The Other Graduate

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INT. CAR- MORNING

A small four door sits on a deserted street corner. Inside the car, a troubled STEPHEN ABRAHAM (early 20s) turns to PAUL THEODORE (early 20s) who is wearing a black ski mask.

Stephen’s once sympathetic face is now rigid and hardened. His eyes reveal a mix of fear and apprehension.

He reaches for a pack of cigarettes that are sitting on the dashboard. His hands shake slightly.

Paul smiles at Stephen and hands him a mask.

PAUL
Just like old times.

Stephen grabs hold of the pack and stares ahead into the street. He brings a cigarette to his lips.

Paul reaches towards his waist and pulls out a 9mm gun. Meanwhile Stephen stares forward in a vacuous daze.

CUT TO:

SCREEN TEXT:EIGHT MONTHS EARLIER

EXT. AMPHITHEATER- DAY

Stephen leans forward in his seat and stares forward at the Commencement speaker.

A sea of parents and college graduates surround him in a large amphitheater. The graduates are fully dressed in caps and gowns with all eyes ahead on the COMMENCEMENT SPEAKER (late 40s), white female.

COMMENCEMENT SPEAKER
In summation, I want to congratulate each and every one of you on your great accomplishment, and remind you that each of you has tremendous potential. Remember, this is not the end of your journey but the beginning, and that you are all empowered to make all your own decisions.

When she finishes, a sudden eruption of applause and whistling continues until she takes her seat.

(CONTINUED)
In the middle of a row of laughing and smiling faces, Stephen fiddles with his hands.

On his far right, Stephen sees COLTON (early 20s) who poses with a cigar in his mouth and a wide grin.

Colton smiles at Stephen, who smiles back, with his eyes nearly blinded by Colton’s glistening golden watch.

The college students finally rise and throw their caps in the air. Stephen waits then finally rises with his cap in hand.

He glances to his left and right then throws his cap into the air. A gust of wind pulls the cap from one side and then the other.

CUT TO:

INT. STEPHEN’S FAMILY HOME- DAY

Balloons and other party decorations decorate the Abraham household. The household is filled with guests.

Stephen sits wearing an expensive suit and observes two young children running down the stairs.

ANTHONY, nine years old, pushes his YOUNGER BROTHER to the ground. The guests ignore the push and continue to talk.

Stephen grabs Anthony’s wrist gently while his brother runs away.

   STEPHEN
   Hey, why did you do that?

   ANTHONY
   Because...

   STEPHEN
   He’s your younger brother you got to take care of him, ok?

   ANTHONY
   Ok.

Stephen pats Anthony on the back and he runs off.
INT. KITCHEN—DAY

Stephen’s father, MR. ABRAHAM (50s) stands in the kitchen talking to a family friend. A tall man, wearing a Men’s Warehouse suit, and a sympathetic face; he looks proudly out at his guests.

He gestures at his son.

MR. ABRAHAM
Can you come over here?

Stephen gets up from the couch and walks over to his father.

MR. ABRAHAM
Why don’t you go upstairs and put on your college gown and cap?

STEPHEN
I don’t think we brought it.

MR. ABRAHAM
Did your mother not pack it?

Stephen scratches his head and Mr. Abraham nods. Stephen begins to walk away.

MR. ABRAHAM
Hey.

He smiles.

MR. ABRAHAM
When it starts to clear out we’ll take a family picture, ok? Something to remember the occasion.

STEPHEN
Sounds good.

MR. ABRAHAM
Fine... Talk to some people will ya?

STEPHEN
Yeah, yeah I will.

Stephen walks over to the fridge to grab a soda. He is tugged on the arm and is forced to turn around.

Stephen’s AUNT HELEN, a middle aged short bubbly woman, is smiling at him.

(CONTINUED)
Helen: Congratulations!

Stephen: Thanks.

Stephen forces a smile.

Helen: So tell me, what are you going to do next?

Stephen: I've got a couple interviews, not a hundred percent sure on anything yet.

Helen: That's great! You have options.

Helen glances away in thought.

Helen: We're so excited for you to be home dear.

She kisses him on the cheek leaving a bit of red lipstick.

Stephen pulls his phone from his pocket and walks towards the back yard. He acts like he is busy then then circles back to the kitchen.

INT. KITCHEN- DAY

Stephen’s mom, Mrs. Abraham, sees him and walks toward him smiling. Mrs. Abraham (50s) is short like her sister, but carries herself with an air of self-confidence and stature.

Mrs. Abraham: What’s wrong?

Stephen: Nothing.

Mrs. Abraham: You sure?

Mrs. Abraham face changes displaying that awareness that only mothers have.

(CONTINUED)
STEPHEN
Just thinkin’ about, you know...
You know Colton already has a job.
He’s working for some I-bank in New York.

Mrs. Abraham shakes her head.

MRS. ABRAHAM
Is that what you want? This is your party. You have your whole life to worry about that stuff.

STEPHEN
Can’t help it.

MRS. ABRAHAM
You’ve got time, ok? I’ve got to do some mingling... since you’re not. Haha. How bout a smile?

Stephen smiles perversely, and his Mom walks away shaking her head.

A family friend, MR. HABLISTON (50s) a short white man with an over confident demeanor, approaches Stephen after talking to Mr. Abraham.

He walks over to Stephen with a beer in one hand and pats him, on the shoulder, with the other.

MR. HABLISTON
Stephen m’boy, I would think after four years of college I’d see a beer in your hand.

STEPHEN
Didn’t really want one.

MR. HABLISTON
Nonsense.

Mr. Habliston grabs a beer from the cooler at the feet of the kitchen table. He opens it and hands the beer to Stephen.

MR. HABLISTON
Now, do you know what I do?

STEPHEN
No-

(Continued)
CONTINUED:

MR. HABLISTON
Life insurance.

STEPHEN
Ok.

MR. HABLISTON
See that red Corvette out front?

Stephen squints and nods.

MR. HABLISTON
That could be you in twenty years. We have an opening at an analyst position. I’m not saying I could get you the job, for sure. But I’m sure, I could grease the wheels for you a bit.

Mr. Habliston gives Stephen a nudge.

STEPHEN
How easy can you move up... you know career wise?

MR. HABLISTON
Haha, ambitious. I like that, I like that. Just have your father send over your resume.

Stephen looks over at his Dad then back at Mr. Habliston.

MR. HABLISTON
Don’t forgot what I told you.

Mr. Habliston points to his car in the drive way. Stephen nods then walks towards the back yard. He weaves his way through his guests and exits the house.

EXT. BACKYARD- DAY

Stephen enters his back yard and loosens his tie. The yard has a small patio to his left with foliage to either side.

He takes a deep breath.

PAUL
Taking a break from your own party?

PAUL THEODORE (20s) sits on a patio chair with his legs across the coffee sized table. He is a charismatic white male with a smile that could talk you into almost anything.

(CONTINUED)
Despite the occasion, he wears a white T-shirt and jeans. He has a tattoo that goes down his right forearm.

Paul smiles then takes a drag of his cigarette.

STEVEN
Paul?

Stephen is startled and walks over to his old friend.

PAUL
Ha, what? You don’t recognize me?

STEPHEN
No, it’s just, you know, my Mom... She’s...

PAUL
Mrs. A? I ran into her before the party... I asked about you. Think she felt guilty.

Paul grins then offers Stephen a cigarette.

Stephen shakes his head.

PAUL
Ha. You stopped?

Paul ashes his cigarette and raises his beer in salute.

PAUL
To your health bro.

Stephen loosens his tie and takes off his jacket.

PAUL
You’re looking good though man.

Paul approaches Stephen and checks the designer name of the suit.

STEPHEN
C’mon.

Paul steps away.

PAUL
Looks like you’re ready to make some real money.
CONTINUED:

STEPHEN
Yeah, well see.

PAUL
I bet you got a job already lined up? Making like what 40? 50 thou?

STEPHEN
I’ve got a couple interviews.

Paul shakes his head and smiles.

PAUL
Always knew you were gonna clean up.

Paul then reaches into his pocket and answers his phone.

PAUL
Yeah, alright, I’m coming.

Stephen glances back inside his house to the party.

PAUL
It’s finishing up now, right?

STEPHEN
Yeah.

PAUL
Why don’t you come back to our spot?

STEPHEN
You’ve got your own place?

PAUL
Haha, yeah. Parents kicked me out. Me and some Springfield kids are renting a place in Arlington. You remember Mike, Joey, and Rob?

Stephen nods then his eyes widen.

STEPHEN
Did you keep in touch with Amy?

Paul chuckles and lights another cigarette.

PAUL
She stays with us sometimes...

(CONTINUED)
STEPHEN
How’s she doing?

Paul shrugs and lights a cigarette.

PAUL
Come and ask her yourself. So you coming or what?

STEPHEN
Yeah, I’ll come say hi.

Paul smiles and they walk around the back yard to the front of the house.

STEPHEN
I bet the place is a shit hole.

PAUL
Ha, fuck you. They’ll be excited to see your ass.

As they reach the front of the house, Mr. Habliston has nearly reached his car.

MR. HABLISTON
Hey Stephen! We were looking for you. Your father suggested I take you over to the office. We’ve got some kids working overtime... Not a bad idea for you to pick their brain, quiz them a bit on the company. Ha. Hope they won’t say anything bad about me.

Stephen glances at Paul who seems to already know Stephen’s decision.

MR. HABLISTON
C’mon now, I don’t have all day.

Paul shakes his head and walks over to his beat up Toyota Corolla.

STEPHEN
I’ll catch up with you guys later.

PAUL
Yeah, just like high school right?

Paul shakes his head and turns away.

(CONTINUED)
PAUL
(under his breath)
Sell out.

Stephen hears Paul and walks towards him.

STEPHEN
Hey. Paul!

Paul does not turn around.

PAUL
(mean spirited)
Don’t keep him waiting man. You might not get that job recommendation.

Paul enters his car and starts the engine. His car struggles to start.

Stephen turns around and approaches Mr. Habliston’s sleek red corvette.

MR. HABLISTON
You drive.

He tosses the keys over the car to Stephen. He smiles to himself as he clenches the keys in his hand.

Stephen drives the sleek red corvette to the intersection and to its left is Paul. Stephen nods at Paul apologetically, but Paul ignores him.

Stephen turns right while Paul turns to the left.

INT. ELEGANT OFFICE BUILDING- DAY

Stephen walks side by side with JOHN (30s), a tall apprehensive looking man. Stephen glances down at his watch then smiles shyly at John.

STEPHEN
Thanks again, I look forward to working with you.

JOHN
Yeah same here Stephen. See you on Monday.

Stephen exits the building.
EXT. BUILDING- DAY

The parking lot is filled with expensive cars. Men wearing suits and carrying briefcases brush past Stephen as he walks toward his car.

His phone rings. It reads: Colton.

COLTON
Bro! How’s life dude? Was driving down from the shore... wanted to give you a ring.

STEPHEN
I’m alright, missing college though.

COLTON
I heard that... listen, I’m thinking of getting a couple people to come up to the shore for a long weekend... Get on the boat, before it starts getting cold. How’s your work schedule?

STEPHEN
Yeah, I don’t know yet. Just got job today actually.

COLTON
Shit man, congrats. Thought you had that taken care of before we graduated.

STEPHEN
I-

COLTON
Where you working?

STEPHEN
Working for Congressman Teller out of Virginia.

COLTON
Fuck... Teller? He’s a family friend.

STEPHEN
Really?
COLTON
Yeah, I’ve known him since I was a kid. He went to school with the old man... Don’t think they’ll give you many breaks then.

STEPHEN
Yeah, I don’t know.

COLTON
How bout this... I’m gonna be around in a couple weeks, how bout we meet up? Get some drinks, maybe smoke some cigars with Teller.

STEPHEN
Yeah, I mean, I don’t-

COLTON
No, no. It’s cool, I told you I know the guy. I’ll call you and we’ll make it happen, ok?

STEPHEN
Yeah, sounds good.

COLTON
Ok, I’m out.

Stephen hangs up the phone and enters his old car. He watches as men in suits continue to walk past him and into the building.

CUT TO:

INT. STEPHEN’S FAMILY HOME– DAY

Stephen enters his home, wearing a suit and tie.

MRS.ABRAHAM
How was your day?

Stephen is tired but smiles.

MR.ABRAHAM
Hell week is over huh?

Mrs. Abraham laughs then turns to Stephen.

MRS.ABRAHAM
It wasn’t that bad?

(CONTINUED)
Mr. and Mrs. Abraham are happy and smile fondly at their son who walks up the stairs.

INT. STEPHEN’S ROOM—DAY

Stephen lays in his bed and stares at his ceiling. Several moments later, he hears a knock on his door.

STEPHEN
Yeah.

Mr. Abraham enters the room.

MR. ABRAHAM
You, ok?

STEPHEN
Yeah...

MR. ABRAHAM
They have you working hard huh?

STEPHEN
Yeah, it’s just been kinda a long week.

Mr. Abraham smiles and walks closer to his son.

MR. ABRAHAM
You know son, when I started the restaurant—

STEPHEN
Dad—

MR. ABRAHAM
Just listen, for a minute. Everybody has to start somewhere. I did, your mother did. Look at you, you’re working for one of the most powerful men in the world.

STEPHEN
Ha, yeah.
MR. ABRAHAM
Now, I can tell you from experience, ya gotta know, relationships are everything. You gotta network, meet the right people and you’ll go right up the ladder.

Mr. Abraham smiles to himself.

STEPHEN
You think so?

Mr. Abraham smiles and nods while glancing around the room.

He then picks up Stephen’ high school year book that lies on his desk.

MR. ABRAHAM
We’re always told, as parents, to tell you that you could do anything. I still the remember the first time you tried playing basketball.

Mr. Abraham laughs.

MR. ABRAHAM
You were about seven, and you said you wanted to play in the NBA. We went outside and I expected you to, you know, naturally be able to dribble the ball a bit. You were god awful. Terrible, really.

STEPHEN
Ha, I was alright.

MR. ABRAHAM
Stephen, you were awful starting out. Couldn’t even dribble, with either hand.

Mr. Abraham mimics his uncoordinated young son.

STEPHEN
Haha.

MR. ABRAHAM
I’m serious. Painful, painful stuff to watch. I remember your mother forcing me to tell you were good. Haha. You eventually got better,

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)
MR.ABRAHAM (cont’d)
but you were never gonna be a basketball player.

STEPHEN
Yeah, I was a kid.

MR. ABRAHAM
I know, and now you’re a man whose got a lot of doors to pick from. Take advantage of it, alright? Maybe... I don’t know, one day you’ll be Senator Abraham.

Mr. Abraham grabs his sons head and kisses him. He then heads for the door.

MR.ABRAHAM
Hey, why don’t you go out tonight, celebrate your first week?

STEPHEN
Yeah, I think I will.

Mr. Abraham winks at him then leaves the room.

INT. STEPHEN’S FAMILY HOME- NIGHT

Stephen walks down the stairs in a collared shirt and jeans. He makes eye contact with his mother, who sets the kitchen table.

MRS.ABRAHAM
Looking sharp. Where you off to?

STEPHEN
Going to the bar.

MRS.ABRAHAM
You can’t drink then if you’re driving there.

STEPHEN
I know, I know.

MRS.ABRAHAM
I’ll leave some left overs in the oven for you.

STEPHEN
Thanks Mom.

(CONTINUED)
MRS. ABRAHAM
You’re welcome sweetie, have a good
time. Don’t stay out too late.

STEPHEN
Yeah, I won’t.

Stephen closes the door of his house and heads to the car.

CUT TO:

INT. BAR- NIGHT

Stephen walks into an almost empty BAR. An old man sits at
the bar drinking a pitcher by himself. The TV at the bar is
showing the football game.

Stephen walks directly to the bar and motions for a beer. He
looks around to see if he sees anyone he knows. He hears
laughter from a group of high school girls that sit at a
table past the bar.

WAITRESS
Here you go.

STEPHEN
Thanks.

Stephen takes a sip of his beer and turns to see Paul behind
him.

PAUL
You would roll to the bar by
yourself.

STEPHEN
About the other day-

PAUL
It’s cool. Just buy a round or
something.

Paul stumbles and Stephen laughs.

PAUL
Let’s, uh, save that round for next
time, c’mon sit with us.

Paul and Stephen walk towards a booth where MIKE (early
20s), JOEY (early 20s) and ROB (early 20s). They are more
similar than they are different.

(CONTINUED)
All work blue collar jobs and have never ventured too far from their town of birth. Each are primarily concerned with girls, drugs, and sports.

ROB
Look who it is!

Stephen smiles and shakes hands with each of them. Paul and Stephen squeeze into the booth.

STEPHEN
How you been Rob?

ROB
(to Mike and Joey)
The fucker remembered my name, thought you would have forgot.

STEPHEN
I-

MIKE
Look at her, over there.

One of the high school girls walks past the bar towards the bathroom.

MIKE
She’s unbelievable.

JOEY
Pssh.

MIKE
What?

JOEY
Go over and talk to her.

Paul nudges Stephen and they both smile. Stephen is happy to be back with his old friends. Mile glances at AMY (20s) who approaches the booth.

Amy is pretty with brown hair and hazel eyes.

PAUL
(to Stephen)
You remember Amy.

Stephen gets up from his booth to hug Amy.
AMY
Wait, you guys didn’t tell me
Stephen was here. Wait, how long
has it been? You look .... Wow, I
haven’t seen you since 10th grade.

STEPHEN
I know, you look great.

Amy reaches out to squeeze Stephen’s hand and he sees
bruising on her wrist. His face changes.

STEPHEN
(to Amy)
Can we-

MIKE
Sit down, both of you.

Amy sighs and they both sit.

MIKE
(to Amy)
Do you know that girl over there?

AMY
Ashley? Um yeah, why?

MIKE
Do you, uh, think-

ROB
He wants to know if he can get
laid.

The group laughs while Mike turns to Amy.

AMY
You don’t want Ashley... she’s-

ROB
Mike will take anything with a
pulse.

JOEY
Give him a break.

Joey shakes his head then looks up. The high school girls
have made their way around the bar and out the door.

ROB
Haha.

(CONTINUED)
PAUL
You guys ready to head out? This place is fuckin’ dead.

Mike sighs. He is exasperated.

PAUL
They’re in high school you fuck.

Rob pats Mike on the back.

Everyone laughs and Mike grunts. Paul turns to Stephen.

PAUL
You trying to come back to our place?

STEPHEN
Yeah, why not.

Stephen puts down his finished beer and they shuffle out of the booth.

STEPHEN
Alright. I’ll drive though.

PAUL
Haha.

Paul jokingly staggers towards Stephen and everyone laughs.

Paul tosses Mike his keys and they exit the bar.

INT. PAUL’S HOUSE- NIGHT

Paul, Stephen and the group walk in to the house. Once the lights are on, Stephen sees pizza boxes and beer cans across the floor.

The group throw themselves on the couch, in front of the large TV, and Stephen follows. Paul runs upstairs.

Stephen sits on the couch while Mike and Joey walk towards the kitchen.

MIKE
Bitches man, fuckin’ bitches. They were definitely waiting for us to make a move.

(CONTINUED)
JOEY
Come off it.

MIKE
How many nights do we go out and not bring anything back?

JOEY
Jesus, I’ve never met someone as pussy driven as you.

MIKE
Yeah? I’ve never met anyone as gay as you.

JOEY
Fuck you.

MIKE
Fuck you.

Stephen laughs which prompts Mike and Joey to laugh. Rob turns on the TV and a snack related commercial is on.

ROB
Don’t eat any of my food!

MIKE
Yeah...

ROB
I’m serious!

MIKE
Whoops...

Rob gets up from his seat quickly and rushes to the kitchen.

MIKE
I was just fucking with you, chill.

Rob shakes his head and returns to his seat.

ROB
So how was college, wild as hell?

STEPHEN
Yeah, had to try and find a balance.

MIKE
Fuck that, I would have been partying every night. Find me a sugar mama.

(CONTINUED)
JOEY
Haha. Mike’s dream is to marry a decent looking girl with money.

MIKE
Who wouldn’t want that?

Paul comes tumbling down the stairs. He has weed and rolling papers in his hand.

ROB
Here he is.

Paul winks at Rob.

PAUL
Amy, do you have your lighter?

Amy puts her hands in her pockets. Stephen sees the bruises on her wrists again.

AMY
Um, I think it is upstairs.

Amy gets up from the couch and runs up the stairs.

STEPHEN
(to Paul)
Bathroom?

PAUL
Upstairs, down the hall.

Stephen gets up from the couch and runs up the stairs.

INT. UPSTAIRS- CONTINUOUS

The upstairs hallway is narrow with doors only a couple feet apart. Stephen hears Amy rummaging through a bag. He stands outside the door. He is unsure of how to talk to her after all these years.

She exits the room and is startled by Stephen.

AMY
Ahh. You scared me.

STEPHEN
Oh, sorry.

(CONTINUED)
AMY
Ha. What’s up? Let’s go downstairs. They’re waiting for us.

STEPHEN
Wait... I, uh, your wrist.

Amy tugs her shirt past her wrist. She is embarrassed.

AMY
What about it?

STEPHEN
I saw the bruises, is it, I mean...I remember your Dad-

AMY
I don’t want to talk about this.

STEPHEN
Just, listen to me.

AMY
What?

Stephen is unsure of what exactly to say.

STEPHEN
Just take my number ok? If you can’t... Just call me if you need anything.

AMY
I’ll get it from Paul.

Amy brushes past Stephen and walks down the stairs.

INT. PAUL’S LIVING ROOM- CONTINUOUS

Amy and Stephen walk down the stairs to see the joint passed around the room.

JOEY
They were definitely hooking up.

Rob, Mike and Joey laugh.

AMY
Funny.

Amy and Stephen sit down on the couch. Rob hands the joint to Stephen.

(CONTINUED)
STEPHEN
I’m good.

ROB
Really?

MIKE
He’s too sophisticated for weed,
get him some cocaine. And some tea.

The group laughs.

PAUL
Fuck man. It’s just a joint.

Stephen shrugs and glances around the room. He is uneasy. Stephen believes smoking weed will take him down the wrong path, a path he left behind.

STEPHEN
You know what, it’s late, I’ve got to go.

PAUL
Are you serious?

MIKE
Let him.

Stephen gets up and heads for the door. Paul takes a long drag from the joint, and grabs his cigarettes from the table.

EXT. PAUL’S DRIVEWAY- NIGHT

Paul’s drive way leads out into the street. Stephen makes his way down the driveway when Paul exits the house.

PAUL
Stephen!

Stephen turns around and Paul gestures for him to come back.

PAUL
You’re just gonna run out like that? Just stay and chill.

STEPHEN
I’m not smoking.

(CONTINUED)
PAUL
Yeah, alright.

Paul takes a cigarette out of his pack as Stephen walks back towards him. Stephen walks back and Paul smiles. He offers him a cigarette.

Stephen sighs.

PAUL
Ha. Lighten up.

Suddenly, Paul’s NEIGHBOR (50s) pulls his beat up suburban up to the curb. The Neighbor is drunk and stumbles out of his car towards his house.

The Neighbor’s hair piece falls off his head as he catches himself.

Paul and Stephen laugh as the man picks up the hair piece and places it incorrectly on his head.

NEIGHBOR
(to himself)
Those motherfuckers...I’ll show em, tryin’ to tell me... Marie!

He enters his house and slams the door shut. Stephen gives Paul a look.

PAUL
He’s a drunk. She’ll probably throw him out again.

STEPHEN
Tonight?

Paul nods his head.

STEPHEN
He could kill someone.

PAUL
What? You’re trying to call the cops?

STEPHEN
No...

Stephen glances at the car then back at Paul.
STEPHEN
You remember when we moved that dipshit’s car in Vegas.

PAUL
Hahah, yeah. What are you- Oh, fuck that would be hilarious. Let’s do it.

STEPHEN
You’re driving-

PAUL
Nah, man. It’s your idea. I’ll do it with you though.

Stephen glances at Paul’s neighbor’s house. He can hear the YELLS of the couple.

STEPHEN
Alright.

Stephen crouches over and heads over to car with Paul close behind him.

The doors are open and they enter.

STEPHEN
Where does he keep his keys?

PAUL
Shit, I don’t know.

Stephen and Paul begin searching the car until Stephen chuckles.

He finds the keys on the mat below the steering wheel. Suddenly, the door to the neighbor’s house flies open.

The Neighbor stands in the door way with his head turned inside.

NEIGHBOR
I-I, have another wo-

A metal pan flies at the man and hits him on the head. He immediately turns back inside the house.

PAUL
Fuck. Hurry up and drive.

In a crouched position, Stephen drives the car down the street and parks it against a curb.

(CONTINUED)
PAUL

Hurry up.

Stephen exits the car and puts keys in the same position. Paul runs down the street with Stephen close behind.

They reach the drive way just as the Neighbor exits his house.

NEIGHBOR

Don’t you, now, I said, don’t you-

The neighbor turns his head towards the curb and does not see his car. He quickly double takes, but the car still does not appear.

He runs down to the street then runs back towards his house again.

NEIGHBOR

They... Marie! Did you? They... they stole my car!

He stumbles over himself, once more, then enters his house.

Paul and Stephen erupt in laughter.

Paul wipes the tears from his eyes and grabs Stephen by the shoulder.

PAUL

You see that double take?

Paul mimics the man.

STEPHEN

Haha, serves him right.

Paul takes a long drag of his cigarette then turns to Stephen.

PAUL

I wonder how he got like that?

STEPHEN

Like what?

PAUL

We’ve been here for a little bit now, and he always comes home drunk... Just got me thinking.
STEPHEN
He probably hates his job.

PAUL
Yeah, so what? Everybody hates their job.

STEPHEN
It can build up, then after a certain point... gets unbearable.

PAUL
Fuck... I can see that. (a beat)
You end up getting something?

STEPHEN
Yeah, working for this Congressman.

PAUL
No shit.

STEPHEN
Yeah.

PAUL
So you’re trying to hustle your way up?

STEPHEN
Something like that.

PAUL
Congressman Abraham.

Paul shoves Stephen then smiles.

PAUL
Don’t forget about where you came from.

Stephen smiles and walks down the driveway. Paul takes a cigarette out and lights it.

CUT TO:

INT. CONGRESSIONAL OFFICE- DAY

Stephen sits at a small mahogany desk and stares through the open Congressional door. To his right sits JULIA (early 20s) another recent graduate, with brown eyes, long hair and full lips.

(CONTINUED)
JOHN (late 20s) a tall, long faced Legislative aide walks through a corridor that leads towards the Congressman. John drops several drafts onto Stephen’s desk.

JOHN
I need you to edit these drafts then make 10 copies of each. Have the edited copies on my office before lunch.

John walks away.

Stephen opens the folder and reads the Congressman’s policy positions. He has a red pen in his hand and begins to mark up the draft.

INT. CONGRESSIONAL OFFICE COPY ROOM- DAY

As Stephen finishes making the copies, John appears behind him.

JOHN
You finished?

STEPHEN
Yeah, here you go.

John glances through the folder

JOHN
Good work, keep it up.

John whips his head around.

STEPHEN
You got anything else for me? I’m not too busy.

John begins to walk away then turns.

JOHN
Yeah sure, I’ll email you some other drafts. Thanks.

Stephen smiles proudly while John walks away.

Stephen sits down and turns his chair to look out the window. The phone rings and he turns around quickly.

(Continued)
CONTINUED:

STEPHEN
Hello, You’ve reached Congressman Teller’s office.

STEPHEN
Oh, ok sir, I’ll transfer you.

Stephen spins around in his leather chair and looks out the window again.

The phone rings again. He picks up the phone.

STEPHEN
Hello? Hello?

The phone continues to ring. Stephen shakes his head then reaches into his pocket. Julia laughs.

COLTON
Bro! We’re still on for drinks tonight?

STEPHEN
Yeah, of course. I’ve been looking forward to it.

COLTON
Great. I had my Dad talk to Teller for you. Think you might be in for a surprise.

STEPHEN
Seriously?

COLTON
Ha, yeah. We’ll talk about it later.

STEPHEN
Ok, do you want to meet at the restaurant?

COLTON
No, I’ve got a driver. Gotta get around in style my man. Who doesn’t like getting driven around in a town car?

STEPHEN
Ha, yeah, I guess. I’ll see you later then.
COLTON
Cool, pick you up around 6.

Stephen hangs up his phone then gathers his work. He walks through his office towards John’s desk.

The office is elegantly decorated with pictures of political leaders and paintings depicting past American leaders.

Stephen drops off the manila folder on John’s desk then turns to leave. John exits the large shiny mahogany door of the Congressman.

JOHN
Wait, a second. Great work on that last policy draft.

STEPHENV
Yeah, thanks.

John taps his folder against his desk.

JOHN
What do you think about a move to a LA position?

STEPHEN
Legislative aide?

JOHN
Yeah, we’re losing some people. Nothing official yet, but you’re gonna be the guy.

John winks at Stephen who nods.

JOHN
Oh, I almost forgot. The Congressman is making a speech on site in Virginia. Make sure to watch it, and jot down remarks, made by the pundits.

INT. CONGRESSIONAL OFFICE- DAY

Julia turns on the TV and observes Congressman Teller standing outside a poor neighborhood and an apparent Transitional Housing Facility in Virginia.

A group of reporters standing in front of him. Stephen begins to take notes diligently.

(CONTINUED)
The Congressman smiles while Julia lets out a grunt. As Stephen continues to take notes Julia sighs and stares out the window.

CUT TO:

EXT. OFFICE- DAY

Stephen walks outside his office and sees a black town car waiting for him. He shakes his head and chuckles. Then he sees Colton’s head sticking out of the roof window.

Colton has a bottle of wine in his hand.

    COLTON
    Haha. What did I tell you?

Stephen shakes his head as he walks towards the car. He feels a vibration and reaches inside his pocket for his phone.

He sees an unfamiliar number.

    STEPHEN
    (on phone)
    Hello?

    AMY
    Hey, it’s Amy.

    AMY
    Um, it’s kinda... I was wondering if-

Colton glares at Stephen.

    COLTON
    C’mon already!

    STEPHEN
    Just text me, I am pretty busy.
    Text me, ok?

Stephen hangs up the phone and enters the town car.

EXT. PAUL’S DRIVEWAY- NIGHT

The Neighbor stumbles out of his house then turns back to his wife who stands at the door.

(CONTINUED)
NEIGHBOR
I...I- I’ll be back later.

CUT TO:

INT. PAUL’S BEDROOM- NIGHT

Paul sits on his bed with his phone pressed to his ear. His room has posters of gangster movies. Dirty clothing litters the floor.

VOICE
(O.S)
After reviewing your application, we don’t think you’ll be the right fit. We however, at Midas International believe in respecting all our applicants and calling them to inform them of our final decision. Best way of handling it, don’t you think?

Paul hangs up his phone and squeezes it firmly. He then throws it against his wall.

Paul gets up from his bed and goes onto his closet. He takes out a jacket with the word security on the back in red letters.

He leaves his room without picking up his phone. It vibrates against the wall.

CUT TO:

EXT. FANCY RESTAURANT- DAY

A line of people wait outside the converted bar. Stephen and Colton exit with MARY (20s) and SARAH (20s). Stephen pulls his from his pocket and sees missed calls from Amy.

He holds his phone in his hand then turns to a smiling Mary. The phone returns to his pocket.

COLTON
Haha. Why don’t you leave the car and party with us. How... your too drunk to drive.

The girls giggle.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

SARAH
Haha, I’m not getting in a car with you.

COLTON
Why not?

He grabs her ass.

SARAH
Stop it! You’re drunk, plus our car is here. We can’t just leave it.

COLTON
We’ve got a driver.

Sarah turns to Mary.

MARY
I guess we could leave it here.

SARAH
Ok, where’s your car?

Colton smiles and they walk to the curb. The black town car pulls up and they enter.

INT. CAR- NIGHT

The inside of the town car is spacious. A finished bottled of wine rolls to their feet.

Mary and Sarah laugh.

MARY
Look like you guys started early.

COLTON
Started in style is more like it.

SARAH
Haha, ok.

Colton smiles and pulls a bottle of wine from under the arm rest. He opens the bottle and takes a swig then passes it to Sarah.

As Sarah takes a swig the car hits a bump in the road and she spills a little wine.

(CONTINUED)
MARY

Clutz.

SARAH

Shut up.

Colton rubs Sarah’s thigh while Mary takes a swig of the wine. Stephen smiles.

The car stops and Sarah glances out the window.

SARAH

(to Colton)

Ooo, can you tell him to stop. I need to use bathroom.

COLTON

Now?

SARAH

Yeah, sorry.

Colton sighs then taps on the glass.

COLTON

Can we stop here?

DRIVER

Yes, sir.

The driver pulls off the main road into a side street that leads into an alley. A convenience store is to the right of the car.

STEPHEN

(to Mary)

You going too?

Mary glances at Sarah.

SARAH

Jeez, c’mon.

Sarah and Mary exit the car and shuffle towards the stores flashing lights.

Stephen and Colton smile at each other.

STEPHEN

The car was a good call.
COLTON
Pssh, what did I say?

Colton takes another wig of the bottle then passes it to
Stephen.

COLTON
They better not take too long.

STEPHEN
Ha, or what we’ll leave?

Colton shifts over to stare out the window. He is impatient. Every second waiting makes him angrier.

COLTON
You see that?

STEPHEN
What?

COLTON
That homeless guy begging for money.

A homeless man stands in front of the store begging for money then returns to the alleyway.

COLTON
They’re criminals really... always trying to take people’s money. I was on metro and I saw one tell someone he was "stuck" inside... Took a couple bucks with that line.

Stephen shakes his head in disagreement. He looks at Colton who is staring down the alleyway.

STEPHEN
(sarcastic)
Yeah man, somebody should do something about them.

Colton nods in agreement.

COLTON
They’re worthless.

STEPHEN
What?

(continued)
COLTON

Where the fuck are these girls?
Fuck it, I’ll be right back.

Colton exits the town car.

STEPHEN

Colton!

DRIVER

Sir? Everything alright?

STEPHEN

Yeah, I’ll be right back. Can you stay here?

The Driver nods.

Stephen exits the car after Colton who darts down the alleyway. Stephen is a couple yards behind him. Sarah and Mary are now returning to the car and are surprised to see Stephen.

STEPHEN

Were, uh, taking a piss. Just wait in the car, ok?

MARY

Ok.

Stephen hurries down the alleyway and sees Colton standing over the Homeless man who is wrapped in blankets. Stephen sees Colton kick the man repeatedly in the stomach. He pushes Colton away.

STEPHEN

What the fuck are you doing?

COLTON

Don’t push me.

Stephen stares at the homeless man who is on all fours now.

HOMELESSMAN

Help... please... ahhh.

SIRENS whale in the background

STEPHEN

Let’s go.

Stephen pushes Colton out of the alleyway and begins to walk quickly towards the car.

(CONTINUED)
SIRENS whale.

As Colton turns away, the homeless man spits at his feet. Colton quickly spins around

COLTON
You know how much these shoes–

He swiftly kicks the man once more. Then again.

HOMELESMAN
AHHH!

Stephen runs back into the alleyway and pins Colton against the back wall.

COLTON
Get off of me. What’s your problem?

The Sirens seem to have moved closer. Stephen turns to the homeless man then down the alleyway and releases Colton.

They run down the alleyway and into the car.

INT. TOWN CAR—NIGHT

Colton makes his way into the car and sits next to Sarah who promptly snugs up next to him.

He smiles at Stephen who is now sitting next to Mary. Stephen’s face is stark.

STEPHEN
What the fuck is wrong with you?

Colton chuckles.

SARAH
What happened? I thought you guys went to the bathroom?

Mary rubs Stephen’s leg to calm him down. Stephen turns around to glance out the window. He then turns to stare at Colton.

STEPHEN
Hey!

Colton takes a swig of the bottle then laughs.

(CONTINUED)
STEPHEN
That was fucked up man!

COLTON
Seriously bro? Who cares?

The car drives down the street as a police car flashes past them.

COLTON
Perform, play an instrument, do something. Better yourself. He’s a waste, I probably did him a favor. Some motivation.

Sarah and Mary are confused.

SARAH
I’m sorry? Did who a favor?

STEPHEN
You didn’t even know him.

MARY
Maybe you want to drop us off.

COLTON
(to Stephen)
Jesus, calm down.
(to Girls)
No sorry, we’re just, uh, debating a... sociological issue.

Stephen shakes his head then glances to the driver. He taps the glass.

STEPHEN
Can you stop the car?

COLTON
What are you doing?

STEPHEN
I’m leaving.

MARY
What? Why? We’re almost there.

Colton smirks as the car pulls over to side of the road. Stephen reaches for the door handle.
COLTON
See you around then.

He shuts the door behind him and walks into a street of young adults.

CUT TO:

EXT. BAR- NIGHT

Several young adults exit a cab outside a dingy dive bar. Paul stands outside the door scanning IDs. He hands a nervous underage kid his ID back and shakes his head.

The Kid walks away deflated.

PAUL
(under his breath)
Nice try.

Several young adults approach the head of the line. Paul smiles and shakes their hands. They cut the line and enter the bar. JESSIE (20s) shakes Paul’s hand and waits around.

JESSIE
Yo, you’re still here?

PAUL
Always here till close.

JESSIE
It’s messed up what happened to Amy.

PAUL
What?

JESSIE
Drove by her place and ambulance was there. Saw her Dad in cuffs. Gotta figure-

Paul reaches for his phone, but can’t find it.

PAUL
Fuck.

Paul turns around to look for his boss, but can’t find him. The line of young adults have grown impatient with Paul not admitting any patrons.

(CONTINUED)
PATRON

HEY!

PAUL
(to Jessie)
I gotta go.

JESSIE
What?

PAUL
Cover for me alright.

Paul dashes away towards his car.

JESSIE
Yo!

Paul enters his car and quickly drives away.

CUT TO:

INT. CAB—NIGHT

Stephen leans his head against the cap window. The car passes the area of the assault. Police lights flash against Stephen’s window.

STEPHEN
Can you take me to nearest hospital?

DRIVER
Are you alright sir?

STEPHEN
Yeah, is it far?

DRIVER
No, I will try and get you there as fast as I can.

CUT TO:

INT. PAUL’S HOUSE—NIGHT

Paul runs into his house and nearly falls on a remote that is on the floor.

Rob and Joey sit on the couch and are surprised to see him.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

ROB
Shouldn’t you be at work?

Paul ignores him and rushes up the stairs and into his room.

INT. PAUL’S BEDROOM- NIGHT

Paul is in a panicked state. He throws his covers off his bed in search of his phone. He scans his room until he finally sees it against the wall.

Paul grabs it and sees the missed calls from Amy. He presses a button and slumps over against the wall to listen to the messages.

He bangs his head against the wall as his eyes get watery. Paul hangs up the phone then punches the wall several times.

Paul finally get up and leaves his room. He storms down the stairs and nearly crushes the TV remote under his feet.

ROB
Yo! You almost-

The door slams behind him.

CUT TO:

INT. HOSPITAL- NIGHT

Several sick and injured people walk across the entrance to the hospital. Stephen enters the hospital and approaches a nurse who sits at a circular desk.

The NURSE is middle aged but her years of duty make her look much older.

STEPHEN
Hi, I was...

NURSE
Speak up hon.

STEPHEN
Did a, uh-

NURSE
I’m very busy, what is it you want?

(CONTINUED)
STEPHEN
Wanted to see if a homeless man might have been brought here. He got beat up pretty bad.

NURSE
Do you have a name?

STEPHEN
No.

NURSE
Listen sugar, I have a bout a hundred of people that came in tonight. If you don’t have a name I can’t help you.

Stephen turns to leave when he sees Paul rush into the hospital.

PAUL
Where is she?

Stephen is startled and moves over so Paul can speak to the Nurse.

PAUL
You ask her?

STEPHEN
I-

PAUL
Amy Donahue?

NURSE
Well, let me see. Third floor, room 315.

Stephen’s eyes turn stark. He reaches for his phone while Paul runs down the hallway. Stephen sees the multiple missed calls from Amy.

His eyes reveal his guilt.

Stephen runs after Paul and they storm up the hospital stairs until they reach the third floor.
INT. HOSPITAL THIRD FLOOR— NIGHT

Paul and Stephen dodge past nurses and patients pushed in wheel chairs. Finally, they reach room 315 and Paul presses his face to the glass.

Amy lies on a hospital bed. Her eye is bruised and her lip is cut, but she exhibits a defiant strength. Paul taps the glass and she tears up slightly and turns her face.

Stephen is too ashamed to approach the glass. He presses his back against the wall and slopes down to the ground.

Paul enters the hospital room while a nurse gestures him out. He holds Amy’s hands gently. Two POLICE OFFICERS exit the room shaking their heads.

Stephen rises to his feet as the Police Officers walk towards him.

    STEPHEN
    He in jail?

They ignore him and continue walking.

    STEPHEN
    Is he in jail?!

    POLICE OFFICER
    For now.

    STEPHEN
    What?

    POLICE OFFICER
    She’s not pressing charges. Nothing we can do.

Paul’s fist clenches the hospital bed. His eyes are now dry and full of anger.

Paul exits the hospital room and glares at Stephen.

    PAUL
    What were you doing tonight? Huh?

Paul shoves Stephen.

    PAUL
    You too busy chasing fancy cars to take a fucking call? What the fuck were you doin’?

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

STEPHEN
C’mon... You know if I knew.

PAUL
Look at her!

The Nurse enters the hallway.

NURSE
I’m going to have to ask you to leave.

Paul ignores her and pushes Stephen into the hospital wall.

PAUL
You even look at her? That motherfucker-

NURSE
I’m calling security.

PAUL
Go for it.

The Nurse runs off and Paul turns to Amy. He raises his fist to strike Stephen, but hears the screams of Amy.

Stephen does not flinch but seems to invite the assault.

Paul glances back Amy who is in tears. Several security guards are now walking towards them.

PAUL
(quietly)
Her Dad better...

The guards walk closer and Paul shakes his fists at Stephen.

Paul raises his hands in the air as the Security guards apprehend him. Stephen walks toward him.

STEPHEN
If you want to, you know, with her Dad. I’ll help you.

They escort Paul away and Stephen stares down the hallway. He approaches Amy’s hospital door and enters.

CUT TO:
INT. STEPHEN’ HOUSE— MORNING

A disheveled Stephen enters his house. He hears the sound of bacon sizzling and the footsteps of his parents walking through the kitchen.

MRS. ABRAHAM
Stephen? Stephen is that you?

STEPHEN
Yeah Mom.

Mrs. Abraham walks through the house to her son. She is startled by his appearance.

MRS. ABRAHAM
What happened? You look awful.

Stephen sighs and walks to the couch and crumples over.

MRS. ABRAHAM
What happened? I thought you were out celebrating your promotion? We’re so excited for you honey.

Mr. Abraham enters the living room and smiles at his son.

MR. ABRAHAM
Mr. Big shot. You have a good time last night? Who was the lucky girl?

MRS. ABRAHAM
Stop it.

Mrs. Abraham walks over to her husband and whispers in his ear. She then walks away.

Mr. Abraham walks over to his son, and sits at the edge of the couch. He tries to lift his sons head but it remains face down.

MR. ABRAHAM
Stephen?

Mr. Abraham attempts to lift his but is resisted. They struggle until he finally manages to lift Stephen’s head.

Stephen’s eyes are red.

MR. ABRAHAM
Hey? Are you alright?

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

STEPHEN
I messed up.

MR. ABRAHAM
You couldn’t have done anything too bad haha. You got a promotion, and the police haven’t come knocking.

Mr. Abraham laughs attempting to lighten the mood.

Stephen shakes his head.

STEPHEN
I let... I just was trying to do what you said. Don’t want to let you guys down.

Mr. Abraham smiles.

MR. ABRAHAM
Whatever you did wrong... I’m sure you can help make it right.

Mr. Abraham hugs his son.

MR. ABRAHAM
We’ll support you either way, ok?

CUT TO:

INT. CONGRESSIONAL OFFICE- DAY

Stephen sits at his desk with several folders and pieces of paper sprawled out in front of him. John walks towards his desk and drops several manila folders.

JOHN
You know the drill.

John begins to walk away then returns.

JOHN
We decided to go in another direction for that LA position.

STEPHEN
Your joking?

JOHN
I wish, it’s nothing personal. We just want you to get more experience. Keep up the good work though.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED: 47.

Julia glances over at Stephen.

JULIA
I bet it’s a lot more stressful.
Maybe you caught a break...

STEPHEN
Yeah thanks

Stephen stares down at his work.

CUT TO:

INT. PAUL’S BEDROOM- AFTERNOON

Paul sits on his bed with a bong in his lap. He takes a long hit then breathes out. Smoke filters through his room. His phone vibrates and Paul gets to his feet.

He puts on his work uniform and leaves his room.

INT. PAUL’S HOME- AFTERNOON

Rob, Mike and Joey sit watching TV.

JOEY (to Paul)
You stoned?

MIKE
That’s all he does now.

ROB
Better not be smoking away your rent money. It’s late.

PAUL
Yeah, yeah, I know. I’ll have it for you today.

ROB
Good.

Paul nods and leaves.

CUT TO
INT. BAR- AFTERNOON

Paul enters the Bar and heads to the back to talk to his boss. He knocks on the manager’s door.

DAVE NELSON (40s) sits at his desk. Behind him are autographed sports memorabilia. A cash box also sits on his desk.

PAUL
Hey, Dave, wanted to pick up my check.

DAVE
About that, why don’t you sit down for a second.

PAUL
What’s up?

DAVE
Kid, I hate to do it, but I have to fire you.

PAUL
What?

DAVE
You put me in a tough position the other night. I had to do it. Management, the cops are breathing down my neck. I couldn’t keep you on if I wanted to. I meant to tell you earlier.

PAUL
It was a-

DAVE
Yeah, I heard what happened. I just can’t...

Dave gives Paul a "my hand are tied expression."

PAUL
What the fuck am I suppose to do?

DAVE
Don’t you fuckin’ curse at me!

Paul gets up and glares at Dave.

(CONTINUED)
DAVE
  Don’t put this on me. You left your
goddamn post. I hired someone
that’s the end of it.

LARRY (30s) an arrogant stocky man enters and grins. Paul
and Larry stare at each other.

DAVE
  Can you give us a minute?

LARRY
  Yeah boss. When do you want me to
make that deposit?

DAVE
  What the fuck do you think?

Larry is puzzled.

LARRY
  I don’t know.

DAVE
  Thursday through Saturday our are
big money days. So...

LARRY
  So Sunday?

DAVE
  There you go.

Larry points to Paul.

LARRY
  This the dumbass who stopped
bouncing to look after his bitch?

Paul spring from his chair and tackles Larry to the ground.
Dave runs over and pulls Paul off of him.

DAVE
  Get the fuck out of here!

Larry gets up and is held back by Dave.

PAUL
  I want my check!

DAVE
  Get outta here.

Paul turns to leave.

(CONTINUED)
LARRY
That’s what I thought bitch.

Paul glares at Larry and then Dave. A drip of blood falls from Larry’s lip to the ground.

INT. HOSPITAL- DAY

Stephen steps into the hospital and walks through the crowded lobby. The same tired Nurse works diligently at her desk.

Stephen reaches the third floor and sees Amy being wheeled out of her room.

STEPHEN
Hey.

Amy is surprised to see Stephen. She smiles courteously, but has no interest in seeing him. The nurse continues to push Amy down the hallway.

STEPHEN
Amy, I was hoping I could give you a ride.

AMY
How did you know I was being discharged today?

STEPHEN
I called in... told them I was family.

The Nurse shakes her head and grunts.

AMY
Your not family.

STEPHEN
Let me take you.

AMY
I told Paul I would call him.

STEPHEN
I’ll drop you off at his house.

AMY
What are you trying to do?

Stephen nods at the Nurse, but she does not understand his implication. He then gestures at her to leave them alone.

(CONTINUED)
Amy sighs and nods to the Nurse.

Stephen begins to push Amy in the wheelchair.

    STEPHEN
    Wow, your heavy.

Stephen peers over the chair to see if Amy is amused. She holds firm then giggles slightly.

They reach the exit of the hospital and Amy gets up from her chair and walks to the exit.

    CUT TO:

EXT. PAUL’S FAMILY HOME- LATER

Paul stands outside a single story home. The grass surrounding the house has grown wild and the bushes are uncut.

Paul notices a mini-van in the driveway. He approaches the house and knocks quietly on the door.

INT. PAUL’S FAMILY HOME- AFTERNOON

MRS.THEODORE (50s) opens the door.

    MRS.THEODORE
    (trepidation in voice)
    Paul...

    PAUL
    Hey Ma, can I come in?

Mrs. Theodore leads Paul into the living room which is decorated with family photos and the numerous awards of their children.

The house suggests that the Theodore’s do not have a great deal of money, but its cleanliness and design demonstrates a great deal of pride.

    MRS.THEODORE
    Your father should be home soon.

    PAUL
    So?

(CONTINUED)
MRS. THEODORE
You know how he feels about you being here after-

PAUL
I’ll be quick. I’m in... I’m just in a tough situation. Just lost my job.

Mrs. Theodore sighs.

PAUL
What? I’m gonna get it back, ok?

Mrs. Theodore shakes her head.

MRS. THEODORE
What do you want Paul?

Paul smiles sarcastically.

PAUL
What I want? I want you to be my fucking Mom.

MRS. THEODROE
Paul!

The door of the house creaks open and Mr. Theodore enters.

MR. THEODORE
Whose car is that out-

Mr. Theodore enters the living room and sees his son sitting on the couch.

He points to the door.

PAUL
Dad? Lets just talk about this. Hear me out.

JOHN THEODORE
Get out.

Paul gets up from the sofa and raises his hands to calm his father.

PAUL
I was just telling Mom that I’m kinda in a tough spot. Maybe I could-

(CONTINUED)
JOHN THEODORE
It’s always a scheme with you. You hear of your brothers getting into this type of mess? Huh? Your always getting your self in some "tough spot." I’m tired of hearing about it.

PAUL
This isn’t like other times.

JOHN THEODORE
Oh, really? Why don’t you tell me how it’s so different?

MRS.THEODORE
John...

Paul glares at his father.

PAUL
Always good talking to you old Man.

Paul points to a cross hanging on the wall.

PAUL
Big believers huh?

Mr.Theodore lunges towards his son.

MRS.THEODORE
Please! John, let him go.

Paul walks past his father with a comic smile.

CUT TO:

INT. STEPHEN’S CAR- AFTERNOON

Stephen and Amy sit in the car outside Paul’s house. A brown paper bag of left overs sit on Amy’s lap.

AMY
Thanks for dropping me off.

STEPHEN
Yeah, of course. Let me walk you inside.

AMY
Um, I don’t know if-
STEPHEN
It’s fine.

Amy nods and Stephen carries her bag of food to the house. The door is open and they enter.

INT. PAUL’S HOUSE- LATE AFTERNOON

Inside of the house, Paul’s roommates sit around the TV watching a boxing match. They turn quickly and then return their gaze to the TV.

ROOMMATES
(to Stephen and Amy)
Hey.

ROB
(to Mike)
You better have my money... that’s what happens when you bet against Vegas.

MIKE
He’s not done yet.

JOEY
Haha, he can’t even stand.

ROB
All these guys try and fight up a class... they should know their place. Managers should tell em to just stay in your class and try and survive. How’s your boy gonna get another fight after this?

MIKE
Fight’s not over.

JOEY
Yeah right...

Amy and Stephen walk up the stairs to Paul’s room. Amy knocks on Paul’s door. The music that BLARES from the room is turned down.

Paul opens the door and sees Amy and Stephen. His eyes soften and he kisses Amy gently.

PAUL
(to Stephen)
You can leave.

(CONTINUED)
Amy turns to Stephen and nods thankfully. Paul shuts the door in Stephen’s face. He stand there momentarily then heads down the stairs.

ROB
You leavin?

STEPHEN
Yeah, I guess...

ROB
Might as well stay and watch end of fight.

Stephen nods.

ROB
Beers in the fridge.

Stephen heads to the fridge and grabs a couple beers. He sits down next to Mike and Joey and hands them new beers.

MIKE
Thanks.

JOEY
Yeah.

Rob rubs his hands in excitement.

ROB
Time for you boy to go down for the count.

MIKE
Fuck you.

As the round begins, they can hear the YELLS of Paul and Amy.

JOEY
What the hell?

Rob and Mike shrug.

JOEY
Has he even payed rent yet?

ROB
No, we actually gotta bring that up. Demetra is on my back about that.

(CONTINUED)
JOEY

Oooo.

A punishing blow has dropped the underdog to the ground.

MIKE

Get up! C’mon!

ROB

Hahah, he fought well. I mean he lasted longer then we thought. He was always gonna lose though.

More YELLS from upstairs and Paul comes stumbling down the stairs.

He heads for the door without a word.

STEPHEN

Paul!

Stephen gets up quickly and follows Paul out the door.

EXT. PAUL’S DRIVEWAY- LATE AFTERNOON

Paul stands by his car as Stephen gestures at him to stop.

STEPHEN

Where you going?

PAUL

Fuck off man.

STEPHEN

Amy’s dad...

Paul smiles sarcastically.

PAUL

What? You gonna call the police? Tell Amy?

STEPHEN

I’m coming with you.

PAUL

No your not.

Paul chuckles.
PAUL
You left remember? This type of shit is beneath you.

Stephen nods and walks over to the passenger side of the car.

STEPHEN
Let’s go.

Paul smiles and nods. Stephen has regained some respect in his eyes.

EXT. AMY’S HOME—NIGHT

Stephen and Paul wait outside a run down house. They both wear gloves. A baseball bat sits across the back seat.

A car pulls up to the curb and PHIL DONAHUE (50s) stumbles out. Stephen nudges Paul.

PAUL
Wait.

After Phil enters the house. After several moments an OLD WOMAN exits and walks across the street.

PAUL
I respect that you came but—

STEPHEN
I’m gonna do it.

PAUL
What?

STEPHEN
Let me go in...Just stay here.

Paul reaches for the bat in the back seat.

PAUL
I think you got it reversed.

Stephen grabs the bat from him.

PAUL
Yo? What are you doin?

STEPHEN
Let me do this. You’re too...

(CONTINUED)
PAUL
Ha, you think I’ll kill him or something?

STEPHEN
Just stay here, and honk or something, if you see anything.

Paul nods and Stephen exits the car with the bat pressed to his outer thigh.

EXT. OUTSIDE AMY’S HOUSE– NIGHT

Stephen rounds the outside of Amy’s house and hops the fence. The backdoor of the house is open and Stephen lets himself in.

INT. AMY’S HOUSE– NIGHT

Stephen quietly walks into Amy’s house and nearly trips on some toys that are laying across the ground.

Stephen walks down the small hallway leading to the bedrooms and opens the first door. A group of small children are sleeping sprawled out against one bed.

Stephen then opens the next door and it CREAKS. He takes a step inside and sees Phil laying across one side of the bed. A collection of beer bottles are on his night stand.

Stephen holds the bat in his hand. His hands begin to shake while he looks over Phil. He sees Phil’s belt on the ground below him. A small mark of blood glistens against the metal.

Stephen raises the bat and swings it down on Phil’s ribs.

PHIL
AHHHHH. What... What are you doing?

Stephen hits him again. Phil writhes in pain on the floor.

PHIL
(stammering)
STOPPP, PLEASEE.

Stephen begins to leave when suddenly; the bat is ripped from him. Paul stands behind him with a mask on.

PAUL
You thought I was lying you piece of shit!

(CONTINUED)
Paul raises the bat and wildly hits Phil in the jaw. Phil lays on the ground spitting up blood.

PHIL
AHHHH, my teeth.

CHILDREN
(O.S)
AHHHH! Daaad!

Stephen looks frantically at Paul and walks backwards out of the room. Paul quickly takes out a 9 mm gun from his waist and presses it to Phil’s jaw.

PAUL
If it wasn’t for your kids, I’d kill you, you fagget.

Suddenly ANNE (about 5 years old) and PHILLIP (about 7 years old) run into the room.

ANNE
AHHHH.

PHILLIP JR.
Daadd, stop it!

The children begin to run towards their father but are scared. Paul freezes momentarily and lifts his mask.

PAUL
Your Dad was-

ANNE
AHHHH.

Paul runs out of the room and the young children comfort their father.

EXT. AMY’S HOUSE—DAWN

Stephen waits for Paul outside and they walk briskly to the car. They enter the car and Paul turns to Stephen.

STEPHEN
I told you to wait in the car!
(a beat)
What the fuck did you say to him?

Stephen drives away from Amy’s house.

(CONTINUED)
PAUL
His kids saw me man-

STEPHEN
I told you to wait in the fucking car!

Stephen slaps the steering wheel.

STEPHEN
You could have fucking killed him? You realize that?

PAUL
Those fuckin’ kids.

INT./EXT. STEPHEN’S CAR OUTSIDE PAUL’S HOUSE—NIGHT
Stephen and Paul sit in silence outside of Paul’s house.

PAUL
What do we do now?

STEPHEN
We? We?

Stephen grunts.

STEPHEN
You gotta tell Amy tonight.

PAUL
How do you think she’s gonna...

STEPHEN
I’ve got to go home.

A somber Paul exits the car and heads to his home.

INT. PAUL’S HOUSE—NIGHT
Paul enters his home and walks up the stairs. He enters his room.

INT. PAUL’S BEDROOM—NIGHT
Amy sleeps in his bed. Paul does not bother to take of his clothing.

He slumps over and lies next to her. She cuddles against him.

(CONTINUED)
AMY
(half asleep)
Where did you go? You understand right?

Paul hugs her close.

AMY
What would happen to Anne and Phillip?

PAUL
Amy...

AMY
He won’t do it again... don’t worry.

PAUL
Amy...

Paul shakes and she becomes fully awake.

PAUL
I need...there’s something I’ve got to tell you.

Amy sits up.

PAUL
Me and Stephen went over to your house.

Amy smiles sadly.

AMY
No you didn’t-

PAUL
I had to do it...After what he did... Missing your calls.

AMY
Paul?

The room is dark but Amy’s fearful disposition is visible in the moonlight. Paul drops his head then looks into Amy’s eyes.

PAUL
I, uh, I hurt him pretty bad-
AMY
Anne and Phillip? Were they there?

Paul nods sadly. Amy gets up and gets dressed quickly.

PAUL
What are you doin? Amy? You can’t go back there.

Paul gets up and tries to stop here but she pushes him. She grabs his keys from the night stand and storms out of the room.

Paul’s silhouetted figure stares after her.

CUT TO:

INT. CONGRESSIONAL OFFICE COPY ROOM- DAY

Stephen’s face reflects of the glass of the copy machine. His eyes are baggy and he looks pale.

John enters the room.

JOHN
What’s the deal with you?

STEPHEN
Sorry?

JOHN
You’ve been aloof lately.

John holds up some drafts.

JOHN
Your work hasn’t been up to par either.

STEPHEN
I’ve had to deal with some stuff, just-

JOHN
Ha. This an around the clock job Stephen. If you’re not willing to do the time someone else will.

Stephen nods.
JOHN
Go get some coffee or something.

John walks out of the room while Julia walks inside.

Julia enters the copy room abruptly and startles him.

JULIA
Sorry, did I scare you?

STEPHEN
Psssh...

JULIA
Are you okay?

STEPHEN
Of course, why?

JULIA
You’ve been acting funny.

STEPHEN
Yeah, I’m fine. Thanks for asking though.

Julia walks closer to Stephen.

JULIA
Ok.

(a beat)
You want to maybe get some coffee with me one of these days? I know a place around the corner.

STEPHEN
Sure, yeah, that would be cool.

Julia smile shyly.

JULIA
Ok. Well let me know.

Stephen nods and walks out of the room.

INT. CONGRESSMAN OFFICE- DAY

Stephen sits at his desk and a mountain of folders stand to his right.

(Continued)
THE REST OF SCENE WILL FACILITATE BETWEEN SLOW REGULAR, SPED-UP AND SLOW motion: The pile of folders rise and fall and Stephen’s shirts change as he stares outside the Congressional door.

People walk back and forth past him until he turns to hear John.

JOHN
Stephen! Jesus, here’s the files I want copied. Respond to your emails.

John walks away and Stephen and Julia make eye contact.

STEPHEN
You still want to get coffee with me?

JULIA
Sure...

STEPHEN
After work?

Julia nods.

CUT TO:

EXT. STREETS OF CITY- AFTERNOON

They walk down the street and Julia points to a small coffee shop across the street. The light signaling for pedestrians to wait flashes.

Stephen takes Julia’s hand and they run across the street. A car nearly hits them as they make it to the other side of the street.

JULIA
Oh my gosh! Are you crazy?

Stephen smiles.

Julia shakes her head and leads Stephen into the coffee shop.
INT. COFFEE SHOP- DAY

The store is filled with book shelves and above them stacks of old records.

Small groups of college aged students sit at different tables talking.

JULIA
Yeah this is one of my favorite places. What do you think?

Stephen looks through the records and bookcases.

STEPHEN
My Dad actually still has his old record player.

Stephen pulls a record from the collection.

STEPHEN
He would like this place...

Julia smiles and Stephen follows her to a small table.

JULIA
I don’t want to pry but...

STEPHEN
It’s no problem-

JULIA
You don’t seem your usual self at work, are you... I don’t know, is there something wrong?

STEPHEN
Just got my mind on some other stuff right now.

JULIA
Are you upset you didn’t get that promotion?

Stephen smiles at Julia.

STEPHEN
No, I mean.... I just, I’ve just have a lot on my mind.

Julia nods.

(CONTINUED)
JULIA
You know, I’ve worked with a lot of people with big plans...And, uh, they tend to get lost in the noise.

Stephen takes a sip of his coffee.

JULIA
So, uh, I wanted to tell you I’m leaving at the end of the month.

STEPHEN
Really? Why?

JULIA
I found another job.

STEPHEN
Yeah?

JULIA
It’s a couple streets down. I’ll show you the building.

Stephen nods. They both take sips of their coffee and listen to the records in the background.

CUT TO:

EXT. STREETS- DAY

Stephen and Julia walk up the street until they come to a green building. A banner drops down from the second story. It reads: "Lift U.S.A"

JULIA
So this is it.

STEPHEN
Why did you bring me here?

JULIA
I just thought...you just reminded me of what I think I started to look like when it hit me.

STEPHEN
Is it a non-profit?

JULIA
Yeah... you actually work one on one with people and help them find (MORE)
JULIA (cont’d)
jobs and housing. I volunteered and honestly felt good waking up in the morning.

STEPHEN
Yeah?

Julia nods.

JULIA
I just wanted you to know about this place.

Stephen smiles and nods. He walks away while Julia walks into the building and closes the door.

CUT TO:

INT. PAUL’S BEDROOM— NIGHT

Paul closes the door to his room. Several boxes of female clothing are sprawled across the floor. He sits on his bed and takes a long hit of the bong.

He takes his phone from his pocket and dials Amy. She does not answer.

PAUL
Fuck man.

He begins to glance around his room for her clothing and other belongings. He sees the cord for her hair dryer under his bed.

Paul grabs it and throws against the wall.

MIKE
(O.S)
Paul! What the hell are you doing?
(A beat)
We’re going out, you coming?

ROB
(O.S)
Come out with us, I don’t remember what you look like.

PAUL
Yeah. alright chill. I’m coming down!
INT. PAUL’S HOUSE—CONTINUOUS

Paul walks down to join his roommates who are all dressed nicely.

JOEY
You’re wearin’ that?

PAUL
What? Yeah, so...

MIKE
It’s not a big deal. We’re just going to your old spot. Preppy girls you know?

PAUL
Wait-

ROB
What? You have a problem with that place?

PAUL
No.

ROB
Good, I want to get some VIP treatment for once... at least not have to pay a cover.

(a beat)
Oh, and I need that rent by the end of the month.

The group begins to leave.

MIKE
You coming or what?

Paul hesitates then follows them out.

CUT TO:

EXT. RHINO BAR—NIGHT

Paul and his friends walk up to the back of the line. He sees Larry bouncing.

PAUL
(under his breath)
Shit.

(CONTINUED)
ROB
We cutting the line or not?

Paul shakes his head and Rob sighs.

Dave stands outside with Larry, who points at Paul and start laughing.

MIKE
You know those guys?

PAUL
Nah.

They get closer to the front of the line and the bouncers continue to laugh at Paul and one spits in his direction.

Dave re-enters the bar.

EXT. BAR- CONTINUOUS

Finally they reach the front of the line.

After his roommates enter, Paul hands his ID to Larry.

Larry has a mean grin on his face as he looks over Paul’s identification.

PAUL
Let’s just let that go alright? I-

Larry chuckles then shakes his head.

LARRY
Nope, sorry you can’t get in tonight.

PAUL
C’mon man.

Paul sees Dave inside the bar and gestures to him. Dave does not acknowledge Paul. Larry

Larry turns inside the bar and sees Dave.

LARRY
I’m just playin’

Larry motions to hand Paul back his ID then he tosses it into the street.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED: 70.

CROWD
Haaaaaa.

PAUL
What the fuck are you doing?

BOUNCER
Embarrassing your bitch ass.

The Bouncer pushes Paul into the street. An enraged Paul starts to approach the bouncer fists clenched when Mike grabs him and takes him aside.

MIKE
(under his breath)
Stop.... He’ll... look at him.. he’ll kill you.

Paul glances at the line of people who are glance towards him smiling.

PAUL
That piece of shit-

MIKE
Go home, ok? Go home.

Paul stares at the bouncer who smiles and waves at him. Paul then turns and walks into the dark night.

INT. PAUL’S ROOM- NIGHT

Paul paces in his room and kicks the boxes full of clothing.

PAUL
I’m gonna-

He kicks another box of Amy’s belongings.

Paul hears the sound of the house door opening then the sound of footsteps up the stairs.

Rob enters his room.

ROB
What was that?

PAUL
They were trying to embarrass me, fuck those guys!

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

ROB
I thought you were cool with Dave?

PAUL
No...

Paul paces the room.

PAUL
He still owes me my paycheck.

ROB
About that. I’ll give you a couple more days but we really need your part of the rent. I can’t hold her off much longer.

PAUL
Or what?

Rob sighs and leaves the room. Paul hears another door slam and he approaches the window and sees the drunken neighbor return home.

INT. STEPHEN’S FAMILY HOME—DAY

Stephen enters his home to hear the SOUND of jazz playing on a turn table. Mr.Abraham is sitting on the floor looking through his pile of records.

MR.ABRAHAM
Hey Stephen, you know who this is?

Stephen frowns.

STEPHEN
Duke Ellington.

Mr.Abraham smiles and pats the ground next to him. Stephen sits down.

MR.ABRAHAM
Glad you reminded me, I missed listening to this old thing. (a beat) Ha. You used to do the weirdest sort of dance move—

Mr. Abraham points to an area in the living room.
MR. ABRAHAM
When I would put on any funk records. I think your mother has a few recordings somewhere.

STEPHEN
Yeah, I bet I was a tiring kid.

Mr. Abraham smiles.

MR. ABRAHAM
Not at all son. Not at all.
(a beat)
We don’t tell you this often, but your mother and I are proud of the man you’ve become.

Mr. Abraham grins at his son and rubs his head.

STEPHEN
I haven’t done anything-

MR. ABRAHAM
Don’t say that. It’s not all about money or
(a beat)
The car you drive. I’m just proud of how you handle yourself.

Mr. Abraham puts on another record and they listen together.

STEPHEN
We should go to that record store I found, maybe find something to add to the collection?

MR. ABRAHAM
Sure, we should do that son.

Stephen smiles as the music cuts off.

CUT TO:

INT. PAUL’S CAR— NIGHT

Paul sits in his car and smokes a cigarette. He glances outside to a single story house that is silhouetted by the moonlight.

His hands shake as he lights a cigarette that illuminates his face.
EXT. PAUL’S FAMILY HOME- NIGHT

He approaches his parent’s door, hesitates, then knocks on it.

The door opens.

MRS. THEODORE

Paul?

PAUL

Hey Mom.

Mrs. Theodore looks confused. She doesn’t know whether or not to let Paul enter the house.

PAUL

It’s ok. You don’t have to let me in.

MRS. THEODORE

It’s not that it’s just-

PAUL

Mom, I am really sorry about before. But I’m.

The charismatic smile of his begins to fade.

PAUL

(soft voice)

I’m... desperate, I can’t, uh, sleep in my car. And I really don’t have anyone but you guys.

Mrs. Theodore looks back into the house.

MRS. THEODORE

Your eyes... Your clothing smells-

PAUL

I know I screwed up before, and I want to apologize to both of you. If you could just-

MR. THEODORE

(O.S)

Who is there?

Mr. Theodore walks towards the door.

(CONTINUED)
PAUL
Dad, before you say anything-

MR. THEODORE
What are you doing here?

PAUL
I have no where to go, I need a place to clear my head and I-

MR. THEODORE
You need a job?

Mr. Theodore looks sternly at his son.

MR. THEODORE
Ha, you must be out of your mind. If you think I’m going to ask anyone to hire you.

PAUL
That’s not what-

MR. THEODORE
What? You’ve changed from the record ridden kid?

PAUL
I’m asking you now, please...

MR. THEODORE
Get out of here.

Mrs. Theodore puts an arm on her husbands shoulders.

MRS. THEODORE
John...

MR. THEODORE
No, he’s got to learn.

PAUL
Learn what! That your father is always going to be on your back, judging you!

Mrs. Theodore is near tears.

MR. THEODORE
(looking at wife)
Close the door.

The door is about to close when Paul lowers his shoulder and pushes inside the house.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

John Theodore falls to the ground and Paul sits on top of him.

Paul bangs his Dad’s head against the ground. Mrs. Theodore SCREAMS.

MRS. THEODORE

PAUL! NO!

PAUL

Whose gonna give me a break if you won’t!

Paul slams his Dad’s head into the ground again. Mr. Theodore’s eyes start to strain as Paul chokes him.

PAUL

You fucking-

Mrs. Theodore bear hugs her son and he stands up.

His father remains on the ground while Paul leaves his house. A picture of him as a child in view on the counter.

EXT. HOUSE— NIGHT

Paul swings at the air in frustration.

PAUL

Fuckkk.

A teary eyed Paul walks to his car.

CUT TO:

INT. PAUL’S HOUSE— NIGHT

John Theodore and Mrs. Theodore are awake sitting upright in bed. Mrs. Theodore holds a pack of ice to her husband’s head.

John Theodore lets out a grunt.

MR. THEODORE

Cheap shot is what it was. He might as well have sucker punched his own father.

Mrs. Theodore removes the ice bag from his head.

(CONTINUED)
MR. THEODORE
Hey?!

Mrs. Theodore starts to cry.

MR. THEODORE
What’s wrong? I’m sorry, I’ll ice my head myself.

MRS. THEODORE
(stammering)
Why are you so hard on him?

Mr. Theodore turns abruptly.

MR. THEODORE
Hard on him? After he embarrassed-

MRS. THEODORE
Stop it! He’s our son. Who knows what he is doing right now. I don’t want to get a phone call one day that...

Mrs. Theodore starts crying.

MRS. THEODORE
I want him here.

Mr. Theodore looks at his wife who has turned over. He looks on.

CUT TO:

INT. PAUL’S CAR- DAY

Paul shakes himself awake as his phone begins to vibrate. The car is littered with paper bags and some of his boxes of clothing and other possessions.

He pulls his wallet from his back pocket and opens it. Paul only has a few dollars left.

Paul begins to drive through town and passes the Rhino bar; he tightens his grip on the wheel.

Finally he reaches Stephen’s house and smirks at its grandiose stature.
EXT. STEPHEN’S HOME- LATE AFTERNOON

Paul exits his car and walks to his door. After composing himself, he knocks on the door. Mrs. Abraham opens it.

MRS. ABRAHAM
Hey Paul!

PAUL
Hello Mrs. Abraham, great to see you again. Is Stephen around?

MRS. ABRAHAM
Think so, let me go and get him for you.

(a beat)
Would you like to come in?

PAUL
No, no. Just want to talk to him for a second.

MRS. ABRAHAM
(O.S)
Stephen!

Stephen comes down the stairs and his mother gestures that someone is at the door. Stephen opens the door and sees a smirking Paul.

PAUL
Musta been cool liven in a house like that.

Stephen glances behind him and takes a step outside.

STEPHEN
What do you want man?

PAUL
I need your help on something.

STEPHEN
What?

Stephen looks back towards his house.

PAUL
How bout I pop in tell your parents what went down with Amy’s dad?

(CONTINUED)
STEPHEN
You wouldn’t do that-

PAUL
Nah, but you would. Bet you already talked to the cops about it. Bet you told em it was all my idea.

STEPHEN
Paul, you’re not thinking straight-

PAUL
Really? Prove it to me then.
(a beat)
Come over tonight and I’ll tell you my plan.

STEPHEN
I’m not-

PAUL
Mrs. Abraham!

Stephen’s face changes. Mrs. Abraham comes to the door.

MRS. ABRAHAM
Yes?

PAUL
Just wanted to tell you how lovely your house is. Architecture, the garden, yeah, everything top of the line.

MRS. ABRAHAM
Ha, yes. Thank you.

PAUL
Ok, well, I better get going. See you tonight brotha.

INT. STEPHEN’S CAR- NIGHT

Stephen sits in his car outside of Paul’s driveway. He stares at the door and then begins slamming his hand against the steering wheel. The horn goes off accidentally.
EXT. PAUL’S HOUSE- NIGHT

Stephen knocks on the door and Paul opens it.

    PAUL
    Ha, come on in.

Stephen enters the house.

    STEPHEN
    Is anybody else here?

    PAUL
    Nah, there out partying or something, why?

Stephen rushes Paul and attempts to tackle him to the ground. Paul overpowers him and holds him to the ground. Paul laughs.

    PAUL
    What the fuck was your plan?
    (a beat)
    Ha, ha. I like the fight though.

Stephen struggles to free himself but Paul is unrelenting.

    PAUL
    I’m gonna let you go, and you’re gonna sit here and hear out my plan.
    (a beat)
    If you don’t, I guess, you could runaway, or some shit....

Paul grins at Stephen then releases him. An angry Stephen sits on the couch staring at Paul.

Paul rubs his hands together excitedly.

    PAUL
    We cool?
    (a beat)
    Alright my old boss...the manager at Rhino down on Baker. He has this cash box in his office, and he always counts it around 11 in the morning.

    STEPHEN
    Why this guy? What did he do to you?

(CONTINUED)
PAUL
Don’t worry about it.

Stephen shakes his head.

PAUL
Like I was saying, the guy likes to think he is the owner... He puts all the cash in a deposit box, and just lets it sit on his desk before he deposits it. I’ve seen him count it in front of people for no reason. He has at least 5,000 in there.

STEPHEN
Ok.

PAUL
His office is on the bottom floor next to the emergency exit. But when I worked there, the alarm never went off; we used it to leave every day.

STEPHEN
This is fucking-

PAUL
We go through the emergency exit, nobody’ll see us and we’ll get the money and get out.

STEPHEN
What about the other employees working there? You don’t think they’re going to hear us robbing their boss?

Paul grins.

PAUL
Nobody else works Sunday morning shifts...

Stephen glances at Paul and makes eye contact with his crazed friend. His silence declares his acceptance of the task.
INT. PAUL’S CAR- MORNING

Paul and Stephen sit in Paul’s car outside the bar.

It is 10:50 am. Stephen’s hands are slightly shaking. He grabs a cigarette pack that sits on Paul’s dashboard. Stephen brings the cigarette to his lips.

PAUL
What the fuck are you doing? Don’t you read man? Smokin’ in the morning fuckin’ doubles your chances of cancer.

Stephen lights the cigarette while Paul shakes his head.

Paul reaches into the back seat and grabs a ski mask and hands one to Stephen.

PAUL
You ready?

Stephen nods.

PAUL
Just like old times, huh?

Paul smiles and leaves the car with Stephen close behind.

EXT. RHINO BAR- MORNING

The streets are empty in this part of town as Paul and Stephen round the back alley of the bar. They reach the emergency door exit and Paul glances and smiles at him.

It is that same charismatic smile of their youth. He pushes the door and it opens without an alarm.

INT. RHINO BAR- MORNING

The bar is dark and the back entrance leads into a narrow hallway. As Paul and Stephen walk down the hallway their feet stick to the ground.

Paul gestures to the next door on the right and Stephen takes a deep breath. Paul knocks on the door.

DAVE
(O.S)
Go see who that is.

(Continued)
Stephen’s eyes reveal a terror while Paul reaches to his belt.

The Bouncer opens the door and Paul brings down the but of his gun on his nose. Larry’s nose splinters and blood gushes out.

Paul and Stephen rush inside the room.

INT. DAVE’S OFFICE— MORNING

Dave’s office has a desk in the back right corner and his wall is framed with various autographed photos of sports and entertainment stars.

    DAVE
    What the fuck!

Paul points the gun at Dave and gestures for him to sit down. Stephen grabs the arm of Larry and restrains him to the radiator.

Larry attempts to grab Paul’s leg and he hits him savagely again.

    PAUL
    Haha. Try and do that again you pussy.

Stephen searches the room for the deposit box but he doesn’t see it.

    STEPHEN
    The Deposit box!

    DAVE
    What? What deposit box?

    PAUL
    We’re not gonna ask you again, where is the fucking deposit box?

Dave’s hand wavers and motions to a cabinet drawer in his desk.

Stephen moves towards the cabinet and Dave lunges at Stephen.

Dave quickly raises his hands as he feels the barrel of the gun pressed into the back of his head.
PAUL

The key!

Dave motions to a spot under papers on his desk and Paul grabs them.

Paul and Stephen head towards the door. Paul turns back over his victims and smiles. Gun still in hand.

PAUL

Hope you enjoyed that, you fuckin’ pussies.

Stephen opens the door slightly, and as Paul follows him; Larry lunges at his feet with his untied hand. Paul trips and falls to the ground.

BAM.

BOUNCER

AHHHHH.

(a beat)

My fuckin’ leg. AHHHHH.

Dave glances at the bouncer then at Paul, who is on the ground. His sleeve is slightly pulled back revealing a portion of the tattoo on his wrist.

Stephen is in shock and Paul pushes him out the door as they run into the hallway.

EXT. RHINO BAR- MORNING

Stephen and Paul run towards the car and quickly pull out of the area.

INT. CAR- MORNING

Stephen continues to glance over his shoulder.

STEPHEN

You fuckin’ shot him!

Stephen turns around again to see if anyone is following them. He looks dazed.

PAUL

No...no- he grabbed me. The Gun... it went off on its own.

(CONTINUED)
STEPHEN
Pull over man.

PAUL
We’ve got to-

STEPHEN
Pull over.

EXT. ALLEYWAY- MIDDAY

Stephen stumbles out of the car and vomits.

PAUL
I think... think we’re alright.

Stephen is still hunched over composing himself.

Inside the car, Paul gets the key to the safety deposit box from his pocket and reaches back to open the box.

The money from the box nearly spills over into the back of the car.

Stephen enters the car and they drive slowly back to Paul’s home.

INT. PAUL’S CAR- AFTERNOON

Paul grins at Stephen and opens his door.

PAUL
Let’s go in and see how much we got. Bet it’s at least 5,000 in there.

STEPHEN
I don’t care, you take it.

PAUL
What?

STEPHEN
We-

(a beat)
You just shot a fucking guy! I can’t- I’m going home.

Paul glares at Stephen.
PAUL
You fucking kidding?
(a beat)
You know what?

Paul grins.

PAUL
I knew Larry was gonna be in there. I wanted to mess him up. This was fucking personal. And you know what? Him getting shot was on him.

STEPHEN
What?!

PAUL
It just fucking happened alright? Shit happens.

Stephen exits Paul’s car and heads to his own. As he’s about to enter, he glances back at Paul.

STEPHEN
What happened to you man?

CUT TO:

INT. PAUL’S BEDROOM- NIGHT

Paul has the stolen money laid out across his bed. He grabs a small stack and begins counting it, but then stops, and tosses the money back on his bed.

He hears the sound of a door CLOSING and he rushes to his window. Paul sees his roommates approach the door.

Paul glances at his desk then to his boxes of clothing and other materials. He finds an envelope, on his desk, then quickly counts a thousand dollars and puts it in the envelope.

INT. PAUL’S LIVING ROOM- CONTINUOUS

Paul stomps down the stairs and smiles at Mike and Rob. He slaps his hand on his envelope then hands it over to Mike.

PAUL
Here you go.
MIKE
What this?

PAUL
Rent, I owe. Plus a little extra.

ROB
How’d you manage that?

PAUL
C’mon... you knew I was good for it.

Rob and Mike look at each other.

MIKE
We, uh, promised your room to someone else.

PAUL
What?

ROB
I’m sure you will-

PAUL
I don’t care what you promised. Tell him to keep looking.

Paul takes the money out of the envelope and throws it at their feet. He stomps back up the stairs and enters his room.

INT. PAUL’S BEDROOM- NIGHT

Paul sits on his bed and puts his hands on his face. He then turns and slaps his money off the bed.

EXT. STEPHEN’S OFFICE- DAY

Stephen sits in his car outside of his office. He exits his car and sees MEN (30s) in suits walking to their jobs. He sees others in construction gear walking in the opposite direction.

Stephen pulls out his phone from his pocket.

STEPHEN
(on phone)
John, I’m not feeling well today. (a beat) (MORE)
Yeah, fine. See you tomorrow.

Stephen leaves his office complex in the same direction as construction workers.

INT. STEPHEN’S BEDROOM—AFTERNOON

Stephen walks into his home and sees his mother putting together a collage of family photos.

MRS. ABRAHAM
Hey sweetie! What’s wrong, you sick?

STEPHEN
Yeah, just a little. Just gonna go to my room and take it easy.

MRS. ABRAHAM
Oh ok.

(a beat)
Come over here and join me for a bit. I’m choosing some pictures.

STEPHEN
Ok.

Stephen sits down next to his mom.

She has an array of pictures scattered across the wooden floor. Some of the pictures have already placed in the frame. Mrs. Abraham points to one.

MRS. ABRAHAM
You were such a cute baby. And so fat, my goodness.

Stephen sits down on the floor next to his Mom.

MRS. ABRAHAM
Did I ever tell you that a woman approached us at the park to get you to be one of those Gerber babies?

STEPHEN
No way.

MRS. ABRAHAM
Your father didn’t want you to get vain.

(CONTINUED)
Continued: 88.

**STEPHEN**
I was a baby, how I could I get conceited?

**MRS. ABRAHAM**
Your know your Dad.

Stephen points to a picture. Two small kids have their arms around each others shoulders.

**MRS. ABRAHAM**
That’s a nice one. You and Paul were attached at the hip for so long.

(a beat)
Do you remember in lower school, when me, Dad, and Paul’s parents had to come into school? You and Paul got into a fight after you were making fun of some of the other boys. You should have seen your Dad’s face when they said you managed to beat them up.

**STEPHEN**
What was Dad’s face like?

**MRS. ABRAHAM**
It was a mixture of pride and shock, I think.

Mrs. Abraham puts her hand on her sons cheek.

**MRS. ABRAHAM**
How is he doing? It was nice to see him the other day.

**STEPHEN**
Yeah, he’s you know, just trying to get by.

**MRS. ABRAHAM**
We never gave you a say but...

(a beat)
Those teenage years were tough on us, we had to keep you part.

**STEPHEN**
I know.

Stephen takes photo from the album and examines it closely.

(Continued)
MRS. ABRAHAM
I think he took it hard. His mother
and I used to keep in contact, but
as the years went on-

STEPHEN
This is a good one.

Stephen hands a photo to his mother.

MRS. ABRAHAM
People go in different directions.

STEPHEN
(softly)
It’s so random.

MRS. ABRAHAM
What?

STEPHEN
Just where people end up, I just—
(a beat)
Sometimes, I wonder what would have
happened if I stayed.

MRS. ABRAHAM
At Springfield?

Stephen nods.

MRS. ABRAHAM
What are you thinking about?

Stephen smiles at his mother then stands up.

MRS. ABRAHAM
No matter where you ended up,
you’re still my boy, and I am proud
of you.

Mrs. Abraham continues to sit and pick photos as Stephen
walks away.

INT. CONGRESSIONAL OFFICE—DAY

Stephen walks through the hallway of his office towards the
copy room. John smiles at him then continues to work.

JOHN
Feelin’ better?

(CONTINUED)
STEPHEN
What? Oh, yeah, thanks for asking.

JOHN
Good, good. I know what you’re going through.

STEPHEN
Sorry?

JOHN
Missed out on promotion. (a beat)
You’re driven, want to be successful, I understand all that.

STEPHEN
Uh, thanks.

JOHN
You gotta know it takes time. Look at me, I’ve been here five years. Now, I’m an LA on a chairman’s staff.

John gives Stephen a nudge.

JOHN
Pretty soon, I’ll be looking at a chief of staff position. You can’t beat that, second most powerful person in room.

STEPHEN
Yeah.

JOHN
You see that Benz that Teller drives? Class all the way.

STEPHEN
Yeah definitely.

JOHN
Alright, good talk.

Stephen nods and John walks off.
INT. CONGRESSIONAL OFFICE- DAY

Stephen returns to his desk and smiles at Julia.

    STEPHEN
    Coffee after work?

    JULIA
    Sorry, I can’t.

    STEPHEN
    Why?

    JULIA
    (whisper)
    I’m moving into my new apartment.
    It’s pretty close to my new job.
    You know that green building.

    STEPHEN
    Yeah?

Julia nods.

    JULIA
    I’m excited.

Stephen nods.

    STEPHEN
    So... I guess I’ll see you around.

    JULIA
    Ha, I guess so.

They smile at each other.

INT. STEPHEN’S FAMILY HOME- NIGHT

Stephen opens the door to a quiet home.

He sees men in suits sitting on his couch and his parents grim faces.

    MRS.ABRAHAM
    Stephen, can you come here? These men want to talk to you.

Stephen braces for the worst. His fears are confirmed when he sees two plain clothed police officers sitting on his couch drinking tea.

(CONTINUED)
One of the OFFICER NORRIS, age 50, is clean shaven with a touch of Grey hair. The other OFFICER PALMER, age 45, is stout and physically built with a goatee.

OFFICER PALMER
Stephen, My name is Detective Palmer this is my partner Detective Norris. Do you know why we are here?

STEPHEN
No idea Sir.

POLICE OFFICER
We’re investigating the robbery of Rhino Bar and the shooting of a Mr. Rosen.

Stephen eyes reveal his fear.

Officer Norris puts up his hand to Detective Palmer.

OFFICER NORRIS
We are going to level with you Stephen, we searched your room for any evidence that may help us.

Stephen looks at his parents. Mr. Abraham does not make eye contact with his son. Mrs. Abraham is in near tears.

OFFICER NORRIS
Lucky for you, we did not find anything.

Officer Norris pulls out his notebook.

OFFICER NORRIS
Dave Nelson, the manager, of Rhino Bar and victim of the attack, described two white males as the perpetrators. And while he was unable to get a positive facial identification; he was able to give us physical description which matches yours.

Mrs. Abraham gasps.

OFFICER PALMER
Why don’t you tell us about your relationship with Paul Theodore.

Officer Palmer scans his notes.

(CONTINUED)
STEPHEN
I’ve known him since high-school.

Stephen looks at his parents then back at the police officers.

STEPHEN
That’s really all I have to say about him.

OFFICER NORRIS
Really? Well he had plenty to say about you.

The Officers glance at each other.

OFFICER PALMER
This would be a good time to tell us anything you know?

Stephen remains silent. The Officers chuckle.

OFFICER PALMER
Your boy gave you up. We have a sworn statement from him stating that you were his accomplice in the robbery.

STEPHEN
What?!

OFFICER NORRIS
Where were you the morning of the twentieth?

STEPHEN
The twentieth? What day of the week was that?

The officers scan their notepad.

OFFICER PALMER
The robbery took place on Sunday morning.

OFFICER NORRIS
I was in church Stephen, where were you?

Stephen looks over at his parents.
STEPHEN
Sunday morning, I was home.

OFFICER NORRIS
We have a sworn statement here saying otherwise! Sir, Ma’am, can you confirm this?

A moment of silence then.

MR. ABRAHAM
Yes, I remember, he was home. We stayed up through Saturday night listening to jazz records.

The officers exchange surprised glances.

OFFICER PALMER
Sir, may I remind you that lying to an officer is a crime.

MR. ABRAHAM
I am aware of this.

OFFICER PALMER
Is it not possible for him to have left while you were sleeping sir?

MR. ABRAHAM
I slept downstairs that night. I would have heard him leaving.

OFFICER NORRIS
If asked, would you testify to that in court?

MR. ABRAHAM
Absolutely.

OFFICER PALMER
Anything else, we should be aware of?

STEPHEN
Where’s Paul now?.

OFFICER NORRIS
He’s in county jail.

Officers get up.
OFFICER PALMER
Do us a favor and stay around, ok
Steve?

Stephen nods.

The officers leave.

Immediately, Mrs. Abraham starts crying and looks at her son. Stephen looks at his father.

MRS.ABRAHAM
(stammering)
Did you do this?

STEPHEN
No, Mom, how could you-

MR. ABRAHAM
Enough!

MR. ABRAHAM
Look at me.

Stephen teary eyed stares at his father.

MR.ABRAHAM
Look at your mother. Do you even think about us? Do you even care what you put us through? Having the police knock at your door looking for your son.
(a beat)
Look at this, everything here, we’ve done for you. To make your life easier than ours was. And for what? For you to spit in our faces.

STEPHEN
It’s not what you think-

Mr. Abraham pauses.

MR. ABRAHAM
So you admit it?

STEPHEN
I was just trying to help Amy and Paul...

Stephen glances from his mother to his father.

(CONTINUED)
Mr. Abraham takes Stephen by the back of his head and holds him. Mr. Abraham holds him tightly unable to hug his son nor hit him.

They continue to stare at each other with a mix of tears of sadness and anger coming down Mr. Abraham’s face.

INT. COUNTY JAIL- DAY

Stephen sits in a visitor’s area of jail. A black telephone hangs in front of him. He stares through the stainless glass waiting on Paul.

INT. COUNTY JAIL- CONTINUOUS

Paul smiles at Stephen as he is escorted into the room. He looks at the line of other inmates talking to their loved ones.

Paul reaches for the phone.

   PAUL
   Was hoping I was gonna get somebody else, but the smart money was on you.

   STEPHEN
   (whisper)
   Why would you do this?

   PAUL
   Didn’t do anything, I just looked out for myself.

Paul presses the phone to his mouth.

   PAUL
   Same thing you would do. Haha sorry, same thing you did.

   STEPHEN
   What? Springfield?

Paul smirks.

   STEPHEN
   You think I owe you for leaving?

Paul is uninterested. He stares at Stephen with lifeless eyes.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

STEVEN
I left because of you.

Life returns to Paul’s demeanor.

PAUL
What?

STEVEN
(fierce whisper)
I walked to the parking lot one day and they were waiting. They found your bag in the car.

Paul is stunned.

STEVEN
My parents knew it was yours and they told the administration. Everyone was begging for me to rat you out.

Paul’s eyes begin to water slightly.

STEVEN
But I didn’t.

Stephen gets up to leave.

PAUL
Stephen! Wait! Stephen!

Paul sits there alone and a deep pain is visible in his eyes. He is escorted out of the room by the bailiff but his stare remains the same.

CUT TO:

INT. COURTROOM—DAY

A shackled Paul Theodore enters the courtroom. Paul stumbles to the defense chair and manages to sit down. Mr. and Mrs. Theodore sit a couple rows behind him weeping.

The Defense and Prosecution rise to address the Judge.

PROSECUTOR
Your’ honor, we’d like to submit a plea agreement, terms of which have been agreed upon by the defense.

Prosecutor walks to the Judge.

(CONTINUED)
The Judge looks over the documents.

JUDGE
Defendant, please rise.

Paul stands.

JUDGE
To the charge of aggravated assault and attempted robbery, how do you plead?

PAUL
Guilty, your honor.

JUDGE
The defendant will serve time with possibility for early parole.

The Gavel slams down and reverberates throughout the courtroom. Paul looks back at his father and mother as he escorted out of the courtroom. He smiles back at them.

CUT TO:

EXT. STEPHEN’S OFFICE– DAY

Officer Palmer and Norris lean against their cruiser and smile as Stephen walks down the stairs.

Stephen nods and he walks towards the officers.

OFFICER PALMER
Bravo Stephen.

STEPHEN
Sorry?

OFFICER NORRIS
We heard about your little performance at County the other day.

STEPHEN
All we did was talk.

OFFICER PALMER
Sure.

STEPHEN
Am I–

(CONTINUED)
OFFICER PALMER
Listen Steve, we just wanted to stop by and tell you that Paul recanted his testimony.

Officer Norris pats a troubled Stephen on the shoulder.

OFFICER NORRIS
Don’t worry, I give Paul a month in lock up before he says you intimidated him into recanting his testimony. How much time you give him Palmer?

STEPHEN
What? Paul took back his-

The officers chuckle.

OFFICER NORRIS
Ha. Yeah, big surprise. What did mommy and daddy promise him? Some money when he came out?

The officers turn to leave.

OFFICER NORRIS
Happy Holidays, say hello to your parents for us.

The officers enter their vehicle and drive off. An emotional Stephen stands alone and stares at the vehicle until it is out of sight.

CUT TO:

INT. CONGRESSIONAL OFFICE- DAY

Stephen stands in front of John’s desk. He has a manila folder in his hand that he gives to John.

JOHN
We’re sad to see you go.

STEPHEN
Yeah, it was.
(a beat)
It was time for me to get out of here.

(CONTINUED)
Continued: 100.

John winks at Stephen.

Stephen exits the building, and walks until he reaches a large green building. Stephen pauses outside the building then enters.

Two months later...

Stephen sits inside his car which is parked on the street outside of Amy’s house. He ducks slightly as he sees her approach the door. Phil follows her as she exits the house.

Phil has a missing tooth and his face is still swollen. Stephen smiles.

Amy smiles.

Phil waves at Amy then glances around his house nervously. Amy enters her friend’s car and drives off.
INT. JAIL CELL- DAY

Paul sits inside his jail cell staring at the wall. The cell is small with only a sink and a single bed. Inmates clang against the steel bars as the mail delivery cart comes by.

MAILMAN
Theodore, package.

The Mailman tosses a package into Paul’s cell. He hurries to grab it and sees that it is from Stephen.

He opens the package to see a picture of a young Paul Theodore and Stephen Abraham arm in arm. Paul slaps his bed repeatedly in delight.

PAUL
Haaaaa.
(a beat)
Hahhaaaa.

The charismatic smile that was nearly destroyed returns once more as he stares at the photograph.

EXT. GREEN BUILDING- DAY

Stephen and Julia exit the non-profit building smiling.

JULIA
So you know a staff leader position is opening up...

Stephen laughs and Julia smiles.

STEPHEN
I think I’m fine where I am.

They pass by the low income citizens they serve and smile and talk.

Fade out

Credits