

THE WEIGHT

screenplay by
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from the short story
"Nevertheless, Miss Clara Will Now Sing"

by
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July 2012

FADE IN:

EXT. CHARLOTTE'S HOUSE - DAWN - ESTABLISHING

Just outside of Washington, DC, it is early morning in December. The sun is slowly creeping over a classic colonial home with a gravel driveway and a red front door. A few lights are on inside and a single porch light and some tasteful Christmas decorations dimly light the outside.

Birds chirp in the b.g.

INT. CHARLOTTE'S HOUSE (KITCHEN) - CONTINUOUS

CHARLOTTE, an attractive woman in her mid-fifties, walks from the refrigerator to the counter with a gallon of milk and pours a splash of it into a mug. She stares out the window as the sun looms in the distance like the hillside fires that torment California every summer.

Suddenly, the phone rings.

Charlotte turns, walks to the phone behind her and answers.

CHARLOTTE
(into phone)

Hello?

DAN (VO)
Well, she's dead.

CHARLOTTE
Who's dead?

DAN (VO)
Anya.

CHARLOTTE
Anya.

(then)
Grandma Anya? Oh, my God! You're kidding!

INT. DREAMWORKS OFFICE (LOS ANGELES) - LATE NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

DAN, Charlotte's younger brother, is a technical advisor for DreamWorks in Los Angeles. His feet are propped up on his desk and his sleeves are rolled to his elbows. A cell phone is glued to his ear and the walls of his office are covered with posters of various productions.

DAN
Not this time. This time it's for real.

CHARLOTTE (VO)
My God, what time is it there?

DAN
(checks watch)
Almost three. I just got off a conference call. Special effects disaster in Nepal or Kuala Lumpur or wherever. Don't ask.

CHARLOTTE (VO)
But she's really dead?

DAN
Really dead.

CHARLOTTE (VO)
For sure? She's not just mostly dead like the time they put the sheet over her at St. John's and she woke up in the elevator on the way to the morgue?

(laughs)
Remember how pissed she was?

DAN
Believe me, Miracle Max couldn't even help her now. And of course Mom's freaking out and yelling at me to call you. I think you've got to come home for this one.

INTERCUT:

CHARLOTTE
Shit.

(then)
I can be there tomorrow. I'll tell Bailey when he wakes up, call the Post, get a hotel. I can probably be there tomorrow afternoon some time.

DAN
There won't be a problem with the paper?

CHARLOTTE
No, no, we have a very liberal family emergency policy. All the advertisers are gone and they could let me go on any random Friday anyway, so getting off won't be an issue. At least, it shouldn't be. But I'm definitely not staying with Mother. Even with Martin as a buffer. No way. And you know she's going to ask me.

DAN
What about Colette?

CHARLOTTE

I'll give her a call in a little bit unless you already have.

DAN

No, I left her to you. I haven't called.

CHARLOTTE

What about Dad?

DAN

I'll call him later. Did I tell you he bought a DeLorean?

CHARLOTTE

Seriously? Why?

DAN

No idea. Ever wondered how many cars he's bought and sold over the years? I lost count after Bush forty-one.

CHARLOTTE

So did I. Is it drivable?

DAN

It's in one piece, but I think it needs an engine. Oh, and I almost forgot. I finally made Mom get a computer - a good, solid PC.

CHARLOTTE

Yeah? How's that going?

DAN

Picture the first Croatian astronaut examining his space capsule, okay? That's Mother on Google.

Dan's office phone starts ringing.

DAN (cont'd)

Look, just call me when you get into town, okay? My other phone is ringing.

CHARLOTTE

At three in the morning? What are you, selling cocaine on the side now too?

DAN

It's probably Martin. Sounds like Sissy's already fit for a straightjacket and Mother is, well, you know. But she'll be fine. At least as close to it as she can be anyway.

CHARLOTTE

Okay, I'll call you when I check into the hotel.

DAN

Have a safe flight.

CHARLOTTE

Bye, Dan.

DAN

Bye.

INT. CHARLOTTE'S HOUSE (KITCHEN) - CONTINUOUS

Charlotte hangs up the phone and leans over the counter in despair.

CHARLOTTE

Fuck.

INT. CHARLOTTE'S HOUSE (BATHROOM) - MOMENTS LATER

BAILEY, Charlotte's husband, is in the shower humming "Smoke on the Water" to himself.

Suddenly, a knock at the door.

CHARLOTTE (OS)

Bailey?

BAILEY

I'll be out in a second, Char.

CHARLOTTE (OS)

Can I come in?

BAILEY

Do you need to use the bathroom or something?

CHARLOTTE (OS)

Can I just come in, please?

BAILEY

Sure.

Charlotte enters.

CHARLOTTE

Well, she's dead.

BAILEY

Who's dead?

CHARLOTTE

Anya.

Bailey shuts off the water and throws open the shower door.

BAILEY

You're kidding!

Bailey grabs a large towel off a hook and steps out of the shower.

CHARLOTTE

Nope.

BAILEY

She's really dead. Not like that time at St. John's.

CHARLOTTE

She's really dead. I actually just asked Danny the same thing. He called from the office.

BAILEY

Have you called your sister yet?

CHARLOTTE

No, I thought I'd wait a little while.

BAILEY

When's the funeral?

CHARLOTTE

Soon.

Bailey applies a small amount of toothpaste to a toothbrush and starts brushing his teeth.

BAILEY

You're going?

CHARLOTTE

I have to. Mother would never forgive me if I didn't make it. She still makes a point of reminding me almost every time she calls that we haven't all been out there in almost ten years. She may never speak to me again if I miss this.

BAILEY

Is that really such a bad thing?

CHARLOTTE

Well, no, but --

Bailey turns and spits in the sink.

BAILEY

But what?

CHARLOTTE

I don't know. I thought I had something there,
but I didn't. Is that bad?

BAILEY

No.

CHARLOTTE

You sure? It seems bad to me.

Bailey spits in the sink again and rinses his mouth out with some water.

BAILEY

It's fine. Really

CHARLOTTE

So, should I assume you won't be able to get off
to go with me?

BAILEY

I could if you really want me to.

Bailey exits the bathroom with Charlotte in tow.

INT. CHARLOTTE'S HOUSE (HALLWAY) - CONTINUOUS

Bailey and Charlotte race through the hallway.

CHARLOTTE

No, it's alright. You don't need to be dragged
through that. It's not like they're your family.

INT. CHARLOTTE'S HOUSE (BEDROOM) - CONTINUOUS

Bailey enters with Charlotte right on his heels.

CHARLOTTE (cont'd)

And someone should be here to take care of the
dogs. I don't want to have to drop three grand at
the vet because Maggie got bloat or something.

Bailey throws his towel onto the bed and walks over to a long
chest of drawers.

BAILEY

So, what then? Just go by yourself?

Bailey pulls out a pair of boxers and steps into them.

CHARLOTTE

There aren't a whole lot of options here.

Charlotte takes a seat on the bed as Bailey throws on a pair of medical scrubs.

BAILEY

What about Sean?

CHARLOTTE

What about him?

BAILEY

See if he'll go with you. Your mother hasn't seen him in awhile. He might be able to take some of the pressure off.

Bailey finishes dressing and walks over to his nightstand where he picks up a hospital identification badge and cell phone.

CHARLOTTE

Don't be silly. He wouldn't want to go. Besides, he's probably working.

BAILEY

No, I talked to him a couple of days ago, actually. They just wrapped shooting and he's got some down time.

CHARLOTTE

Really.

(then)

I don't know. I don't think he'd even want to go. Christ, who would want to go?

BAILEY

No harm in asking, right? Hell, he might even insist on going. She was ninety-seven, ninety-eight?

CHARLOTTE

Ninety-seven.

Bailey's head tilts to the side and his eyes roll up towards the ceiling.

CHARLOTTE (cont'd)

Why?

And like a bolt of lightning, it hits Charlotte.

CHARLOTTE (cont'd)

Wait, you're not talking about the dead pool are you?

Bailey nods.

CHARLOTTE (cont'd)

Oh, Bailey, no! You don't really think Ronnie had that going, do you?

BAILEY

Sean said he did.

Charlotte's head drops into her hands.

CHARLOTTE

I don't believe this.

Bailey takes a seat beside Charlotte and wraps an arm around her.

BAILEY

Just give him a call, okay? He's not working and he can probably get a better deal on hotel and air fair than you with his connections. Think about it. That's all I'm asking. I'd feel a lot better if he went with you.

Bailey kisses Charlotte on the cheek.

BAILEY (cont'd)

I've got to go.

(stands)

See you for dinner.

Bailey exits.

Charlotte remains on the bed, but lifts her head out of her hands and sighs deeply.

CHARLOTTE

Fuck.

INT. COLETTE'S HOUSE (LIVING ROOM) - ONE HOUR LATER

COLETTE'S house is unremittingly chaotic. The sounds of barking dogs, a loud television, plastic wheels racing across tile, children's music and impromptu screaming from a barrage of children - most of whom are under the age of seven - are almost deafening.

Suddenly, the phone rings.

CORDELIA, Colette's eldest child, answers.

CORDELIA
(into phone)

Hello?

CHARLOTTE (VO)
REGAN? IS THAT YOU?

CORDELIA
No, Auntie Charlotte, it's Cordelia. And you don't have to yell. I can hear you.

CHARLOTTE (VO)
Oh, sorry. How are you? Is your mother there? I need to talk to her.

CORDELIA
Is it something important? Did Grandma Anya die?

INT. CHARLOTTE'S HOUSE (LIVING ROOM) - CONTINUOUS

Charlotte is sitting on the sofa with another cup of coffee.

Joni Mitchell plays faintly in the b.g.

CHARLOTTE
Yes, as a matter of fact she did. Did someone already call?

CORDELIA (VO)
No, I had a dream last night that she died.

CHARLOTTE
Well, that sort of thing runs in our family, honey. Actually, I'm not a bit surprised by it.

INT. COLETTE'S HOUSE (KITCHEN) - CONTINUOUS

Colette is rinsing off dishes when she notices Cordelia approaching with the phone.

COLETTE
Is it your aunt?

Cordelia confirms with an exaggerated nod - as only a child would - and hands the Colette the phone.

COLETTE
(into phone)
Char, are you there?

CHARLOTTE (VO)

Yes, I'm here. How are you, sweetie?

COLETTE

Good, good, I'm good. How are you?

CHARLOTTE (VO)

I'm fine. Did you hear any of that with Cordelia?

Colette exits the kitchen onto the patio in search of privacy.

EXT. COLETTE'S HOUSE (BACKYARD) - CONTINUOUS

Colette shuts the door behind her.

INTERCUT:

COLETTE

I did. I told her you have dreams like that too. That it's sort of like a gift.

CHARLOTTE

Don't scare the girl, Colette. She's only, what, ten?

COLETTE

Eleven and don't worry. She thinks it's kind of cool, actually.

CHARLOTTE

It can be. Listen, you're coming to the funeral, aren't you?

COLETTE

Yeah, I'll be there as soon as I can. Slim's away right now, but --

CHARLOTTE

-- where is he?

COLETTE

Take it easy, Char. He's out in Santa Ynez looking at grapes with Miles, but he gets back tonight. We're starting a vineyard up here.

CHARLOTTE

A vineyard.

COLETTE

Yeah, a vineyard.

CHARLOTTE

In Vermont.

COLETTE

Yeah.

Suddenly, a blood-curdling shriek comes from inside Colette's house.

CHARLOTTE

What was that?

COLETTE

Hold on a second.

Colette covers up the phone and opens the patio door.

COLETTE (cont'd)

Go get the crayons, Henry, and tell your brother sorry. Gracie, tell Cordy to help you put your shoes on. And don't touch the guinea pigs!

Colette shuts the door and uncovers the phone.

COLETTE (cont'd)

(into phone)

Okay, where were we?

CHARLOTTE

You must be taking so much Xanax.

COLETTE

Don't be silly, Char.

CHARLOTTE

Do you have any idea when you'll be able to get away?

COLETTE

Probably Sunday morning. I'll book a flight as soon as Slim gets back.

CHARLOTTE

Do you think you could stay with Mom when you get there?

COLETTE

Sure.

CHARLOTTE

Oh, thank you! E-mail me your flight information when you have it, okay? And call my cell about when you're landing. I'll make sure someone picks you up.

COLETTE

Are Sean and Bailey coming?

CHARLOTTE

Bailey isn't. I haven't spoken to Sean yet.

COLETTE

I hear the show's doing really well. Oh, and if you get the chance, tell him that Slim and I absolutely loved "On a Wire."

CHARLOTTE

I'll tell him.

COLETTE

Thanks, dear. Alright, I have to go take the kids to school.

CHARLOTTE

I'll talk to you soon. And thanks again. You're a saint. I love you.

COLETTE

Love you too, Char. Bye-bye.

CHARLOTTE

Bye.

INT. CHARLOTTE'S HOUSE (LIVING ROOM) - CONTINUOUS

Charlotte hangs up the phone and tosses it onto the coffee table. She reaches for a pack of cigarettes, which, by their crushed state, appear rather old. She pops one out and lights it.

INT. SEAN'S APARTMENT (LIVING ROOM) - ONE HOUR LATER

SEAN, an actor in his early twenties, and his roommate, ADAM, are relaxing in their relatively posh apartment, watching "National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation" on an enormous flat screen and eating breakfast. On the floor are a small, fake Christmas tree and an aluminum pole that stretches from floor to ceiling. An open laptop is on the coffee table in front of Sean.

ADAM

How did this not sweep the Oscars the year it came out?

SEAN

I've been wondering that too. It's definitely the most quotable movie of that year.

ADAM

What year did this come out?

SEAN

'89.

ADAM

What was the Best Picture that year?

SEAN

"Driving Miss Daisy."

ADAM

The one where Morgan Freeman's the chauffeur for Jessica Tandy?

SEAN

Yeah, did you see it?

ADAM

I caught some of it on AMC once when I was waiting for "Terminator" to start. No, wait. Maybe it was "Predator." It was definitely a Schwarzenegger. I remember that much.

(then)

What about '90?

SEAN

"Dances With Wolves."

(then)

You know what we should do sometime?

ADAM

What?

SEAN

Not right away, I mean, but when the weather's nice we should do Air and Space again.

ADAM

Sure.

SEAN

No play-by-play on the whole space race this time, though, okay?

Adam laughs lightly to himself.

ADAM

Alright.

SEAN

I mean, it was fine last time, but just don't need to do it again.

ADAM

That's fine, man. Whatever you want. I don't care.

SEAN

Shoot for April or May if I'm not working.

ADAM

Definitely.

Sean grabs the plates off the coffee table and heads for the kitchen. He dumps the plates in the sink and walks over to the refrigerator.

SEAN

I'll do the dishes later.
(opens refrigerator)
You want anything?

ADAM

I'm good.

Sean pulls a water bottle out of the refrigerator and starts opening it when "Star Wars Imperial March" starts blasting from his pocket. He reaches in and pulls out an iPhone.

ADAM

The Madre?

SEAN

Yeah, I wonder why she's calling.

ADAM

Pick it up and find out.

Sean answers and walks over to the sofa.

SEAN

(into iPhone)
Hello, Mother.

INT. CHARLOTTE'S HOUSE (HOME OFFICE) - CONTINUOUS

Charlotte is dressed and smoking another cigarette at the desk in her home office.

Jackson Browne plays faintly in the b.g.

CHARLOTTE

Sean! I didn't think I was going to get you so early. How are you?

SEAN (VO)

I'm good. Just hanging with Adam and watching "Christmas Vacation."

CHARLOTTE

That's nice. How is Adam? Is he good?

SEAN (VO)

Yeah, he's fine. He's on vacation right now, actually.

(clears throat)

So, what's up?

CHARLOTTE

Ready for this? Anya's dead.

INT. SEAN'S APARTMENT (LIVING ROOM) - CONTINUOUS

Sean holds the iPhone against his chest and looks at Adam. His jaw has dropped in disbelief.

ADAM

What?

SEAN

My great-grandmother died.

ADAM

Anya?

SEAN

Yeah, do you fucking believe that?

ADAM

That's crazy.

Sean lifts the iPhone back to his ear.

SEAN

(into iPhone)

She's really dead?

INTERCUT:

CHARLOTTE

She's really dead. I swear.

SEAN
When's the funeral?

CHARLOTTE
(inhales)
Probably Monday.

SEAN
Are you smoking?

CHARLOTTE
(exhales)
No.

SEAN
I won't tell Dad. It's cool.

CHARLOTTE
Okay, but about the funeral. I don't know if
you're working or not, but I was --

SEAN
-- no, no, we just finished taping last week. I'm
not doing anything right now.

CHARLOTTE
Oh.
(then)
Do you want to go?

SEAN
Sure. Hey, that reminds me. I need to get in
touch with Ronnie.

CHARLOTTE
So, it was true?

SEAN
Of course, it was true. Have you looked at hotels
or airfare yet?

Sean grabs the laptop and starts typing with one hand.

CHARLOTTE
Not yet. I was just about --

SEAN
-- I'll take care of it.

CHARLOTTE
Are you sure?

SEAN

Yeah, yeah, yeah, don't worry about it. I'm already on the United site.

CHARLOTTE

Okay.

SEAN

I'll call you back in a bit and let you know what's up, alright?

CHARLOTTE

Okay.

INT. SEAN'S APARTMENT (LIVING ROOM) - CONTINUOUS

SEAN

Alright, bye.

Sean hangs up and drops the iPhone on the sofa.

ADAM

She really died, huh?

SEAN

She really died.

ADAM

When's the funeral?

SEAN

Monday, most likely.

ADAM

Los Angeles?

SEAN

Yeah, I'm getting plane tickets tickets right now.

Sean takes a sip of water and continues typing while Adam watches the movie intently.

ADAM

"And we're going to have the hap-hap-happiest Christmas since Bing Crosby --

ADAM/SEAN

-- tap danced with Danny fucking Kaye!"

EXT. SEAN'S APARTMENT (BALCONY) - AFTERNOON

Sean is standing on the balcony of his apartment wearing an oversized Santa Claus jacket and puffing away on a cigarette. He presses down on his iPhone, holds it up to his ear and it begins ringing.

LANA (VO)

Hi, you've reached Lana. Sorry I can't take your call right now, but please leave your name, number and a short message and I will get back to you as soon as I can. Thanks.

The phone beeps.

SEAN

(into iPhone)

Hey, it's Sean. I'm guessing you're busy right now, but I wanted to let you know I'm coming back out to LA tomorrow. My great-grandmother just passed away and I'm flying out with --

The phone beeps.

Sean holds the iPhone in front of his face and cracks a smile before pressing down to accept the call.

SEAN (cont'd)

Hey, what's up? I was just calling you.

LANA (VO)

Yeah, I was in the library. What's up?

SEAN

I just wanted to let you know I'm coming back into town tomorrow.

LANA (VO)

Awesome! Is it for a job?

SEAN

Something like that, yeah.

INT. CHARLOTTE'S HOUSE (LIVING ROOM) - EVENING

An assortment of takeout boxes line the coffee table and two collies are sitting in front of it hoping to catch some scraps. Charlotte is sitting in the far corner of the sofa reading the *Washington Post* and paying little to no attention to her food as Bailey lounges in an office chair across from her, eating with gusto.

The television blares in the b.g.

BAILEY

What time do you want to get up tomorrow?

CHARLOTTE

A little before five.

BAILEY

Really think we need to be up that early?

CHARLOTTE

I want enough time to shower and make sure the dogs get out.

BAILEY

Did Sean send you everything you need?

CHARLOTTE

Yes, he e-mailed me my ticket this afternoon. First class.

BAILEY

Well, if there's one thing you can say about the kid it's that he does have style.

CHARLOTTE

We taught him well.

BAILEY

No, you taught him well. I just threw in some things when I could.

CHARLOTTE

Yes, you did.

A beat.

BAILEY

What hotel are you staying at?

CHARLOTTE

The Beverly Hills.

BAILEY

Really? Wow. He really does know what he's doing.

CHARLOTTE

He set up a reservation for a rental car too.

BAILEY

Sounds like you're all set. Going to see the old man while you're there?

CHARLOTTE

Yeah, we're supposed to get together for dinner tomorrow. Probably just go to Junior's or whatever little hole in the wall diner he's currently abusing.

(then)

Oh, I almost forgot to tell you. Danny said he bought a DeLorean.

Bailey breaks out into uncontrollable laughter.

BAILEY

Are you serious?

CHARLOTTE

Hand to God. He bought a DeLorean.

BAILEY

How long you think before he turns it around?

Bailey composes himself and wipes his eyes.

CHARLOTTE

Danny said he thinks it needs an engine, so who knows?

BAILEY

Is the flux capacitor working?

Charlotte lowers her paper knowing she walked right into that one.

CHARLOTTE

No, Marty. The flux capacitor is not working.

BAILEY

Just checking.

CHARLOTTE

Yes, I'm sure you were just checking.

A beat.

BAILEY

Did you tell your mother that Sean was coming?

CHARLOTTE

Yes.

A beat.

BAILEY

And?

CHARLOTTE

What?

BAILEY

What did she say?

CHARLOTTE

Oh, just how much of a wonderful boy he is and that it's so nice of him to drop everything he's doing because she knows how busy he is with his career to fly across the country during her time of need and how blessed she's feeling by the Lord in this great time of sorrow.

BAILEY

I take it you didn't tell her then that he's out there at least a dozen times a year, did you?

CHARLOTTE

No, it was really tempting, though. Really tempting.

BAILEY

I'm sure it was. Are you just going to meet him at the gate?

CHARLOTTE

(Hervé Villechaize)

That is the plan, boss.

BAILEY

I wonder what he's up to tonight.

CHARLOTTE

I'd like to think he's reading a book or something and taking it easy, but probably not.

EXT. SIGN OF THE WHALE - LATE EVENING - ESTABLISHING

Sign of the Whale is a sports bar located in Northwest. A strip club is next door and a group of people are walking down the street.

INT. SIGN OF THE WHALE (BAR) - CONTINUOUS

Sean and Adam are drinking and casually watching a hockey game, but they appear to be more interested in the conversation they are having with the bartender, an attractive brunette named KATY.

Music plays through the jukebox in the b.g.

ADAM

-- and you have no problem with doing it.

KATY

Not really, no.

ADAM

But it's the same thing.

KATY

No, it's not.

SEAN

It's absolutely the same thing. How is doing it to a guy any different than letting a guy do it to you?

KATY

It just is!

ADAM

It absolutely is not!

KATY

Okay, if it is in fact the same thing, why don't you just take Sean to the bathroom and do it to him right now?

Adam's face turns white in terror. He's trapped.

ADAM

Damn it.

Sean and Katy share a quick laugh.

KATY

See? It's not the same. If it was the same thing, then logically you should have no problem doing it to a guy. But it isn't the same thing. At all. Which is why you wouldn't do it. You have no argument here.

SEAN

Okay, okay. If it's not the same thing, enlighten us. Tell us what we're missing.

KATY

Girls are completely different from guys, right? Like, physically.

SEAN/ADAM

Yeah.

KATY

Now, in my experience, most guys don't give a shit about how they present down there. Know what I mean?

SEAN

Not really.

KATY

Guys don't care how it looks or if it smells or if it's hairy as fuck or whatever. They don't, but girls do.

SEAN

Well, that's not entirely true.

ADAM

Yeah.

KATY

What do you mean?

SEAN

I care how mine looks and smells. I trim, I shower, I use body wash and everything. I don't want it to smell like I just played four quarters of smash-mouth football or look like an overgrown hedge or something.

ADAM

Yeah, same here. Guys care. Guys totally care. And he and I both know girls put in a lot of effort to make theirs look good and make the guy happy. It's only fair that we return the favor.

KATY

That's good. That's good that you care. And it's really good that you want the chick to be as pleased with you as you are with her, but guys like you two are few and far between.

ADAM

What, have you done it to a lot of disgusting guys or something?

Katy hits Adam repeatedly with the bar rag.

KATY

No, not a lot, you jackass.

SEAN

But enough to know that a lot of guys just don't give a shit, is that it?

KATY

I guess so, yeah.

ADAM

Still not getting it, Katy.

KATY

Okay, look. Would you blame yourself if you ever got it and it was bad?

ADAM

No.

KATY

Okay, and if you were with a girl that for some reason just didn't like giving it, how would you feel about it?

SEAN

I honestly wouldn't give a shit.

ADAM

Yeah, I've been with girls that just don't do it.

KATY

Right. See, it's different for a girl. If a guy's terrible at it then you might think maybe it's your fault. Maybe he's not putting in the effort because there's something about me that he's not happy with. Like, maybe it smells funny or I have a freckle that makes what I got look like a cookie or something.

SEAN

That's pretty thin. Just because some guys aren't good at it or not into doing it doesn't mean there's anything wrong with the girl. It means the guys just flat out suck at it.

KATY

Yes, some guys do just plain suck at it.

ADAM

So, what's your point?

KATY

A lot of girls don't know that a lot of guys just suck. They think it's them. They think if the guy is bad that it's their fault. Or if the guy doesn't do it at all that maybe he just thinks it's disgusting and that can turn a girl off from it completely. Guys don't care about that shit at all. They'll take it any time. It's just not the same for girls. It's really personal. It's even more personal than sex.

SEAN

Basically what you're saying is that because a girl may have had a bad experience with one guy in the past that it may turn her off from ever letting another guy do it to her in the future.

KATY

Pretty much, yeah.

SEAN

But a guy will never get turned off it and will always let a girl do it because they'll take whatever they can get.

KATY

It's just more personal for a girl to let a guy do that.

SEAN

Okay, I can --

ADAM

-- yeah, I get it. I think.

KATY

Good.

ADAM

But what about you? You just made it sound like you're one of those girls that's completely turned off from it.

KATY

No, I'll usually give a guy a shot to prove himself if he's willing, but that's it. Just one shot.

SEAN

You should moonlight for "American Idol."

ADAM
So, if he sucks --

KATY
-- that's it.

SEAN
No shot at redemption.

KATY
Nope. It's not fucking beer pong. I'm not going to waste my time on a guy who has no idea what the hell he's doing down there.

ADAM
But if he's good --

KATY
-- then I'm good.

A beat.

ADAM
That's pretty reasonable.

KATY
Glad I could help, boys.

Adam and Sean finish their beers and push their glasses towards Katy for refills.

KATY (cont'd)
Another round?

ADAM
And two Jameson shots. Pour yourself one too.

Katy nods and walks towards the taps.

SEAN
I'm going for a cigarette.

ADAM
Have fun, sweetie.

Sean exits.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. BWI (KISS & RIDE) - DAWN

Charlotte and Bailey are standing at curbside check-in and Bailey is unloading Charlotte's luggage from the back of a Cherokee.

Charlotte pulls out the handle of a midsize carry-on and throws a garment bag over her shoulder.

BAILEY
Got everything?

Bailey slams the hatch on the Cherokee.

CHARLOTTE
I think so.

BAILEY
Purse, wallet, cell phone, ticket --

CHARLOTTE
-- yes, I have everything. Stop worrying, honey.

BAILEY
Call me when you get to the hotel, okay?

CHARLOTTE
I will. And take care of the dogs. Don't let them think I'm never coming back.

BAILEY
Don't worry, I won't. Have a safe flight, honey. Give Sean my best.

CHARLOTTE
I will.

Bailey hugs Charlotte and kisses her softly.

BAILEY
I love you.

CHARLOTTE
I love you too.

Charlotte turns and disappears in the crowd of people heading into the terminal.

INT. BWI (LONG-TERM PARKING GARAGE) - CONTINUOUS

Sean pulls a garment bag out of a late model VW Golf. He throws the bag over his shoulder, shuts the back and locks the car. He slides a Zippo lighter into the side of the bag to prevent it from being confiscated by TSA as he walks away. A small carry-on is also in his possession.

INT. BWI (TSA CHECKPOINT) - MOMENTS LATER

Charlotte walks through security with her boarding pass in hand to verify that she is a passenger. She strolls over to the conveyor belt, grabs her belongings, steps into her shoes and moves on.

INT. BWI (NEWSSTAND) - MOMENTS LATER

Sean is standing at the counter of a newsstand. The CASHIER hands him some change as he stuffs packs of cigarettes and gum into his carry-on.

CASHIER
Have a good day, sir.

SEAN
Thanks, you too.

Sean exits.

INT. BWI (DEPARTING GATE) - MOMENTS LATER

Charlotte is sitting at the gate leafing through an issue of *Vanity Fair* as Sean approaches, unnoticed, from the distance.

SEAN
Hey, stranger.

Charlotte looks up and smiles. She puts down her magazine, stands up and walks over to Sean.

CHARLOTTE
Hi, honey.

Charlotte throws her arms around Sean and hugs him tightly.

SEAN
Good to see you, Mom.

CHARLOTTE
Oh, you too.

The hug ends and the two take a seat.

CHARLOTTE (cont'd)
You're looking well.

SEAN
You too. I like what you did with your hair. A little different than last time, but it's nice.

CHARLOTTE
Thanks, I got it done about a week ago.

SEAN

Looks good. Looks real good.

CHARLOTTE

Thank you. And thank you for coming.

SEAN

Of course. I wasn't going to miss this.

CHARLOTTE

Just tell me how you've been going to out there and avoiding the family this whole time.

SEAN

I don't avoid everybody. I've seen Grandma and Grandpa a few times, but mostly I just see Danny.

CHARLOTTE

Oh, really?

SEAN

Yeah, we had lunch at Hugo's about a month ago.

CHARLOTTE

That's nice. I hope sometimes you offer to pay.

SEAN

Usually split the check.

CHARLOTTE

That works too.

SEAN

Oh, I meant to tell you. You'll like this. I'm seeing Lana while we're out there.

CHARLOTTE

Lana.

SEAN

Yeah, you know Lana.

CHARLOTTE

Lana Padorin?

Sean nods.

CHARLOTTE (cont'd)

Oh, how lovely! How is she?

SEAN

She's good. She's at USC Law, actually. Second year.

CHARLOTTE

That's wonderful. I'll have to tell her mother you two got together.

SEAN

Her mom knows.

Charlotte seems puzzled by this revelation.

SEAN (cont'd)

I usually see her when I go out too.

CHARLOTTE

How come I never heard this before?

SEAN

I told Dad.

CHARLOTTE

Yes, and we both know how good your father is at relaying information.

SEAN

Touché, salesman.

CHARLOTTE

How is her mother?

SEAN

She's good. She's on sabbatical right now.

CHARLOTTE

You know, I'm glad you mentioned that. I should email her sometime.

SEAN

I'm sure she'd love to hear from you.

CHARLOTTE

Are they still in Santa Barbara?

SEAN

Mhmm.

CHARLOTTE

Where's Lana living?

SEAN

She and some of her friends have a house off Walton near the campus.

CHARLOTTE

I think I know where you're talking about. I went to a party or two in high school near there with Jackie. Walton's off of Exposition or something, correct?

SEAN

Correct.

CHARLOTTE

Yeah, I definitely got dragged there a few times. One of my girlfriends was dating a guy on the football team when we were in high school.

SEAN

It wasn't the Juice, was it?

CHARLOTTE

No, it was not the Juice. This was the seventies.

SEAN

"Goddamn bitch set me up like this."

CHARLOTTE

That's Marion Barry, not O.J.

SEAN

I was going for Cochran, actually.

CHARLOTTE

Keep going.

SEAN

"This is the most public yet of my many humiliations."

Charlotte smiles softly, folds her magazine in half and stuffs it into her purse.

CHARLOTTE

You know, I'm really happy you and Lana stayed in touch all these years. I always liked her. She was such a sweet girl.

SEAN

She still is a sweet girl.

CHARLOTTE

I know, that's what I meant.

SEAN

Thought so.

CHARLOTTE

By the way, will you be getting us any, you know, herbal refreshment while we're there?

SEAN

I will.

Charlotte pats Sean on the knee appreciatively.

CHARLOTTE

You're a good son, Sean.

SEAN

Thanks.

CHARLOTTE

You don't call as much as I would like, but you're still a pretty good son.

SEAN

Actually, Lana's going to be coming with us to the funeral.

Charlotte takes a second to process this.

CHARLOTTE

Why?

SEAN

Because I asked her to.

CHARLOTTE

As what, a date? Don't you think that's a little inappropriate?

SEAN

We've been friends since we were, like, before I can remember. Just companionship and besides, you like her.

CHARLOTTE

I love her. I just don't know if she should come. What will your grandmother say?

SEAN

The more people in our corner, the better.

CHARLOTTE

Sean.

SEAN

Come on. I'm sure she knows how to handle herself in a situation like this. Croats and Ruskses, they're like peas in a pod.

(then)

Or bullets in a bullet factory if we're going to be comparing former socialist republics.

A beat.

CHARLOTTE

Herbal refreshment?

Sean nods.

CHARLOTTE (cont'd)

For sure?

SEAN

For sure.

CHARLOTTE

Good?

SEAN

"The best, Jerry."

Charlotte knows she can't win this argument.

CHARLOTTE

Alright. Fine. I guess I really can't argue since you're the one paying for this fiasco.

SEAN

Ronnie's paying for most of it. I'm barely spending anything on this.

Suddenly, a FEMALE VOICE comes over the public address system.

FEMALE VOICE (VO)

Attention, passengers: we will now begin the boarding process for United Airlines flight 176, non-stop service to Los Angeles. We request that all first-class passengers now report to Gate D-26. Thank you.

A look of dread crawls across Sean and Charlotte's faces. This is it. There's no turning back now.

CHARLOTTE

Ready?

SEAN

"Ready when you are, C.B."

CHARLOTTE

You remember that, huh?

Charlotte and Sean stand, gather their belongings and start walking towards the gate.

SEAN

Of course, it's a classic.

CHARLOTTE

You know, your great-grandmother told me that one when I was a little girl.

SEAN

Any?

CHARLOTTE

No, God no. Your grandfather's mother, Sam. The actress.

SEAN

Oh, okay.

CHARLOTTE

So, we both have aisle seats?

SEAN

Yup.

CHARLOTTE

How did you get these anyway?

SEAN

I know people.

CHARLOTTE

You know people, you know people. That's all I ever hear is you know people. Still doesn't explain how you were able to get such primo seats on a non-stop flight at the last minute so close to Christmas.

SEAN

I had, like, a million frequent flyer miles.

CHARLOTTE

Oh.

(then)

It's not really a million, is it?

SEAN

Not literally a million, but a lot. Don't worry about it.

Charlotte and Sean reach the gate and are greeted by a GATE ATTENDANT.

GATE ATTENDANT

Good morning.

The attendant takes the boarding passes, briefly examines them and hands them back.

GATE ATTENDANT (cont'd)

Enjoy your flight.

CHARLOTTE

Thank you.

Sean and Charlotte head down the jet way and become just another set of faces in the long line of passengers heading west.

EXT. BWI (RUNWAY) - MORNING

The booming sound of jet engines echo through the area as the plane takes off from the runway and ascends into the sky.

INT. AIRPLANE - LATE MORNING (EST)

Charlotte and Sean are sitting across from each other on the aisle of the first class cabin. Sean has propped his laptop up on the tray table and is typing at a rapid pace. A large pair of headphones are hooked into the laptop and an open book is in his lap. Charlotte - trying to read her magazine - leans her head back, takes a deep breath and looks over at Sean, who can't be bothered. She makes an attempt.

CHARLOTTE

Sean?

No response.

CHARLOTTE (cont'd)

Sean?

No response.

CHARLOTTE (cont'd)

Sean.

Sean finally notices Charlotte staring at him, stops typing and removes his headphones.

SEAN

What's up?

CHARLOTTE

Nothing.

SEAN

Something on your mind?

CHARLOTTE

No, not really.

SEAN

Well, what was it?

CHARLOTTE

I don't know. I just can't concentrate right now.

(then)

You're typing up a storm over there. What are you writing?

SEAN

Working on a screenplay. Trying to anyway.

CHARLOTTE

What's it about?

Sean picks up the book in his lap and holds it up in front of Charlotte. The title is Matty: An American Hero.

CHARLOTTE (cont'd)

Who's Matty?

SEAN

Christy Mathewson. He was a pitcher for the New York Giants.

CHARLOTTE

Never heard of him.

SEAN

One of the original five to get into the Hall of Fame.

CHARLOTTE

Before Ruth?

SEAN

Same year, actually, but Mathewson was dead already.

CHARLOTTE

How did he die?

SEAN

TB. Gassed in World War I.

CHARLOTTE

That's awful.

SEAN

Yeah, I know.

CHARLOTTE

What made you decide to write about him?

SEAN

I was cleaning the apartment one day and I found this under the sofa. Mathewson was, like, the first true baseball icon. You know? The first one that wasn't some degenerate or booze hound that kids could point to and say they wanted to be like without their parents getting upset about it.

CHARLOTTE

And he was a pitcher for the Giants?

SEAN

Yeah, do you remember that Ken Burns baseball documentary they did a little while back?

CHARLOTTE

Of course. I watched some of it with your father. In fact, I think we still have some of it on tape. You know, back when people actually taped television shows instead of Tivoing them.

SEAN

Yeah, Studs Terkel says in one of the parts that Mathewson was so straight-laced that he wouldn't even give interviews to sports writers who fooled around on their wives.

Suddenly, two STEWARDESSES arrive on the scene with a beverage cart.

STEWARDESS # 1
 (to Charlotte)
 Would you care for anything to drink, ma'am?

CHARLOTTE
 Oh, yes. A cup of regular, please?

STEWARDESS # 1
 Cream and sugar?

CHARLOTTE
 Just cream.

Stewardess # 1 takes out a Styrofoam cup and pours Charlotte's coffee.

STEWARDESS # 2
 (to Sean)
 Anything for you, sir?

SEAN
 Regular, please.

STEWARDESS # 2
 Cream and sugar?

SEAN
 Black is fine.

Stewardess # 2 pours Sean's coffee and hands it to him just as Stewardess # 1 hands Charlotte hers. They move ahead to the next row of seats and repeat the process.

CHARLOTTE
 So, how's it coming?

Charlotte pours some cream into her coffee as Sean takes a sip of his.

SEAN
 Not so great.

CHARLOTTE
 How come?

Charlotte takes a sip of coffee.

SEAN
 I really don't know how to make it into a script.

CHARLOTTE
 Why?

SEAN

Not completely sure. I know there's a movie in this book. There's a good movie, actually, but I just can't get it to work.

CHARLOTTE

Is it too broad or something?

SEAN

I guess you could say that. I don't even know why I'm writing it, really. I was just bored and thought I'd give it a shot.

CHARLOTTE

Were you trying to write it for yourself? Like, maybe something you could be in?

SEAN

Kind of.

(then)

I don't know. My agent's sent me some pretty bad scripts in the last couple of years and I thought maybe I could write a good one, but it's not turning out that way.

CHARLOTTE

What kind of stuff has he sent you?

SEAN

Well, he sent me this script for a remake of "Westworld" that never got made. Thank God.

CHARLOTTE

That bad?

SEAN

Oh, it was terrible. Then he sent me this one called "Stray Dawgz" with dogs spelled D-A-W-G-Z. It was basically "Blade" with werewolves instead of vampires.

CHARLOTTE

That sounds pretty bad too.

SEAN

Yeah, really bad.

CHARLOTTE

So, how'd you get that Darabont movie?

SEAN

He offered it to me.

CHARLOTTE

You didn't have to audition or anything?

SEAN

I did, but it was more or less a formality. It was great. I thought I told you that.

CHARLOTTE

No, I don't think so.

SEAN

Could have sworn I did.

CHARLOTTE

Maybe you did. It's not that important.

Charlotte takes another sip of coffee.

CHARLOTTE (cont'd)

So, when are you seeing Lana?

SEAN

Tomorrow night. We're going to get sushi and then we're going to this little get together one of her friends is having.

CHARLOTTE

You're not coming with me to your grandmother's?

SEAN

I thought that's what we were doing tonight.

CHARLOTTE

No, we're seeing your grandfather tonight. We're only going to Grandma's today to say "hi" before we go to the hotel. She's supposed to be cooking tomorrow night for us.

SEAN

Then, yeah. Guess I won't be there.

CHARLOTTE

So, you're just going to leave me with her?

SEAN

I have a legitimate reason. Besides, you'll have Martin and Colette there.

CHARLOTTE

I don't know. Maybe I'll just cancel. I don't need to see her everyday we're there.

SEAN

Yeah, call Jackie or Robert and have dinner or something. Get one of those thirty-dollar burgers at the Polo Lounge.

CHARLOTTE

I think Jackie's in Tokyo right now for business. Robert, though, that's a good idea. I'll give him a call. It's been forever since I saw him. Plus, it would really torture your father.

Charlotte laughs lightly to herself at the idea.

SEAN

Who cares? We're on vacation.

CHARLOTTE

I don't know if I would call going to a funeral a vacation, but you're right. What he doesn't know won't hurt him.

SEAN

There you go. Problem solved.

Sean starts typing again.

CHARLOTTE

You remember that time you were a kid when we flew out and we sat next to that really pretty girl?

Sean stops typing to think for a second.

SEAN

I think so. That's one of the last time we flew out together, wasn't it?

CHARLOTTE

I think you're right. She was such a sweetheart. She had just gotten engaged, remember?

SEAN

Yeah, she had this really nice half-naked photo of herself that she showed me too.

CHARLOTTE

Yeah.

(then)

Wait, what?

SEAN

Nothing.

CHARLOTTE

No, hold on. How did I not know about this? Where was I?

SEAN

Probably in the bathroom.

CHARLOTTE

How half-naked was she?

SEAN

She was wearing, like, black panties and a letterman sweater. You know, like a sixties-era Playboy spread? Really tame.

CHARLOTTE

Not sure how I feel about that, but okay.

SEAN

It was fine, really. What made you think of that anyway?

CHARLOTTE

I don't know. It's just been awhile since you and I went anywhere together.

SEAN

Yeah, well, that was a real vacation. And like you said, this isn't.

CHARLOTTE

I know. I was just thinking.

SEAN

Yeah.

A beat.

CHARLOTTE

We're screwed, aren't we?

SEAN

Oh, yeah.

Sean continues typing.

EXT. AIRPLANE - LATE MORNING (PST)

Looking down on Los Angeles, we see row upon row of stucco homes with in-ground pools and bumper-to-bumper traffic stretches as far as the eye can see.

"L.A. Woman" PLAYS OVER:

SUPERIMPOSE: Los Angeles

INT. AIRPLANE - MOMENTS LATER

Sean leans forward in his seat in an attempt to look through the window. He quickly gives up and looks over at Charlotte, who pops a pill to calm her nerves.

EXT. LAX (RUNWAY) - MOMENTS LATER

The plane descends from sky with landing gear deployed and touches down.

INT. AIRPLANE - CONTINUOUS

The passengers jerk forward as the plane reaches the ground and Charlotte crosses herself.

EXT. LAX (ARRIVING GATE) - MOMENTS LATER

The plane taxis towards the jet way. It reaches and the doors open.

INT. AIRPLANE - CONTINUOUS

Sean and Charlotte quickly unfasten their seatbelts as do the rest of the passengers. Everyone stands and immediately starts pulling bags out of the overhead compartments.

INT. LAX (JETWAY) - MOMENTS LATER

Charlotte walks ahead of Sean with her bag behind her.

INT. LAX (BAGGAGE CLAIM) - MOMENTS LATER

Sean grabs his garment bag off the conveyer and throws it over his shoulder. Charlotte's has already been claimed and they start walking towards the doors.

INT. HERTZ OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

A young woman behind the counter hands Sean a set of car keys. Sean gives her a nod of gratitude and turns towards Charlotte before exiting into the blinding sunlight.

INT. DODGE CHARGER (MOVING) - LATE MORNING

Sean is behind the wheel of a late model Dodge Charger with Charlotte riding shotgun. A lit cigarette hangs from his lip and he is holding out the Zippo he retrieved from his garment bag to light the cigarette that is hanging from Charlotte's lip.

EXT. DODGE CHARGER - LATE MORNING

The Dodge pulls up in front of Charlotte's mother's house, which is white brick with a Spanish roof. Sean turns off the engine and along with Charlotte takes a long, hard look at the house through the passenger's side window.

This is it.

SEAN

It's like fucking "Saving Private Ryan" when they were about to land on Omaha.

Charlotte looks back at Sean, who cracks a wide, exaggerated grin.

EXT. MOTHER'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Sean and Charlotte walk slowly towards the house, trying to make the journey last as long as humanly possible.

CHARLOTTE

We're just stopping in, saying "hi" and getting the hell out.

SEAN

You know what I could really go for right now?

CHARLOTTE

What?

SEAN

Pastrami and Swiss on rye with Russian and some potato salad.

INT. MOTHER'S HOUSE (FRONT ENTRANCE) - CONTINUOUS

The sound of a doorbell ringing the classic ding-dong, ding-dong is heard.

A few seconds pass before MOTHER opens the door to reveal Sean and Charlotte standing on her stoop. Mother is in her late seventies and wearing a pair of large, dark sunglasses and bright pastel colors, an outfit that just screams 1960's Los Angeles fashion.

MOTHER

You're here. Thank you for coming, sincerely, the both of you. Thank you.

CHARLOTTE

Mom, I told you we'd be here. You know, two of my better suits went out of style waiting for the old bi--

(then)

-- I mean, for Anya to die.

Mother is quite undone and possibly hungover, making her sunglasses seem all the more appropriate.

MOTHER

Let's not fight today, okay? Please?

CHARLOTTE

Fine by me, but --

CHARLOTTE'S MOTHER

-- just don't say anything right now, okay?

Mother turns and walks deeper into the house. Charlotte turns to Sean, whose face is without expression.

SEAN

Three thousand miles across the country and she doesn't even say "come in." Just --

CHARLOTTE

-- just relax. Take a deep breath. Be calm and we'll survive.

SEAN

I'm calm. I'm plenty calm.

They enter the house.

CHARLOTTE

Look, we won't be here long. Just keep smiling, be nice and then we can go to the hotel and get room service and go swimming.

Sean shuts the door behind him and follows Charlotte into the dining room.

INT. MOTHER'S HOUSE (DINING ROOM) - CONTINUOUS

Sean and Charlotte take a seat at the dinner table while Mother tinkers in the kitchen.

MOTHER (OS)

Something to drink?

CHARLOTTE

Water, please?

SEAN

Same.

MOTHER (OS)

Is tap okay? I don't have any bottles.

CHARLOTTE

It's fine.

The sounds of running water and ice hitting the bottom of a glass can be heard from the kitchen.

Charlotte and Sean sit like prisoners awaiting interrogation. Mother enters carrying two large glasses, hands one to Sean and the other to Charlotte.

CHARLOTTE (cont'd)

Thank you. So, have you heard from --

MOTHER

-- one second.

Mother walks back into the kitchen as Charlotte and Sean exchange a glance before shrugging and clinking their glasses together in a mock toast. Mother reenters the room with a large glass of scotch in her hand. She has removed her sunglasses and takes a seat at the table.

MOTHER (cont'd)

So, how was your flight?

CHARLOTTE

Not bad. The movie was a yawner, but you know how it is.

MOTHER

Not really.

(to Sean)

Don't slouch. It's bad for your back.

Sean immediately corrects his posture.

SEAN

Sorry.

MOTHER

Don't say you're sorry. It's a sign of weakness. You're too young to be having back problems.

Sean takes a deep drink from his glass.

CHARLOTTE

So, have you spoken to Colette?

MOTHER

She'll be here tomorrow. Martin will be picking her up from the airport around three.

CHARLOTTE

Where is Martin?

MOTHER

The supermarket. We needed crackers.

The tension in the room is thick.

MOTHER (cont'd)

So, I saw Liz Taylor had another face-lift. How many do you think that makes?

CHARLOTTE

I really couldn't say. Last I heard she was dying again.

MOTHER

She's been dying since "Cleopatra."

CHARLOTTE

I know. That's why I said "again."

MOTHER

What about you? You're in Hollywood. How many face lifts do you think Liz Taylor has had?

SEAN

I really don't know. I'm not here that much.

MOTHER

What about that last movie you did? Didn't they film it here like they do all other movies?

SEAN

No, it was a nine-week shoot in Vancouver.

MOTHER

I don't get it. Here we are in Los Angeles, the town that made movies into movies and they don't even make them here anymore. How do you like that?

SEAN

Actually, I had a lot of fun on that picture.
There are some really great restaurants in Van--

Mother stares Sean down. She was not looking for an answer to her question.

SEAN (cont'd)

Never mind.

MOTHER

Charlotte, you're smoking again. I can smell it.

CHARLOTTE

Oh, no, Mother. Sean was.

MOTHER

You told me you quit.

Sean is trapped like a rat.

SEAN

Well, you know, my character on the show is a smoker and I guess I kind of got back into it.

MOTHER

No girl's going to want to marry you if you stink like cigarettes all day long, Sean. If you don't quit soon you'll never be able to.

Mother reaches across the table for a large bowl of cherries and plops it in front of Sean.

MOTHER (cont'd)

Here, have some cherries. They're good for you. Queen Anne's. Eleven ninety-five a pound at Gelson's.

Mother takes a sip of scotch. Sean and Charlotte are nearly catatonic. A few seconds pass and they each take a sip of their drinks before Sean cautiously takes a cherry from the bowl.

DISOLVE TO:

EXT. JUNIOR'S DELICATESSEN - EVENING - ESTABLISHING

Junior's Delicatessen is a classic Jewish deli located in Westwood directly across from the Pavilion shopping center.

INT. JUNIOR'S DELICATESSEN - CONTINUOUS

Sean and Charlotte are sitting on one side of a booth across from Charlotte's father. FATHER is in his early eighties, but looks older. His clothing is just a little too big for him and he sits hunched over the table. His breathing is characteristic of a lifelong asthmatic and beside him in the booth is a gift bag.

A WAITRESS arrives at the table holding three plates and hands Charlotte a California Salad. Sean finally gets the pastrami sandwich and potato salad that he was craving. Though the potato salad is just the right amount for a single person, the sandwich is about the size of a volleyball. His eyes open wide in anticipation. Waitress hands Father the Schwartzburger, a monstrosity of a cheeseburger topped with cheese, mushrooms, onions, lettuce, tomatoes and Russian dressing.

WAITRESS

Is there anything else I can get you folks?

Charlotte and Father look at each other and ponder the question.

CHARLOTTE

I think we're good.

With that said, Sean quickly dives into his sandwich, attacking it the way a lion would a gazelle.

WAITRESS

Okay, I'll be back in a few to check on you.

CHARLOTTE

Thank you, this all looks great.

Waitress exits.

Charlotte picks at her salad while Father removes the top half of the bun from his burger and pours salt onto the tomato.

FATHER

So, did you see your mother yet?

CHARLOTTE

Stopped by there on the way to the hotel this morning.

FATHER

How did that go?

Sean holds up one finger to signify that he needs a moment. He takes a sip of his drink to clear his throat before speaking.

SEAN

She pretty much said that if I didn't stop slouching I'd be a hunchback. And she also said if I didn't stop smoking that I'd never get married.

Father can't believe what he's hearing. No, wait, yes he can.

CHARLOTTE

She was just trying to give you a little friendly advice.

SEAN

Nice try. She knew what she was doing. She knew exactly what she was doing.

FATHER

She wasn't drinking, was she?

CHARLOTTE

She was.

SEAN

Heavily.

CHARLOTTE

Sean, we don't know that.

SEAN

Yes, we do. She had two huge scotches while we were there and I'm betting she had at least one more beforehand.

FATHER

(shakes head)

Jesus.

Sean resumes devouring his sandwich, Father takes a big bite of his burger and Charlotte finally takes a bite of her salad.

FATHER (cont'd)

Was anyone else at the house?

CHARLOTTE

Not while we were there.

FATHER

Where was Martin?

CHARLOTTE

The grocery store.

FATHER

I thought your sister was supposed to be coming.

CHARLOTTE

She is. She'll be here tomorrow.

FATHER

Give her my best, will you?

CHARLOTTE

Of course, Dad.

FATHER

(to Sean)

Pass me some ketchup.

Sean passes the ketchup to Father, who proceeds to douse his French fries in it.

CHARLOTTE

By the way, they're starting a vineyard.

FATHER

Who is?

CHARLOTTE

Colette and Slim. They're starting a vineyard.

Charlotte's father passes the ketchup back to Sean.

FATHER

A vineyard. In Vermont.

CHARLOTTE

That's what Colette said. She said Slim was up in Santa Ynez this week looking at grapes.

Father is amused by this idea.

FATHER

Alright.

Sean finishes the first half of his sandwich and moves onto the potato salad. Charlotte catches this out of the corner of her eye and looks at him in disbelief.

CHARLOTTE

Jesus Christ, Sean, slow down.

SEAN

What? I'm starving.

CHARLOTTE
Just chew, okay?

SEAN
I am chewing.

FATHER
Oh, I almost forgot.

Father picks up the gift bag that was sitting beside him in the booth and places it on the table.

FATHER (cont'd)
I got you a little something.

CHARLOTTE
Me or Sean?

FATHER
Both.
(to Sean)
Take a look inside.

Sean grabs the bag off the table and opens it. His head tilts the way a curious dog's would once he sees what's inside.

SEAN
Alright.

CHARLOTTE
What is it?

SEAN
It's a .38.

CHARLOTTE
Excuse me?

FATHER
It's a gun.

CHARLOTTE
You've got to be kidding.

SEAN
Nope, it's a gun.

Sean reaches into the bag to get a feel for the weight of the weapon, but does not pull it out.

SEAN (cont'd)
It's unloaded.

Charlotte's tone becomes one of quiet anger.

CHARLOTTE

(whispers)

Dad, have you lost your fucking mind? This isn't one of your NRA meetings. What the hell do you think you're doing bringing a gun in here?

Sean calmly puts the bag on the table and continues eating his potato salad like nothing happened.

FATHER

Charlotte, relax. I just thought that with him out of the house and Bailey gone at work all the time that you might want to have one for protection.

CHARLOTTE

I have dogs for protection, thank you.

FATHER

And I understand and appreciate that, but you can get past a dog. No one's going to fuck with you if you pull a gun on their ass.

CHARLOTTE

Dad, really.

SEAN

I think it's a pretty good idea, actually.

Charlotte snaps at Sean.

CHARLOTTE

(whispers)

You're supposed to be on my side!

(then)

Look, we don't need a gun in the house.

SEAN

Don't be so dramatic. Dad was in the service. He still knows how to take care of a gun. It'll be fine, really.

FATHER

Charlotte, if you don't want it then you don't have to take it. No need to cause a scene.

Before Charlotte can defend herself, Waitress reappears at the table.

WAITRESS

How is everything?

CHARLOTTE

Fine, fine, just fine. Thank you.

WAITRESS

Is there anything else I can --

CHARLOTTE

-- no, we're fine. Thank you.

Waitress exits.

CHARLOTTE (cont'd)

(to Father, whispers)

I am not causing a scene!

SEAN

Come on, let's just take it.

FATHER

Don't pressure her. If she doesn't want it, she doesn't have to take it.

CHARLOTTE

It's not just that.

(then)

Look, even if we do take it, how are we supposed to get it back to Maryland? Did you even think about that?

SEAN

Just put it in your checked luggage.

Charlotte stares daggers at Sean.

SEAN (cont'd)

What?

CHARLOTTE

Put it in my checked luggage? You're serious.

SEAN

Yeah, what's the big deal?

CHARLOTTE

"What's the big deal?" What is this, Bizarro World?

(whispers)

Am I the only person here who gets that we're talking about a fucking gun?

FATHER

Actually, the kid's right. As long as it's not in a carry-on the airport security guys won't give two shits about it.

CHARLOTTE

I can't believe I'm hearing this right now.

FATHER

Then don't take it. It's not a big deal. I have plenty back home if that's what you're worried about.

CHARLOTTE

That's not what I'm worried about.

FATHER

Well, what is it then?

Charlotte rubs her face in anguish.

CHARLOTTE

Fine. To hell with it. We'll take it.

Sean takes the bag off the table and nestles it between himself and the wall. He continues eating his potato salad as Charlotte shakes her head in disbelief.

CHARLOTTE (cont'd)

Unbelievable.

EXT. CHARLOTTE'S HOTEL ROOM (PATIO) - LATE EVENING

Sean and Charlotte are sitting on the patio of Charlotte's room in the dark. Both are smoking and have been doing so for quite some time as seen by the nearly overflowing ashtray on the table next to Sean's laptop. Sean's feet are propped up on the table and he has changed into his pajamas. The gun is in his hands with the chamber popped out and Charlotte is quietly mouthing the words to Stevie Nicks' "Crash Into Me," which plays through Sean's laptop.

SEAN

Your father gave us a gun in the middle of Junior's.

CHARLOTTE

I know. I was there.

SEAN

That's why you were so upset, wasn't it?

CHARLOTTE

What do you mean?

SEAN

About the gun.

Sean pops the chamber back into place and lays the gun on the table. He throws his feet off and leans in.

SEAN (cont'd)

It wasn't that he offered us the gun that pissed you off. I know you and Dad have been talking about getting one for years. It was that he brought it to dinner with him.

CHARLOTTE

I suppose you're right.

SEAN

Like, if we had just gone to dinner and then maybe back to his place, you'd probably have been more inclined to just take it, right?

CHARLOTTE

Probably, but that's the thing about your grandfather. He lives in his own little universe where normal rules don't apply.

SEAN

Who do you think is crazier? Him or your mother?

CHARLOTTE

It's a tossup.

SEAN

How so?

CHARLOTTE

They're not the same kind of crazy. They're different kinds of crazy.

SEAN

Who do you think is easier to get along with?

CHARLOTTE

Again, it's --

SEAN

-- a tossup, right.

CHARLOTTE

Danny would probably say your grandmother because the old man kind of screwed him up in the head a little.

SEAN

What about Colette?

CHARLOTTE

Well, she didn't really know your grandfather too well. She was so young when they divorced.

SEAN

So, Grandma?

Charlotte nods.

SEAN (cont'd)

I still can't believe that fucking scene at the house today. I thought you said she was happy I was coming.

CHARLOTTE

She was. She is.

SEAN

Didn't seem like it.

CHARLOTTE

Yeah, well, I think I may know what that whole thing today was about.

SEAN

Yeah?

CHARLOTTE

Yeah, your Great Aunt Sissy probably had something to do with it.

SEAN

You're probably right.

(then)

What was that one story you told me about her?

CHARLOTTE

Which one? I've probably told you dozens of stories over the years. You're going to have to be more specific.

SEAN

The one about what she said about "One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest."

CHARLOTTE

Oh, that one.

Charlotte laughs uncomfortably in an attempt to mask her contempt for Sissy.

CHARLOTTE (cont'd)

She tried defending Nurse Ratched once by saying that she was only trying to help those poor men.

Sean is dumbfounded.

SEAN

That's fucked up.

CHARLOTTE

Yes.

SEAN

I mean, that is really, really fucked up.

CHARLOTTE

That's Sissy. That's how she's always been and it's how she will always be.

Sean leans forward to check the time on his laptop and turns off the music.

SEAN

It's getting late. I should probably get some sleep.

CHARLOTTE

What time is it?

SEAN

Almost midnight.

CHARLOTTE

So, it's almost three in the morning back home?

SEAN

Correct.

CHARLOTTE

Wow.

Sean shuts the laptop and picks it up. He stands and stretches his arms high above his head before letting out a long yawn.

SEAN

Do you need any help cleaning up?

CHARLOTTE

I got it. I'll take care of it in the morning
before the maids come.

Sean starts walking inside.

CHARLOTTE (cont'd)

Take the gun inside, though. I don't want it out
here all night.

Sean turns around and grabs the gun off the table.

SEAN

Where do you want me to put it?

CHARLOTTE

Just stick it somewhere for now. My bag.

SEAN

Alright.

Sean starts walking inside again, but stops and turns once more.

SEAN (cont'd)

Goodnight.

CHARLOTTE

Goodnight, Sean. See you in the morning.

Sean turns again and heads inside, disappearing in the darkness of the unlit hotel room. Charlotte reaches for her cigarettes and lights up one more time. She stares into the moonlight, slowly puffing away as the sounds of crickets and other insects chirp in the distance.

FADE TO BLACK:

FADE IN:

EXT. BEVERLY HILLS HOTEL (POOL) - EARLY MORNING

Sean appears in the deserted pool area holding a towel, which he promptly throws onto a deck chair. He reaches into his pocket and pulls out a couple of room keys, throws them on top of the towel, removes his shirt and steps out of his flip-flops. He takes a few steps back and gets ready. He slaps his hands together for a second before taking a running start for the deep end of the pool. Just before he reaches the lip, he jumps in the air and pulls his legs against his chest. He lets out a loud whoop just before hitting the water.

INT. CHARLOTTE'S HOTEL ROOM - MORNING

A room service cart is parked beside the bed and on top of it are the remains of a grapefruit and croissant. Next to them is a basket overflowing with muffins, pastries and pound cake. A large coffee pot completes the cart. Charlotte is sitting in bed with her cell phone glued to her ear and a copy of the *Los Angeles Times* in her lap. She is speaking to ROBERT, her dear friend from college that Sean advised her to get in touch with.

CHARLOTTE
(into phone)

7:30 then?

ROBERT (VO)
Sounds great. Looking forward to it.

CHARLOTTE
Alright, I'll see you then.

Suddenly, a knock at the door.

ROBERT (VO)
See you then.

CHARLOTTE
Bye-bye, Robert.

ROBERT (VO)
Bye, Charlotte.

Charlotte hangs up the phone and throws it on the bed.

Another knock.

CHARLOTTE
USE THE KEY, SEAN.

The sound of the door opening and closing.

A drenched Sean appears from the hallway and drops his towel onto the ground.

SEAN
Hello, hello.

CHARLOTTE
Enjoy your swim?

SEAN
Water was freezing and there was no one there. It was fantastic. I had the whole pool to myself.

Sean walks over to the room service cart and pours himself a cup of coffee.

CHARLOTTE

Well, it is only 7:00.

SEAN

I know. I love it. I feel like I'm actually doing something. Is this all you got?

CHARLOTTE

Well, I didn't have a chance ask you if you wanted anything and I didn't want to order something hot then have it get cold.

SEAN

It's fine. I would have done the same.

(picks up a Danish)

These look good.

CHARLOTTE

I'm sure they're excellent. I had one of the croissants that was in there and it was lovely.

SEAN

I have no doubt.

Sean carefully selects a pastry to go with his coffee and walks around to the other side of the bed. He pulls up a chair and takes a sip of coffee.

SEAN (cont'd)

So, what are you doing today?

CHARLOTTE

I thought maybe I'd go to Westwood and do some shopping.

SEAN

Don't go to Westwood. Go to Rodeo.

CHARLOTTE

I can't afford Rodeo.

SEAN

But --

CHARLOTTE

-- no, before you say anything, no. I'm not letting you pay for me to go shopping too. You've paid for enough already.

SEAN

Just offering.

CHARLOTTE

I know and I appreciate it, but no. I'm going to Westwood and I'm going to get something with my money. I work too, you know.

SEAN

I know, but --

CHARLOTTE

-- no, no buts, okay? It's settled.

SEAN

Suit yourself.

CHARLOTTE

What about you? What are you doing today?

SEAN

I've got a lunch meeting.

CHARLOTTE

Oh, yeah?

SEAN

Yeah, my agent wants me to meet with this French director to talk about maybe doing some action flick.

CHARLOTTE

Are you thinking about doing it?

SEAN

Not really.

CHARLOTTE

Then why are you going?

SEAN

Free lunch.

CHARLOTTE

Touché, salesman. Do you need the car?

SEAN

No, I'll just take a cab. You take the car today.

Sean stands up and grabs his coffee, covering it with his pastry.

SEAN (cont'd)
Alright, I'm going to shower.

Sean walks over to this towel, picks it up off the floor and heads for the door.

CHARLOTTE
What time is Lana picking you up tonight?

Sean stops and turns.

SEAN
Like, 7:30, I think. Why? What are you doing tonight? Going to Grandma's?

CHARLOTTE
No, I took your advice and called Robert. We're going to have dinner downstairs.

SEAN
Nice. What time?

CHARLOTTE
7:30.

SEAN
Okay, cool. Maybe we'll go down together.

CHARLOTTE
That would be nice.

SEAN
Alright, I've really got to hop in the shower now. This chlorine in my eyes is killing me.

CHARLOTTE
Go, go, go.

SEAN
Have a good day.

CHARLOTTE
You too.

Sean turns and walks away as Charlotte picks up the paper and leafs through it.

The sound of the door opening and closing.

DISOLVE TO:

INT. BEVERLY HILLS HOTEL (LOBBY) - EVENING

Sean and Charlotte step off the elevator. She is wearing a sensible, but slim-fitting dress with matching heels. Her makeup is subtle, but elegant. Sean is dressed much more casually. The two walk past the front desk, stop and face each other.

CHARLOTTE

Well, have a good time.

SEAN

I will. You too. You look nice.

CHARLOTTE

Thanks, you said that twice already.

SEAN

Well, I may just say it again.

They share a laugh.

CHARLOTTE

Now, remember. Not --

SEAN

-- too late. Not too many drinks. I know.

CHARLOTTE

Okay, well --

Charlotte and Sean hug.

CHARLOTTE (cont'd)

Be safe, honey.

SEAN

I will.

CHARLOTTE

And tell Lana I said to give her mother my best.

SEAN

I will.

The hug ends.

SEAN (cont'd)

Alright, I'm going to go have a smoke.

CHARLOTTE

And I am going to get a glass of Pinot at the bar.

SEAN

Take it easy, Mom.

CHARLOTTE

You too.

Sean turns and heads for the front door as Charlotte beelines for the Polo Lounge.

EXT. BEVERLY HILLS HOTEL (MAIN ENTRANCE) - CONTINUOUS

Sean steps out under the awning and examines his surroundings. No sign of his ride yet. He reaches into his jacket pocket and emerges with his cigarettes. He pulls one out and lights up as a SUITED MAN entering the hotel passes him and gives him a friendly wave.

SUITED MAN

Hey, how's it going?

SEAN

Not much.

(then)

I mean, fine.

Suited Man passes Sean without acknowledging either of his responses.

SEAN (cont'd)

Goddamn it.

INT. THE POLO LOUNGE (BAR) - MOMENTS LATER

Charlotte is sitting alone at the bar as a BARTENDER bearing a large glass of wine approaches her. He places the glass in front of her.

CHARLOTTE

Thank you.

BARTENDER

Would you care to open a tab, ma'am?

CHARLOTTE

No, that's alright. Actually, I'm waiting for someone. Would it be okay to transfer my drink to my dinner check when he arrives?

BARTENDER

Of course.

No sooner has the Bartender finished his sentence that Robert enters.

ROBERT
Hello, Charlotte.

Robert's stealthy approach causes Charlotte to nearly fall out of her seat.

CHARLOTTE
Robert! You scared me.

Robert is a well-dressed man also in his mid-fifties that is a little shorter than Charlotte.

ROBERT
Sorry, I didn't mean to.

CHARLOTTE
No, no, it's fine. Well, come here. Give me a hug.

Charlotte and Robert share a quick, friendly hug.

ROBERT
Have you been here long?

CHARLOTTE
No, I just got here.

ROBERT
Perfect timing then.

CHARLOTTE
Yes, perfect timing.

ROBERT
Do you want to stay for a drink or just head to the table?

CHARLOTTE
Let's go to the table. I haven't eaten since this morning. I'm starving.
(to Bartender)
If you could just transfer that drink, please?

BARTENDER
Yes, very good, ma'am.

Charlotte hops off the barstool and grabs her purse and glass as Robert extends an arm to her.

ROBERT
Shall we?

Robert takes Charlotte's arm and leads her into the dining room.

EXT. BEVERLY HILLS HOTEL (MAIN ENTRANCE) - MOMENTS LATER

Sean is still standing under the awning when a late model Volvo S40 pulls into the drop-off area and honks twice.

INT. VOLVO S40 - CONTINUOUS

LANA, an effortlessly beautiful girl, is behind the wheel. Sean approaches and leans into the passenger's side window.

SEAN

Hey, girl.

LANA

Get in, let's go.

Sean opens the passenger's side door and hops in.

EXT. BEVERLY HILLS HOTEL (MAIN ENTRANCE) - CONTINUOUS

The Volvo speeds away.

INT./EXT. VOLVO S40 (MOVING) - MOMENTS LATER

Sean is kicking back in the passenger's seat as Lana scrolls through her iPod and steers the car west down Sunset.

SEAN

What's with the mommy mobile?

LANA

It's Narissa's.

SEAN

What's wrong with yours?

LANA

It started overheating the other day, so I took it into the shop.

SEAN

Did they say what's wrong?

LANA

Yeah, it's just the thermostat, but I'm getting the master cylinder replaced too.

SEAN

And Narissa doesn't mind you driving her car?

LANA

She doesn't know.

SEAN

You just took it?

LANA

Kind of.

SEAN

What do you mean "kind of?"

LANA

She went to Aspen for Christmas with her parents and left the car at the house.

SEAN

Sure no one's going to rat you out?

LANA

Everyone else is gone. I've got the place to myself.

SEAN

I guess you're safe then.

LANA

I can't find anything.

Lana stops scrolling and passes the iPod to Sean.

LANA (cont'd)

Pick something.

Sean scrolls through the iPod.

SEAN

Any requests?

LANA

Just put on something that's good.

SEAN

Got some shitty music on here or something?

LANA

No, not at all. It's mostly good stuff, but there's some not so good stuff too.

Sean finds an example of Lana's "not so good stuff."

SEAN

Yeah, like the complete Ace of Bass discography?

LANA

Hey, I loved them when we were little. "Happy Nation" was the first record I ever bought. I had it on cassette.

SEAN

You told me Green Day was the first record you ever bought.

LANA

I lied. I wanted you to think I was cool.

SEAN

I do think you're cool.

LANA

You're just saying that.

SEAN

No, I really do.

LANA

Uh-huh.

Sean plays "Cruel to Be Kind" by Spacehog.

LANA (cont'd)

Good call.

SEAN

Yeah, I've actually been on more of an old school kick lately and wanted something different.

LANA

Like what?

SEAN

I've been with my Mom the last couple of days, so if I play anything it's got to be something she would like.

LANA

I repeat.

SEAN

Beach Boys, Dylan, Stones. Listened to some Fleetwood Mac last night.

LANA

Nice.

(then)

Put some on.

SEAN

Fleetwood Mac? You have some on here? I didn't see it.

LANA

It's on there somewhere. Probably under The Fleetwood Mac.

Sean scrolls through the iPod again.

LANA (cont'd)

How's your mom doing, by the way?

SEAN

She's good. She sends her best. She's having dinner with her friend Robert tonight. Oh, that reminds me. You have the stuff?

LANA

It's in the console.

Sean puts down the iPod and opens up the center console. He emerges with a quarter ounce of marijuana. He closes the console and opens the bag, inhaling the smell deeply.

SEAN

Pretty good.

LANA

Yeah, it's really good.

SEAN

How much do I owe you?

LANA

One-forty.

Sean closes the bag and sticks it in the side compartment of the passenger's door. He reaches into his back pocket for his wallet and pulls out seven twenty-dollar bills.

SEAN

(passes money)

Here you go.

Lana takes the money and stuffs it into her bra.

LANA

Thank you.

Sean picks the iPod back up and continues searching for the requested Fleetwood Mac.

LANA (cont'd)

You don't want to smoke now?

SEAN

You have papers or something?

LANA

Come on, Sean, remember who you're talking to here. I'm always prepared.

Lana reaches into her cleavage, pulls out a fat joint and passes it to Sean. He puts down the iPod and runs the joint under his nose the way someone would a fine cigar.

SEAN

Still wearing that strawberry stuff, huh?

LANA

(blushes)

Yeah.

Sean pops the joint into his mouth, lights it and inhales deeply.

SEAN

(exhales)

Holy shit.

LANA

I told you. I've got some blunts in my bag for later too.

Sean holds the joint between his fingers and finally finds some Fleetwood Mac on the iPod. "Say You Love Me" plays.

LANA (cont'd)

Good song.

Sean takes another hit and passes to Lana, who tokes.

SEAN

(exhales)

Great song. So, where's this sushi place?

LANA

We're not getting sushi.

SEAN

Thai?

LANA

No, we're going to that party.

Lana passes back to Sean and he tokes.

SEAN

I thought you said it was just a little get together.

LANA

It was supposed to be, but I think a lot of people are going to be there, actually.

SEAN

Whatever.

Sean passes back to Lana and she tokes.

LANA

It's not a problem, is it?

SEAN

No, I don't care. It's fine.

LANA

I'm only going to have a drink or two, so feel free to --

SEAN

-- oh, I was planning on it.

Lana passes back to Sean and he tokes.

SEAN (cont'd)

So, whose house is this we're going to?

LANA

This guy I know, Jay's. He was in my contracts class.

SEAN

Is he cool?

LANA

Yeah, he's really cool. We'll have fun. I promise.

Sean passes back to Lana and she tokes.

EXT. SUNSET BLVD. - CONTINUOUS

The Volvo continues cruising down the road.

DISOLVE TO:

INT. THE POLO LOUNGE (DINING ROOM) - EVENING

A well-dressed AGENT is sitting at a table by himself, screaming into his phone. His hair is thinning and he could stand to lose some weight.

AGENT
(into phone)

Yeah?

(then)

Tell him to go fuck himself.

(then)

No, No, No! You tell him I don't even walk across a fucking room for that kind of money!

(then)

Well, fuck you too! And how's this, asshole?
You're fire! Do you hear me? You're motherfucking fired!

Agent slams the phone down into the table, knocking over his wine glass in the process.

ON CHARLOTTE/ROBERT

Charlotte and Robert are sitting across from Agent eating prime rib and Yorkshire pudding. They can hear everything he has been saying. Charlotte leans in towards her co-conspirator.

CHARLOTTE
(whispers)

Sometimes, I really miss this town.

Robert laughs heartily, wipes his mouth with his linen napkin and leans in.

ROBERT
(whispers)

Have you heard any of the one that's been going on behind me?

Charlotte looks over Robert's shoulder and sees two men, one wearing a five-thousand-dollar suit and the other in a leather Prada jacket eating oysters and throwing back martinis.

CHARLOTTE

(whispers)

No, what are they talking about?

ROBERT

(whispers)

Shh, shh, just listen.

ON TWO MEN

One man is a NETWORK EXECUTIVE and the other is a PRODUCER.

PRODUCER

-- it's a home run. Guaranteed.

NETWORK EXECUTIVE

But where's the audience?

PRODUCER

It's already built-in. It appeals to the same kind of mouth breathers that watch all the other shows because they like seeing people make complete asses of themselves on television.

NETWORK EXECUTIVE

I don't know. It just seems a bit tawdry, even for this network. Tell it to me again.

PRODUCER

You have a panel of people, okay? Maybe one's a shrink or a counselor or something.

NETWORK EXECUTIVE

How about just some junkie off the street?

PRODUCER

That'd work too. Think "What's My Line?" meets "Survivor," okay?

NETWORK EXECUTIVE

I'm listening.

PRODUCER

And each panelist asks the contestant a bunch of questions until he guesses which drug the they're fucked up on.

NETWORK EXECUTIVE

Only one contestant?

PRODUCER

Yeah, that's right.

NETWORK EXECUTIVE

What about the panel? How many people on the panel? How many people get to ask questions?

PRODUCER

I don't know. Three or four, maybe? Something like that.

NETWORK EXECUTIVE

But what if the schmuck's on some combination of things, you know? Like, what if he's mixing Percodan and vodka? Or what if he's blowing rails and smoking dope? What about that?

A beat.

PRODUCER

I'm not sure. I hadn't thought of that.

NETWORK EXECUTIVE

Have to admit it's a possibility. I seriously doubt you're just going to find someone who's only on coke or only on Oxy around here. Everybody's mixing these days.

PRODUCER

You're right. I hadn't thought of that. It's doable, though.

NETWORK EXECUTIVE

Oh, it's definitely doable. What did you say you wanted to call it again?

PRODUCER

"Are You on Crack or What?" What do you think?

NETWORK EXECUTIVE

It's alright.

PRODUCER

It's a working title.

NETWORK EXECUTIVE

Yeah, we can think of another name if we do it.

ON CHARLOTTE/ROBERT

Charlotte's eyes roll back in amazement.

CHARLOTTE
(whispers)

Wow.

ROBERT

See?

CHARLOTTE

Yeah, good catch. How was your prime rib?

Robert places his knife and fork in the middle of the plate. Only a few pieces of fat and a small bit of Yorkshire pudding remain.

ROBERT

Excellent. Thank you for talking me out of the scallops.

CHARLOTTE

Of course.

Charlotte has slightly more on her plate, but also places her knife and fork in the middle of it. They push their plates to the edge of the table.

ROBERT

Seriously, excellent.

Charlotte and Robert each take a sip of wine.

CHARLOTTE

Think you might be up for dessert?

ROBERT

I don't know. I'm kind of stuffed.

CHARLOTTE

Come on, split one with me.

ROBERT

I really don't think I can.

CHARLOTTE

Oh, come on.

Robert chuckles to himself.

ROBERT

Going to twist my arm, Char?

CHARLOTTE

If I have to.

ROBERT

Alright, fine, fine. But I get to pick.

CHARLOTTE

Whatever you want.

ROBERT

Something with chocolate. A lot of chocolate.

CHARLOTTE

And I'm going to have a Grand Marnier.

ROBERT

You sure?

CHARLOTTE

Yeah, what the hell. I'm on vacation, right?

ROBERT

A funeral-cation, yes, but I'm not going to argue that point.

A WAITER arrives at the table, picks up the plates and cradles them in his arms.

WAITER

How was everything this evening?

ROBERT

Fantastic, thank you.

CHARLOTTE

The prime rib was delicious.

WAITER

Yes, it's been really popular tonight.

ROBERT

I'm not a bit surprised.

WAITER

Would you care to look at a desert menu this evening?

ROBERT

Yes, and I would like a cup of decaf and --

Robert points to Charlotte.

CHARLOTTE

Grand Marnier if you have it?

WAITER

We do.

ROBERT

Actually, do you have anything that's just, like, death by chocolate? You know, like, something that's just, you know, unbelievably decadent?

The waiter is amused by Robert's question.

WAITER

Yes, sir. As a matter of fact, we have a few.

ROBERT

Of course, you do. Just tell me which one you would get.

WAITER

Well, I would have to recommend the mocha ice cream pie, sir.

ROBERT

Oh, that sounds good.

CHARLOTTE

Yeah, that does sound good.

WAITER

It's very good, ma'am. Hot fudge and chocolate dipped Florentine.

ROBERT

Wow. Okay, we'll have that.

WAITER

Two forks, sir?

ROBERT

Please.

WAITER

Decaf, Grand Marnier, mocha ice cream pie with two forks.

CHARLOTTE

I think that'll do it.

WAITER

Alright, I'll be right back with those for you.

ROBERT

Thank you.

Waiter exits.

CHARLOTTE

Glad I talked you into dessert now?

ROBERT

Definitely.

Charlotte and Robert raise their glasses and toast.

CHARLOTTE/ROBERT

Cheers.

EXT. JAY'S HOUSE - LATE EVENING - ESTABLISHING

JAY'S family lives in a multi-million-dollar Beverly Hills mansion. A number of people are carousing outside and a couple is making out by the pool.

INT. JAY'S HOUSE - REC ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The party resembles something from a John Hughes film.

JAY and Sean are playing ten-cup beer pong with two Abercrombie & Fitch-clad frat boys named MATT and JARED. Jay and Sean are on the last cup, whereas Jared and Matt have failed to make a single shot. Judging by the size of the CROWD that has gathered around the table, Jay and Sean have been dominating for some time. Sean holds the ping-pong ball in his hand preparing to take the game-winning shot with Lana beside him.

Music blares in the b.g.

JARED

COME ON, HOLLYWOOD. YOU AIN'T GOT SHIT. YOU AIN'T GOT SHIT!

Sean is unfazed. He shoots, he scores and the Crowd erupts.

SEAN

LEBRON JAMES! WITH NO REGARD FOR HUMAN LIFE!

MATT

FUCK!

Sean and Jay hug in celebration before Sean reaches for his drinking cup.

SEAN

GET NAKED, ASSHOLES. RIGHT NOW!

JARED

OH, COME ON!

SEAN
YOU KNOW THE RULES. SHUTOUT EQUALS NAKED LAP.

JARED
JAY, COME ON! DO WE HAVE TO?

JAY
SORRY, BOYS. DOWN TO YOUR BARE ASSES AND AROUND
THE HOUSE.

MATT
FUCK!

The crowd chants: "Take it off!" "Let's see that ass!" "Hope it's not cold outside!"

SEAN
NOW, GODDAMN IT!

Matt and Jared start stripping as Lana throws her arms around Sean and kisses him.

LANA
Good game, babe.

SEAN
Thanks.

JAY
Up for one more?

Sean looks at Lana. It's late. They should be getting back.

SEAN
Nah, we should be heading back.

JAY
Come on, just one more, bro.

SEAN
I'd love to, but we have a funeral to go to in the morning and we have to get back to the hotel at some point.

JAY
Alright.

SEAN
Hey, thanks for having me, man.

JAY
No problem. You're welcome here anytime.

SEAN

We'll do it again soon.

JAY

Absolutely.

Jay and Sean hug once more before Sean turns his attention to Matt and Jared, who are now standing naked with their hands covering their genitals.

SEAN

YOU TWO, OUTSIDE!

Crowd erupts once more as Jared and Matt reluctantly make their way through. Sean and Lana walk slowly behind the incendiary crowd.

LANA

Sure you don't want to play one more?

SEAN

Yeah, I want to keep my undefeated record intact.

LANA

Alright.

SEAN

Come on, let's bounce. Stop and get some Gatorades for the morning and get back to the hotel.

LANA

And smoke.

SEAN

Yes, and smoke. We'll listen to music too.

LANA

I can't wait.

Lana kisses Sean on the cheek before he tosses back the last bit of beer in his cup.

SEAN

Let's get some taquitos too. I'm fucking starving.

LANA

You're pretty drunk.

SEAN

You can't prove that.

Sean and Lana share a laugh as they follow the crowd out of the house.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. BEVERLY HILLS HOTEL (MAIN ENTRANCE) - MORNING - ESTABLISHING

An elderly couple step out of a Cadillac CTS and are quickly greeted by a valet.

INT. CHARLOTTE'S HOTEL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Charlotte is face down in bed. The patio door appears to have been open all night and an empty standard of red wine is on the table.

Suddenly, the room phone rings.

Without moving, Charlotte reaches over to the nightstand and picks up the phone. She slams the receiver back down without answering and lets out a long, painful groan.

CHARLOTTE

Oh, God.

INT. SEAN'S HOTEL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Lana is sitting on the edge of the bed with the bag of marijuana, a grinder, a long rolling machine and a bottle of Gatorade. She is wearing a sensible black dress with matching Chanel sunglasses. Sean's laptop is beside her playing music and beside the laptop is a blunt. Sean is standing in front of a mirror in the hallway tying his tie.

SEAN

You know "Hotel California?"

Lana is focused on rolling and paying little to no attention to Sean.

LANA

Uh-huh.

SEAN

Remember the album cover?

LANA

Not really.

SEAN

It's this hotel.

LANA
Really.

SEAN
Yeah.

LANA
That's cool.

Sean finishes tying his tie. He knows Lana is not listening to him and starts embellishing.

SEAN
So, I'm up for this new Scorsese movie.

LANA
That's nice.

SEAN
Yeah, it's a reimagining of "A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court."

LANA
Uh-huh.

Sean grabs his coat and a pair of sunglasses off the bed.

SEAN
Bulldozer, truck stop, batwing, colostomy, harp--

LANA
-- you know that thing you do where you just spout off random words because you think I'm not listening?

SEAN
Oh, you were paying attention.

LANA
No.

Lana finishes rolling, grabs her purse and drops the blunt into it. She walks over to Sean and kisses him softly.

LANA (cont'd)
I just have to use the bathroom real quick.

INT. BEVERLY HILLS HOTEL (HALLWAY) - MOMENTS LATER

Sean and Lana are standing at Charlotte's door. The door opens to reveal a disheveled, but clean, Charlotte in a bathrobe. She can barely keep her eyes open. Sean removes his sunglasses.

SEAN

Oh, fuck.

CHARLOTTE

I'm in trouble.

SEAN

What happened?

CHARLOTTE

Just get in here.

Sean and Lana enter and shut the door behind them.

INT. CHARLOTTE'S HOTEL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Charlotte walks towards the bed where she has a black Armani skirt suit laid out and ready to go. Sean and Lana follow close behind.

SEAN

What the hell's going on? What happened last night?

Charlotte takes a seat on the bed. Her balance is not up to par.

SEAN (cont'd)

I thought you were just going to dinner with Robert.

CHARLOTTE

I was. I mean, I did.
(to Lana)

Hi, Lana.

LANA

Hi, Mrs. K.

CHARLOTTE

You look very nice.

LANA

Thank you.

SEAN

Wait, wait, hold on a second. Tell me what happened last night.

CHARLOTTE

Well, I had a glass of wine at dinner.

(then)

And a few drinks with desert.

Sean notices the empty standard of red on the patio table.

SEAN

Where did that come from?

CHARLOTTE

I stopped at Ralph's when I went shopping yesterday.

SEAN

And drank the whole thing?

CHARLOTTE

I wasn't planning to. I don't know. I don't know what happened.

Sean sits on the bed beside Charlotte and puts an arm around her.

SEAN

Are you okay?

CHARLOTTE

I'll live.

SEAN

How's your head?

CHARLOTTE

Pounding, actually.

SEAN

Shit. Alright.

(to Lana)

Babe.

LANA

What's up?

Sean reaches into his pocket and pulls out his room key. He stands up and hands it Lana.

SEAN

Go to my room and make some tea.

The look on Sean's face says it all.

LANA

(whispers)

You sure?

SEAN
 (whispers)
 No, but do it anyway.

LANA
 (whispers)
 Sean, I --

SEAN
 (whispers)
 -- I know. Just go.

Lana reluctantly turns and exits the room as Sean sits back down on the bed with Charlotte.

The door opening and closing is heard in the b.g.

CHARLOTTE
 Where is she going?

SEAN
 She's going to make you some tea.

CHARLOTTE
 She really looks nice.

SEAN
 Yeah, she looks great.

CHARLOTTE
 I always liked her, you know?

SEAN
 I know. You've said that a couple million times already.

CHARLOTTE
 Well, maybe I'll say it again.

Sean and Charlotte share a laugh.

CHARLOTTE (cont'd)
 How much time do we have?

SEAN
 (checks watch)
 Little over an hour.

CHARLOTTE
 Okay, well I'm showered, so --

SEAN

-- all you have to do is hair and makeup, right?

CHARLOTTE

And get dressed.

Suddenly, the room phone rings.

CHARLOTTE (cont'd)

What could it possibly be now?

Charlotte walks over to the nightstand and answers.

CHARLOTTE
(into phone)

Hello?

MOTHER (VO)

Charlotte?

CHARLOTTE

Mother?

MOTHER (VO)

Where have you been? I've been calling you for the last twenty minutes.

CHARLOTTE

I was in the shower.

EXT. MORTUARY (PARKING LOT) - CONTINUOUS

A very jittery Mother is pacing back and forth in the parking lot of the mortuary on her cell phone.

MOTHER

Well, you're not going to believe it.

CHARLOTTE (VO)

Try me.

MOTHER

Everyone said she would lose it when Mother died and she has. She's lost it.

INTERCUT:

CHARLOTTE

Who?

MOTHER

Sissy! She's screaming at the mortician that the body doesn't look good enough and now she wants to postpone the whole goddamn thing!

CHARLOTTE

She wants her money back.

MOTHER

Of course, she does!

INT. SEAN'S HOTEL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Lana is sitting on the edge of the bed with the bag of marijuana and the grinder. She opens up the grinder and pours out a decent amount of marijuana onto the nightstand then rips open a teabag and pours out the contents. She picks up a few fingers full of marijuana and pinches them into the teabag.

INT. CHARLOTTE'S HOTEL ROOM - MOMEMNTS LATER

Charlotte is dressed with makeup applied and hair done. She paces frantically around the room while Sean sit calmly on the bed.

CHARLOTTE

-- been going on between the two of them for fifty years.

SEAN

We'll be alright.

CHARLOTTE

You don't know that. You don't know anything right now!

SEAN

I'm just trying to help.

CHARLOTTE

I appreciate that, but you're not right now.

SEAN

Okay, I'm sorry.

CHARLOTTE

Don't say you're sorry. It's a sign --

Charlotte realizes what she was about to say and can't believe it.

CHARLOTTE (cont'd)

Fuck. I sounded just like your grandmother for a second, didn't I?

SEAN

It's alright.

Charlotte sits down on the bed beside Sean and takes his hand in hers.

CHARLOTTE

No, honey, it's not. I know you're trying to help and you're right. It will be okay. We'll be okay.

The sound of the door opening and closing.

Lana appears from the hallway with a steaming hot mug in her hand. She walks over to the bed.

LANA

(passes mug)

Here you go, Mrs. K.

CHARLOTTE

Oh, thank you.

(then, to Sean)

What is this again?

SEAN

It's --

LANA

-- it's this special tea from Oregon, Mrs. K.

CHARLOTTE

Alright.

SEAN

Should help with the headache.

CHARLOTTE

You know, the same thing happened at your other great-grandmother's funeral thirty years ago.

SEAN

What, you got loaded the night before?

CHARLOTTE

You'd think I know better now, right?

Charlotte takes a sip of the tea and nods approvingly.

CHARLOTTE (cont'd)
Not bad. Thank you, Lana.

LANA
Sure, no problem.

Charlotte takes another sip as Sean rubs her back.

CHARLOTTE
Where did you say it was from again?

INT. DODGE CHARGER (MOVING) - MORNING

Sean is behind the wheel with Charlotte riding shotgun and Lana in the backseat. Charlotte is obviously stoned and rubbing her jaw in a circular motion.

SEAN
-- how's your head feel, though?

CHARLOTTE
Fine, but my mouth feels really strange. Almost like it's not connected to the rest of my face.

Lana hits Sean on the shoulder with her purse. She is not pleased with this development.

CHARLOTTE (cont'd)
How much longer?

SEAN
Not long.

CHARLOTTE
Sure you know where this place is?

SEAN
Yeah, we're fine. Don't worry.

CHARLOTTE
I'm not worried. I know you'll get us there, honey. I trust you.
(then)
My face just feels so weird.
(to Lana)
Was there something in that tea you're not telling me?

LANA
No.

CHARLOTTE

You sure?

LANA

Pretty sure, yeah.

CHARLOTTE

Interesting.

(then)

You guys want to get some Egg McMuffins?

EXT. MORTUARY (MAIN ENTRANCE) - MORNING

The Dodge pulls up in front of the mortuary. A group of people have gathered around the front entrance wearing black and similar colors. Charlotte steps out of the car and turns to Sean, who is still behind the wheel.

CHARLOTTE

Just going to park the car?

SEAN

Yeah, we'll be in in a few, okay?

CHARLOTTE

Okay.

Charlotte shuts the door and the Dodge drives away. She walks slowly up the stairs to the mortuary and spots Dan standing at the top.

CHARLOTTE

Dan!

Dan is wearing a dark gray suit and standing beside his beautiful wife, SUZANNE. He sees Charlotte and walks down to meet her. They hug.

DAN

Good to see you.

CHARLOTTE

Oh, you too.

The hug ends.

DAN

Where's Sean?

CHARLOTTE

Just parking the car.

Suzanne appears and hugs Charlotte.

SUZANNE
Charlotte, good to see you.

CHARLOTTE
You too.

The hug ends.

DAN
Did you have any trouble finding the place?

CHARLOTTE
No, Sean got us here without incident.

Something about Charlotte seems a little off.

DAN
Are you alright?

INT./EXT. DODGE CHARGER (MOVING) - MOMENTS LATER

Sean continues driving until he notices a COUPLE walking towards the mortuary.

SEAN
Check it out.

LANA
What?

SEAN
(points to the Man)
This guy right here.

The Dodge pulls up and Sean taps the horn, which startles the Couple. The Man looks ready to hurl insults at Sean until he recognizes him. The Man is RONNIE, Sean's cousin, and the woman is KAREN, his wife.

RONNIE
Sean! How the hell are you, man?

SEAN
Good, good.
(motions to Lana)
Ronnie, this is Lana.

RONNIE
Hi, Lana.

SEAN

Lana, this is my cousin Ronnie and his wife Karen.

LANA

Nice to meet you both.

RONNIE

Nice to meet you.

KAREN

Nice to meet you, Lana.

SEAN

Ronnie, you want to take a ride really quick?

Sean raises his eyebrows and cracks a smile. It's a tell.

RONNIE

Yeah, sure.

(to Karen)

I'll be right back, honey.

Ronnie kisses Karen on the cheek.

KAREN

Where are you guys going?

SEAN

We're just going to the drugstore to get waters.

KAREN

Okay.

RONNIE

We'll be back in five minutes, babe. You won't even notice I'm gone. Do you need anything?

KAREN

No, I'm good.

RONNIE

Alright, see you in a few.

Ronnie hops into the passenger's side of the car and it drives away.

SEAN

You got it?

RONNIE

Of course I got it. You got it?

SEAN
 (motions to Lana)
 She's got it.

EXT. MORTUARY (MAIN ENTRANCE) - CONTINUOUS

Charlotte, Dan and Suzanne are standing in a tight circle at the bottom of the steps.

DAN
 Jesus Christ. Today?
 (shakes head)
 Look, just go inside. I'll go to CVS and get you something.

CHARLOTTE
 I'm really not that bad, Danny. I'll be alright.

DAN
 You need some water. Trust me.

CHARLOTTE
 My head's fine, though. Really. I just feel, I don't know. I just feel really warm all over for some reason.

DAN
 Yeah, you definitely need some water.
 (to Suzanne)
 You have the keys?

Suzanne reaches into her purse, emerges with a set of car keys and drops them into Dan's hand.

DAN
 Alright, I'll be back in a few minutes.

Dan kisses Suzanne and exits.

SUZANNE
 So, what brought it on?

CHARLOTTE
 I don't know.

Charlotte and Suzanne start walking up the steps into the mortuary.

SUZANNE
 Was your mother calling all day yesterday or something?

CHARLOTTE

No, actually. We didn't talk yesterday.

SUZANNE

Have you seen her yet?

CHARLOTTE

No. She called, though.

SUZANNE

I meant since you got here. Since Saturday.

CHARLOTTE

Yeah, we stopped by the house after we got in. Funny story about that.

SUZANNE

Oh, yeah?

INT./EXT. DODGE CHARGER - MOMENTS LATER

Sean, Ronnie, and Lana are hot-boxing the Dodge in the mortuary parking lot. Sean is also counting his winnings from the dead pool and Ronnie has the blunt.

"Texas Floods" plays in the b.g.

RONNIE

"Can't be more than a hundred and fourteen."

SEAN

"Mongo, only pawn in game of life."

LANA

What are you two talking about?

RONNIE

That's "Blazing Saddles", honey.

(to Sean)

Goddamn. You weren't kidding. This shit's good.

SEAN

It really is.

LANA

Yeah, pretty killer, right?

RONNIE

Definitely goes to eleven.

Ronnie passes to Lana and she takes.

RONNIE (cont'd)
So, how's the show going?

SEAN
Going good. We just wrapped the new season.

RONNIE
That's awesome, bro.

SEAN
Yeah, it is pretty cool. Hope people like it.

Sean finishes counting the bills, rolls them into a wad and stuffs it into his pants pocket.

LANA
I'm sure they will.

RONNIE
Definitely.

Lana passes to Sean and he tokes.

RONNIE (cont'd)
(to Lana)
So, you guys fucking or what?

LANA
Kind of.

RONNIE
Good for you.

LANA
Thank you.

RONNIE
Pretty serious?

LANA
No, not really. We're just --

SEAN
-- having fun.

RONNIE
Nice. I'm telling you, Sean. Don't ever get married. Ever. Stay single.

Sean passes to Ronnie and he tokes.

SEAN
 (exhales)
 I'll take it under consideration.

RONNIE
 It's the worst.

LANA
 Saying you don't love your wife?

RONNIE
 No, of course not. I love my fucking wife.
 I'm just saying.
 (to Sean)
 But you wouldn't believe the amount of pussy I
 got when I was your age.

LANA
 Cute.

RONNIE
 Seriously. Get married and you'll see. It's all
 down hill after the first six months.

SEAN
 That's really encouraging, thanks.

Ronnie passes to Lana and she tokes.

RONNIE
 Don't make the same mistake I did.

SEAN
 Yeah, we'll see.

RONNIE
 So, how do you think this thing's going to go?

SEAN
 Don't know.

RONNIE
 Good thing you brought weed. If this thing goes
 in the shitter, at least you'll be set.

Lana passes to Sean and he tokes.

RONNIE (cont'd)
 (buttons jacket)
 Alright, I should probably bail. I don't want to
 look too stoned or Karen's going to kill me.
 (more)

RONNIE (cont'd)
How do I look?

SEAN
Like shit.

RONNIE
Seriously, bro. Come on, how do I fucking look?

LANA
You look fine.

RONNIE
Thanks, Lana. It is Lana, right?

LANA
Yes.

Sean passes to Ronnie, who tokes once more before passing to Lana, who also tokes.

RONNIE
(exhales)
I'm going to have to lie at my NA meeting. Again.

Ronnie checks his hair in the rearview mirror and reaches for the door, but Lana stops him.

LANA
Hold on.

Lana pulls a bottle of perfume out of her purse and sprays Ronnie with it.

RONNIE
Thanks.
(sniffs)
Strawberries?

Lana nods.

RONNIE (cont'd)
Not bad.
(to Sean)
Hey, man. Thanks again.

Sean and Ronnie shake hands.

SEAN
Thank you too.

RONNIE

Let me know the next time you're in town. We'll go to the Body Shop or something.

SEAN

Sounds good.

RONNIE

You still have my number, right?

SEAN

Yeah.

RONNIE

Alright.

(to Lana)

Nice to meet you.

LANA

You too.

Lana passes to Sean and he tokes.

RONNIE

See you on the inside, guys.

LANA

Say "hi" to your wife for me.

Ronnie steps out of the car and shuts the door behind him.

LANA (cont'd)

Interesting guy.

SEAN

Yeah, he's a trip.

INT. MORTUARY (MAIN HALL) - MORNING

Charlotte, Suzanne, Colette and MARTIN, Mother's elderly British husband, are standing in a circle making small talk in the back of the mortuary as they wait for the service to start.

COLETTE

He said the grapes were great.

Suddenly, a loud thump comes from the back.

MARTIN

What the bloody hell was that?

Incoherent voices, including Mother's, rise, getting louder by the second.

CHARLOTTE

Oh, no.

The clatter grows.

MARTIN

I'm not going in there.

CHARLOTTE

Martin, maybe you should.

MARTIN

No way. I've got a strong feeling that your aunt is back there and that if I see her I might be compelled to use some unpardonable language.

A beat.

COLETTE

I'll go.

SUZANNE

Me too.

Charlotte gives both women a look of appreciation and nods. Together, the three women - Musketeers, really - start walking in the direction of what is certainly a catastrophe.

INT. MORTUARY (PREP AREA) - CONTINUOUS

In the prep area of the mortuary are Mother, a skeletal man named BARNEY, and the elusive, but dreaded, AUNT SISSY. Aunt Sissy is a thin woman of late age that was once gorgeous in her own right. The argument between the sisters is very heated. Years of feuding of have come to this.

AUNT SISSY

I am not taking her out there until they fix her!
(to Barney)
Barney, help me. Please.

Barney remains silent, looking like he's ready for embalming himself.

CHARLOTTE

Excuse me, but are you two out of your fucking minds?

MOTHER

Stay out of this, Charlotte.

(to Aunt Sissy)

I don't care what you do. I don't care what you say. I don't care what you think. You're not going to get away with it. Not this time.

AUNT SISSY

SHE LOOKS TERRIBLE. I AM NOT HAVING MOTHER BURIED LIKE THIS.

Charlotte, Suzanne, and Colette stand in silent awe.

MOTHER

SHE LOOKS FINE! SHE LOOKS BETTER THAN SHE DID TEN YEARS AGO, FOR CHRIST'S SAKE. YOU JUST DON'T WANT TO PAY THE BILL. YOU STILL THINK I WASN'T GOING TO SPLIT IT WITH YOU, DON'T YOU?

Mother grabs a hold of the casket and starts pulling forcefully. Aunt Sissy weighs in and grabs the other end.

AUNT SISSY

I'M THE ONE WHO TOOK CARE OF HER. I'M THE ONE WHO SACRIFICED MY YOUTH AND A FAMILY TO TAKE CARE OF HER!

Considering the respective ages of both women and that neither one of them could possibly weigh more than a hundred and twenty, it's an impressive battle.

COLETTE

Oh, for fuck's sake, Sissy. Shut up!

Suzanne, Mother and Charlotte are shocked. No one could have suspected that Colette, of all people, would speak up.

MOTHER

She's right. I'VE BEEN LISTENING TO YOUR CRAP FOR FIFTY YEARS. REMEMBER CHRISTMAS OF '91?

COLETTE

(whispers)

I really wish I had a camera right now.

AUNT SISSY

WHAT ABOUT IT?

MOTHER

I BOUGHT MOTHER A BATHROBE AT SAKS AND IT ENDED UP IN YOUR CLOSET. YEAH, THOUGHT I FORGOT ABOUT THAT DIDN'T YOU? TWO-HUNDRED-DOLLARS AND IT ENDED UP IN YOUR CLOSET!

AUNT SISSY

DON'T BE RIDICULOUS.

MOTHER

TELLING ME I IMAGINED IT? ARE YOU SAYING I DIDN'T SEE A BATHROBE IN YOUR CLOSET? BECAUSE IF THAT'S WHAT YOU'RE SAYING, THEN YOU'RE A GODDAMN LIAR. I KNOW I SAW IT!

AUNT SISSY

YOU NEVER GAVE A DAMN ABOUT MOTHER. NONE OF YOU EVER LOVED HER, BUT ME! YOU NEVER TOOK HER TO THE DOCTOR. YOU NEVER TOOK HER TO CHURCH AND YOU WERE NEVER THERE WHEN SHE NEEDED YOU.

COLETTE

Here it comes.

Suzanne leans in against Charlotte.

SUZANNE

I had no idea it could be this bad.

CHARLOTTE

I'm calling Danny.

Charlotte reaches into her purse, a large black bag made of silky parachute cloth with many compartments and digs around for her phone.

SUZANNE

(whispers)

What about Martin?

CHARLOTTE

No, no, leave him be. He probably deals with this all the time.

COLETTE

She's right. Call Danny. Tell him to hurry.

Charlotte continues digging around in her purse, but can't find the phone.

CHARLOTTE

Damn it, where the --

Charlotte's face goes blank. She has not found the phone, but something much more damaging.

COLETTE

You can't find it? I'll call him.

There it is, buried at the bottom. Barrel, chamber, handle, trigger. Sean put the gun that Father had given them into the purse.

CHARLOTTE

No, no, no, I've got it. I've got it.

Charlotte pulls out the gun and points it at the casket. She's had enough.

CHARLOTTE

ALRIGHT, EVERYONE SHUT THE FUCK UP RIGHT NOW OR THE OLD LADY GETS IT!

A stillness of biblical proportions overcomes the room. Mother and Aunt Sissy immediately step away from the casket, horrified at what they see in Charlotte's hand. Suzanne calmly backs away from Charlotte, but Colette remains close to her sister, completely unfazed by what has just transpired.

CHARLOTTE (cont'd)

They can send me to jail for a year and it will be totally worth it.

Aunt Sissy sways on her feet as if she's about to faint, but no one makes an attempt to catch her. Not even Barney, her pseudo companion, moves. In fact, the walking corpse hasn't moved so much as a muscle in several minutes.

MOTHER

Is it, is it loaded? It's not loaded, is it?

A beat.

CHARLOTTE

I honestly don't remember.

Aunt Sissy composes herself.

AUNT SISSY

Oh, for God's sake! Is this really what it's come to? We're going to be on the news. I know it. We're going to be on the news.

Mother moves towards Charlotte with her hand out.

MOTHER

Give it to me.

Charlotte hands the gun over to Mother with no objection. Surprisingly, she knows exactly what to do with it once it's in her hands. Mother pops the chamber out and spins it to verify that it's not loaded.

MOTHER (cont'd)

You've been in town two days and I know you didn't bring this with you from Maryland, so where --

Charlotte remains silent, but cracks a faint smile.

MOTHER (cont'd)

Your father. I knew it! He gave you the gun, didn't he? Somehow, I knew he'd be the cause of this. And what good would it do to shoot a dead person anyway?

CHARLOTTE

Nevertheless.

(then)

Nevertheless, Miss Clara Frothingham will now sing.

Mother stares at her daughter with narrow, piercing eyes as she decides whether or not to smile. Finally, she does and doubles over with relief and laughter. Colette chuckles to herself as Aunt Sissy, who has collapsed on the floor but remains conscious, sobs. Mother hands the gun back to Charlotte, which she drops into her purse as if nothing happened.

The sound of a door opening and closing.

Dan appears from the back and jogs up to the front holding a large water bottle, which he hands to Charlotte.

DAN

What's going on? What happened? Did I miss anything?

A beat.

COLETTE

No.

A collective laugh fills the room.

MOTHER

Come on, Sissy. Let's go burry Mom.

Mother beelines for the door while Sissy remains on the floor. Barney, the walking skeleton, finally makes his way over to her and rubs her on the back in an attempt to console her.

DAN

What's wrong with Sissy?

CHARLOTTE

I'm not sure.

DAN

Huh.

Dan walks over to Suzanne, who is still a little freaked out, and takes her by the arm. He leads her to the door with Colette following close behind. Charlotte remains and admires the coffin for a few seconds. She finally turns around and sees Sean grinning from ear to ear at the back door. She tries not to laugh as she approaches her son.

SEAN

"Shut up or the old lady gets it?" That's the best you could come up with?

CHARLOTTE

I was improvising.

SEAN

Yeah, well, next time you get the urge to pull a gun on someone, let me know and we'll drum up some material, okay?

Charlotte laughs as Sean wraps his arm around her waist and leads her to the door.

EXT. WESTWOOD BLVD. - LATE MORNING

A black limousine follows behind a hearse. The headlights are on and a long line of cars follows behind it through an older section of Los Angeles. The Dodge Charger appears four cars back.

INT. DODGE CHARGER (MOVING) - CONTINUOUS

Sean is behind the wheel with Lana riding shotgun. They drive silently until Sean's iPhone beeps from the center cup holder.

SEAN

Can you check that?

Lana picks up the phone.

LANA
Text from your mom.

SEAN
What's it say?

Lana slides her finger across the iPhone and lets out a soft chuckle.

SEAN (cont'd)
What's it say?

Lana holds the phone up in front of Sean, who also lets out a soft chuckle.

INT. LIMOUSINE (MOVING) - CONTINUOUS

Charlotte is wedged between Colette, Dan and Suzanne in the limousine. Across from them are Mother, Aunt Sissy and Martin. Charlotte appears absolutely miserable. Aunt Sissy has finally composed herself, but has not forgotten what happened at the mortuary.

AUNT SISSY
She needs therapy.

Before Charlotte can defend herself, Mother speaks up.

MOTHER
An interesting point.

Mother shoots Aunt Sissy a look.

MOTHER (cont'd)
She probably does, but I think we can all agree that everyone in this car, some more than others, could use some as well.

(then)
Then again, it can also be said that for those of us who have had some in the past that it doesn't always work.

Mother's remarks are an obvious dig at Aunt Sissy, who is not amused. Charlotte smiles.

MOTHER (cont'd)
I mean, what is the real point of therapy? To learn how to change one's behavior, correct?
(more)

MOTHER (cont'd)

So, one could therefore argue, if one wanted to, that if it doesn't change your behavior that there really is no point of going to therapy in the first place, is there? For Charlotte or anyone else.

Mother stares down Aunt Sissy once more.

MOTHER (cont'd)

Alright, we're almost there. Sissy, when we get to the church you should lead the family down the aisle to the front pews. After all, it was always you who took such good care of Mother. And then we'll all walk together, side by side, when we get to the cemetery.

Dan leans in next to Charlotte with a smile on his face, knowing what happened during his absence at the mortuary.

DAN

(whispers)

Let me know if you need me to get any bullets before we get there, okay?

Charlotte covers her mouth with her hand to stop herself from laughing out loud.

MOTHER

Who's saying the Mass?

AUNT SISSY

Viscovich. The new one.

INT. THE POLO LOUNGE (BAR) - AFTERNOON

Charlotte, Sean and Lana are sitting in the Polo Lounge bar enjoying drinks and some food after a long day. A few appetizer plates are scattered along the bar and all three look exhausted from the morning. A bartender appears and hands Sean a fresh beer. Sean pushes an empty bottle towards the bartender.

SEAN

Thanks.

The bartender takes Sean's empty bottle, clears away the appetizer plates and exits.

CHARLOTTE

So, you met Ronnie?

LANA

Yeah.

CHARLOTTE

He's a character, isn't he?

LANA

Yeah, I guess you could say that.

Sean slides a cigarette out of his pack, which has been sitting on the bar. He pops it in his mouth, grabs his beer and starts walking away.

CHARLOTTE

Cigarette?

SEAN

Yeah, I'll be right back.

Sean exits.

Charlotte is drinking Perrier and Lana is drinking a vodka/cranberry.

CHARLOTTE

Lana, can I ask you something?

LANA

Sure.

CHARLOTTE

How is he?

Lana is puzzled that Charlotte would be asking such a question about her own son.

LANA

What do you mean?

CHARLOTTE

Well, these last three days are really the most I've spoken to him in five years. And I know you two are close. I thought maybe you'd be able to tell me how my son is.

LANA

Oh, well, he's good.

CHARLOTTE

Is he happy?

LANA

Yeah. Yeah, I think he's real happy.

CHARLOTTE

That's good. I'm glad.

(then)

Can I ask you one more thing?

LANA

Sure.

CHARLOTTE

Are you sleeping together?

Lana's face turns bright red and her eyes open incredibly wide.

CHARLOTTE (cont'd)

I don't mean to embarrass you, really. And I'm sorry if that was too personal. But I saw the way he was looking at you today. Men don't give that look to their friends, especially if they're girls.

Lana swallows nervously.

LANA

Yeah, I guess we are.

CHARLOTTE

How is it?

Lana can't take much more.

LANA

Mrs. K --

CHARLOTTE

-- no, no, no, I don't mean that. I mean, you know, is it serious? He'd die before he'd ever say anything to me about it.

Lana composes herself.

LANA

Oh. Well. No. I guess it's not. It's, you know, casual. Fun. I mean, you know. I'm in school. He's always working.

(then)

It's just better this way. For everyone.

CHARLOTTE

Do you ever wish it was more?

Lana is really getting uncomfortable.

LANA

(whispers)

Should we really be talking about this?

CHARLOTTE

Lana, I'm not talking to you as his mother. I'm talking to you as a woman.

LANA

I don't know. I never really thought about it being anymore than this.

CHARLOTTE

Yes, you have.

Lana sighs deeply and takes a sip of her drink.

CHARLOTTE (cont'd)

Do you love him?

A beat.

LANA

I don't know. Even if I did I could never tell him.

CHARLOTTE

Why not?

LANA

I just couldn't. I mean, what we have is great, yeah. And, okay, yes, sometimes I wish it was more, but right now it can't be. Maybe later on. If it's meant to be it's meant to be. But not right now.

CHARLOTTE

Let me tell you something. I was madly in love with this boy Dean when I was your age. And I was young enough and stupid enough to think that maybe we'd spend the rest of our lives together, but it didn't happen that way.

LANA

What did happen?

CHARLOTTE

He ran off with one of my friends.

Lana and Charlotte share an uncomfortable laugh.

LANA

That doesn't sound like a great story.

CHARLOTTE

You're right. It doesn't. And the reason it doesn't is because I let him go.

LANA

What do you mean?

CHARLOTTE

I never told him how I really felt about him. And when I tried, it was too late.

(then)

Okay, that wasn't the best example, but I guess what I'm trying to say is that you can't wait for things to happen. Sometimes you have to make your own fate. Yes, if the two of you are meant to be together then you're meant to be together. But just because you're meant to be doesn't mean you will be. Sometimes you have to give it that little extra push yourself.

LANA

I don't know. I mean, what if he doesn't feel the same? Yeah, this is great, but the friendship means more and I don't want to lose that.

(then)

I don't know what I'd do --

CHARLOTTE

-- if you lost him all together?

A beat.

LANA

Something like that, yeah.

CHARLOTTE

That's how you know you really love someone.

Sean reenters through the side door and starts walking back towards the women. Charlotte notices him and leans in close to Lana.

CHARLOTTE (cont'd)

(whispers)

I'm not saying to do it tonight, but --

Sean sits back down in his seat.

SEAN

-- miss me?

Charlotte remains close to Lana.

CHARLOTTE

(whispers)

Just think about it.

Lana cracks an appreciative smile at Charlotte.

SEAN

What are you two talking about over there?

CHARLOTTE

Girl stuff.

Sean raises an eyebrow.

SEAN

Okay.

A beat.

CHARLOTTE

Just one more question.

Lana's eyes open wide in fearful anticipation.

LANA

Okay.

CHARLOTTE

Don't worry. It's nothing bad.

Charlotte leans in close to Lana again.

CHARLOTTE (cont'd)

(whispers)

Do you have any pot left?

Lana is surprised by the question and does not know what to say.

LANA

I don't know. Maybe? Yes? No?

CHARLOTTE

Where is it?

Lana cautiously points to Sean.

CHARLOTTE (cont'd)

Sean?

SEAN

Yes?

CHARLOTTE

You promised me some herbal refreshment. Is there anything left or did you use it all in the tea?

SEAN

Yeah, it's in my room.

Lana can't believe what she's hearing.

LANA

You knew about that, Mrs. K.?

Charlotte's face seems to say it all. Look who you're talking to.

CHARLOTTE

Lana, please. And call me Charlotte. You're not a little girl anymore.

LANA

Okay. Charlotte.

Charlotte smiles.

CHARLOTTE

Well, I don't know about you two, but after the day I've had I could go for a smoke.

SEAN

Absolutely. Just let me pay the tab.

Sean stands up and throws back some of his beer, but leaves it half-full on the bar. He reaches into his pants and pulls out the large wad of cash he stuffed in there earlier. He peels off a few bills, tosses them onto the bar and grabs his jacket off the back of his seat. Lana and Charlotte throw their drinks back then push their glasses forward and stand.

CHARLOTTE

How much did you win anyway?

Sean stuffs the money back into his pocket.

SEAN

Three. More or less.

CHARLOTTE

Thousand?

Sean nods.

CHARLOTTE (cont'd)

I really don't believe this family sometimes.

Sean, Lana and Charlotte exit the bar.

INT. SEAN'S HOTEL ROOM - EVENING/LATE EVENING

"Tenth Avenue Freeze-Out" PLAYS OVER:

MONTAGE:

- Sean, Charlotte and Lana passing a blunt around.
- Sean dancing with Lana and Charlotte applauds.
- Charlotte laughing on the phone with a bottle of water in hand.
- Sean softly kissing Lana.
- Sean dancing with Charlotte as Lana videotapes with the iPhone.
- Lana laughing on her cell phone.
- Sean dancing alone and attempting to moonwalk as Lana and Charlotte laugh. Lana videotaping on the iPhone.
- Sean laughing on his iPhone with a bottle of water in hand.
- Sean rolling.
- Sean, Lana and Charlotte singing "Tenth Avenue Freeze-Out".

FADE TO BLACK:

FADE IN:

EXT. BEVERLY HILLS HOTEL (MAIN ENTRANCE) - MORNING

The Dodge is parked in front of the main entrance to the hotel and Sean is lifting luggage into the trunk. Lana, with bags in hand, is standing with Charlotte.

CHARLOTTE

Remember what I said, alright?

Lana smiles and nods.

LANA

I will.

Lana and Charlotte smile at each other before hugging tightly.

CHARLOTTE

Take care of yourself, Lana.

LANA

You too, Charlotte.

CHARLOTTE

Don't study too hard.

LANA

I won't.

The hug ends.

Charlotte smiles once more at Lana and places a hand on her cheek. She looks at Lana the way a mother would look at her daughter. After a few seconds, Charlotte hops into the Dodge as Sean walks around from the trunk to say his goodbye.

SEAN

You got everything?

LANA

Uh-huh.

SEAN

Thanks again for coming. I really appreciated it.

LANA

Thank you for inviting me.

SEAN

Always.

(then)

Well, got a plane to catch, so --

Sean and Lana hug.

SEAN (cont'd)

I'll call you soon, okay?

LANA

Okay.

Sean kisses Lana softly.

SEAN

Bye.

Sean walks around the front of the car to the driver's side door, but Lana sees Charlotte in the car motioning for her to go to him. She drops her bags and runs around to the front of the car.

LANA

Sean.

SEAN

Yeah?

Lana throws her arms around Sean's neck, looks into his eyes and gives him a long, deep, loving kiss. She pulls back and smiles before hugging him tightly and burying her head in his chest. She kisses him once more, quickly and playfully on the lips.

LANA

Bye.

Lana jogs back around the front of the car and picks up her things. She hands a valet her parking ticket. Sean, after gathering himself, finally gets in the car.

INT. DODGE CHARGER - CONTINUOUS

Sean looks at Charlotte, who is smiling widely. He knows what happened and smiles appreciatively at his mother.

SEAN

(nods)

I know.

Sean turns on the engine.

SEAN (cont'd)

I know.

Sean pops the car into gear.

EXT. BEVERLY HILLS HOTEL (MAIN ENTRANCE) - CONTINUOUS

"Bring it On Home to Me" PLAYS OVER:

The Dodge Charger pulls out of the entrance and drives off into the distance, leaving Lana behind. It.

INT. AIRPLANE - EVENING

Charlotte and Sean are sitting in aisle seats in the first class cabin. Sean is sleeping in his seat as is the passenger next to

him. Charlotte, however, is completely awake and reading Matty: An American Hero. On the tray table in front of her is a legal pad, which she appears to be writing notes on. She looks over at Sean and smiles adoringly.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. BWI (RUNWAY) - EVENING

The plane descends out of the sky with landing gear deployed. It touches down.

INT. VW GOLF (MOVING) - EVENING

Sean is behind the wheel with Charlotte riding shotgun. She appears to be on the verge of falling asleep.

EXT. CHARLOTTE'S HOUSE - EVENING

The Golf pulls into the driveway of Charlotte's house. The outside lights are on and the Jeep Cherokee and a Saab 9-3 are parked in the driveway. Sean steps out of the car, walks around to the back and pops the hatch. He reaches in and pulls Charlotte's bags out of the back. Charlotte steps out of the car and walks around to the back where Sean hands her her garment bag, which she throws over her shoulder. She takes hold of her carryon as well just before Sean closes the hatch.

SEAN

That everything?

CHARLOTTE

Yup.

SEAN

Alright, well --

Sean and Charlotte hug tightly.

CHARLOTTE

Thanks again for coming, honey.

SEAN

Don't mention it.

The hug ends.

CHARLOTTE

See you in a few days?

SEAN

Christmas morning, yeah.

CHARLOTTE

Drive safe.

SEAN

I will.

Charlotte turns and starts walking up the driveway to the front door as Sean remains by the car.

SEAN (cont'd)

Hey, Mom?

Charlotte stops and turns towards her son.

SEAN (cont'd)

I love you.

Charlotte smiles.

CHARLOTTE

I love you too, Sean.

Charlotte turns slowly and starts walking towards the house. Sean takes a deep breath and turns back towards the VW. He opens the driver's side door and hops into the car. He slams the door behind him and turns on the ignition.

Charlotte enters the house.

Sean pops the car into gear, backs it out of the driveway and drives away.

INT. SEAN'S APARTMENT - LATE EVENING

Sean barges in through the front door of his dark apartment and immediately drops his bags on the floor. He flips the light switch on, drops his jacket on the floor and walks into the kitchen. He opens the refrigerator, grabs a beer, opens it and sucks a bit down.

Suddenly, Adam pops his head out of his bedroom.

ADAM

Hey, man.

Sean nearly drops his beer.

SEAN

Jesus fucking Christ, You scared the shit out of me.

ADAM

Sorry.

Adam scoots past Sean and grabs a beer from the refrigerator. He cracks it open and takes a sip.

ADAM (cont'd)

So, how was it?

SEAN

Fine.

ADAM

Anything exciting happen?

SEAN

No, not really.

Sean takes a sip of his beer and follows Adam over to the sofa. They take a seat, both leaning back as if they've been on their feet for far too long.

ADAM

See Lana?

SEAN

Yeah.

ADAM

How's she doing?

SEAN

She's doing good.

ADAM

That's good.

Sean picks the remote up from the coffee table and starts flipping through channels in an attempt to find something worth watching.

ADAM (cont'd)

You're not going to find anything, dude. I looked already.

Sean lets out a resigned groan.

SEAN

This is ridiculous. Five hundred channels and there's nothing on.

ADAM
"Christmas Vacation?"

Sean flips the remote into Adam's hand.

SEAN
"Christmas Vacation."

Adam punches a few buttons on the remote.

SEAN (cont'd)
Make it happen.

Adam drops the remote onto the coffee table as the opening credits of "National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation" blare through the television. He looks over at the hallway and notices Sean's belongings scattered on the floor.

ADAM
You're going to pick all that shit up, right?

SEAN
Fuck your mother.

Adam laughs.

ADAM
I mean, you're not going to just leave it there all night, are you?

SEAN
What did I just say?

Sean props his feet up on the coffee table to relax. Adam does the same.

SEAN (cont'd)
(holds up bottle)
Cheers.

Adam and Sean clink their bottles together and drink.

CUT TO BLACK:

THE END