FADE IN:

INT. CAMP HENDERSON - BARRACKS - DAY

GOMER PYLE, 20, wearing his Marine uniform, is holding his phone to his ear.

    GOMER
    -- I have. -- I promise. -- Mrs. Garney. --
    The School for Unwed Mothers won't answer the phone. -- I'm not. -- I
    love Ellen, Mrs. Garney. -- I will. --
    Like my own. -- I know it's been 3 years. -- No, no don't. Don't put
    your phone down. Damn.

Gomer waits, sighs, and leans against the wall. He looks at a picture of Ellen.

INT. CHOCOLATE FACTORY - TESTING ROOM - DAY

Gomer hesitates before opening the door and takes his prepared break-up speech out of his pocket.

BUNNY VAN PELT, 19, is taste-testing chocolates. She's gorgeous and looks like a doctor in her white lab coat.

She smiles from ear-to-ear when she sees Gomer.

    BUNNY
    Gomer. Gomer, Gomer, Gomer. Your
    name sounds funny. Does your name
    sound funny to you? Come in, come
    in.

Bunny giggles and sways.

    GOMER
    Are you okay?

She throws her arms around Gomer.

    BUNNY
    I feel fantastic. I love you so much.

She holds onto Gomer as she tries to remain standing.

    GOMER
    Honey, I think you're drunk.
BUNNY
I am not. Daddy's makin' new chocolates. Want one? They're really good.

Bunny reaches for another piece of candy.

Gomer puts the speech back in his pocket. He takes the chocolate from her hand and smells it.

GOMER
These are filled with booze. How many have you had?

Bunny takes the confectionary delight back from Gomer and quickly puts it in her mouth.

BUNNY
I don't know, 10, 15. It's just so hard. I can't decide which one is the best.

Gomer takes out his speech.

GOMER
Bunny, I have somethin' important to tell you.

Bunny loses her balance and Gomer catches her.

BUNNY
Let's get out of here.
(sing-song voice)
I know a place we can go.

Gomer puts the speech back in his pocket and buttons it. Together they leave the taste testing office.

GOMER
Bunny, I think you need some coffee.

INT. CAMP HENDERSON - BARRACKS - DAY

Sergeant Carter, 29, stands in front of Gomer.

SERGEANT CARTER
Congratulations, son. Private First Class.

Carter hands Gomer a Marine First Class Shield.

GOMER
Thank you, sir.
LIEUTENANT COLONEL VAN PELT, 43, storms through the door.

Gomer and Sergeant Carter stand at attention.

Van Pelt gets in Gomer's face and winks then notices Sergeant Carter is still saluting.

VAN PELT
At ease, Sergeant.
(to Gomer)
Private Pyle, who said my wife was not allowed to bring you lunch?

Sergeant Carter steps forward.

SERGEANT CARTER
Your wife? It was me, Colonel. Regulations.

Van Pelt turns back to Gomer.

VAN PELT
At ease, Private.

Van Pelt takes Sergeant Carter by his arm and leads him to the far side of the barracks.

VAN PELT
My wife wasn't happy last night. You know what that means, Sergeant? It means I wasn't happy. Now, I know it's not by the book but I'm sure...

Bunny enters the barracks. She looks more upset than her father.

She throws a piece of paper that hits Gomer in the face.

BUNNY
I got your note. If you think...

VAN PELT
Bunny?

Bunny runs to her father and hugs Van Pelt around his stomach.

BUNNY
Daddy, Gomer's breaking up with me.

Van Pelt unwraps Bunny's arms.

He walks over to Gomer.

Sergeant Carter takes the opportunity to sneak away.
VAN PELT
What is this about, son?

Gomer glares at Bunny for a moment then turns back to Van Pelt.

Sergeant Carter gets out the door with it being seen and celebrates with a victory dance.

GOMER
Colonel, Bunny has known the situation from the...

Bunny runs over to her father and interrupts.

BUNNY
I did. I just thought you'd be leaving. Not that she'd come here.

Van Pelt gently turns his daughter by her arm and leads her across the barracks.

VAN PELT
I kept this man out of Iraq for you. Are you sayin' it's a fling?

Bunny walks back to Gomer.

Van Pelt looks around for Sergeant Carter.

BUNNY
I'm still gonna see you. You'll just have to explain that to her.

GOMER
I don't know, Bunny.

BUNNY
We'll stay friends. I'm not gonna disappear.

GOMER
Friends is fine.

Gomer walks over to Van Pelt.

Bunny sits on the bunk.

GOMER
Her name is Ellen. She's my fiancee. She's movin' here. I found out two days ago. I need to get to my duty, Colonel.
VAN PELT
You're free to go.

Gomer leaves.

Van Pelt sits on the bunk next to Bunny shaking his head as she rubs his back and smiles.

BUNNY
It's okay, Daddy. You'll be all right.

INT. CAMP HENDERSON - HOSPITAL - NIGHT

ELLEN GARNEY, 18, holds her baby in her arms and her eyes shine with love as she stares at her newborn child.

Ellen's mother, HARRIET GARNEY, 47, has her feet up on one chair and sits in another.

Gomer crashes through the door. His uniform is muddy and torn. His face is dirty and his hair is a mess.

HARRIET
There you are. Any problems gettin' here?

Gomer puts his back to Harriet and faces Ellen. His eyes say, "is she serious"?

ELLEN
Did you look at him, Mom?.
(to Gomer)
Honey, what happened?

GOMER
Doesn't matter, can I hold him?

Ellen transfers the baby into Gomer's arms. A few tears flow down his cheek.

HARRIET
All I know is Edgar never missed a birth. God rest his soul.

ELLEN
Dad's not dead, Mother.

HARRIET
I know. It just sounded right.

GOMER
What's goin' on between you two.
HARRIET
I'm on a break.

GOMER
(whispers to Ellen)
Edgar's the one gettin' a break.

HARRIET
What was that? So anyway, I can stay as long as you want me or longer.

GOMER
I'm bettin' on longer.

INT. HOUSE - BEDROOM - DAY

Ellen slams the phone on the table and throws her head back three times onto her pillow. She releases a cry so loud and so long that the walls tremble.

SCOTT PYLE, 16 months, starts to cry, then BABY MIKE PYLE, 4 months, begins to wail and he adds to the chorus.

The door flies open. Harriet hesitates as she's buffeted by the wall of sound.

Her hair is a mess and the cleaning apron appears as exhausted as she is. With the speed and precision of a paramedic she knows the routine.

She quiets Ellen. Then Scott. Then Baby Mike. She sits down next to her daughter and enjoys her victory. Ellen sniffles.

HARRIET
There, that's better.

Harriet straightens her hair.

HARRIET
What was it this time, honey? Another fly in the ice cream?

ELLEN
I just talked to Gomer.

Ellen sits up and grabs the last tissue from the box. It becomes just another Kleenex exoskeleton piled on her table.

ELLEN
I miss home, Mom. Is my room still the same?
HARRIET
Just like you left it.

ELLEN
I wanna go home. I really do.

HARRIET
You are home. This is your home now.

Ellen throws her head back onto her pillow.

ELLEN
I think I made a mistake.

HARRIET
Two children is a little more than a mistake. Honey, things'll get better. What brought this on?

ELLEN
Gomer said they're makin' him stay on base four more months.

Harriet's eyes well up and she begins to weep. The weeps become sobs. The sobs become blubbering. This causes Ellen to cry. Then Baby Scott. Then Baby Mike.

The symphony of tears can be heard half-way down the street.

INT. HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Harriet is washing the dishes. The glasses and cups become musical instruments as she strikes them with a spoon.

She dances to her improvised tune.

ELLEN (O.S.)
Woo hoo.

HARRIET
Ellen?

Ellen runs into the kitchen.

ELLEN
Mom, Mom. Gomer will be able to live off-base next month.
HARRIET
Slow down, honey. I'm old. That's great because it's time for me to go. Your father called me last night. He was really sweet, then he started talkin' in his "when we have sex" voice.

ELLEN
Okay, that's enough, Mom. I know where this is going. Don't need to hear it.

HARRIET
Ellen you have two kids. Loosen up. He started tellin' me what he was gonna do and what he wanted...

Ellen's fingers become earplugs.

ELLEN
La, la la la la ...

HARRIET
Okay. Okay, I'll stop.

Ellen holds her fingers out ready to engage.

HARRIET
Anyway. I'm goin' back to Isaac. I kinda miss my Teddy Bear.

ELLEN
That's great, Mom. I'm sure he misses you too.

HARRIET
He was missin' me last night. He started breathing heavy and then he...

Ellen puts her fingers back in her ears and walks away.

ELLEN
La, la la la la ...

EXT. CAMP HENDERSON - POND - NIGHT

Gomer's sitting on a bench. The swans show-off as they compete for the pieces of bread Gomer tosses to them.

Gomer smokes one cigarette after another. JACK, 70, a tiny man with bright red cheeks and wearing a funny hat approaches Gomer. He's selling apples.
JACK
Apple, sir?

GOMER
You can't be serious. You supposed to be an elf or somethin'?

JACK
I've been called worse.

Jack starts to shiver unprotected from the winter cold. Gomer takes off his jacket and holds it out.

Jack puts on the coat.

GOMER
Tell you what little guy. I'll take all twelve of those apples. You want a smoke?

JACK
No. You know you shouldn't be smokin'. The body's a temple.

GOMER
It's been awhile since my wife's worshipped at my temple, if you know what I mean. I've gone back to some old habits. Spadin' so much time alone it's hard to quit. My wife won't put up with it. You know what, that coat looks good on you. Keep it.

The clouds clear and the stars reflect off the apples making them appear magical.

JACK
Your wife. You'll finally be able to live with her.

GOMER
Okay, who sent you? You tell Duke this is good but it doesn't top the super-glue on the toilet seat. No, check that. He's still a little sensitive about that.

Gomer looks at his cigarette.

GOMER
I've really tried to quit smokin'.

JACK
Instead of smokin', have an apple.
Gomer laughs then looks at the apples. He grabs one.

GOMER
That may not be...

Jack is gone. Gomer shrugs and takes a bite. He puts the apple down and walks toward the pond. He looks at the swans, the water, and the stars.

GOMER
Wish he had better tastin' apples.

Gomer lights a cigarette. He makes a face and turns it around convinced he lit the filter. Now he lights the filter. Gomer throws it down and carefully lights another one.

GOMER
What the hell?

He throws that one down. The last cigarette Gomer will ever smoke slowly dies.

INT. CAMP HENDERSON - HOSPITAL - DAY

Gomer sits beside the hospital bed reading a magazine. Both Ellen and the new baby are asleep.

DOCTOR KEATS, 42, walks in.

DOCTOR KEATS
Private, the baby's healthy. It's your wife I'm concerned about. She's been in and out of this hospital all year.

GOMER
I know, Doctor, no one can tell me why.

DOCTOR KEATS
She's physically and mentally exhausted. She can't handle you bein' in the military. Especially in these volatile times. The stress is gonna kill her. My advice to you is quit and move back to your hometown. Try to eliminate any kind of stress in Ellen's life. She needs to rest.

GOMER
If you say so, Doc.

The Doctor leaves.
Gomer kneels beside the bed.
He takes Ellen's hand without waking her.

GOMER
I love you so much, Ellen. We're goin' home.

INT. MAYBERRY - GOMER'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY
The house is a mess. Clothes are strewn everywhere.
Ellen holds TAMMY PYLE, 1, in her arms as she cries.
Scott, 3, runs through the room holding a stuffed animal with Mike, 2, crying loudly and chasing him.

MIKE
Mine, mine, mine...

Gomer slowly enters the house.
Too tired to even notice the commotion, Gomer walks toward the bedroom.

GOMER
I've gotta get some sleep.

Ellen gets Tammy to stop crying and puts her in the crib.
She catches Scott as he runs by and takes the toy away from him.
She gives it to Mike and he stops crying.

ELLEN
Scott, please. I need you to behave for five minutes. I have to talk to Daddy. Can you play nice?

Scott nods his head.
Ellen takes a beeline to Gomer.

BEDROOM
The door flies open. Gomer already appears to be asleep.

ELLEN
I can't do this anymore.

Gomer opens his eyes and sits up.
GOMER
Okay, Ellen. What's this about?

ELLEN
For the past year if you get four hours of sleep you're lucky. Same for me.

GOMER
I know, honey. I've got some big car repairs to do. That's gonna bring in more money. It'll help.

ELLEN
It's not about the money. You've always made sure we have what we need. We just can't keep livin' like this.

GOMER
The kid's are gettin' older. Right now I'm still barely keepin' the bills paid. I'm doin' everything I can.

Ellen sits next to Gomer and grabs his hand.

ELLEN
I know you are. I think, maybe, the best thing to do is for me to take the kids and move in with my mother.

GOMER

ELLEN
I love you, Gomer, but Mom can help me with the kids. You can focus on building the business. I just don't see any other way.

GOMER
I think all we need is a vacation. Give me a few weeks. I'll arrange things. We'll go anywhere you want.

ELLEN
Really? I'd love to go to Yellowstone. You mean it?

GOMER
Yellowstone, Rocky Mountain, Glacier, let's go to all of 'em.
Ellen hugs Gomer with all her might.

GOMER
Those cars I picked up will bring in enough for us to do it. I'll take off for two weeks. It'll be perfect.

ELLEN
I love you so much. You're right, that's all we need.

GOMER
And we'll do it every year. Maybe two or three times. Can I get some sleep now? I'm so tired.

Tammy starts to cry.

ELLEN
Of course, honey. I'll keep 'em quiet. I love you. Get some sleep.

GOMER
Love you too, Ellen.

LIVING ROOM
Ellen quietly closes the door to the bedroom.

She looks around the room and the look on her face says she's fine with everything.

She goes to Tammy's crib to check on her. Tammy's awake but quiet.

Tammy sees her mother and looks right in her eyes. The rush of emotion overpowers Ellen.

TAMMY
Ma... ma.

Ellen picks her up and holds her. Scott comes out of the bedroom with his favorite book about clowns. Mike follows close behind.

They join Ellen on the couch.

Scott hands the book to Ellen.

SCOTT
Mommy, can you read to us?
ELLEN
Of course, honey. Want me to read the book, Mike?

Mike nods his head.

Ellen shows the first page.

ELLEN
(clown voice)
So many clowns, so little room.

Tammy laughs.

SCOTT
Tammy likes it.

ELLEN
I think she does.

She shows the next page.

ELLEN
The baby thinks it's funny. What about you?

Ellen tickles Mike. Tammy laughs louder.

Mike starts laughing so Tammy laughs again.

ELLEN
And what does big brother think?

Ellen tickles Scott and all of them laugh hysterically.

ELLEN
(laughing)
Quiet. Quiet. Daddy's sleeping.

FADE OUT: