this show
for me now, these poor people...

Marc clicks off the TV.

MARC (CONT'D)
You wanna do up the usual?

DIXON
Sure, might as well.

INT. MOVIE RENTAL STORE

Dixon and Marc are walking through the aisle of the store
drinking huge *Slurpees*.

DIXON (V.O.)
The usual was to hit up the nearest
7/11, grab some *Slurpees* and wander
through the video store for a while
until something grabbed us...
either that or until we got kicked
out.

MARC
 (picking up a video)
 Oh look at this - *Sexual Boundaries*
 7.

DIXON
 Eh, I heard it wasn't as good as
Sexual Boundaries 6.

MARC
 Well what could be?

DIXON
 (picking up another video)
 What about *The Return of the Kiss*
of the Vampire? It's even got Fabio
 and Tara Reid in it.

MARC
 Fabio and Tara Reid? I'm surprised
 it's still in stock.

As they go through their little spiel a nerdy looking high school aged CLERK comes over to them.

CLERK
 Umm, excuse me I'm gonna have to
 ask you to refrain from making fun
 of the movie titles in front of
 other customers.

MARC
 Why?

CLERK
 Well, you might negatively
 influence a person's decision to
 rent a given title.

Marc grabs the copy of *The Return of the Kiss of the Vampire* from Dixon and holds it up the clerk's face.

MARC
 You really think someone was
 actually gonna rent this?

CLERK
 Well, not necessarily, but...
 you're not allowed to have drinks
 in here anyway.

DIXON

Okay thanks there (reads his name tag) Lance, we were just on our way out anyway.

MARC

(loudly)

Yeah cuz all these movies suck!

The two friends exit the store.

INT. MARC'S CAR

Marc and Dixon, both with *Slurpees* still in hand are debating what to do next.

MARC

We could always do a strip club.

DIXON

Nah, I don't really have the money for that.

MARC

Well I could spot you the cover and then we could just sit in the back row so we don't have to feed the bitches dollars all night.

DIXON

Yeah, but what fun is that?

MARC

True, true. Any thoughts?

DIXON

Nah, not a thing.

MARC

You know it's funny you're supposed to be this genius writer with a crazy imagination and you can't think of one thing to do on a Friday night.

DIXON

Well, what can I say? I guess I'm pretty much a disappointment however you look at it.

MARC

Jeez, don't get all teary-eyed on me, I'm just messing around with you.

DIXON

Nah, no it's no big deal, it's just that I got rejected again today for another story.

MARC

The Thursday's Song one?

DIXON

Yeah, apparently once again my writing isn't ready for human consumption.

MARC

Fuck man that was a good story - I sent that out to a bunch of people and they all really liked it.

DIXON

Really? Who?

MARC

Well, my sister for one - she said that it was the best thing she's ever read of yours.

DIXON

Hannah said that?

MARC

Definitely, she reads anything I send her that you wrote within a few hours and this is a girl that is busy as shit with all her school work and art projects.

DIXON

Hmm...

MARC

So fuck it man - maybe these magazine people are just rejecting you cuz they've never heard of Dixon Cooper. I bet they never even take the time to read any of your stories. They're just looking for crap from people that everybody knows.

DIXON

Maybe, but it's frustrating - how do you get to be a 'name' if no one is ready to take a chance on you?

MARC

It's a bitch man... a real bitch. (thinks for a beat) We need some beer.

DIXON

Yeah I think your right.

INT. MARC'S APARTMENT

We see Dixon and Marc enter the front door each carrying a 30 pack.

MARC

Cheer up buddy - there's nothing wrong with you a few beers won't fix.

He tears open his case and tosses a beer to Dixon.

CUT TO:

INT. MARC'S APARTMENT

The two have obviously been drinking for a while. There are a number of beer cans strewn about the apartment. Marc is laying on the futon while Dixon is sitting on the floor with his back to it. He is going on and on about his inability to get a story published, and Marc is growing impatient with his ramblings.

DIXON

And the thing is I once overheard my mom saying that I 'have more ambition than talent' and I'm starting to think she might be right. Like I want to be a writer, I think I can be a writer, but fuck it man when I sit down and look at it, I'm no writer I'm just some jerk with no job who still lives with his parents and thinks he's some kind of misunderstood genius. It's like I'm some sort of cliched crappy movie stereotype.

MARC

Right...

DIXON

...and I look at some of these other people that are making money at writing and I think I'm better than them - that they suck, but maybe I'm just wrong. I'm the one who sucks - I mean what's more pathetic that an unsuccessful writer? Maybe a gym teacher or homeless drug addict, but you know...

MARC

Right...

DIXON

Exactly, fuck this - I'm sick of all of this. I'm no writer, I'm no genius, I'm nothing. Starting first thing next week I'm looking for a real job. I'm gonna be like any normal member of society.

MARC

Right... wait what?

DIXON

I said fuck writing, its a fucking lost cause anyway.

MARC

(growing angry)

Now wait a fucking second now, you're gonna quit writing? Or are you just drunk talking?

DIXON

Nah I mean it - fuck writing. I won't write another word as long as I live.

MARC

You really mean that?

DIXON

Yeah, I think I do.

MARC

Fuck it, get up.

Marc jumps down and pulls Dixon up. Dixon, confused at first, eases himself up from his sitting position.

DIXON

What are you doing?

MARC

Come on get ready - we're going.

DIXON

Huh? Where?

MARC

I'm not sure yet - but we are gonna track down that Roth guy and get him to read one of your stories - maybe his opinion will make you see you shouldn't give up writing.

DIXON

Nah, that's fucking ridiculous. We don't even know where he lives.

MARC

That's what the Internet is for. We can find shit out like that in no time.

Marc gets up and walks into his bedroom.

INT. MARC'S BEDROOM

In a small disheveled room - the bed is unmade and there are clothes strewn about all over the place - sits a computer hutch. Marc walks over to it and turns on the screen.

MARC

(after a long beat)

Hey fucker - I just narrowed our search area from 50 to 1.

DIXON (O.S.)

Huh?

MARC

Come in here.

Dixon slowly enters the room and leans over the computer.

MARC (CONT'D)

He lives in 'the New Hampshire countryside.'

DIXON

So?

MARC

So, that's where we're going.

DIXON

You're joking - are you planning to just drive around New Hampshire looking for him?

MARC

Hmm... well let's do another search here and see if we can find something a bit more helpful.

Marc enters the search query 'Philip Roth' into his Internet search engine. Almost immediately this hit pops up: "Acclaimed author Philip Roth to speak at Dartmouth University Fiction Symposium."

DIXON

Well fuck me, when is it?

Marc clicks on the link.

MARC

Tomorrow at 8 PM.

DIXON

No fucking way.

MARC

Saddle up and ride buddy, we're there.

DIXON

No, no wait, now I appreciate what you're trying to do here, you know save me from myself and give me confidence and all, but driving all the way up there? For what? He's not gonna wanna talk to me or anything. It'll all be a big waste of time.

MARC

(looking around)

Waste of time? At the very least this little trip will be fun. Look around - there ain't shit else to do.

DIXON

Haha, fine let's do it.

MARC

Nice! Just remember when you make the big bucks as a writer and win all sorts of awards who did this for you.

DIXON

Okay, so what, we leaving tomorrow morning?

MARC

Fuck it, let's go now.

DIXON

Now? Are you cool to drive?

MARC

Sure I've only had like six or seven beers - I'm golden.

INT. MARC'S CAR - NIGHT

Marc and Dixon are setting out on their journey north. The radio is blasting some modern rock track as the two friends stare through the car's windshield at the vacant interstate and woods lining the roadway.

MARC

(turning down music)

I'm hungry man, you wanna hit up *White Castle* or something?

DIXON

Nah, *White Castle's* fucking gross.

MARC

Alright then. Any ideas for where we should stop?

DIXON

Let's just hit up a rest stop. That way we don't have to get off the main road or anything.

MARC

Okay. (beat) You think any of these rest stops have a *Bob's Big Boy*?

DIXON
I really don't know.

MARC
Cuz that would hit the spot right now.

DIXON
Well at the very least it will have a *Cinnabun* or something.

MARC
Eh, I guess that'll work.

EXT. INTERSTATE - NIGHT

Marc's car roars by a sign that reads next Rest Stop 8 miles.

EXT. REST STOP - NIGHT

Dixon and Marc are heading towards the door of the rest stop. Dixon cranes his neck up to read the sign above the entrance that lists the restaurants inside.

DIXON
Looks like a no-go on the *Bob's Big Boy*.

MARC
(crestfallen)
Yeah...

INT. REST STOP

As they enter the Rest Stop we see a small group of people milling around the place. Some buy coffee, but most are making a beeline for the rest rooms.

DIXON
And it looks like the *Cinnabun* stand is closed.

MARC
Well this trip is off to a great start... Looks like *Roy Rogers* is the only thing still serving food.

The two walk over to the *Roy Rogers* station, grab trays and slide down looking over the premade meals that are warming under heat lamps.

DIXON

Roy's been pretty picked over here.

MARC

Only fish sandwiches left? I didn't even know that *Roy Rogers* had a fish sandwich.

DIXON

(deadpan)

I think they call it the *Koi Rogers*.

Marc stares at him for a long beat.

MARC

You're fucking hysterical you know that?

DIXON

Hey I try.

Marc picks up the fish sandwich and smells it for a beat before he puts it down in disgust.

MARC

I think I'll just get some french fries.

DIXON

And the *Koi Rogers* lives to fight another day...

MARC

Okay, okay enough.

DIXON

Come on! Admit it, that was a little funny.

Marc shakes his head 'no' in disgust as the two move to the french fry holder and each grab a large fry. They then head to the checkout counter where a small HISPANIC CHECKOUT GIRL waits for them.

MARC

Can we get two large sodas as well?

The checkout girl pulls two large cups out of a dispenser as she glares at the two.

HISPANIC CHECKOUT GIRL

Is this it?

MARC

Well, there wasn't a whole lot of selection.

HISPANIC CHECKOUT GIRL

(not listening)

Yeah...

She rings up their purchase at the register and their total comes to \$11.63. Both friends react with a 'that can't be right expression.'

DIXON

(leaning in towards Marc)

That can't be right.

MARC

Yeah I know. (to Checkout Girl)

Umm, are you sure this is right?

The Hispanic Checkout Girl looks down at their purchases and then back at them.

HISPANIC CHECKOUT GIRL

Yeah.

MARC

Wait how much are the fries?

HISPANIC CHECKOUT GIRL

I don't know.

MARC

I mean like individually.

HISPANIC CHECKOUT GIRL

I'm not sure.

MARC

Well how much are the sodas?

HISPANIC CHECKOUT GIRL

I don't know.

MARC

Okay, so you don't know how much the fries or sodas are *but* you know that together they total (beat) \$11.63.

HISPANIC CHECKOUT GIRL

Yeah.

DIXON
 (interjecting)
 Is there a manager here or something?

HISPANIC CHECKOUT GIRL
 No.

MARC
 Is there anyone else here that can help us?

The Hispanic Checkout Girl points over towards another Hispanic Checkout Girl working behind a *TCBY* stand.

MARC (CONT'D)
 How can she help us?

HISPANIC CHECKOUT GIRL
 Frozen Yogurt.

MARC
 Oh forget this, I'll just pay.

He gives her a twenty for the meal, gets his change, counts it very carefully and then the two walk off.

INT. REST STOP DINING AREA

Marc and Dixon are just are finishing up their french fries and sodas.

DIXON
 Well that was quite a meal.

MARC
 (sarcastic)
 Oh yeah best eleven bucks I've ever spent.

The two get up, drop off their trays and garbage and head towards the door.

DIXON
 I'm gonna hit the bathroom before we split - you know squeeze as much out as I can before we hit the road.

MARC
 Yeah that sounds like a good idea.

INT. REST STOP BATHROOM

Dixon and Marc are standing at two urinals near each other with one empty between them as a buffer zone.

DIXON

Hey what do you think the gayest thing you could say to a stranger at a urinal would be?

MARC

(thinks it over)
Probably 'need a hand with that?'

DIXON

I was thinking a simple 'nice dick' would do it.

As Dixon says the words 'nice dick' a MAN in his late 40's, unnoticed by the two friends, comes into the bathroom, hears this comment, and quickly spins around and exits with all due speed.

INT. MARC'S CAR

Back in the car the two continue on their way up the interstate with the radio at full blast. Dixon lets out a big yawn as Marc rubs the sleep from his eyes.

MARC

(turning down the radio)
Hmm, maybe we shouldn't have left at 11:30.

DIXON

(sleepily)
Yeah.

MARC

You know, if you want I could call my sister and see if we could crash in her dorm room for a while.

DIXON

Really? How far away are we from her school?

MARC

I dunno, like 40 minutes.

DIXON

Whatever man you're driving, if you
wanna stop let's stop.

MARC

Well I am kinda tired and I also
realized that we never printed out
any directions up to Dartmouth.

DIXON

Oh, so not only are we both tired,
but we don't know where we are
going?

MARC

Well I know it's north, but besides
that... no.

DIXON

Let's stop then.

MARC

Okay, lemme give my sister a call
real quick.

Marc pulls out his cell phone from his front coat pocket and
speed dials her number.

MARC (CONT'D)

(into the phone)

Hannah what's up?

Beat for Hannah's unheard answer.

MARC (CONT'D)

Oh really - well never mind then.

Another beat for Hannah's unheard response.

MARC (CONT'D)

Well - it's just that me and Dixs
here were in the area and we were
planning on stopping by tonight,
but...

Another beat for Hannah's unheard response.

MARC (CONT'D)

(to Dixon)

Hannah says hi.

DIXON
 (leaning into Marc's
 phone)
 Hi Hannah.

Marc listens another beat for Hannah's unheard response.

MARC
 We're on our way up to
 Dartmouth...New
 Hampshire....why?... that's kind of
 a long story... but we don't wanna
 ruin your plans.

Another beat for Hannah's unheard response.

MARC (CONT'D)
 Okay, let me ask him. (to Dixon)
 She's going to some party tonight
 and wants to know if we're
 interested in going.

DIXON
 Well I dunno...

MARC
 (into his phone)
 Sure, we're both down.

Another beat for Hannah's unheard response.

MARC (CONT'D)
 Yeah well we should be there in
 like 40 minutes or so. (beat) Okay
 cool I'll call you when we park.
 Bye!

Marc pulls the phone away from his ear.

DIXON
 (into the phone)
 Cya later!

MARC
 She already hung up.

There is a beat of uncomfortable silence.

DIXON
 So we're going to some party?

MARC

Yeah apparently there's some big frat party going down tonight, Hannah says it should be a good time.

DIXON

Eh, a frat party?

MARC

I figure we'll give it a chance - if it sucks we can always go back to her room, crash, and be ready to go early next morning.

DIXON

Fine, now don't forget that we need to get directions to Darmouth while we're at her place.

MARC

Gotcha.

EXT. INTERSTATE - NIGHT

The car roars by a sign that says: New Jersey University Exit **25** miles and travels further into the distance as the shot fades to black.

EXT. NEW JERSEY UNIVERSITY'S MAIN ENTRANCE - NIGHT

Marc's car makes a right turn into the college's entrance and continues down Jersey Road, the main road which cuts through the campus grounds.

INT. MARC'S CAR

MARC

Okay, we're looking for Kenzer Hall.

DIXON

Is that your sister's dorm?

MARC

No, I just wanna see that building... of course it's my sister's dorm - ass.

DIXON
 (looking over his
 shoulder)
 There it is.

MARC
 Where?

DIXON
 (pointing)
 Back there.

MARC
 (looking back)
 Fuck.

EXT. NEW JERSEY UNIVERSITY - NIGHT

Marc's car screeches to a stop, remains idling for a second, then does a quick K-turn and heads back in the direction of Kenzer Hall. It makes a left into the Kenzer Hall parking lot and eases into an empty space.

INT. MARC'S CAR

MARC
 We're there.

DIXON
 Yup.

EXT. NEW JERSEY UNIVERSITY - KENZER PARKING LOT - NIGHT

The two get out of the car. Marc pulls out his phone, speed dials Hannah's number again and waits for her to answer as the two head towards the building.

MARC
 (into phone)
 Yeah we're here. (beat) Cool, cya
 in a sec.

Marc hangs up the phone as the two reach the main entrance of Kenzer Hall, a nondescript red brick four story building. They stop by the front door and wait. Two COLLEGE GIRLS walk by.

MARC (CONT'D)
 Good Evening, ladies.

The two College Girls give him a confused "who is that guy look" as they continue on their way at a slightly faster pace.

MARC (CONT'D)
 (to Dixon)
 Ah, I've still got it.

DIXON
 Just like riding a bike. But hey I have to admit it, you've still never lost the balls to approach random chicks. Remember that time in Ocean City?

MARC
 Do I remember? Candy the 33-year-old stripper? How could I forget?

DIXON
 Haha, yeah - what did you ever do with those pictures by the way?

MARC
 I think they're online somewhere.

As the two are talking a young voluptuous woman with strawberry blonde hair and a bright moon face comes out of the building. It is HANNAH, Marc's sister, and she seems to simply radiate warmth and beauty even though she is only dressed in jeans, a *Death Cab for Cutie* T-shirt and flip-flops. Seeing her Dixon is slightly taken aback.

HANNAH
 Hey boys.

MARC
 What's up sis?

The two give each other a hug and separate while Dixon stands off to the side sifting his weight from foot to foot.

HANNAH
 Dickie - how are you doing?

She walks over and gives Dixon a big hug, while he tentatively returns the gesture.

DIXON
 Good, good, how's college going?

HANNAH

Eh you know lot's of work, lot's of fun. So what are you two doing up here, something about going to Dartmouth?

MARC

We're on a bit of a quest to save Dixon's literary soul.

HANNAH

(confused)

Okay... well I'm glad you decided to stop by - tonight should be fun.

MARC

Cool, cool.

Hannah leads the way as the three head into the dormitory.

INT. KENZER HALL MAIN LOBBY

The three breeze passed security, as Hannah's easy smile is all the identification the GUARD needs to let them in without any ID, and pile into an elevator.

INT. ELEVATOR

MARC

So how are classes going? Mom was telling me you switched up your major again?

HANNAH

Yeah I went from Art History to straight up Art. I like the more hands on approach.

She shoots Dixon a quick, seductive look which he misses as he is busy staring at the floor.

MARC

So are you still gonna graduate on time, or are you now on the five or six year plan?

HANNAH

Nah, I'll definitely be outta here in four years.

(MORE)

HANNAH (CONT'D)

I can't wait until this next year and a half is over with, so I can get out of here and enter the 'real world'.

The two friends quietly scoff at her suggestion that the 'real world' is better than college.

MARC

Don't be too eager to leave now, life is long after college.

HANNAH

Haha, okay I feel like I'm talking to a couple of bitter old men.

The three share a laugh as the elevator comes to a stop and dings open.

HANNAH (CONT'D)

(cheerfully)

Here's our stop.

The three spill out of the elevator and into the hallway.

INT. KENZER HALL FOURTH FLOOR HALLWAY

They walk through the hallway passed open doors that are blasting out music at maximum volume: the first is rap, the second is cock rock, and the third is a lone male singer accompanied by an acoustic guitar. As they pass by we see that it is, in fact, a MALE COLLEGE STUDENT (DRAKE) singing and playing a sappy love ballad to his GIRLFRIEND. He stops as he sees Hannah walk by.

MALE SINGER

Oh, hey Hannah.

HANNAH

(dismissively)

Hey Drake.

As they continue on they hear Drake's girlfriend harping on him.

DRAKE'S GIRLFRIEND (O.S.)

You stopped singing to me to say hi to her!!!

Hannah leans in to tell them a secret.

HANNAH

I swear that kid plays that damn
song a thousand times a day - it's
just a bit annoying.

Dixon and Marc laugh.

Finally they arrive at Hannah's room - #420. Hannah swipes
her key card and lets them in.

INT. HANNAH'S DORMROOM

The vibe emanating from the room is distinctively feminine -
pink and purple photos are plastered all along the walls.
There is a pink shag rug and two purple beanbags chairs on
the floor in front of a small television. Off to one corner
are bunk beds, each of which is covered with a pink comforter
and mounds of stuffed animals. On the opposite side of the
room are two computer desks - above each is a poster - one of
Dave Matthews and the other the famous photo of Bob Marley
smoking a huge joint. A small fridge plastered with photo
magnets is stationed on the floor between the two. Marc and
Dixon take all this in as Hannah goes over and sits down at
her computer.

MARC

(sarcastic)

And you say two girls live here?

HANNAH

Funny.

DIXON

Well this is certainly a festive
room.

HANNAH

It took me and Ashley a lot of time
to decorate this so don't make fun.

MARC

No, no I'm not making fun. Its
just so unbelievably girly I feel
like I'm actually inside a vagina
right now.

HANNAH

That's a lovely image.

Dixon leans in to question Marc.

DIXON
Is Ashley the roommate?

MARC
(quietly)
Yeah. (then louder to Hannah) Where
is the ole roomie by the way?

HANNAH
She went to visit her boyfriend at
Villanova.

MARC
Pffh, Villanova - GAY. (beat) Damn
I was hoping we could get her to
give Dixs here a blowjob.

Hannah throws up her hands in a 'oh well what can I do about
it' pose.

HANNAH
I guess you two will have to try
and get one of my other friends to
whore it out tonight.

MARC
That shouldn't be too hard.

HANNAH
Well you guys make yourselves
comfortable here - my friends
should be over any second and then
we can take off.

Marc and Dixon ease themselves down into the beanbags chairs,
both of which don't seem to be holding their shape very well.
Dixon's in particular is so stretched out he is practically
sitting on the floor.

DIXON
(struggling in the chair)
I'm not sure I'll be able to get
out of this thing.

A knock raps at the door and soon enough, four girls (CASEY -
a brunette, JESS - a blonde, CHRISTINA - a bottle blonde, and
LIZ - dark skinned with black hair) file into the room. All
four are dressed to perfection in their desire to attract
guys - low cut tops, short skirts and lots of make-up).
Hannah, in her jeans and T-shirt sticks out slightly in this
crowd but since she is more naturally beautiful than all of
the others it is not hard to imagine them being friends.
Dixon and Marc struggle to get up to greet them.

DIXON (V.O.)

We all did about three or four shots of some god awful gin that smelled like a Christmas tree before we decided to hit up the party.

Fast cut scenes of the group downing shots.

EXT. NEW JERSEY UNIVERSITY CAMPUS - NIGHT

The group (the five girls and two guys) stumble across the campus as they make their way to the party. Throughout the entire trip Marc and Liz are walking and talking arm and arm a little ways off from the rest of the group.

EXT. PHI KAPPA DELTA FRAT HOUSE - NIGHT

The group arrives at the party spot and start to head in. Three of the girls (Casey, Christina, and Liz) all go in without incident. As soon as Marc starts to enter, the arm of an asshole FRAT BROTHER (SULLY), stops him with a push.

MARC

Hey! What the fuck?

SULLY

Five bucks for dudes.

MARC

Okay fine. Jesus Christ, you don't need to push me.

Marc pulls out a ten and hands it to Sully.

MARC (CONT'D)

That other five is for my buddy back there.

Sully nods as Marc goes inside followed by Jess and Hannah. As Dixon gets up to the door he is stopped by Sully.

SULLY

Five bucks.

Dixon points in vain to where Marc just entered the party.

DIXON

But my friend already paid for me.

SULLY
I don't remember that.

DIXON
But...

SULLY
(to someone O.S)
Hey Biggs!

Another huge, muscular frat brother (BIGGS) walks over to block Dixon's way.

BIGGS
Yeah?

SULLY
Did this guy's friend already pay for him?

BIGGS
(smiling sadistically)
No definitely not. Because if he did let another dude pay for him it would be too gay for him to be let in.

SULLY
Plus you would have to kick his gay ass, right Biggs?

BIGGS
Yeah, I guess I would.

Dixon, taking all this in, pulls out five singles from his wallet. He quietly hands them to Sully. The two frat brothers part and let Dixon head inside.

INT. PHI KAPPA DELTA FRAT HOUSE

The frat house is packed with people clutching red *Dixie Cups*. Rap music is pumping as Dixon moves throughout the huge party room looking for his friends. All the torn crappy furniture has been pushed over towards the walls so that the only furniture seen throughout the house are the half-dozen keg stations that are manned by frat brothers, and the beer pong tables (with games in full swing) in the back corner.

As Dixon absently walks through the party looking for his friends he is constantly bumped and pushed by others trying to jockey for position in the crowded house. He finally sees Hannah in line for a beer and moves off in her direction.

DIXON
 (yelling over the music)
 Ah, there you are.

HANNAH
 (yelling)
 Dickie! Where did you go before?

DIXON
 (yelling)
 I was just getting to know some of
 the frat brothers.

HANNAH
 (yelling)
 Oh really?

She turns around, gets two cups of beer, and gives one to
 Dixon. He takes a sip and makes a 'gross' face.

DIXON
 (yelling)
 I can't believe I had to pay five
 bucks to drink the *Beast*.

HANNAH
 (yelling)
 What?

DIXON
 (yelling)
 Nevermind.

The two stand next to each other in silence as the music
 blares.

DIXON (CONT'D)
 (yelling)
 So where is everyone else?

HANNAH
 (not hearing him -
 yelling)
 You wanna play beer pong?

DIXON
 (yelling)
 Sure.

HANNAH
 (yelling)
 What?!

Dixon emphatically shakes his head 'yes' and the two move on towards the back of the party to the beer pong tables. It is a bit quieter in the back of the house by the tables and they can carry on a more normal conversation.

DIXON

Where did everyone else go?

HANNAH

Oh they're back here signing up for a table - I told Marc to sign me and you up for a team while I waited for you.

DIXON

You were waiting for me?

HANNAH

Sure, I can't let you get lost on my watch can I?

DIXON

(laughing)

Haha, I guess not... thanks.

HANNAH

No problem.

DIXON

So, um... how are you at beer pong?

HANNAH

Pretty good, you?

DIXON

I run hot and cold.

HANNAH

That's not what I want to hear Dickie.

DIXON

Oh, in that case I was the state beer pong champion four years straight.

Hannah laughs lightheartedly at his comment as their friends reappear pushing themselves away from the crowded table. Marc singles out Dixon.

MARC

Looks like me and Liz have next game.

(MORE)

MARC (CONT'D)

But you and Hannah are up after that, so you should hang out here so no one tries to jump ahead of you.

DIXON

Gotcha.

Marc and Dixon hang back by the wall as Hannah and her friends form a circle and start talking. Liz's position in the circle keeps her closest to Marc whom she has obviously hit it off with.

DIXON (CONT'D)

(motioning to Liz)

She seems nice.

MARC

Yeah... *real* nice.

DIXON

I would say too bad that you're dating Sarah, but...

MARC

That's never stopped me before.

DIXON

Exactly

MARC

And it won't stop me now.

Dixon nods and the two share a laugh. A voice calls out that "Marc and Liz" are up next. The two move off towards the table to set up their cups.

Dixon settles with his back against the wall and takes the entire scene in.

DIXON (V.O.)

No matter how I tried to not think about it, pretty soon I was dissecting the entire party as if each event was its own short story. I guess you could call it the writer's curse - no matter where you are or how much fun you are supposed to be having, the wheels are always turning.

Dixon focuses on a group of girls fatter and plainer than most of the rest at the party.

DIXON (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 That group right there - the girls
 that will exchange blow jobs for a
 smile and a kind word. There's a
 story.

His gaze moves on and settles on a group of men wearing
 school football jerseys talking to one extremely slutty
 looking girl.

DIXON (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 And that girl - what's up with her?
 Maybe she lets those guys gang-bang
 her before every home game for good
 luck.

Dixon then shifts his focus on to Marc and Liz as they are
 playing beer pong against two FRAT BROTHERS. Marc and Liz
 are badly beating the guys and Marc in particular is letting
 them hear it.

DIXON (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 And Marc here, he's probably gonna
 do this girl tonight, never talk to
 her again, go back, eventually
 marry Sarah, and pretend like this
 whole night never happened.

As Dixon is thinking this, Marc hits last the last cup, and
 throws both his hands in the air as Liz joyously hangs all
 over him. Dixon, thinking he has next game starts to move
 over closer to the table.

MARC
 Woohoo! (pointing to Frat
 Brothers) You suck!

Dixon takes this in with a smile as the scene freezes on his
 smiling face.

DIXON (V.O.)
 And then it hit me.

The scene resumes and a ping pong ball hits Dixon directly in
 the left eye. He immediately doubles over in pain. Nothing
 happens for a beat as he crumbles to the ground.

DIXON (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 Apparently one of the fraternity
 pricks didn't take to kindly to
 losing;
 (MORE)

DIXON (V.O.) (CONT'D)
and with the kind of aim that
hadn't hit one cup all night - his
attempt at hitting Marc caught me
right in the eye.

Realizing what happened, Marc immediately jumps across the table, sending beer flying all over the place in the process, and attacks the two frat brothers. *Kings of Leon's* "Four Kicks" blares as a melee ensues. Other frat brothers come to the rescue of the two Marc is attacking, including Sully (the doorman) who takes the opportunity to punch Dixon in the other eye as soon as he tries to stand up again. Throughout this all, Hannah and Liz are trying, in vain, to defuse the situation. The fight scene ends with Dixon and Marc being forcibly ejected from the party by a dozen or more frat brothers.

EXT. FRAT HOUSE - NIGHT

SULLY
You try and come back in here we'll
fucking kill ya!

The door slams shut.

MARC
Fuck you!

There is a long beat of silence as both men take stock of their injuries. Dixon touches the tender area around his eye that was punched while constantly blinking the other, ping pong ball-struck one. Marc is studying his left hand as he clenches and unclenches his fist.

MARC (CONT'D)
(quietly)
I think I broke my hand.

DIXON
Yeah well I might be blind.

Hannah and Liz quietly come out of the front door.

HANNAH
Well you two certainly know how to
make friends.

MARC
What? This wasn't our fault at
all! Those guys are dicks - they
hit Dixs here in the fucking eye
and he didn't even do anything to
them!

HANNAH

I know, I know, but... we weren't even there for a half hour.

MARC

Let's get the fuck outta here.

He turns to leave.

DIXON

Are we gonna leave without the rest of the people we came with?

LIZ

Yeah, they wanted to stay.

MARC

(over his shoulder)

Eh fuck 'em too, the only people I would want to hang out with are here anyway.

The other three follow Marc away from the frat house and down the street.

EXT. NEW JERSEY UNIVERSITY CAMPUS - NIGHT

As the four make their way back to Hannah's dormitory, Marc is still seething. Dixon is a few steps behind the rest staring up at the sky as he walks.

MARC

Those bastards... I mean... come on... what the fuck? Hannah you're not friends with any of those guys are you?

HANNAH

Well, not really...

MARC

Good. (to Dixon) Hey Dixs you okay back there?

DIXON

Yeah I guess... although it feels like my one eye might be bleeding on the inside and the other one is swelling shut.

MARC

Just walk it off - we'll get some beer in you back at Hannah's and then you'll be fine.

HANNAH

Umm, no you won't, I don't have any beer in my room.

MARC

What? Are you kidding me? Don't you go to college? What kind of college student doesn't have beer in their room?

HANNAH

Me I guess.

Liz pipes in.

LIZ

I have some beer in my room if you guys want to go over there.

HANNAH

Yeah but won't Neil be hanging around over there?

LIZ

Yeah... probably. (to Marc) Neil's her stalker.

MARC

Oooh? Really? Young Hannah has a suitor? Let's go over there then.

HANNAH

No that guy creeps me out, I wanna avoid him at all costs.

DIXON

(to anyone who will listen)

Does my eye look like it's bleeding on the inside?

His question is ignored.

LIZ

Well I could just go back there and grab some and bring it back to your room.

MARC

Yes! There you go, that'll work.

HANNAH

That's fine with me.

They come to a fork in the road.

LIZ

Well I'll just turn here and I'll see you guys in a few minutes.

MARC

Nah, I'll go with you - I can help you carry some of the beer. Plus from what I've seen of this place it's not safe for you to be walking around here by yourself.

LIZ

Hannah?

HANNAH

Hey if you want him to give you a hand, its completely up to you.

LIZ

Okay fine, come with me.

Liz grabs Marc's hand and the two turn off in the opposite direction. Dixon stops for a second while Hannah keeps walking.

DIXON

(calling after them)

Cya in a few minutes.

He notices Hannah hasn't slowed and hustles to catch up with her.

INT. HANNAH'S DORMROOM (EMPTY/DARK)

We hear a click at the door and it pops open as Hannah and Dixon come in. Hannah flicks on the light.

HANNAH

So what's your guess on when we see the two of them again?

DIXON

Truthfully? I bet we see your brother tomorrow morning, and I doubt I'll ever see that chick again.

HANNAH

Yeah, that's what I was thinking... well since it doesn't look like we'll be getting any beer anytime soon, you wanna play cards?

DIXON

Sure, but you might be at an advantage since I can't really see.

Hannah grabs a pack of cards as well as two shot glasses and the rest of her bottle of Christmas-tree gin from the fridge.

DIXON (CONT'D)

(indicating the bottle)
What's that for?

HANNAH

Drinking. We're gonna play NJU war - every time there is a war we both have to take a shot. Then the loser has to take another shot.

DIXON

Whew that's sounds hard-core.

HANNAH

(slyly)
Oh it definitely is.

The two sit down Indian-style on the floor where Hannah shuffles and deals the cards as Dixon readies the bottle for the game.

HANNAH (CONT'D)

One shot before we play.

DIXON

Is that a rule?

HANNAH

Sure why not?

They both take a shot and pick up their hands. Dixon throws down his card first - it's the three of hearts.

DIXON

Three. What a great way to start.

Hannah pulls her card and throws down the three of clubs.

HANNAH

Three! War! Drink!

She pours two shots and they down them.

HANNAH (CONT'D)

(throwing down her cards)

One, two, three... ace!

Dixon sighs as he puts his cards down.

DIXON

One, two, three... four... fuck.

Hannah pours Dixon a shot and hands it to him.

He downs it and coughs.

The game continues...

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. HANNAH'S DORMROOM

Hannah and Dixon are still playing NJU Drinking War and are both drunk. Drunk Dixon, coupled with the two shots his eyes took, is having trouble following the game.

The two throw out cards and Dixon goes to grab them.

HANNAH

Hey, I won that!

DIXON

Wait, didn't I put out the nine?

HANNAH

(laughing)

No you put out the two.

Taking this in, Dixon compares his tiny stack of cards with the nearly complete deck in Hannah's hands.

DIXON

I think we are at a point where we can declare you the winner.

HANNAH

Haha, okay I'll take your forfeit.

Hannah grabs Dixon's cards and takes them over to her computer desk. She sits and checks her Instant Messenger as she leaves Dixon sitting on the floor. There is a long beat of silence.

HANNAH (CONT'D)

Soo... how come you didn't try and put the moves on one of my friends like my brother?

DIXON

Was I supposed to?

HANNAH

Well no but I'm just surprised you didn't even try... you didn't even talk to them.

DIXON

(thinking this over)

I guess I just didn't have anything to say to any of them.

HANNAH

I think you're problem is that you have a lot to say but you just don't say it.

DIXON

Okay well thanks, I'll keep that in mind.

There is another long beat of silence.

DIXON (CONT'D)

So majoring in art huh? Your future is really wide open right?

HANNAH

Yeah I guess...

DIXON

Do you have any plans after you're finished with college?

HANNAH

Not really, (beat) do you?

DIXON COOPER

Ouch. Sorry for asking.

HANNAH

Nah, sorry for being bitchy there its just that I have no plans and I don't expect to have any anytime soon. Hopefully I can go a couple of years traveling, seeing all the sights and beauty in the world and having passionate affairs with hot European guys.

DIXON

Yeah I'm kinda in the same boat as you I guess... except for the hot European guys part.

There is another beat of uncomfortable silence.

HANNAH

Hey, I read that story of yours my brother sent me - it was good.

DIXON

(dismissively)
Yeah, thanks.

HANNAH

Boy you don't take praise too well do you?

DIXON

Sorry, thanks but I just got word today that particular story was my latest one to be rejected by a magazine.

HANNAH

Oh. Does that have something to do with this little road trip of yours then?

DIXON

Yeah, kinda.

HANNAH

Just look at it this way - the best artists are never truly appreciated in their own time. Maybe you're like van Gogh - a misunderstood genius.

DIXON

Well I was just thinking about cutting my ear off.

Yet another beat of uncomfortable silence.

HANNAH

(testing the waters)

You know I was thinking, most European men are awfully smelly. Maybe I could switch them up with a frustrated aspiring writer.

DIXON

(not getting it)

Yeah, well good luck with that.

Hannah gets up and walks over to Dixon, kneels down and passionately kisses him on the mouth. As she pulls back Dixon is not sure how to react.

HANNAH

Well?

DIXON

Um, thanks.

HANNAH

You really are kind of a strange kid.

DIXON

Yeah I know...

There is yet another long beat of uncomfortable silence as the two stare into each other's eyes.

HANNAH

Well what are you waiting for?

DIXON

I dunno. I guess I'm a little confused, it's just - I just have this image of myself as a being a famous writer in a few years. I can see why a woman would want to have sex with that Dixon, but not this Dixon, not really right now.

HANNAH

Is that it?

DIXON

Well that and your my brother's sister.

HANNAH

Huh?

DIXON

I mean buddy's sister - sorry I'm a little drunk.

There is another long beat of uncomfortable silence that seems to stretch on interminably. Finally Hannah breaks the silence.

HANNAH

Just so you know, I'm not sure I'll like the famous writer Dixon of the future, but I do like the Dixon that's here right now.

As she finishes Dixon makes his move and firmly kisses her on the lips. The two kiss on the floor for a while before Hannah pulls back for a second, stands up and takes off her T-shirt and jeans so that she is standing in front of Dixon in just her panties. She grabs his hand and leads him to her bed where she lays down and awaits Dixon who is rapidly undressing until he is down to his boxers.

HANNAH (CONT'D)

(motioning to her roommates computer desk)

There are some condoms in my roommate's top drawer.

Dixon silent walks over, opens the drawer and grabs a condom and walks back over to the bed. He appears ready to enter the sheets but hesitates.

DIXON

Um, I just wanted to know, is this your first time or anything?

HANNAH

(chuckling)

No.

DIXON

Why is that funny?

Hannah quiets him with her index finger and motions for him to get into bed. He assents and slips into the sheets and the two resume kissing.

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. HANNAH'S DORMROOM - MORNING

Hannah and Dixon are sleeping and spooning with each other in the bottom bunk when a loud rap rings out from the door.

MARC (O.S.)

Yo! You guys there? Let me in!

Dixon, hearing Marc's voice, shoots up out of the bed and smacks his forehead on the bunk above. He crumples back down and falls off the bed onto the hard floor wearing only his boxer shorts.

Hannah jumps up from her bed (without hitting her head) throws on some clothes and wisely unmakes the top bunk and opens the door for her brother.

MARC (CONT'D)

(cheerfully)

Goood morning.

Dixon whimpers a hello from the floor.

HANNAH

Well look who it is, nice of you to make it back here.

MARC

Hey what can I say? We sort of got sidetracked.

HANNAH

I bet.

MARC

Forget all that for now, let's go get something to eat, I'm fucking starvin'. Does this school have a cafeteria or something where we could get breakfast?

HANNAH

(annoyed)

Of course it does.

Marc notices Dixon laying on the floor.

MARC

Come on Dixs and hustle up - time to get some food.

DIXON
 (holding his head)
 Yeah, yeah I'm coming...

INT. NEW JERSEY UNIVERSITY DINING HALL

Dixon, Marc, and Hannah (all looking dog tired and wearing the same clothes they wore last night) are standing in line to pay for their trays of food. Marc is checking out Dixon's battle scars.

MARC
 Ouch that's some black eye you've got there.

DIXON COOPER
 (touching it gingerly)
 Thanks.

MARC
 How's the other eye.

DIXON
 Blurry.

Marc leans in and notices the bump on his head.

MARC
 What's that from?

DIXON
 (feeling his forehead)
 That? Um, I'm not sure...

Hannah tries to change the subject.

HANNAH
 Maybe I should have had Liz come meet us for breakfast.

Ignoring her, Marc changes to another subject.

MARC
 So how does this work, are you going to be charged for three meals or what?

HANNAH
 Nah, it's an a la carte point system so they just deduct the points from the meal plan mom and dad bought me.

DIXON
How many points is all this gonna
cost ya?

HANNAH
Who knows?

Finally they arrive at the check-out counter where an ancient
300 pound CHECKOUT LADY tallies up their order. She is
furiously pressing buttons throughout the entire subsequent
conversation.

HANNAH (CONT'D)
(to Checkout Lady)
This and (pointing to Dixon and
Marc's trays) those two. (to Marc
and Dixon) So are you guys gonna
head out soon or stick around for a
while?

DIXON
I dunno, we've gotta see how long
it will take to get to Dartmouth
and then...

MARC
Ah jeez, why didn't you do that
last night when you got back to
Hannah's?

HANNAH
(slyly)
We were busy.

MARC
With what?

DIXON
Oh you know, playing cards and
drinking.

MARC
(sizing up Dixon)
That's it? What else did you do?

CHECKOUT LADY
69.

Dixon and Hannah both shoot her a look.

CHECKOUT LADY (CONT'D)
69 points.

HANNAH
(composing herself)
Oh, okay thanks.

She hands over her card to pay.

CUT TO:

INT. COMMUNAL DORM BATHROOM

Dixon comes out of the shower wearing bright pink sandals and a purple robe. He is carrying a shower cozy full of female bathing products as he uses a Q-Tip to clean his ears. Nonchalantly whistling a happy tune he nods at two college GUYS shaving into the mirrors at bathroom sinks. We following him as he leaves the bathroom and enters the hallway.

INT. KENZER HALL FOURTH FLOOR HALLWAY

Dixon continues to whistle as he walks down the hall towards Hannah's room. He hears the familiar sounds of Drake playing his sappy love ballad to his girlfriend. Pausing for a moment by Hannah's room he listens for a beat before screaming out a song request.

DIXON
(shouting)
"Freebird"!

He quickly dives into Hannah's room just before Drake and his girlfriend come out in the hallway.

DRAKE'S GIRLFRIEND
(nagging)
Why do you always stop?

INT. HANNAH'S DORMROOM

Marc is all showered and dressed in a long sleeve T-shirt and jeans while Hannah has reverted to her pajamas - a Dave Matthews Band T-shirt and flannel pants. The two were sitting on the bean bag chairs talking but stop as Dixon comes in.

DIXON
(as he gets dressed)
Don't let me ruin your
conversation.

MARC

Nah, we weren't really talking about anything (beat) you almost ready?

Dixon pulls a different hooded sweatshirt over his head.

DIXON

Yup.

Marc and Hannah get up and hug.

MARC

See ya later.

HANNAH

Yeah you too. And Dixon good seeing you too. You know you guys should stop by more often, it was fun.

DIXON

Yeah will do. See ya later Hannah.

The two friends turn to leave.

HANNAH

Oh wait!

She runs to the fridge and grabs two bottles of iced tea.

HANNAH (CONT'D)

Here you go - for the ride.

She hands one to Marc and the other to Dixon. As she gives Dixon his bottle her hand lingers there just a second long enough to give off the hint of intimacy.

Marc and Dixon then exit Hannah's dorm.

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. MARC'S CAR - DAY

Marc is driving as Dixon sits shotgun and reads directions from a computer print out.

DIXON

Okay we stay on this road for about 50 miles then get off at exit 140.

MARC

If we just passed exit 40 how is
140 only 50 miles away?

DIXON

Don't ask me, I'm just reading what
the directions say.

MARC

Fucking MapQuest - we're gonna get
so lost.

DIXON

Maybe not, look - now we are at 90,
its not that the directions are
f'ed up, it's just this road.

There is a long beat of silence as they continue driving.
During this time Dixon opens his iced tea and takes a big
sip. While he drinks, Marc blurts out:

MARC

So how was fucking my sister?

Dixon violently coughs as he tries not to spit iced tea all
over the car.

DIXON

(coughing)
What?...

MARC

Last night - she told me about it
while you were in the shower.

DIXON

Okay...

MARC

Eh don't worry about it, I'm not
pissed or anything. But just tell
me, was that a one night hook up
thing...

DIXON

Like you and that girl last night?

MARC

Yeah I guess, or would you hang out
with her again, like you know, date
her and stuff?

DIXON

Hmm, that's a good question, I mean, I've never thought about dating your sister or anything but it's not like I don't plan on ever talking to her again but... Fuck you weren't supposed to find out about this. Why did she tell you?

MARC

Eh, Hannah tells me everything. Plus she has had a crush on you since we were in the fifth grade.

DIXON

Really? Me?

MARC

Yeah, it was a running joke in my family how in love she was with you.

DIXON

Really? I literally had no idea.

MARC

Yeah well you're pretty much the last to know about stuff like that.

DIXON

That's true, I am kind of out of the loop.

MARC

I guess when you spend all your time reading forty year old books and writing story after story you tend to miss picking up on little things like the present.

DIXON

(laughing)

Yeah I guess the present and I aren't always on the same page.

MARC

Okay now listen, I don't want to hear any details, I don't really want to even think about it, but I just want you to know that I'm not pissed and I wouldn't be even if you dated Hannah, I mean, if that's something you wanted to do.

DIXON
Okay thanks I'll keep that in mind.

MARC
Now no more Hannah talk.

DIXON
What about your girl last night,
Liz?

MARC
Eh, let's not talk about her
either. Let's just focus on
getting to this place so you can
get that writing chip off your
shoulder.

EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY

Marc's car rumbles down the road.

INT. MARC'S CAR

Still driving, Marc decides to take this opportunity to check his cell phone. Pulling it out of the console of his car, he notices that he has numerous message.

MARC
Wow, six messages.

DIXON
There probably all from Sarah.

MARC
Yeah probably.

Marc punches a few buttons on his phone and listens. He turns to Dixon:

MARC (CONT'D)
Yup.

He skips to the next message.

MARC (CONT'D)
Yup.

He skips to the next message.

MARC (CONT'D)
Yup.

He skips to the next message.

MARC (CONT'D)
 (imitating her voice)
 Hi, it's Sarah.

He skips to the next message.

MARC (CONT'D)
 And surprise - it's Sarah!

He skips to the last message.

MARC (CONT'D)
 And it's wait... what the fuck?

DIXON
 What?

MARC
 It's that girl from last night -
 Liz.

DIXON
 How did she get your number?

MARC
 I guess I gave it to her, (beat)
 but I didn't think she would call.

DIXON
 Well that really wasn't too smart.

MARC
 Yeah thanks. Great, looks like I
 need to switch my number again.

DIXON
 Why?

MARC
 Sarah randomly checks my phone to
 make sure other girls don't call
 me.

DIXON
 (laughing)
 I guess she doesn't trust you, not
 that she doesn't have a point.

MARC
 Fuck man, this is the third time
 this year I've had to do this.

DIXON

Maybe you should stop hooking up
with random chicks and then giving
them your phone number.

MARC

(mock highfalutin tone)
Never!

The two laugh.

EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY (AFTERNOON)

Marc's car speeds down the highway towards Dartmouth.

INT. MARC'S CAR

Marc is quietly talking on his cell phone as Dixon sleeps
with his head resting on the passenger side window.

MARC

(into phone)
I know I should have
called...you're right it was
stupid... and selfish.

He glances over to make sure Dixon is still asleep.

MARC (CONT'D)

(into phone)
I'm sorry honey don't be pissed at
me... No I'll make it up to you.
I've just got to do this thing with
Dixs and then I'll be back and...
yeah we could do that. Yeah yeah
whatever you want...

He glances over again to make sure Dixon is still asleep.

MARC (CONT'D)

Okay I'll talk to you later... I
love you. (beat) No I love you
more... more... No, no I love you
more. Okay bye bye. (beat) I love
you...

He hangs up. As he does Dixon stirs and mutters:

DIXON

(sleepily)
You're such a fag.

Marc playfully punches Dixon in the arm.

EXT. LOCAL ROADWAY - DAY (LATE AFTERNOON)

Marc's car continues down a main road flanked on the side by a much more rural setting as they head north.

INT. MARC'S CAR

MARC
Boy it's sure bright out here,
right?

DIXON
I guess.

MARC
Good thing I got these new glasses.

Marc pulls a pair of huge pink reflector sunglasses out of his pocket and puts them on.

DIXON
What the fuck are those?!

MARC
(pointing to the glasses)
What, these?

DIXON
(sarcastic)
Yeah.

MARC
They're sunglasses.

DIXON
I know that, but they're
ridiculous, where'd you get them?

MARC
I stole 'em from that girl's room.

DIXON
The girl you hooked up with?

MARC
Yeah, so what? If she didn't want
me to take them she shouldn't have
left them on her desk like that.

DIXON

Whew, I'm sure that girl is gonna have fond memories of you.

MARC

Don't they all.

The two settle back down into a long beat of silence.

DIXON (V.O.)

It's a funny thing about road trips, no matter how long you've known the person and no matter how good of friends you are, you inevitably run out of stuff to talk about. We reached that point right after we entered Connecticut.

MARC

(breaking the silence)
Sooo... what's up?

DIXON

Eh, nothing.

MARC

Oh I have an idea, let's play a game.

DIXON

What do you mean, like counting license plates or something?

MARC

No. This is a better game - we'll play 'would you or wouldn't you.'

DIXON

Which is?

MARC

Any girl that drives by we'll have to say if we would or wouldn't fuck her.

DIXON

Interesting.

MARC

You down?

DIXON

Yeah sure, whatever.

Marc checks his rearview mirror.

MARC

Okay here comes a car. Get ready.

A car passes Marc's car on the left. The two friends stare at an old fat BLACK MAN as he goes by. He stares back.

MARC (CONT'D)

Okay that was a dude - that does not count.

DIXON

Are you sure? He kinda seemed like your type.

MARC

Shut the fuck up. (looking back)
Here comes another one.

Another car passes on the left. It is driven by a shrivelled old LADY.

MARC (CONT'D)

Hmm, I'm gonna go with a no for that one.

DIXON

I would, if it was 1937.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. MARC'S CAR

Marc and Dixon are still driving.

MARC

Okay here comes a *Chevy Malibu*. Those are always driven by hot girls.

DIXON

Yeah, we'll see.

The *Chevy Malibu* drives by on the left as Marc and Dixon stare stare to get a good look at the person driving. As the car passes two young effeminate looking MEN stare back. The occupants of both cars make eye contact. Seeing Marc and Dixon staring at them the two guys in the other car seize the opportunity and make obscene 'blow job' gestures. Marc takes his foot off of the gas and lets the *Malibu* pass by.

There is a long beat of uncomfortable silence as Marc continues to drive.

MARC

I think we're done with that game.

DIXON

Yeah.

MARC

Let's stop. Just to, you know, get some space between them and us. Plus I feel a beer shit coming on.

EXT. LOCAL ROADWAY - DAY (LATE AFTERNOON)

Marc's car gets off the main road at an exit.

EXT. CONNECTICUT REST STOP (LATE AFTERNOON)

Marc's car pulls into a parking spot and the two friends jump out of the car and walk up to the entrance

MARC

Boy we sure are hitting up all the rest stops this weekend.

DIXON

Yeah, we really are getting the true American tour.

They enter the rest stop.

INT. CONNECTICUT REST STOP

The two enter a building that looks suspiciously like the New Jersey rest stop.

MARC

Is it just me or do all these places look exactly the same?

DIXON

Well at least this one has more food.

The two stand and stare for a moment before venturing off to the bathroom.

INT. CONNECTICUT REST STOP BATHROOM

The two walk into the bathroom - Dixon veers off towards the urinals while Marc makes his way towards the stalls. He picks a stall, checks to make sure there is no one on either side of him, and enters.

INT. CONNECTICUT REST STOP BATHROOM (URINALS)

Dixon stands alone peeing at urinal. As he pees, a man enters and takes the urinal right next to him. Slightly put off, Dixon looks up and notices that it is one of the guys from the *Chevy Malibu*. He immediately focuses his attention straight ahead hoping that the man doesn't recognize him.

MAN

Hey.

Dixon doesn't respond.

MAN (CONT'D)

Hey. You're one of the guy's from the freeway right?

DIXON

Um, I'm not sure what you mean. I don't think so.

MAN

Nah I remember you, you were staring at me and my boyfriend.

DIXON

No that wasn't me. I mean I don't even know what you're talking about.

MAN

Right.

He notices Dixon won't tear his eyes away from the wall.

MAN (CONT'D)

Does it make you uncomfortable to pee right next to a gay man?

DIXON

Uh, nah. I mean, you're gay? Nah, that's cool I guess. Good for you.

MAN

Look at you - you're terrified.
You probably think I want to say
'hey buddy need a hand with that?'
and reach out and grab you. You
actually think that don't you?

Without speaking Dixon takes a sideways step away from him to the next urinal. He stays there a beat and then moves on down to the next one. The man stares at him and laughs. Dixon zips up and leaves the restroom.

CUT TO:

INT. CONNECTICUT REST STOP BATHROOM (STALL)

Marc pulls out two seat protectors, lays them out on the seat and sits down. After a moment or two, Marc sees a pair of fat legs underneath the stall door walking towards him.

MARC

(whispering)

No. Fuck, fuck, fuck.

The fat legs stop at the stall right next to him and enter. The man goes in and plops himself down with a loud, painful groan. Marc covers his ears and hums to himself to drown out the sounds he is sure will be coming from the fat guy.

CUT TO:

INT. CONNECTICUT REST STOP

Dixon is standing in front of a brochure rack scanning the titles. He picks up one entitled "The Mark Twain House Museum" and scans through it. He puts it in the pouch of his hooded sweatshirt. Marc, finally out of the bathroom, meets up with him there.

MARC

Yo, did you see that gay dude from
the road hanging out by the
bathroom?

DIXON

No. I didn't... no.

MARC

Really? You didn't see him? He was
standing right by urinals.

DIXON
 Nope, didn't see him. (beat) You
 ready to go?

MARC
 Yup, let's just grab something to
 eat and then gas up and ride.

DIXON
 (looking around
 uncomfortably)
 Okay.

CUT TO:

EXT. CONNECTICUT REST STOP GAS STATION

Marc is leaning against his car pumping gas and eating a churro, while Dixon, also eating a churro, leafs through the Mark Twain brochure.

MARC
 What are you are looking at?

DIXON
 Oh, just a brochure.

MARC
 Yeah, thanks ass I can see that,
 but for what?

DIXON
 (showing it)
 The Mark Twain Museum.

MARC
 Oh boy.

DIXON
 Hey you know...

MARC
 No way.

DIXON
 No way what?

MARC
 There's no way I'm go to that
 fucking museum.

DIXON
How'd you know I was gonna say
that?

MARC
Because I know how you're twisted
mind works.

Dixon thinks about that comment for a beat.

DIXON
I really think we should check this
out.

MARC
Of course you do.

Marc pulls the handle out of his gas tank and swipes his
credit card in the pump.

MARC (CONT'D)
Good God! 45 bucks! Fucking
Connecticut and its ridiculous gas
prices.

DIXON
(still reading)
You should think about getting one
of those Hybrid cards.

MARC
(sarcastic)
Yeah, that's what I'm gonna do.
(beat) Well come on, jump in.

INT. MARC'S CAR

MARC
No!

DIXON
Come on, we have plenty of time,
it'll be fun.

MARC
Now how the fuck is the Mark Twain
museum gonna be fun?

DIXON
I really think...

MARC

Aaargh! What the fuck do you wanna go there for?

DIXON

I dunno, I just figure when is the next time I'm gonna be up this way?

MARC

And the trip won't be complete until we visit Markie's house?

DIXON

I didn't say that.

MARC

Ah jeez, how far is this place away?

DIXON

Only like twenty minutes from here.

MARC

Okay, fine. I'll go with you on one condition.

DIXON

What's that?

CUT TO:

EXT. MARK TWAIN MUSEUM PARKING LOT - DAY

Marc's car sits in the parking lot. After a beat Dixon and Marc tumble out followed by a huge cloud of smoke. Marc has put his stolen huge pink glasses back on and Dixon sports a pair of normal shades.

INT. MARK TWAIN MUSEUM - FRONT ROOM

Marc and Dixon enter the museum - a building restored to its 19th century Victorian splendor and shuffle around confused for a few moments. Eventually, a plain-looking 30-year-old female tour (JOY) guide approaches them.

JOY

Are you two interested in a tour?

MARC

Huh?

JOY

A tour, do you want a tour of the house?

DIXON

We sure do.

JOY

Excellent, well just follow this hallway and make your second right and you'll meet up with a group just about to start out on a tour - I'll catch up with you in a minute.

She heads off and Marc and Dixon follow her directions.

INT. MARK TWAIN MUSEUM

They head down the long hallway to the room where the tour will start.

MARC

This is weird, roaming through the house of a dead guy. Do you think he ever thought people would be doing this?

DIXON

'Inside the museum infinity goes on trial..'

MARC

Huh?

DIXON

It's a line from a Bob Dylan song - 'Inside the museum infinity goes on trial/Voices echo this is what salvation must be like after a while.'

MARC

(confused)

That doesn't make any sense.

DIXON

Sure it does, if you think about it the right way.

MARC

Eh, I'm too high to think about it.

The two continue on in silence for a beat.

MARC (CONT'D)

So is this your ultimate goal?
Having people wandering through
your house a hundred years after
you die with their families and
taking pictures because you wrote
some books they like?

DIXON

(laughing)

Yeah right, I can see it now - "And
this is where Mr. Cooper liked to
get high and masturbate."

The two laugh as they reach the door. They enter the
Billiard Room and meet up with the same tour guide, flanked
by older couples and WASP-y families.

JOY

Glad to see you finally made it.

MARC

How did you beat us here?

JOY

I have my ways.

Dixon and Marc look at each confused as the tour begins.

INT. MARK TWAIN MUSEUM

The tour continues...

JOY

And this is where Mark Twain wrote
some of his most famous works: *A
Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's
Court* and *Pudd'nhead Wilson* among
them.

MARC

(quietly to Dixon)

Pudd'nhead? What the shit is that?

DIXON

I have no idea.

MARC

I mean I know Huck Finn and Tom
Sawyer but...

DIXON

You know, now that I think about it
I'm not sure I've ever read
anything by Twain.

MARC

Really?

DIXON

Yeah, but I always meant to. Seems
like something I should do, you
know, eventually.

MARC

(getting louder)

What the fuck? Why the hell are we
here?

The tour guide stops and everyone looks at the two.

DIXON

Uh, sorry, he's more of a Faulkner
fan.

The crowd surprisingly responds with a 'oh okay that makes
sense' attitude.

The tour continues...

INT. MARK TWAIN MUSEUM GIFTSHOP

As all tours do, they end in the giftshop.

JOY

Okay, so before I send you on your
way to purchase your official
Twainian memorabilia and
merchandise, does anyone have any
questions?

DIXON

(raising his hand)

Uh, I do actually.

JOY

Go ahead.

DIXON

I was just confused as to why a writer who is best known for writing about the Southern American way of life would make his home just about as far north in this country as he possibly could.

JOY

Uh...

MARC

(jumping in)

Maybe he secretly hated the South - the bunch of redneck racist bastards.

JOY

Please... no, I think he liked the area up here and maybe he enjoyed the perspective that being away from the south gave him. Does that answer your question?

As she speaks Dixon's focus starts to wander and he picks up a stuffed frog and squeaks it to make a 'ribbit' sound. Joy walks over and taps him on the shoulder.

JOY(CONT'D)

Sir, did that answer your question?

DIXON

Huh, what question?

Marc laughs hysterically.

MARC

Umm, excuse me Joy - I too have a question.

JOY

(muttering)

Great. (louder) Yes?

Marc holds up a corncob pipe wrapped in plastic.

MARC

Does this Huck Finn pipe really work?

JOY

What do you mean?

MARC
I mean, can you smoke out of it?

JOY
Well sure I guess.

MARC
Sold.

EXT. MARK TWAIN MUSEUM PARKING LOT (LATE AFTERNOON)

Dixon and Marc, holding a bag from the gift shop, head towards the car.

MARC
It will all be worth while if this pipe works well.

EXT. NEW HAMPSHIRE HIGHWAY (EARLY EVENING)

Marc's car rumbles down the empty road and passes a sign that reads: Dartmouth University 8 miles.

INT. MARC'S CAR

Dixon is sleeping once again.

MARC
Yo, dude wake up, we're almost there.

Dixon groans and looks around confused.

MARC (CONT'D)
You have no idea where you are do you?

DIXON
(sleepily)
Not so much no.

MARC
(sighing)
We're up in New Hampshire - you're gonna try and meet Philip Roth to give you some writing advice.

It registers.

DIXON

Yeah that's right. How far away are we?

MARC

Like ten minutes or so. We should be there with an hour before the thing starts.

DIXON

Cool. (beat) Hey I better pick out a story to show him - which one do you think?

MARC

Whaddya mean pick one? How many stories did you bring up?

DIXON

All of them - I always carry all my stories with me... you never know who you're gonna run into.

MARC

That's just slightly odd, but, I dunno, give him the one you think is your best.

DIXON

(nods and smiles)

I think I know which one I want to give him.

Dixon, grabs his bookbag from the back seat and rifles through a stack of papers for the desired story. After a few beats, he finds it, and tosses the bag and the other stories into the back.

DIXON (CONT'D)

This one.

He shows Marc the title: "The Next Great American Novel."

MARC

You sure?

DIXON

Yeah, I think he'll like that one the best.

MARC

Okay, totally you're call.

DIXON
Why you think I shouldn't show him
this one?

MARC
I didn't say that.

There is a beat of silence.

DIXON
Hey you know what, I just had the
funniest dream.

MARC
Oh really, of what?

DIXON
I had this dream we went to Mark
Twain's house and got all stoned
and hung out with Tom Sawyer and
Huck Finn.

MARC
Dude that actually happened.
Except for the last part.

DIXON
Shut the fuck up.

MARC
Nah, I'm serious. We were there.

He holds up the Mark Twain giftshop bag.

DIXON
What's that?

MARC
A Huck Finn pipe. Later we are
gonna get fucking stoned like
Huckleberry used to back in the
day.

DIXON
So we were really there?

MARC
Yeah.

DIXON
No shit - no wonder it seemed so
real.

MARC
(shaking his head)
Glad to see you made lifelong
memories there. They should put
your museum experience on the
fucking brochure.

EXT. NEW HAMPSHIRE HIGHWAY (EARLY EVENING)

The car continues on down the road.

EXT. DARTMOUTH UNIVERSITY CAMPUS MAIN ENTRANCE (EARLY
EVENING)

Marc's car turns into the main campus entrance and drives
along the main road.

INT. MARC'S CAR

Marc and Dixon are scanning the scenery of the campus.

MARC
Where should we be heading here?

DIXON
I dunno. Let's head for the
bookstore, we should be able to
find out something there.

EXT. DARTMOUTH UNIVERSITY CAMPUS PARKING LOT (EARLY EVENING)

Marc's car pulls into the parking lot right by the campus
bookstore and the two get out. As they head for the bookstore
Dixon can hardly contain his excitement.

DIXON
I can't believe we actually made
it... I mean this is the best
chance I'm probably ever gonna get
to listen to and have a meaningful
interaction with Philip Roth. Sure
he might be a little hesitant to
talk to me but once I convince him
I'm for real he'll pretty much
hafta wanna talk to me and see what
I'm all about as a writer, right?

MARC
Who knows?

DIXON

Jeez, this whole thing is exhilarating and terrifying at the same time.

MARC

(sarcastically)

Yeah it sure is... my nipples are hard over here.

DIXON

Thanks again for this buddy. For some strange reason I feel really damn good about how tonight is gonna turn out.

MARC

Well good for you. Me personally, I'm just hoping to find some hot Ivy League chick that will end up being my sugar mama. Then it would be a really damn good night all around.

They walk into the campus bookstore's entrance.

INT. DARTMOUTH UNIVERSITY CAMPUS BOOKSTORE

Dixon and Marc are wandering through the aisles. Dixon is a man on a mission.

MARC

What are you looking for?

Dixon stops reaches out and grabs a copy of *Goodbye Columbus* by Philip Roth. He turns and heads up to the check out counter.

MARC (CONT'D)

(calling after him)

Wait, don't you already have that one?

Dixon, not paying attention is already at the counter. Ringing him up is a college aged FEMALE BOOKSTORE CLERK. She looks once at the book and immediately recognizes the author's name.

FEMALE BOOKSTORE CLERK

Oh Philip Roth, did you know he came to speak here last year?

DIXON

Yeah actually, (beat) wait last year?

FEMALE BOOKSTORE CLERK

Oh yeah, for the annual Great American Writer's symposium. Actually its going on again tonight.

DIXON

And Philip Roth is gonna be there again tonight, right?

FEMALE BOOKSTORE CLERK

No, I'm pretty sure this year it's Dan Brown.

DIXON

Dan Brown? Who is that?

FEMALE BOOKSTORE CLERK

You know, *The Da Vinci Code...*
Angels and Demons...?

DIXON

(concerned)

So Philip Roth isn't gonna be here tonight?

FEMALE BOOKSTORE CLERK

I don't think so, unless he comes to listen to Dan Brown talk.

DIXON

But...

FEMALE BOOKSTORE CLERK

Tickets are still available if you're interested.

DIXON

(bitterly)

I bet they are.

She hands him his bags slightly confused at his attitude.

DIXON (CONT'D)

(taking the bag)

Thanks.

INT. DARTMOUTH UNIVERSITY STUDENT CENTER

Dixon and Marc are sitting on benches watching students walk by.

DIXON

I can't believe you looked at a fucking ad for an event that happened a year ago.

MARC

Hey you looked at it too. But, come on, you can't blame me for this! It's not like I wanted to drive up here for nothing. I was looking to help you out.

DIXON

Eh fuck it, let's just get the fuck outta here.

MARC

Well couldn't you just stay and go and watch the other guy speak and see if he likes your story?

DIXON

The *Da Vinci Code* guy? Fuck him, he sucks. What the hell do I care what he thinks?

MARC

Okay fine, I'm just throwing out some ideas.

DIXON

Well just stop it, cuz your ideas keep getting worse... I never should have listened to you and come up here. This whole trip has been one big waste.

MARC

Jeez Mr. Negative, I was just trying to help you keep a hold of your dreams.

DIXON

Yeah, well you know what? - the trouble with dreams is that they don't come true.

Dixon gets up and starts to head out of the student center.

MARC
(calling after him)
Hey wait!

Dixon spins around.

DIXON
What?

MARC
Okay, so the Roth thing didn't work out, but still come on - we're here, right? We might as well make the best of it. Let's try to crash a party, beat up some computer nerds, have sex with a girl studying rocket science or something.

DIXON
Nah, you can do all that. I'll just wait in the car.

Dixon starts to head out and Marc stops him yet again.

MARC
Hey, just give me five minutes and I bet I can cheer you up.

DIXON
Nah. Fuck it.

MARC
Dude - five minutes. That's all I ask. I think you can give me that after I drove your ass all the way up here.

DIXON
(sighing)
Fine, five minutes. But there's nothing you can do to cheer me up.

CUT TO:

INT. MEN'S ROOM

Dixon and Marc are in a stall together sharing the Huck Finn pipe.

They pass it back and forth in silence for a beat or two, before Marc pulls out a small plastic sandwich bag from his pocket.

DIXON
What's in the bag?

He takes a hit from the pipe and passes it.

MARC
(taking the pipe)
Oh this - I was gonna save this until after we got to meet that author guy, you know, kind of like an end of trip celebration, but since that's not really gonna happen and you need to be cheered up a bit...

He takes a hit and passes the pipe to Dixon.

DIXON
(inhales)
Mmhhmm...

MARC
Just leave one of these on your tongue until it dissolves and then you'll be ready to have a good time.

Dixon kills what's left in the pipe, dumps it in the toilet and flushes before he takes what looks like a sugar cube from Marc.

DIXON
(inspecting it)
What is this gonna do to me?

MARC
Make everything beautiful and exciting for about 8 to 10 hours.

DIXON
Hmm. And they always tried to teach us in school that drugs were bad.

He puts the cube on his tongue and holds it there, as Marc does likewise.

DIXON (CONT'D)
(mouth full)
It kinda stings a bit.

MARC
(mouth full)
That's how you know its working...

They wait in silence as the cubes dissolve on their tongues.

DIXON
Sooo, now what?

MARC
Now we head out and find the
freshman dorms.

DIXON
What for?

MARC
Freshman chicks man - 18 years old,
away from home for the first time
and most of them are just aching
for it. Plus out of all the chicks
at college they have the lowest
percentage of STD's.

DIXON
Really? Where'd you hear that?

MARC
Wikipedia.com. I love that site,
it has so much useful information.

DIXON
Are you sure that's true though? I
think a lot of the info on that
site is made up.

MARC
Hey man, maybe it's true and maybe
it's not. I'm just saying I
choose to believe it cuz there's no
fucking way I'm gonna get crabs
again.

INT. DARTMOUTH UNIVERSITY STUDENT CENTER

The two stumble through the student center and outside.

EXT. DARTMOUTH UNIVERSITY CAMPUS - (NIGHT)

The two wander around the campus looking for any sign of the freshman dorms. Their search proves fruitless, and they pause by a lamppost and wait.

DIXON

Dude we don't know where the fuck we are going.

MARC

We'll just wait here and ask the next person that walks by for directions.

After a long beat, a brunette FEMALE DARTMOUTH STUDENT walks by. Marc solicits her for directions.

MARC (CONT'D)

Um excuse me, we are looking for the freshman dorms.

The girl stares blankly at him, then Dixon, and does not say a word. Slowly she hands him a business card which reads:

"As a form of protest for the silence and fear for which the Homosexual, Bisexual, and Transgendered People of the world must daily experience, I have taken a vow of silence today to show my solidarity with their pain, and as a way to promote dialogue and acceptance for all people. Please respect my resolve not to speak to you."

MARC (CONT'D)

What the fuck?

The girl starts to walk away.

MARC (CONT'D)

Hey, can you tell us where the freshman dorms are?

The girl continues to walk.

MARC (CONT'D)

How bout pointing us in the right direction? Or have you taken a vow against pointing as well?

The girl point off to her right with her middle finger as she continues to walk.

Dixon heads over to Marc and the two begin to walk off in the directions she pointed.

DIXON
Jeez, what was her problem?

MARC
Fucking dyke bitch... that's her problem.

Dixon nods in agreement.

EXT. DARTMOUTH UNIVERSITY CAMPUS (NIGHT)

Dixon and Marc are heading towards the freshman dorms. While Marc walks with purpose, Dixon continually falls behind and stares up at the heavens.

MARC
(looking back)
What the fuck man, catch up!

DIXON
Oh sorry.

Dixon hustles forward to catch up, but sure enough after another beat or two of walking he has fallen behind again and is back staring at the sky.

MARC
What are you looking at?!

DIXON
Huh? Oh just the stars, you know, the sky.

MARC
Why?

DIXON
It looks cool.

EXT. NIGHT SKY (DIXON'S P.O.V.)

We see the sky as Dixon sees it - a swirling panorama similar to a van Gogh painting.

MARC
Oh dude, are you tripping balls already?

DIXON

Maybe, but I don't think enough people stop and look at the stars enough any more. Just look at them.

MARC

Oh fuck - you're getting all spacey on me. Do me a favor, when we get to the freshman girls let me do the talking.

DIXON

(still staring up)
You bet.

Marc starts walking again leaving Dixon standing alone with his neck craned all the way back.

MARC (O.S.)

Jesus Christ, Dixon hurry up!

Dixon comes out of his daze and runs O.S. after Marc.

INT. BOWSER (FRESHMAN) DORM

Marc and Dixon enter the dorm and walk right passed security without any hesitation and head into a stairwell.

INT. STAIRWELL

The two head up the stairs taking a few steps at a time.

MARC

Okay the story is that we are two Harvard Law students looking for someone we know here at Dartmouth.

DIXON

And somehow we got lost wandering the freshman dorms?

MARC

Hey ass, no chick is gonna question this too much - at least not the type of chicks we're looking for. They'll hear Harvard law and positively cream themselves.

DIXON
 (unsure)
 Right.

MARC
 How you feeling?

DIXON
 A little strange.

MARC
 Yeah I gathered that. Do me a
 favor and try not to freak out the
 girl's too much right off the bat.

Dixon is staring up and down at the stairwell, taking it all
 in wide-eyed.

DIXON
 Huh?

MARC
 Uhh, just follow me.

The two walk until they are finally at the top of the stairs,
 and then bust through the door into the hallway.

INT. SIXTH FLOOR BOWSER (FRESHMAN) DORM HALLWAY

Marc leads the way as the two scour the hallways - from
 checking out girls as they walk by to nonchalantly looking
 into open doors at the occupants. Every time they pass by a
 male student, they are met with a nasty look...COMPETITION.

Finally Marc passes one room at the end of the hallway,
 pauses for a second and motions for Dixon to stop before he
 crosses the open doorway. Mouthing "Just Follow Me" he
 enters the room while knocking on the open door. Dixon, a
 bit uncertain and very stoned, follows directly behind him.

INT. SIXTH FLOOR ROOM (LACEY'S & SAM'S ROOM)

Two young, fresh faced and attractive freshman girls (LACEY
 and SAM) look up at the two men knocking. From the look of
 them we can tell - they don't stand a chance. Marc walks in,
 the picture of cool as Dixon stumbles in behind.

MARC
 Um yeah I was wondering if you two
 ladies could help me.
 (MORE)

MARC (CONT'D)

Me and my friend here just drove down from Harvard, we go to law school there, and were hoping to surprise his sister who goes there.

Beat as the girls digest this information.

MARC (CONT'D)

The problem is we don't know where she is. She was in this room last year but she's moved off campus now.

SAM

Okay.

MARC

Well the thing is this was supposed to be a big surprise that she doesn't know about, so we don't want to call her just yet. It's just, do you two ladies know where any off campus housing would be?

LACEY

(addressing Dixon)

You have no idea where she lives?

Dixon slowly shakes his head no.

MARC

(stepping in)

We didn't know what to do, so we came here. And while we were wandering the campus trying to think of something we decided to stop here, the only place where we know she used to be.

SAM

Well I'm sorry we don't really have any idea where she could be.

MARC

(feigning surprise)

Really? That's a little odd (to Dixon) don't you think? (Dixon nods) I mean, at Harvard we used to get contact info from the people who lived in our dorms the previous year so we could ask them questions.

LACEY

Really? That's weird I've never heard of that before.

MARC

So I'm guessing you don't do that here... (beat) Well buddy I guess it's back to the old drawing board.

Dixon and Marc turn to leave, reaching the doorway before they are halted by Lacey.

LACEY

Wait, there's no sense in you two wandering around looking for her. Maybe you should stay here while you wait for her to get in touch with you or we could help you or something...

She looks pleadingly at Sam, who reluctantly, agrees.

SAM

Yeah, we could ask around and find some places you should check out.

Marc gives Dixon a sly smile as they head back into the room.

MARC

Ah thank you, my friend here wasn't too sure we would find anyone who could help us out, but I was sure we would be able to find some good Samaritans here at Dartmouth. Well aren't you glad I decided to stop and ask these lovely young ladies for help, Craig?

DIXON

Uh, sure thing, Marc.

Marc shoots him a look for not following his 'fake name' move.

Then the two start to walk back into the room.

LACEY

Okay (to Dixon) Craig and (to Marc) Marc, right? I'm Lacey and this is my roommate Sam.

DIXON

Hi.

MARC

A pleasure.

Marc shuts the door behind him.

CUT TO:

INT. LACEY AND SAM'S ROOM

The four are sitting Indian-style on the floor passing around the pipe and listening to *The Dave Matthews Band*. They are all stoned and the girls in particular giggle after every comment. Dixon is noticeably perspiring.

MARC

Oh yeah, law school is pretty tough, but, you know, we try not to let it get us down.

LACEY

Wow, I must admit, you two are not what I would expect Harvard law students to be, you're so laid back and *normal*.

MARC

Well the same goes for you two. I'm shocked that two girls as smart, funny and beautiful as you two even exist. Isn't that right, um, Craig?

DIXON

(monotone)
Yes I agree.

There is a beat of silence until Marc notices an acoustic guitar in the corner of the room.

MARC

Hey that's a nice guitar.

SAM

Thanks, it's mine. I'm trying to teach myself some Dave songs.

MARC

You mind if I play? I know one or two DMB songs.

SAM

Sure.

She gets up, crosses the room and grabs the guitar

SAM (CONT'D)
 (handing it to Marc)
 It might be out of tune.

MARC
 I can tune it up real quick.

Marc tests the strings and tunes the guitar by ear.

MARC (CONT'D)
 Okay, let me know if you can spot
 this one.

He plays and sings "Crash Into Me" by the Dave Matthews Band so flawlessly that both girls are like putty in his hands.

After he finishes he passes the guitar to Dixon.

MARC (CONT'D)
 My buddy here can play too.

DIXON
 Nah, that's okay. I'm really not...
 my hands are on fire.

LACEY
 Oh come on, please play one.

Dixon stares at her face for a beat, blinks twice, and relents.

DIXON
 Okay, um... I'll play this one.

Dixon tunes the lowest string down a step.

DIXON (CONT'D)
 Capo. Do you have a capo?

SAM
 Actually yeah I do.

She crosses over to her desk and rummages through the drawers.

LACEY
 (to Dixon)
 Are you hot? You're sweating a
 lot.

DIXON
 Am I?

He dabs his brow incredulously.

MARC
(jumping in)
He's cool. He just gets that way
when he smokes up.

Sam returns with the capo and hands it to Dixon.

SAM
What song are you gonna play?

DIXON
It's called "It's Alright Ma (I'm
Only Bleeding)" ho-ho, he-he.

LACEY
Huh?

DIXON
Oh, it's just Bob Dylan. Haven't
you ever seen *Don't Look Back*?

SAM
No, what's that?

MARC
Eh, it's nothing, (to Dixon) just
play man.

Dixon places the capo over the third fret and jumps into the song. **The song is a work of abstract, stream of consciousness lyrics and a hypnotic guitar part.** As Dixon plays he stares off into the distance at nothing in particular as if he is pulling the words from mid air. He gets to the line "...not much is really sacred." Before he stumbles over the guitar part and the song breaks down and then screeches to a halt.

DIXON
(still staring off into
the distance)
Uh, sorry. I think I lost it.

There is a beat of silence as the girls try to react to the song (which was way over their heads). Finally, Sam speaks:

SAM
Right.

She glances at the wall where Dixon is staring.

SAM (CONT'D)
What are you looking at?

LACEY
(to Marc)
Do you know any more Dave songs?

Dixon hands the guitar to Marc, who begins to play "What Would You Say?" by the Dave Matthews Band.

INT. LACEY AND SAM'S ROOM (DIXON'S P.O.V.)

Dixon stares around the room and sees the walls and the ceiling bubble and recede with the music as the lights glow incredibly bright and then fade into black. The other three people in the room are bathed in black and seem far away. The sound of Marc's playing sounds as if it is coming from a bathtub from the next room over.

INT. LACEY AND SAM'S ROOM

Back to reality.

Marc is snapping his fingers in front of Dixon's face.

MARC
Hey. HEY!!

Dixon smiles dreamily off into the distance.

SAM
Is he gonna be okay?

MARC
Yeah. Let me just take him out
into the hallway so he can call his
sister.

Marc picks Dixon up and leads him towards the door.

DIXON
Where are we going?

MARC
We are going into the hall to give
your sister a call.

DIXON
My sister? Why? She doesn't want
to talk to me.

Marc opens the door and pushes Dixon out into the hallway.

INT. BOWSER DORM (FRESHMAN DORM) HALLWAY

MARC
Dude, you okay?

DIXON
(looking around confused)
Huh?

MARC
Are you okay?

DIXON
No thanks. Hey do you think those girls are into me? I think they might be? Especially the really tall one.

MARC
Oh God I don't know. (beat) The really tall one? Dude what the fuck are you talking about? You're tripping balls aren't you.

DIXON
Whose to say? Maybe you are and I'm not.

MARC
You're a mess. Go to the bathroom and put cold water on your face or something. When you've calmed down some, come on back to the room. Otherwise you'll blow this for us.

Dixon starts to laugh.

MARC (CONT'D)
(shaking his head)
The bathroom are right down there.

He points to the end of the hall.

Dixon starts to walk slowly and deliberately to the bathroom.

MARC (CONT'D)
(calling after him)
And remember stay calm so you don't freak out.

DIXON
 (mispronouncing calm by
 sounding out the 'l')
 Calm. (He laughs) Calm. I'll stay
 calm.

MARC
 (to himself)
 Oh God, he is fucked.

Marc opens the door and ducked back into the room.

INT. BOWSER DORM (FRESHMAN DORM) COMMUNAL BATHROOM

Dixon busts into the bathroom and heads right for a stall where he proceeds to throw up a few times before he starts to dry heave. He walks doubled over to the sink and vanity and starts to splash water on this face. After a few splashes he stands fully upright and looks into the mirror. Staring back at him is his body except for one major difference - he simply does not have a face - no eyes, mouth, or nose. Marc's drugs are taking full effect and for Dixon it is about to be a bad trip.

DIXON
 (grabbing his face)
 Aahhh!

Starting to panic Dixon grabs his face a few times pulling and pushing it around to try and change his reflection - no change. In his panic he smacks his head against the mirror and shatters it - opening open a cut on his forehead. In the reflection blood starts to ooze out of the cut at an alarming rate. Not being able to stand his reflection any more Dixon turns and heads out of the bathroom.

INT. BOWSER DORM (FRESHMAN DORM) HALLWAY

Dixon runs down the hallway which looks hazy and jumpy in his state. The hum of the fluorescent lights is unbearably loud and torments Dixon as he runs full speed down the hallway into the stairwell.

INT. STAIRWELL

Dixon still being tormented by the buzz of the lights flies down the stairs taking three or four at a time. The stairs twist and turn as the entire structure seems about ready to collapse in on itself.

Dixon, unable to keep his balance tumbles down the stairs and knocks open the door into the main lobby of the dorm.

INT. BOWSER DORM (FRESHMAN DORM)

Dixon gets up and rushes out of the dorm as the security guard looks on.

SECURITY GUARD
(to Dixon as he rushes by)
Watch yourself...

EXT. DARTMOUTH UNIVERSITY CAMPUS - (NIGHT)

Dixon pauses for a beat once he is outside of the dorm and takes in big gulps of air while his hands go up to where his head smashed into the mirror. As he brings his hands down to look at them he sees two skeletal hands drenched in blood. Not knowing what else to do, he takes off into the night at full speed.

EXT. NEW HAMPSHIRE - **DRUG VISION** (NIGHT)

Dixon continues to run at full speed. The sounds of gun fire ringing out seems to be following him, and he constantly looks back over his shoulder expecting to find someone shooting at him. The landscape spins and moves in and out of focus. Although he is drenched in sweat and exhausted, Dixon continues running until 'BAM' he smacks face first into a low hanging tree branch and collapses with a whimper into a pile of leaves by a small grove of trees.

CUT TO:

EXT. NEW HAMPSHIRE PARK - (EARLY MORNING)

An elderly, distinguished looking man, complete with fedora and walking stick, walks down a dirt trail in the early morning. Despite the fact that it is a bit cold, birds chirp and the sun shines brightly. He walks by a small grove of trees and pauses. Taking a few steps forward he reaches out his walking stick and gently pokes something once...twice...

EXT. NEW HAMPSHIRE PARK (DIXON'S P.O.V) - (EARLY MORNING)

Dixon looks up and sees a shadowy figure bathed in sunlight lightly poking him with a stick. He moans. As the elderly man questions him, he is only seen through Dixon's point of view, i.e. a shadowy figured bathed in sunlight.

ELDERLY MAN
Are you okay?

Dixon groans.

ELDERLY MAN (CONT'D)
How long have you been here?

Dixon mutters something indecipherable.

ELDERLY MAN (CONT'D)
(looking around)
What are you doing here?

DIXON
(softly)
Philip Roth...

ELDERLY MAN
What was that?

DIXON
(softly)
Philip Roth...

ELDERLY MAN
How? How did you know my name?

Suddenly Dixon shoots up to a sitting position and takes in the old man's face - he recognizes the face from the back cover of his books and the speech at Bucknell - he has finally found Philip Roth.

DIXON
Oh my God - it's you!

ROTH
Were you looking for me? Do I know you?

DIXON
No, but... it's a long story.

Dixon gets up slowly and brushes leaves and dirt off of his clothes. He takes the time to size up Roth, while the author is examining this dirty, bruised young man.

ROTH
Were you in a fight?

DIXON
(pointing to his face)
What this? Yeah I guess - although
a lot of this I did to myself.

ROTH
Right.

DIXON
(beaming)
I have to say you are absolutely my
favorite author.

ROTH
Thanks. What are you doing up here?

DIXON
Looking for you.

ROTH
By sleeping in the park?

DIXON
Well no. I came up to New
Hampshire to look for you. I'm not
sure why I slept in the park, or
even how I got here. It's not like
I knew you would come here and I
was laying in wait for you or
something.

Roth takes a step away from Dixon.

DIXON (CONT'D)
No, no, it's not like I'm a stalker
or anything...

ROTH
Let me guess - you've read a few of
my stories and now you want to be a
writer and you think that I can
help you somehow. Am I right?

DIXON
Yeah, but...

ROTH
Do you have any idea how many lost
kids like you come looking for me
thinking that I can help them with
something? Do you?

DIXON

Well no. Not really. Is it a lot?

ROTH

It's a number too high to even think about, and I'll tell you what I tell every single one of them - go away, and leave me alone - I have nothing to say or offer to you.

The old man starts to walk away.

DIXON

But, I thought.

ROTH

(turning around)

I know, you read the books and feel like the character 'is' you, that somehow I almost wrote it for you.

DIXON

Yeah, I guess something like that.

ROTH

Now explain to me how I could have done that, have I ever met you before? I mean, you weren't even alive when I wrote most of those books, what are you 20 years old?

DIXON

22. (beat) It's just...

ROTH

(sighing)

What? What do you want from me? Do you want me to read a story you wrote and hold your hand and tell you that you're good, that you can make it? Somehow you're special and better than all the rest? Well I'm not going to do that, so you can just forget it.

Dixon is crestfallen and watches as Roth continues on his way.

DIXON

(pitifully)

I guess this is what you get for ever wanting to be something.

Roth spins around.

ROTH
What did you say?

DIXON
What? Oh, nothing. Listen I'm
sorry I bothered you, and I just
wanted to let you know that I think
you're a really great writer.
Sorry.

Dixon starts to walk the other way.

ROTH
(calling after him)
Hey, are you hungry?

DIXON
(turning around)
Huh?

ROTH
Are you hungry?

DIXON
Yeah I guess, a little.

ROTH
Let me buy you some breakfast.

DIXON
(confused)
Really?

Dixon hustles to catch up with Roth. The two walk in silence
for a beat.

ROTH
So since you obviously know my name
can I ask you for yours?

DIXON
It's Dixon, Dixon Cooper.

ROTH
Well Dixon, that's a good strong
Anglo-Saxon name you've got there.

DIXON
Uh, thanks.

The two walk off into the distance.

INT. DINER

At local diner, complete with old style counters and booths, Roth and Dixon sit at a table while a few other early risers mill around in the background. Roth eats a plate of eggs while Dixon works on french toast. Two pots of coffee are positioned on either side of the table.

ROTH
So you've read all my books?

DIXON
Yup. Most of them at least three times.

ROTH
Really? Which one was your favorite?

DIXON
Hmm, that's a tough one - maybe *Portnoy's Complaint*.

ROTH
Hmm, interesting - can I ask you a question?

DIXON
Sure.

ROTH
Did you relate with the main character?

DIXON
Portnoy? Oh sure, it was like it was me.

ROTH
Interesting...

DIXON
How so?

ROTH
Let me ask you this, what's your favorite movie?

DIXON
You mean like a comedy or more like a serious movie?

ROTH

Both.

DIXON

I really like *The Graduate*, I can kinda relate. And I guess *Schindler's List* is a pretty powerful movie.

ROTH

Hmm, and your favorite musician?

DIXON

Oh, Bob Dylan, easily.

ROTH

Now, do you see any pattern there?

DIXON

Not really, I'm not sure what you mean.

ROTH

I mean - me, Dylan, *Schindler's List*, Dustin Hoffmann - what do they all have in common?

DIXON

I'm not sure what you mean.

ROTH

They're all Jewish!

DIXON

Okay, yeah?

ROTH

And you're not.

DIXON

Right.

ROTH

Don't you see, you have a persecution complex.

DIXON

(with mouth full)

Huh?

ROTH

You yourself feel like you are beaten down by the world, so you relate yourself with a people who have historically been discriminated again and again by every faction of society. And that thought never even crossed your mind?

DIXON

(confused)

No, not really.

ROTH

Remarkable, most Jews wish they were like you. And here you sit, a nice gentile WASP of the highest order and you wish you were a Jew.

DIXON

Well I'm not sure if that's exactly the case.

ROTH

Can I ask you another question?

DIXON

I guess.

ROTH

Do you find yourself attracted to Jewish women?

DIXON

No, I guess not really.

ROTH

(triumphant)

Aha! You sound like a Jew to me!

DIXON

Well, can I ask you a question then?

ROTH

As long as it's not about reading one of your stories.

DIXON

It's not. I read somewhere that you said you found a sheet of paper that had random lines written on it, and you used those lines as the first lines for all your books? Now I've always thought that was really cool, but did that really happen?

ROTH

Maybe, maybe not - in the mind of the writer who is to say what is real and what is fiction.

Dixon ponders that for a beat.

ROTH (CONT'D)

So how many stories have you written.

DIXON

Since I've left college 33.

ROTH

And have any of them been published?

DIXON

Nope, not a one.

ROTH

Well Master Cooper I must say I admire your determination. Too many people today think being an artist is just smoking some dope and writing a bunch of nonsensical drivel. And there are too many people who will pay them to write such trash. It's refreshing to see someone like yourself struggling so much.

DIXON

Um, thanks... I guess.

ROTH

What I meant is, based on all your struggles, it will be all the more sweet when you do succeed as a writer.

DIXON

Ah, I see. Thanks.

ROTH

Now back to my questions, why is it that you write?

DIXON

Um, I'm not exactly sure... I guess because I have to.

ROTH

No one has to write Dixon - people write for a number of reasons: money, fame, or a desire to express themselves creatively. There are other reasons too, I'm sure.

DIXON

(taking this in)

I guess I write because it's the only way I can get across what I want to say and maybe... maybe I hope that someday something I write will help someone. (beat) I guess that sounds kinda stupid.

ROTH

(smiling)

No that's not stupid at all, that's why I write and that's why every important author who ever lived writes. No great book was ever written with the intention to make a lot of money, and some of the most famous writers are easily the worst.

DIXON

(absentmindedly)

Yeah like Dan Brown...

ROTH

Who?

DIXON

Nevermind.

The waitress comes over and drops off the check. Dixon starts to pull out his wallet.

ROTH

(motions for him to put it away)

(MORE)

ROTH (CONT'D)

Please, please - when you publish your first book you can take me out to breakfast.

DIXON

Okay, thanks Mr. Roth, I think I might just have to hold you to that.

ROTH

Sounds good.

EXT. RURAL TOWN MAIN STREET - IN FRONT OF DINER (DAY)

Dixon and Philip Roth exit the diner.

ROTH

Well Mr. Cooper I believe this is where we part ways... I'll keep an eye out for your work.

DIXON

Thanks.

ROTH

And remember, an author must have superior faith in the quality of their work. Do you know how many stories I submitted before one got published?

DIXON

No, how many?

ROTH

(smiling)

34. And I'm not going to lie and say it wasn't frustrating, but as a writer if you know in your heart that your stories are good you just have to keep going and hope that someday people will catch up with you and get it.

DIXON

Yeah, gotcha.

ROTH

Best of luck to you.

The two shake hands and part ways. After a few steps Dixon stops and turns to watch Philip Roth walk off down the street, unnoticed by others, for a few moments.

Just then the waitress comes out of the diner and hands Dixon a piece of paper folded in half.

WAITRESS

Excuse me I think you left this inside.

DIXON

I don't think so, what is it?

The waitress opens it up and stares at it.

WAITRESS

I dunno, just a bunch of weird sentences.

Dixon grabs the paper. The first sentence reads: "I guess this is what you get for ever wanting to be something." He stares at the paper for a beat and then up in the direction Roth was walking. Roth is nowhere to be found.

DIXON (V.O.)

And that's how I met Philip Roth - I'd hate to go on record advocating drug use and irresponsible behavior, but without it I probably would have spent the entire weekend on the couch waiting for soft core porn movies to come on TV...

EXT. LOCAL ROADWAY - (DAY)

Dixon walks down the side of the road back towards campus as cars roar passed him.

DIXON (V.O.)

It was a surprisingly long walk back to campus... and when I got there Marc was waiting for me.

EXT. DARTMOUTH UNIVERSITY CAMPUS PARKING LOT - (DAY)

Marc is leaning against his car as Dixon walks towards him. The two nonchalantly wave at each other. As Dixon move closer Marc wonders aloud:

MARC

What the fuck happened to you?

DIXON

(laughing)

I have no idea - whatever you gave me really f'ed me up.

MARC

Really? I had the most beautiful high I've ever felt from that stuff - it started to kick in just as I was hooking up with those two girls.

DIXON

You hooked up with both of them?

MARC

Yup.

DIXON

At the same time?

MARC

(slyly)

Yeah I sure did, and it was glor-i-ous. But where did you end up?

DIXON

Oh I dunno a field, or park or something.

MARC

Ah fuck man sorry, besides Hannah this trip has been a total bust for you.

DIXON

Nah I wouldn't say that. Guess who found me this morning passed out in the middle of nowhere?

MARC

(confused)

Who?

DIXON

Philip Fucking Roth!!

MARC

No way! So how did that go?! What did he have to say?!

DIXON
 Eh, you know just some stuff
 between writers.

Dixon opens the passenger side door of Marc's car and jumps in.

MARC
 (following into the car
 after him)
 Hey, wait a minute...

INT. MARC'S CAR

Dixon finishes telling Marc the story.

DIXON
 And after breakfast we just kinda
 split but he said he'd keep an eye
 out for me and my writing. And as
 I'm out in front of the diner, the
 waitress comes out and gives me
 this.

Marc looks at the piece of paper.

MARC
 What is that?

DIXON
 It's just a bunch of sentences that
 don't make sense, but this first
 one, it's what I said to him and it
 made him stop in his tracks when he
 was gonna pass right on by this
 morning.

MARC
 No fucking way - that's
 ridiculous... I mean I can't
 believe it, like everything that we
 did had to happen in that
 particular way so you could meet
 him. It's like it's...

DIXON
 Fate?

MARC
 Exactly. Well buddy I must admit
 this weekend has certainly been a
 trip...

(MORE)

MARC (CONT'D)

I mean just think of the stories we have from these last two days.

DIXON

Yeah.

MARC

You wanna smoke up, you know, as a celebration?

DIXON

Nah.

MARC

Really? You serious?

DIXON

Yeah, I wanna keep a clear head about this stuff. Plus, I dunno, I guess truthfully I smoke up to forget about how I'm not happy with the way my life is turning out. Maybe I should spend more time on getting my life on track and less time getting high. Then I won't have to smoke to forget about my life.

MARC

(sarcastically)

Wow, that's quite a profound revelation you've stumbled across there.

DIXON

Yup.

MARC

And when did you decide all this?

DIXON

Just now.

MARC

(slightly hurt)

Fine dude, just means more for me then.

EXT. HIGHWAY - (NIGHT)

Marc's car rushes passed the "Welcome to New Jersey" sign.

DIXON (V.O.)

The rest of that trip I thought about everything that had happened: Marc, Hannah, the Ivy League Girls, Philip Roth, and came to the conclusion that yeah - that was a pretty fucking good story.

EXT. DIXON'S HOUSE - (NIGHT)

Marc's car pulls into Dixon's driveway.

MARC

Okay buddy we're here. Well I must say I had fun on our little trip.

DIXON

Yeah me too. Thanks again for everything, you know driving and all that. (beat) Hey you wanna come in and grab something to eat or something?

MARC

Nah, I've gotta go and smooth things over with Sarah, and then get some sleep. Some of us have work tomorrow.

DIXON

Cool, cool. Tell Sarah I said hi.

MARC

Will do, if I can get a word in edgewise with her. You know how she gets when she's pissed at me.

DIXON

Well you could always tell her that she shouldn't waste her time being pissed off at you for taking off without telling her, while she could be focusing on the fact that you had sex with three different girls this weekend.

MARC

Yeah, I'm not sure that would help my case.

The two laugh and slap hands and Dixon jumps out of the car.

Marc's car pulls out of the driveway as Dixon unlocks the front door to his house. Dixon waves as the car pulls away.

DIXON (V.O.)

And even though it was really late
and I was exhausted I started the
story that very night.

INT. DIXON'S ROOM

Dixon sits in front of his computer screen typing away - the first line he types reads "I guess this is what you get for ever wanting to be something."

DIXON (V.O.)

After a week of nothing but eating,
sleeping and writing what had
started out as a story had turned
into a novella, and that turned
into a novel.

INT. PUBLIC LIBRARY

DIXON (V.O.)

Since I had a good start on the
story I wanted to tell, I decided
that maybe it was time to get a job
to help my parents out and stop
being such a waste of space. I
mean, you can only get high and sit
in front of the TV so many days
before you start to get a little
stir crazy right?

The camera pans across the library and rests on Dixon reading "On Beyond Zebra" by Dr. Seuss to a bunch of preschoolers who sit on the floor and hang on his every word.

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

The pay's not great, and the hours
are a little strange, but I love
the benefits.

INT. DIXON'S ROOM

Dixon drops a manuscript into an envelope and carefully prints out 'Goldman & Wallach Literary Agency' on the front.

INT. POST OFFICE

Dixon hands the post office clerk the envelope and watches as he weighs it.

DIXON (V.O.)

I feel pretty good about this story, but then again I felt pretty good about most of the others too. I guess the big difference now is that I'm not obsessing whether it will be published or not. If it happens, it happens. If not, I'm not gonna go and do something stupid like giving up on writing. Besides my girl kinda has a thing for the struggling writer type.

EXT. NEW JERSEY UNIVERSITY CAMPUS - NIGHT

Dixon walks down a pathway carrying a single rose. Bob Marley & The Wailers "Baby We've Got A Date" plays in the background. As he makes his way towards Kenzer Hall, we see Hannah waiting for him. The two kiss and he gives her the rose. They walk hand in hand into the distance.

THE END.