

HOT ROD

Written by

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DB

FADE IN:

We see a series of close-ups:

A hand goes into a glove; a cape is fastened around a neck; A helmet chinstrap is snapped; goggles are adjusted over steely blue eyes; a boot comes down on the kickstart; a gloved hand revs the engine...

EXT. PACIFIC NORTHWEST - EARLY MORNING

Pull back to reveal a man on a pale blue moped. This is ROD KIMBLE, 30, adventurer, dreamer, lover, doer. He wears an ill-fitting pale green suit and a cape. His moped is aimed toward a ramp which leads to one parked MAIL DELIVERY JEEP.

Rod revs his engine and turns to his step-brother, KEVIN AGNEW, the manager of his crew, earnest and loyal, early 20's. Rod shouts over the whine of his excruciatingly loud engine.

ROD

Kevin, did you reinforce the take-off ramp?

KEVIN

No. We didn't have time.

Rod looks at Kevin blankly, then glances over at a bunch of guys eating donuts. This is HIS CREW --

There's EUGENE, late 80's, a super racist/sexist in failing health; RICO, 40's, Gulf War Vet who's obsessed with death and violence; DAVE, 20's, mega stoner and true believer in Rod's mission; and AL GEISER, 56, a timid insurance salesman who joined up to add a little excitement in his life. These guys are not A+ material.

ROD

They're good men. I know they did their best. And that's good enough for me.

Rod spins his finger over his head and calls to his crew.

ROD (CONT'D)

Bring it!

They don't react. Kevin gives Rod an enthusiastic thumbs-up. Rod nods. It's time. He closes his eyes, revs his engine and gently caresses the moped gas tank.

ROD (CONT'D)

DB

(to himself)
Soul of an eagle.

He begins to PEDAL, hits the gas and ACCELERATES toward the ramp.

ROD (CONT'D)
Yieeeeeee!!!!

He hits the ramp and it collapses immediately causing Rod to ride full-speed into the side of the postal truck landing on the ground with a sickening thud.

AL GEISER
(looking up, holding
a donut)
Son of a bitch.

Kevin runs to him.

KEVIN
Rod, are you okay?

He cradles Rod's head. Rod SLOWLY OPENS his eyes.

ROD
I'm fine. Oh, yeah. Wow. That
ramp definitely collapsed right
there. Rico should really look into
that because --
(then, eyes
fluttering)
Here it comes. Good night.

KEVIN
Oh, my god. Rod, what do I do?

ROD
Just turn me over if I start
throwing up.
(then)
...and going grey.

Rod gives a triumphant thumbs-up.

ROD (CONT'D)
Rock and roll! I'm out.

Rod falls UNCONSCIOUS.

"TITLE SEQUENCE"

Stylized credits. A seventies font. Lots of RED, WHITE and BLUE and stars and stripes.

DB

EXT. SCHOOL BUS - DAY

Establishing. It's a warm spring day. End of May.

INT. SCHOOL BUS - CONTINUOUS

Rod is driving a bus filled with grade schoolers. He has a black eye and he operates the clutch with a stick. He talks to a THIRD GRADE GIRL in a KARATE uniform in the front seat. This is OLIVIA, 8, level-headed without being precocious, Rod's confidante.

ROD

...I can't completely describe the feeling but when I collided with the side of the bus I felt like I connected with some ancient life force.

OLIVIA

Oh.

ROD

Maybe it was the way my moped and I accelerated into a stationary object at twenty-seven miles per hour, or maybe it was the fact that I forgot to eat breakfast that morning, but for a brief fleeting second I felt like the first amoeba who grew legs and walked out of the primordial ooze. You know what I mean?

OLIVIA

Not really. So, you didn't make the jump?

ROD

When did you get so ends-oriented? No, technically I didn't "make" the jump in your traditional western sense of the word, but it was a success in other ways. Namely, it taught me a lot about myself, my bone structure vis a vis which joints bend which way, and it revealed certain technical limitations of my crew.

OLIVIA

Oh.

ROD

DB

You've got to learn to respect the journey, Olivia. That's the key to enlightenment. That's what the Tao teaches us. Read your Lao Tse. It's all in there.

Rod hands Olivia an orange piece of paper.

ROD (CONT'D)

Here, I'm jumping the incinerator tomorrow morning. You should ask your mom if you can go.

OLIVIA

But doesn't your leg still hurt?

ROD

I won't lie to you, Olivia. It's incredibly painful. If I was in the wild right now I'd try to chew it off. But the show must go on.

OLIVIA

Why don't you just rest until your leg feels better?

ROD

Well, that's impossible. We already made the fliers.

OLIVIA

Just make new ones.

ROD

Oh, Olivia. New fliers require paper and... a Xerox machine... And paper. It's very complicated.

Olivia looks at the FLIER and shakes her head.

ROD (CONT'D)

What?

OLIVIA

I just don't understand why you need to hurt yourself all the time.

ROD

(laughing too hard)
Need to hurt myself? That's ridiculous. Olivia, I'm a stuntman. Getting hurt is an occupational hazard.

DB

OLIVIA
Do you love being a stuntman?

ROD
Of course I do. You know that.

OLIVIA
And stuntmen get hurt?

ROD
Sometimes, yes.

OLIVIA
Then by the transitive property, you
love getting hurt.

ROD
Jesus. What goes on in that school
of yours? Do you have a Communist
teacher or something?

(then)
Look, you're too young to understand
things like fate and destiny but
when you grow up you're going to
think about bigger things than
spelling bees and karate practice.
You're going to think about what
kind of mark you're going to leave
on this world when you're gone. We
all have destinies in this life, my
young, young friend. And for better
or worse, my destiny is danger.

Rod stops the bus and reaches to open the door, WINCING in
pain.

ROD (CONT'D)
Ahh...

OLIVIA
I got it.

Olivia stands up and opens the BUS DOOR with two hands.

ROD
Thanks.

OLIVIA
You're a good person, Rod.
Experiencing pain isn't the only way
to give your life meaning.

Rod stares at Olivia blankly.

DB

ROD
What does that mean?

OLIVIA
See ya.

She gets off the bus. Rod shakes his head, bemused.

ROD
Funny mixed-up kid.

Rod drives off.

EXT. SCHOOL BUS LOT - LATER

Rod pulls into the lot. We see his PALE BLUE MOPED attached to the back of the bus.

INT. SCHOOL BUS OFFICE - A LITTLE LATER

The bus dispatcher, DENISE, late 20's, bright and very together, sits at her desk in a sundress as Rod LIMPS IN.

DENISE
I can't believe you came into work today, Rod.

ROD
Hey, someone's got to drive those kids. And I made a sacred promise to this company when I signed up. I take my vows seriously.

He tries to lift his arm to put his bus keys on the counter.

ROD (CONT'D)
Ahhh. Ahhh.

Denise takes the keys from him.

DENISE
You need to go to a hospital and get checked out. You are hurt.

ROD
This is nothing. You should have seen me after I tried to jump Kevin's Sentra over the quarry. Plus, I have to finish handing out these fliers for the jump tomorrow.

Denise looks at the flier.

DENISE

DB

"Incinerator jump." You can't do this.

ROD
No offense, Denise. But I've been training really hard lately and I don't respond well to negative reinforcement.

DENISE
No. It's just that you're in no shape for another stunt right now. You need to give your body time to rest and heal. Why don't I come over and make you dinner tonight so you can relax.

ROD
Ooh, I'd love to, fella. But I have plans. I wrestle my stepfather Frank on Thursday nights.

DENISE
Wrestle? Like this?

ROD
No. I'm going to wear a helmet.

Rod's boss, MR. SHERF, 50, a grizzled middle-aged man, pops his head out of his office.

MR. SHERF
Kimble. My office. Now.

Mr. Sherf slips back inside the door. Rod smiles at Denise.

ROD
He must have read my proposed changes for bus protocol and route strategy. Probably wants to pick my brain.

Rod WALKS OFF. Denise watches him go, worried.

INT. MR. SHERF'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Mr. Sherf sits behind his desk eating lunch as Rod enters.

MR. SHERF
Have a seat, Rod.

ROD
I'd love to, sir, but my legs don't exactly bend right now.

DB

MR. SHERF

Rod, I'm going to cut right to the chase.

ROD

That's the way I play, governor. My brain is open. Pick away.

MR. SHERF

You're fired.

ROD

What?! On what grounds?

MR. SHERF

Parents don't like having a stuntman driving their kids to school. Period. End of story. You're gone.

ROD

But I never do stunts on, with or at my bus. And I would never put a child in harm's way. That's item 12R of my personal code of conduct. You have a copy of that.

MR. SHERF

I gave you a choice, Rod. Stunts. Or the bus. You made your choice.

ROD

But that's like telling the sun not to rise. Or a rooster not to have feathers. Or a bat not to use its ears to see. It's against god! Mr. Sherf, you, sir, are against god!

MR. SHERF

Get out.

ROD

But --

MR. SHERF

Out!

ROD

(determined)

The Chinese character for crisis is made up of two separate words -- problem and opportunity. And it is this spirit, this enlightened eastern spirit, that I will accept this horrible news, you godless

DB

swine. Thank you, Mr. Sherf, for presenting me with half a crisis. And by that I mean the opportunity part.

Rod knocks on his desk.

ROD (CONT'D)
Good day to you, sir!

INT. SCHOOL BUS OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Rod marches out to Denise's desk, FURIOUS.

DENISE
Rod, I'm so sorry.

ROD
Don't be sorry for me, ladyman.
This firing is like a gift from --
(collapsing)
Whoa...

Rod braces himself on Denise's counter, DIZZY.

DENISE
Rod. Are you okay?

ROD
(wobbly)
Hypoglycemic... Need treats. Honey
nut Cheerios...

Rod reaches into his POCKETS and stuffs CEREAL into his mouth.

DENISE
That's it. We're going to the hospital right now to get you checked out. Let's go.

ROD
(shoving cereal in his mouth)
No offense, Denise. I'm sure you know a lot about buying flannel but what do you know about health?

DENISE
Rod, I'm starting medical school next year.

ROD

DB

Well, get back to me in four years
when you're a real doctor.

Rod lets go of Denise's counter and collapses again.

ROD (CONT'D)

No. Not quite there yet.

DENISE

Rod, this could be really serious.
You don't mess around with head
injuries.

ROD

Sell crazy somewhere else, Lilith
Fair. My head is the only place on
my body that didn't get injured
yesterday. This is blood sugar
related, I assure you!

Rod keeps SHOVING Cheerios into his mouth.

DENISE

Rod, please cancel the jump
tomorrow.

ROD

Negative!

DENISE

Then let me drive you home.

ROD

Double negative!

DENISE

Rod, why are you so stubborn? I'm
just trying to help.

ROD

(knocks on the
counter)

I said good day to you, sir!

Rod STUMBLES out of the office. Denise watches him go. She
looks down at the flier, worried.

EXT. SUBURBAN TOWN - LATER

Rod rides his PALE BLUE MOPED past a gas station. The
attendant gives Rod a wave. Rod takes his hands off the
handlebars and salutes the man with a flourish.

DB

Rod passes a soccer field. He drives up on the curb and stands on his seat with one leg. The middle-aged MEXICAN MEN all wave and cheer and call out his name. Rod gives the thumbs-up.

Rod passes some teenagers smoking pot in the high school parking lot. They give him the hang-ten sign and cheer. He spins around backwards on his seat and salutes them. They CHEER louder.

EXT. ROD'S NEIGHBORHOOD - A LITTLE LATER

Rod pulls onto his street. A bunch of kids are riding bikes in the street. They call out Rod's name and cheer. Rod clumsily tries to do a handstand on his handlebars. He almost kills himself. The kids cheer. He rides on.

EXT. ROD'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Rod smiles as he pulls into the DRIVEWAY of his suburban neighborhood. He gets off his moped, leans it against the garage and bows to it, MARTIAL ARTS style. He then walks toward his house.

INT. ROD'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

A middle-aged woman is at the stove stirring something in a pot and humming to herself. This is MARIE AGNEW, early 50's, Rod's mother. Rod enters with a duffel bag.

ROD

Hey, Mom.

MARIE

Hi, honey. How was your day?

Rod sits at the kitchen table and pulls athletic equipment from his bag.

ROD

Not so great. I got fired.

(then)

Where's Frank?

MARIE

In the basement.

Marie WALKS to Rod wiping her hands on a dishtowel.

MARIE (CONT'D)

What happened with your job, sweetie?

Rod PULLS KNEEPADS from his bag and puts them on.

ROD

Mr. Sherf's threatened by me. By my leadership skills around the office. He was probably afraid I was gonna try and take over. The sad part is, I thought he was doing a pretty decent job.

MARIE

Well, if it's any consolation, I think you're wonderful.

ROD

Thanks, Mom.

Rod puts on a pair of LACROSSE SHOULDER PADS and laces them tightly.

ROD (CONT'D)

Mom?

MARIE

Yes, Rod?

ROD

Do you think Dad's watching me from heaven right now?

MARIE

(uncertain)

Um. Sure. Sure I do, honey.

ROD

What do you think he's thinking?

MARIE

(scrambling)

Well, I'm sure he's thinking that he's very proud of you and that you've become quite a fantastic man.

ROD

He's probably pretty blown away by my stunts, too. What do you think he thinks about my stunts?

MARIE

(scrambling harder)

Uh... I'm sure he loves the stunts, honey.

ROD

I know. Danger is in my blood.

DB

Rod tries to stand up.

ROD (CONT'D)

Ow. Ow. Ow.

MARIE

Rod, honey, if you're sore, maybe you shouldn't wrestle with Frank tonight.

ROD

I don't want to let Frank down, Mom. Plus, I love our togetherness time.

MARIE

I know you do, honey. Frank loves it, too.

Marie KISSES Rod on the top of the head. Rod SMILES.

ROD

(then)
Have you seen my cup?

MARIE

In the den.

Rod LIMPS OUT. Marie goes back to making dinner.

INT. DEN - CONTINUOUS

We see a GERMAN SHEPHERD on the floor CHEWING ROD'S CUP.

ROD

Gomez, no!

Rod tries to wrestle his CUP away from the GROWLING DOG.

ROD (CONT'D)

Gomez, give it. Drop it. Drop!

The dog SNAPS at Rod and advances THREATENINGLY.

ROD (CONT'D)

Gomez... Away! No, Gomez!

Rod backs away with AWKWARD karate chop motions.

KEVIN (O.S.)

Herr Gomez, schlaffen schnell!

The dog WHIMPERS and runs to Kevin's side. Kevin hugs it.

KEVIN (CONT'D)

DB

Who's my good girl? Daddy loves his good girl.

The dog licks Kevin's face.

ROD

Kevin, I strongly suggest you keep your M F-ing kraut animal under control. We almost had a situation here. I was this close to putting her lights out. This close!

KEVIN

Sorry, Rod.

Rod looks at the MANGLED CUP. The plastic is chewed with sharp edges. He sticks it in his pants anyway.

ROD

(to himself)
Ayiee.

Rod crosses out AWKWARDLY. Kevin follows.

KEVIN

What are you getting all geared up for?

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Rod crosses back through the kitchen.

ROD

It's Thursday night, J-Off. What do you think?

KEVIN

You're still fighting Frank? Why?

ROD

Because I love competition, turdlicker. Keeping my skills sharp is what makes me a champion.

Rod crosses out into the dining room. Kevin follows.

INT. DINING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Rod STRUGGLES to pull on a pair of way too tight hip pads.

KEVIN

But shouldn't you rest for the jump tomorrow?

DB

ROD
 Negative. I love fighting Frank. I
 will not, I cannot let him down.

KEVIN
 What is it with you two?

ROD
 You wouldn't understand. Frank's
 your father so he automatically
 loves you. But Frank's my
 stepfather. I have to earn it.

Rod places his green tinted SKI GOGGLES over his eyes, bows
 to Kevin, and exits to the basement.

INT. BASEMENT - CONTINUOUS

Rod takes a DEEP BREATH at the top of the steps. He is
 fully outfitted head to toe in an ill-conceived melange of
 protective ATHLETIC CLOTHING. He closes the door and
 DESCENDS the stairs, the music growing LOUDER and LOUDER.

He looks around the washer/dryer unit to see his opponent
 lying on his back on the floor dropping a medicine ball on
 his stomach over and over. This is FRANK AGNEW, 70, KEVIN'S
 FATHER, and ROD'S STEPFATHER since early childhood. He
 wears tight red polyester football coaching shorts and a
 simple grey West Point t-shirt. Rod approaches him.

ROD
 Frank?

The MUSIC'S TOO LOUD. Rod moves closer.

ROD (CONT'D)
 Frank.

Still nothing. He gets right up to FRANK'S EAR.

ROD (CONT'D)
 Frank!

Frank SCISSOR-KICKS Rod's legs out from under him, PINNING
 him VIOLENTLY on the floor.

FRANK
 Never sneak up on a man who's been
 in a chemical fire. Never!

ROD
 I'm... sorry... Frank.

FRANK

Now, what's it going to be? Pugil sticks, knives, hand-to-hand? Ladies choice.

ROD
...yeah, I'm blacking out here, Frank.

FRANK
Well, we don't want that.
Frank pulls a WOBBLY Rod to his feet.

FRANK (CONT'D)
Catch.
Frank lobs a SIX FOOT STICK at Rod. He CATCHES it.

ROD
What's this?

FRANK
It's a Rhodesian fighting stick. A guy down at the paint store got them for me at the VFW swap meet. Very lethal.

ROD
Of course, the Rhodesian fighting stick. I had it upside down that's why I didn't recognize it at first -

Suddenly, Frank CRACKS Rod below the knees. Rod COLLAPSES.

ROD (CONT'D)
Ow! I give up.

FRANK
I'm going to make a man of you if it kills me.

Frank HITS Rod again across the SHINS.

ROD
Ow! What's with the shins, man? The one place I don't have protective clothing.

Rod takes an ANGRY SWING at Frank. Frank DUCKS.

FRANK
He fights back. I love it!

Frank UNLEASHES a torrent of fancy stick spinning hits on Rod's shoulders and ribs.

FRANK (CONT'D)

I'm strong and you're weak. Say it!

Frank spins his stick over his head and brings it down on Rod in a SERIES OF QUICK HITS.

ROD

Ow, ow, ow, ow, ow, ow!

FRANK

Play the victim and you will be the victim.

Frank takes a BASEBALL BAT SWING and connects with Rod's ass.

ROD

Ah ahhhh!!!

Rod jumps around, grabbing his butt.

ROD (CONT'D)

OW, that hurts, that hurts, that hurts!

FRANK

Pain lets you know you're still alive, Rod. Pain is your friend.

With an expert flourish, Frank PARRIES Rod against the washing machine, PRESSING the fighting stick against Rod's THROAT. Rod struggles.

ROD

Aghghh...

FRANK

You know what you need to do, Rod. Defeat me and you'll earn my respect.

Rod tries to get away. He lifts his stick to hit Frank over the head. Frank GRABS the stick and throws it away. He throws his stick away, too.

FRANK (CONT'D)

Mano a mano time.

He STANDS in front of Rod moving his hands in the air menacingly.

DB

FRANK (CONT'D)

You can't hide behind anything now, boy. Not your protective clothing or your moped or your stunts. It's just you and me. Pin me once and I'll tell you that I love you.

Rod and Frank remain STANDING -- getting each other in more and more elaborate wrestling holds -- neither one gains too much of an upper hand.

ROD

Seriously, aren't you at all impressed by my stunts? I mean, they're very dangerous.

FRANK

No.

ROD

I mean, I crash all the time. People generally think of me as a courageous and cool guy.

FRANK

Not me.

ROD

What about when I jump the fountains at Caesar's Palace? Will you finally be impressed then?

FRANK

Nope, 'cause you're never going to do it.

ROD

Yes, I am. I'm in training.

FRANK

You've been training for eleven years.

ROD

I'm very thorough.

FRANK

This is your last chance of the night, fucknut. Are you going to pin me or not?

ROD

Yes!

DB

And with that, Rod POUNCES but Frank deflects him and drops him to the ground putting his foot on Rod's neck.

ROD (CONT'D)

I am going to jump those fountains, Frank. I'm going to be a hero and achieve the glory my dead stuntman father never could during life. And you're going to be proud of me, you'll see. My will is too strong, my resolve too determined... And I'm out.

Rod falls UNCONSCIOUS.

INT. ROD'S BEDROOM - LATER

Rod lies on his bed with ice on his FOREHEAD. The walls are covered with pictures of EVEL KNIEVEL, YO YO MA and WILD ANIMALS. Rod holds a picture of an AVERAGE LOOKING MAN, late 20's, posing with Evel Knievel in front of a stack of radial tires. This is ROD'S FATHER. Rod talks to the photo.

ROD

Are you there, Pops? It's me, Rod. Starting today, we go for the dream. Jumping the old man, big daddy -- the fountains at Caesar's Palace. I'm scrambling for my footing like a drunk baby penguin on the summer ice. I got no money, no resources and no job. But what I do have is courage. And that all comes from you, old man. Thanks for that. You may have died an anonymous stuntman but you will live on through me. I will avenge your glory, pops. I will succeed.

(then, crying)

I miss you, daddy...

Kevin WALKS IN as Rod SOBS over the PICTURE.

ROD (CONT'D)

Kevin, what did I tell you about knocking?

KEVIN

Sorry. I was just making sure you didn't slip into a coma in your sleep.

ROD

DB

Go outside and knock!

KEVIN
But Rod, I'm here now.

ROD
Go and knock like a human, you Nazi
whorespaw!

Kevin goes outside and shuts the door. A second later, he
KNOCKS. Rod SNIFFLES and puts his picture back in his
wallet.

ROD (CONT'D)
Yes?

KEVIN
Can I come in?

ROD
Who is it?

KEVIN
It's Kevin.

ROD
Please enter, Kevin.

The door opens and Kevin ENTERS.

ROD (CONT'D)
Now how hard was that? Courtesy is
what separates us from the beasts,
Kevin. Without it, we might as well
just be eating our own feces and
having sex with our uncles' skulls.

KEVIN
Jesus, Rod.

ROD
Look, I'm not happy about the idea
either. That's why I'm fighting for
it NOT to happen. And courtesy is
the line that saves us! Now what
can I do for you?

KEVIN
I think we should cancel the jump
tomorrow.

ROD
Negative! Game on!

KEVIN

But you're hurt.

ROD

You're hurt. I never cancel.
Never! That's my first rule. Next
order of business. Kevin, I need a
favor from you. All I'll ask in
return is that you ask no questions.

KEVIN

What if the favor's confusing?

ROD

No questions.

KEVIN

Okay.

(then)

It's not illegal, is it?

ROD

Kevin, what was that? What
punctuation ended that sentence? It
was a question mark. No more
questions.

KEVIN

Sorry. Okay. Go ahead.

ROD

Kevin, I want you to give me one
thousand dollars.

KEVIN

Is this for training?

ROD

That's three. You're gone!

Rod jumps up and VIOLENTLY MARCHES Kevin to the door.

ROD (CONT'D)

I don't want anything from you
anymore...

EXT. ROD'S APARTMENT OVER THE GARAGE - CONTINUOUS

Rod PUSHES Kevin out of the door. PULL BACK TO REVEAL that
Rod's bedroom is a CONVERTED APARTMENT over the GARAGE.

ROD

...you're evil! You're evil and
dirty!

DB

KEVIN
Okay, okay. I'll give it to you.

ROD
You will?

KEVIN
Yeah. I'll sell something. I'll figure out a way.

ROD
You're a good man, Kevin.

Rod hugs Kevin.

ROD (CONT'D)
I love you, little brother. I love you so much.

KEVIN
I love you, too, Rod.

EXT. TOWN DUMP - DAWN

Rod stands on the edge of the ramp over the burning INCINERATOR. He holds his hand over the furnace. Smoke and ash blast out. He turns to Kevin.

ROD
J. H. Christ, that's hot! Kevin, your recon reports indicated that the incinerator didn't burn this early.

KEVIN
It shouldn't be doing this.

ROD
"Shouldn't." "Shouldn't." That's a fear word, Kevin. That implies that someone else is in a position to determine your fate. You cannot use that word anymore. Erase it from your memory. It doesn't exist.

KEVIN
Okay.

Rod looks at the RAMPS on either end of the INCINERATOR. They are INSANELY STEEP.

ROD

Ratchet the ramps up sixteen degrees. I need more height so the tires don't melt.

Kevin writes it down, then:

KEVIN

Uh, Rod, that'll make the ramps seventy-five degrees.

ROD

And?

KEVIN

Well, that's almost straight up.

ROD

Why are you so afraid all the time? Where is this coming from?

KEVIN

I'm just saying, it's pretty steep.

ROD

You're doing it again. You're trying to undermine my confidence and make me fail.

KEVIN

No, I --

ROD

Implement the order!

KEVIN

Okay.

Kevin runs off toward the crew who are milling around aimlessly in the background. Rod stares at the incinerator, bewitched. Just then, Denise approaches. She wears a very flowery sundress.

DENISE

Hi, Rod.

ROD

Denise. What the H are you doing here? I thought you were against this jump.

DENISE

I wasn't against the jump. I was just against you getting hurt.

DB

How's your head? Did you have any more dizzy spells last night?

ROD

I don't know. Frank knocked me out and I was unconscious for most of the evening.

Denise reacts, then pulls out a little medical flashlight.

DENISE

Let me just take a look at your eyes.

ROD

No, ladyman!

Rod pulls away.

DENISE

Rod, I care about you. I'm just trying to help.

ROD

If you really want to help, you could start by moving those steel caissons away from the landing area.

Denise turns as the octogenarian Eugene gets pinned under two giant girders. Rico tries to free him.

ROD (CONT'D)

You might need to call one of your lady P.E. teacher buddies for help.

DENISE

(confused)
P.E. teacher buddies?

Just then we hear POLICE SIRENS in the distance. Rod doesn't even turn to look.

ROD

(calmly, to himself)
Jesus Mother F-ing Law.

DENISE

Oh my god. What do we do?

ROD

Run like hell, ladyman. Run like hell.

Rod RUNS and JUMPS on his MOPED, slightly injuring his MANHOOD in the process. He PEELS away from Denise and SKIDS in to a STOP in front of KEVIN and the crew.

ROD (CONT'D)
Kevin, take the truck, load up the crew and get out of here. I'll meet you back at the house.

KEVIN
I'm not leaving you here, Rod.

ROD
Save yourself. That's an order! If I'm not back in an hour tell Frank to spring me from jail.

Rod REVS the moped's TINY engine.

KEVIN
I don't want to leave you!

ROD
Do it!!!

Rod sees the APPROACHING police car.

ROD (CONT'D)
(to himself)
It's gut check time.

He DRAMATICALLY HITS the accelerator and SQUEALS away. He looks behind him as he rides and sees the police car gaining ground. He turns left.

ROD (CONT'D)
You'll never get me, pigs!

The MOPED ACCELERATES for two seconds and then maintains a steady TWENTY-TWO MILE an hour clip. Rod LUNGES FORWARD to try to get it to go faster.

ROD (CONT'D)
Come on, you M F-er!

He looks behind him. The cops are gaining fast.

ROD (CONT'D)
Go, go, go!

He lunges and ACCELERATES until finally the MOPED STALLS. Rod tries to restart it desperately. NOTHING.

ROD (CONT'D)

F-ing A.

The police car comes to a CALM STOP inches from Rod. Rod jump away, surprised, then picks up the moped and THROWS it at the door of the police car. It scratches the door and lands lamely on the ground. Rod looks around like a caged animal.

ROD (CONT'D)
Soul of an antelope!

He runs away. We follow him through the WOODS, over a fallen log, through BUSHES...

ROD (CONT'D)
Ayeee!!!

There's a FENCE in front of him. He SPRINGS into the air to jump it...

ROD (CONT'D)
I'm FREE!!!

But he gets his shirt stuck on a piece of metal at the top of the fence. He HANGS helplessly at the top of the fence. The policeman, OFFICER MANTA, a clear FIVE YEARS YOUNGER than Rod, casually pulls him down.

OFFICER MANTA
Let's go, Rod.

ROD
Officer Manta, I am not armed.

OFFICER MANTA
I know, Rod, I'm just trying to help you down.

ROD
Oh.

Officer Manta pulls Rod down.

ROD (CONT'D)
Sorry about the police car. I knew as soon as I threw it that was a bad idea.

OFFICER MANTA
It's okay, Rod. Let's go.

Officer Manta walks Rod to the police car.

EXT. ROD'S HOUSE - NIGHT

DB

Rod stands in his driveway as Officer Manta removes his moped from the back of the police car.

ROD

Thanks again for the ride, Officer Manta, and for your assistance in the recon of my vehicle. I'm sorry I took up your whole day. I'll see you in court.

OFFICER MANTA

Rod, I didn't arrest you. You were free to leave any time you wanted.

ROD

I am not above the law, Officer! Kids look up to me so I prefer to go by the book.

OFFICER MANTA

Rod, I only broke up the jump because Denise was worried you'd get hurt again.

ROD

What?

OFFICER MANTA

Denise really cares about you. She was just trying to help.

ROD

Trying to help me not live my dreams! What a betraying whore of a ladyman suckpig!

OFFICER MANTA

Rod, watch the language. That's my sister you're talking about.

ROD

I know that! I don't care. Read me? I'm a betrayed man! Now I'm liable to do anything. For the good of the community put me in jail and throw away the key! Make the betrayer-spawn happy!!!

Rod puts out his hands to be cuffed.

OFFICER MANTA

Okay, I'm leaving. Good night, Rod.

DB

Officer Manta gets in his car and drives off. Rod screams after him.

ROD
Drive away, Officer Manta! It's
what you do best!

Rod turns away and starts to PUSH his moped back up to the house. He then sees that the house is FILLED with people.

ROD (CONT'D)
What the F-ing H is this?

EXT. ROD'S HOUSE - LATER

Rod enters and sees that the house is filled with people.

ROD
I rot in jail while these M F-er's
have a party?!

He moves through the crowd and walks UPSTAIRS.

INT. FRANK'S BEDROOM - A LITTLE LATER

Rod enters the bedroom, FURIOUS. It's filled with CRYING PEOPLE. Marie APPROACHES him.

MARIE
Oh, Rod. Thank god you're here.

ROD
I don't know what's worse, letting
your own flesh and blood rot in jail
all day or neglecting to invite him
to a block party thrown in his own
house!

Marie starts to CRY. Rod SOFTENS.

ROD (CONT'D)
I'm sorry, Mom. I'm sure it was a
last minute thing. Everyone seems
to be having a good time.

Rod hears the BEEP from a HEART MONITOR. He sees Frank semiconscious in his bed with a PRIEST standing over him praying. Rod then realizes that most of the guests are CRYING.

ROD (CONT'D)
What's happening? Is this some sort
of interactive theater art piece?

DB

MARIE
It's Frank. He's dying.

ROD
What? Since when?

MARIE
For the last twenty-one years. It's his heart. He needs a transplant. He's been on every list but they never picked him. He's too high risk, they say. Time's running out. Oh Rod, I can't lose him.

She SOBS. Rod HUGS her.

MARIE (CONT'D)
We never told you about his condition because we knew how much it would upset you.

ROD
So you just decided to keep it from me and Kevin?

MARIE
Oh, no. Kevin knows. We just didn't think you could handle it.

In the background, we see that Kevin has moved to Frank's bedside. Frank takes off his WATCH and hands it to him. Kevin HUGS Frank.

ROD
I don't know what to believe in anymore. Am I in a dream inside of a dream? Am I the dreamer or has someone dreamed me? Who am I? Why am I here?
(then)
I need water.

Rod goes to leave. Marie grabs his arm.

MARIE
Rod, he may not have much time left. Go say your good-byes.

ROD
No. He can't die now.

IN THE BACKGROUND, WE SEE Frank taking off a GOLD MAN BRACELET and handing it to Kevin.

DB

MARIE

That's a sweet thing to say, Rod.

ROD

Frank needs to see me jump the fountains at Caesar's Palace. There's got to be something we can do.

MARIE

We've tried everything. The only hope is an experimental medical trial and Frank's insurance won't pay. If we could come up with the money, we could get him in. But where are we going to get four hundred and fifty thousand dollars?

ROD

I'll get the money somehow. He can't die now!

Rod RUSHES to Frank's bedside. Marie turns to a fellow mourner, CAROL, mid-fifties.

MARIE

I knew Rod would take this hard. They're very close.

FRANK

In his deathbed. He whispers something to Kevin.

KEVIN

I love you, too, Dad.

Rod PUSHES Kevin away from FRANK.

ROD

Frank, hold on. Don't die!

Frank SMILES.

FRANK

Sorry, Rod. It's over.

ROD

No, no. It can't be over. I have too much to prove to you. How can I do that when you're dead?

FRANK

You had your chances, Rod. You had twenty-one years of chances.

ROD
I need more time.

FRANK
I'm all out of time, guy.

ROD
Nooo!!!

FRANK
Look, I'm a good sport. Do you
really want another shot?

ROD
More than anything.

FRANK
Alright. Let's go.

Frank WEAKLY puts up his FISTS.

ROD
I can't fight you now. You're on
the verge of death.

FRANK
(weakly)
Chicken. Girl chicken. Scared you
can't win?

ROD
No, actually I'm fairly positive I
can take you right now.

FRANK
Then bring it. Put my lights out
and make me the happiest man on
earth. Show me that I got through
to you as a father somewhere along
the way. Punch me and I'll love
you.

Rod jumps in place, CONFLICTED.

ROD
Ohhh...

MARIE

Is still talking to Carol. We can see Rod struggling over
his predicament in the background.

MARIE

DB

Rod was really lucky to get a stepfather who took as much of an interest in his life as Frank did.

CAROL

We're all very lucky to have known Frank.

ON FRANK

Rod holds up his fists. Frank smiles.

FRANK

It's so easy, Rod. Hit me -- I love you. Don't hit me -- I die and you live out your empty hollow life suffocating in the knowledge that you've never received paternal approval. It's a no brainer, Rod. Do it.

Rod pulls back his fist, then:

ROD

I can't. It's wrong.

FRANK

I knew it. You don't have the stuff. You'll never have the stuff!!!

ROD

Aieeee!!!!

Rod HAULS OFF and PUNCHES the WALL right over Frank's head. The WHOLE ROOM turns, shocked, to see what happened.

ROD (CONT'D)

I'm going to get you well, Frank, so I can beat you fair and square! That is my pledge to you!!!

Rod RUNS OUT.

KEVIN

Rod, are you okay?

ROD

I need to go to my quiet place!!!

EXT. LAKE - LATER

DB

Rod sits on a log in a beautiful isolated part of the forest PLAYING HIS FRENCH HORN. He's really BAD. A SQUIRREL stands in front of him and LISTENS to his horrible music.

Rod gets caught up in the drama of the piece, feeling each note... He STARTS TO CRY. This makes him play even harder.

Rod's CRIES turn into SOBS. Each blow of the horn is an EXPLOSION of blubbering tears.

Through his tears and high-pitched French horn SCREECHES, Rod hears a distant sound from across the lake. It seems to be music playing in response to him. The SQUIRREL TURNS. He hears it, too.

Rod plays a few notes and LISTENS. Those same notes are played back. He plays a couple more. They're played back, too. Rod dries his tears as he sets off in pursuit of this mystery musician.

He continues to play as he follows the sound. His walk turns into a run as he circles the lake to find the source. And then like destiny, behind a tree, sits a young Japanese woman with a TRUMPET. This is KYOKO SUZUKI, twenties, scholarly and proper. She LOOKS UP EXPRESSIONLESS. Rod is AMAZED.

ROD

Who are you, person?

Kyoko looks at him and says nothing. She WEARS a sticker that says, "HELLO, MY NAME IS KYOKO." Rod reads her nametag.

ROD (CONT'D)

"Kyoko." Right on.

EXT. LAKE - LATER

Rod and Kyoko walk through the WOODS. Rod pours out his guts.

ROD

I chose the path of an international superstar stuntman because it was my destiny. But what is destiny? Is there a great architect up there with his/her master design for life or are we alone in the universe spinning around with fate nothing more than a comforting explanation for our real purpose --to pass on our genetic material to future generations?

A beat. Kyoko looks at him, expressionless.

ROD (CONT'D)

God, you are so easy to talk to. I feel like the last two hours and forty-six minutes just dissolved in one second. I know this sounds crazy but I want to spend the rest of my life with you.

Kyoko looks blankly at Rod.

ROD (CONT'D)

You make me feel like I can do anything. You make me feel like I can get that four hundred and fifty thousand dollars to save Frank's life and get him healthy so I can kick his teeth in and win his love.

Kyoko just looks at Rod.

ROD (CONT'D)

My god, Kyoko, I feel like I'm seeing in color for the first time in my life. You've given me the greatest gift of all, Kyoko. You've given me back my manhood.

Rod smiles and kisses Kyoko's hand. She stares blankly and then pulls a small VIDEO CAMERA from her bag.

ROD (CONT'D)

Oh, are you a camera nut?

She starts to video Rod.

ROD (CONT'D)

Okay, sure. Shoot away.
(into camera)
Hi. I'm Rod Kimble.

She keeps the camera trained on him.

ROD (CONT'D)

My god this feels so natural. I love being in front of the camera. Kyoko, you can be my official videographer.

Kyoko keeps shooting.

ROD (CONT'D)

And now for some action footage.

(into camera)
Chase me!

Rod runs away LAUGHING and JUMPING. Kyoko just stands there.

EXT. HOUSE OF PIES - DAY

Establishing.

INT. HOUSE OF PIES - CONTINUOUS

Rod sits at the head of a table with his crew: Eugene, Rico, Dave, Al Geiser and Kevin. Kyoko sits next to Rod as he speaks. Kevin eyes her WARILY.

ROD

As you all know, the last two days have been very difficult for me. I was fired from my job and I discovered that my stepfather Frank -- a man with whom I have a very complicated relationship -- is on his deathbed. Yesterday, for fourteen minutes I thought about different ways of killing myself. Some ways spectacular, some ways pretty sad. And then this special yellow someone walked into my life. Everybody, meet Kyoko. My soulmate.

Everyone looks at Kyoko who just stares back at them blankly. She pulls out her video camera and starts shooting.

ROD (CONT'D)

She's my girlfriend now. She's also a real shutterbug.

(matter of factly)

I'm putting her in charge of operations.

KEVIN

But that's my job.

ROD

Do not make me end you, Kevin. Do not take us all there!

Al Geiser cheerily puts his hand out to Kyoko.

AL GEISER

Hi, Al Geiser. I'm in insurance.

DB

Kyoko points the camera at Al Geiser and ignores his hand.

AL GEISER (CONT'D)

So, do you live in town?

KYOKO doesn't react. Al Geiser smiles anyway.

AL GEISER (CONT'D)

She seems nice.

DAVE

Why isn't she talking? Is she playing games with our minds?

ROD

She's a little shy. She'll warm up to you.

EUGENE

I bet she will. I had a Chinese once. She could suck the chrome off a trailer hitch.

Rod smacks Eugene across the side of the head.

ROD

Eugene! Show some respect.

(then)

She's Japanese!

AL GEISER

Well, I think it's just great to have a lady in the crew. Welcome aboard, Kyoko.

ROD

That's the spirit I'm looking for, Al Geiser. The spirit of openness. Now I want everyone to make Kyoko feel at home. She's the reason we're on the fast track to glory.

KEVIN

Why's that?

ROD

You and your questions. I love you, Kev, but sometimes I feel like putting you through a wall. Kyoko gave me my manhood back. She gave me the confidence to take out big daddy.

RICO

DB

(excited)
We get to kill someone?

ROD
No. I'm talking about the fountains
at Caesar's Palace. Big Daddy is
just one of my many euphemisms for
said fountains.

KEVIN
(thrilled)
We're gonna do it? We're really
gonna do it?

ROD
Yes, Kevin. And what's more -- I'm
going to take the money I make from
the jump and use it to save Frank's
life.

KEVIN
Oh that's fantastic. How are you
going to do that?

ROD
You're the hotshot businessman. You
figure it out.

KEVIN
Me? Rod, I'm a cashier at AAMCO. I
don't know anything about business.

ROD
Hey!

Rod grabs Kevin by the throat and drives him into the wall.

ROD (CONT'D)
I never want to hear you put
yourself down again, Kevin! You are
a gifted, wonderful person with
tremendous business skills! Got it?
(then)
I said got it?!!!

KEVIN
(weakly)
Yes... got it.

Rod releases Kevin who collapses into the booth.

ROD
Now, as estimated, the fountain jump
will cost \$41,000 U.S. This

DB

includes travel and a fourteen-dollar per diem for all crew members. Now Kevin has agreed to give me three thousand dollars.

KEVIN

I thought I only said one thousand -

ROD

And last night Kyoko and I devised a plan to come up with the rest.

Rod reveals a notebook with a chart of earnings calculations drawn in crayon across the page. He tilts it toward Kyoko's camera.

ROD (CONT'D)

Is this a good angle for you, Kyoko?

EUGENE

Here's a good angle, Koko. Of my crotch.

Rod smacks Eugene in the head again.

ROD

Now then, I will use my extensive grade school contacts to drum up small scale stunt work at birthday parties. We're talking escape tricks, fire breathing, anything to please the rugrats. Also, I will enter any and all major contests of strength and skill held within a three hundred mile radius. I'm talking alligator wrestling, pie eating, engine block tossing. If it has a cash prize, I will be a contestant. Once I win every contest I enter, we will secure advertising and media coverage and I will become a major international phenomenon.

Rod turns the page in the notebook. The new page has lots of crayon bar graphs.

DAVE

Whoa. So many columns. And colors.

ROD

That's right, Dave. So many columns. And colors. This jump

requires major training. That means no compromises. From here on out it's all about dedication and sacrifice. And I make this sacred vow: In four weeks we will have the funds for the fountain jump. And in five weeks we will make said jump and Kevin will secure the cash prize of a minimum amount of four hundred and fifty thousand dollars! I will save Frank and avenge my dead father's memory. My life will finally make sense.

KEVIN

Four hundred and fifty thousand dollars?

ROD

What did that sentence end with?

KEVIN

A question mark?

ROD

Exactly. From this point on, declarative sentences only. Got it?

KEVIN

Yes? Yes.

Rod spins his finger in the air triumphantly.

ROD

Alright, men. And Kyoko. Let's rock it!

EXT. ROD'S HOUSE - DAY

Rod pulls up on his WHEEZING moped. He sees Denise waiting for him.

DENISE

Rod, we need to talk.

ROD

Go away, betrayer ladyman!

DENISE

Rod, I'm sorry I called Danny. I didn't know what else to do.

ROD

So you call the police? The police?! You know I have authority issues!

DENISE

But it was just my brother. He was off duty.

ROD

Your brother has a badge!

DENISE

Look, I'm sorry. I just didn't want you to get hurt again.

ROD

That sounded rehearsed.

DENISE

Let me make it up to you. Let me join your crew. Let me help you with your training. At least that way I can monitor your injuries.

ROD

Why should I ever trust you again?

DENISE

Because I have an Exxon credit card and I can pay for gas and snacks.

ROD

(beat)

Welcome aboard, fella.

He shakes her hand.

EXT. FIELD - DAY

Rod stands beside a BIG TUB of water with his crew. Kevin holds a notepad. Denise looks at Kyoko confused as she shoots video footage.

ROD

Okay, first order of business: submersion. I want you to hold me under water for forty seconds. Get Denise in there. She's strong. Use all of your power because my body's natural instinct will be to resist you. If there's a problem I will ring this bell.

Rod pulls on a string attached to a BELL. It RINGS.

DB

ROD (CONT'D)
That's our safety valve. Any
questions?

No one says anything.

ROD (CONT'D)
Let's do this thing!

Rod takes a couple of deep breaths.

ROD (CONT'D)
(to himself)
Soul of a bottlenose dolphin.

Rod gets into the tub of water. He makes a TINY DOLPHIN
SOUND and SUBMERGES. Kevin hits the stopwatch. Al, Eugene,
Rico and Dave HOLD ROD DOWN.

Three seconds tick by. On the fourth, Rod starts to THRASH
around wildly. Rod pulls on the string but it falls off the
bell and no one notices. The rope FLAILS around as Rod
struggles to get to the surface.

Then the string becomes still.

DENISE
Wait. Something's not right.

KEVIN
(counting off time)
Thirty-six, thirty-seven, thirty-
eight, thirty-nine, forty. Let him
up.

The crew RELEASES Rod but he just stays in the water,
UNCONSCIOUS.

KEVIN (CONT'D)
Pull him out. Pull him out!

Rico and Dave pull Rod's lifeless body out of the tub.

DENISE
Rod!

Denise HAMMERS her fists on his chest and delivers mouth-to-
mouth. Rod THROWS UP and regains consciousness.

ROD
Where am I?

DENISE
You're at the training field.

ROD

Okay. I saw a bright light but I ran from it. I'm okay. Well done, everyone. Good response time. Good stuff. One note: Let's tie the rope to the bell just a little tighter next time. Okay? Great. I'm out.

Rod falls UNCONSCIOUS.

EXT. BUS PARKING LOT - DAY

Rod stands beside a TRAMPOLINE with stacks of sand bags all around. He addresses his crew and Kyoko who continues to videotape all proceedings.

ROD

Okay, now we're going to focus on body control and gravity management. These skills are vital for any successful stunt.

Rod tries to suavely swing himself up on the trampoline. It doesn't work. After a STRUGGLE, he manages to hook one leg over the edge and AWKWARDLY pull himself up. He stands, winded. His legs are RUBBERY as he tries to steady himself and look confident.

ROD (CONT'D)

You'll notice that next to you there are several sandbags. I am going to jump higher and higher into the air and I want you to take these sandbags and hurl them at me with all your strength. Any questions?

AL GEISER

I did the hammer throw in high school. Can we throw the sandbags like that?

ROD

Do what you need to do, Al. I delegate the specifics to you.

RICO

(haunted)

In Desert Storm I saw a highway full of cars explode into flames. I saw skin melt off the people. I saw liquid death.

ROD

DB

Okay. Channel that energy into the sandbags, Rico.

(then)

Kevin, clock it.

KEVIN

You got it.

DAVE

(to Kevin)

Clock what where?

KEVIN

I have no idea.

Rod starts to JUMP on the TRAMPOLINE. He gets higher and higher.

ROD

Okay. Now!

Kevin, Dave, Eugene and Rico pick up their sandbags and HURL them at Rod. Denise STRUGGLES to lift hers.

ROD (CONT'D)

Come on, Denise, make your field hockey team proud!

Denise looks confused. Some of the sandbags BRUSH BY Rod, he jumps around to avoid being hit by the other ones. Rod smiles, still jumping.

ROD (CONT'D)

Okay. Good. Keep going.

The crewmembers each eagerly pick up more SANDBAGS AND THROW them at the LEAPING Rod. Again, Rod jumps away from the sandbags.

ROD (CONT'D)

Ha ha! I'm going to live forever!

Eugene picks up a sandbag. His back instantly goes out.

EUGENE

Hernia.

He falls over. Just as Rod gets AIRBORNE, Kevin throws a sandbag and hits him SQUARELY in the chest. Rod is ROCKETED backwards out of frame and right into the WINDSHIELD of a parked car.

DAVE

Douche! My Kia!

DB

Kevin, Denise and the crew run over to a semiconscious Rod. Kevin tries to revive him. Kyoko gets the CAMERA right in there for close-ups.

KEVIN

Oh, my god, Rod. I'm so sorry.

DENISE

(to Kyoko)

Please give him some room.

Kyoko IGNORES her. Denise's hatred for Kyoko is starting to grow.

KEVIN

Rod? Rod?

Rod opens his eyes. And then TUSSELES Kevin's hair playfully.

ROD

You got me good, little bro. Right in the breadbasket.

Rod gets to one knee. And then falls over.

ROD (CONT'D)

I'm out.

Denise takes his pulse and looks at her watch.

EXT. HILLY STREET - A LITTLE LATER

Rod is sitting on a street luge at the top of a steep hill. The crew is gathered around him. Kevin and Denise are watching Kyoko as she passionlessly videotapes Rod as he poses.

DENISE

What does Rod see in her?

KEVIN

I don't know.

DENISE

I mean, she has to speak English, right? But why won't she talk to us?

KEVIN

Search me.

DENISE

DB

I mean, don't you think it's weird that she just showed up out of nowhere? No friends. No family. I don't like it.

KEVIN

I don't like it either. But what are we going to do? Rod's in love.

Kevin walks off. Denise hangs back, bummed out. She looks over at Kyoko as she keeps shooting. She shakes her head.

ON ROD --

He lies on his back on his street luge and calls up to the crew.

ROD

Okay, troops, it's time to work on speed management. I must be prepared to handle maximum G force with minimum muscle fatigue. My safety word will be whiskey.

(then)

Okay, Eugene, Dave. I'm going to need a big push here. Denise, you get in there, too. We can use your shoulder strength. On my cue.

Rod lies back and begins to move the LUGE forward and backward with his hands. Eugene, Dave and Denise grab the back of the sled.

DAVE

(to Kevin)

Whoa. I didn't know he knew how to street luge.

KEVIN

He doesn't.

ROD

And one, two, thr--

Eugene, Dave and Denise LAUNCH Rod down the hill. From different angles we see Rod SHOOT past SCREAMING. Kyoko jumps out to get a shot of his insane speed.

ROD (CONT'D)

....whiskey!!!

The crew watches nervously.

CLOSEUP ON ROD

DB

The skin on his face RIPPLES. He shakes as he fights to hang on to the sled. More angles of him shooting past. Finally he hits a curb and SHOOTs like a ROCKET into a parked van. Kevin and Rico arrive in the follow truck.

KEVIN

Rod, Rod. Are you okay?

ROD

Did anyone here know these things went that fast? Jesus.

EUGENE

I think I crapped my pants.

ROD

Also, Eugene, Dave, Denise? As much as the middle of three seems like my cue, it's not. Uh, oh. Over and out.

Rod falls unconscious.

INT. FRANK'S BEDROOM - LATER

Frank is sleeping peacefully. Rod enters quietly. As soon as he sits down, Frank wakes up, swinging at Rod's head.

FRANK

ROD!

ROD

(ducking)

Frank! I thought you were sleeping.

FRANK

I'll sleep when I'm dead. So did you come back to kick my ass?

ROD

No. I just wanted see how you were feeling.

FRANK

Show some balls, kick my ass.

ROD

No. Can I get you anything?

FRANK

Yeah. A heart that works.

ROD

DB

Frank, you know if I could, I would reach into my own chest cavity and give you my heart.

FRANK
What's stopping you? Do it.

ROD
But I'd die.

FRANK
(smiling)
Exactly.

Rod scowls, hurt.

FRANK (CONT'D)
Are you angry, fucknut? Get angry.
Punch my lights out.

ROD
No! I've got a plan. I'm going to win the money you need to get into that experimental medical trial. I'm going to jump the fountains at Caesar's Palace!

Frank starts laughing.

ROD (CONT'D)
It's not funny.

Frank can't stop laughing.

ROD (CONT'D)
I'm going to save your life, Frank. And when you feel better I'm going to kick your ass and then you're finally going to love me!

Frank laughs even harder. Rod is furious. He really wants to punch him now. Marie walks by the room and sees Frank laughing. She pops her head in.

MARIE
Oh honey, you always cheer him up.
Thank you.

Marie leaves. Rod just sits there.

EXT. TOWN - DAY

It's a hot summer afternoon. The town is decorated for the Fourth of July. Rod and Kyoko are walking down the street. Rod points to all the flags and red, white and blue bunting.

ROD

These decorations are for a holiday called "The Fourth of July." That's when America and her territories, Puerto Rico, Guam, etc., celebrate our freedom from the tyrannical rule of Mother England.

(then)

I love talking about history with you.

Rod puts his arm around Kyoko and then puts his hand in her back jeans pocket. He smiles, then:

ROD (CONT'D)

What's this?

Rod pulls a WALLET out of Kyoko's jeans pocket. Kyoko doesn't react.

ROD (CONT'D)

This is my wallet. I thought I lost it two weeks ago. Remember I asked you about it?

Kyoko looks at him blankly.

ROD (CONT'D)

I had to order all new credit cards and change my ATM PIN number which I can't remember now and that's why I had to use my credit card to buy gum. Why didn't you tell me you found it?

Still nothing from Kyoko. Then, Rod smiles.

ROD (CONT'D)

Oh, I get it. You were being playful, weren't you? Oh, you are such a minx. You keep me honest, Kyoko. That's one of the things I love most about you.

Rod kisses Kyoko and puts the wallet back in his pocket. Kyoko still stares blankly.

ROD (CONT'D)

I'm going to have to keep my eye on you.

DB

He laughs. They continue to walk.

INT. KARATE STUDIO - MOMENTS LATER

Rod and Kyoko enter the studio. A bunch of THIRD GRADERS are having a class.

ROD

I used to be something of a martial arts master myself. I still do tai chi to stay calm.

Rod and Kyoko sit on a bench. Rod points to a little girl who's breaking boards with her hands.

ROD (CONT'D)

That's Olivia. She's helping me line up some birthday party gigs with her young friends at school. I'm going to get a quick update.

Rod waves to Olivia. She excuses herself from her exercise with a bow to her sensei and goes over to them.

OLIVIA

Hi, Rod.

ROD

Hi, Olivia. Nice board breaking.

OLIVIA

Thanks. The trick is the follow through.

ROD

It always is. You know, I should incorporate board breaking into my training. I'll have Kevin look into it. So, what do you have for me?

OLIVIA

Three definite yes's. Six maybes. And one no.

ROD

That's great. You talked to them about price schedules and performance variations?

OLIVIA

I gave them the pamphlet, yes.

ROD

I'm so pumped. So, who was the no?

OLIVIA

Danny Buggy. He's getting a petting zoo. Goats and sheep mostly.

ROD

Petting zoo? What is that crap? I just got a shipment of Mexican fireworks that are going to kick all kinds of ass. Can a goat or sheep blow itself up? I don't think so.

A beat. Rod sees Olivia looking at Kyoko confused.

ROD (CONT'D)

Oh, where are my manners? Olivia, this is Kyoko. Kyoko, Olivia. Kyoko and I met two days ago. She's my soulmate.

OLIVIA

Really?

Olivia shakes Kyoko's hand.

OLIVIA (CONT'D)

It's nice to meet you.

Nothing from Kyoko.

OLIVIA (CONT'D)

Are you from Japan?

(then)

O ginke des ka?

KYOKO

Ginke des.

OLIVIA

Wow.

(to Rod)

I didn't know you spoke Japanese.

ROD

Yes. Well, I don't.

OLIVIA

Oh. I'll go get Mr. Nobushiya. He can translate for you.

ROD

Ah. No, no. That's not necessary.

OLIVIA

DB

But how do you understand each other?

ROD

Olivia, communication is about much more than language. We don't need words. We're in love. When you're older, you'll understand. We'd better be off. Come on, Kyoko.

Rod mimes for Kyoko to walk out the door with him. She doesn't move.

ROD (CONT'D)

Let's go.

Rod gives her a nudge out the door.

ROD (CONT'D)

She's very playful.

As they exit, Rod calls back to Olivia.

ROD (CONT'D)

Keep me posted on the maybes. And tell Danny Buggy I'll see him in hell.

Olivia watches them go, concerned.

INT. HOUSE OF PIES - NIGHT

Rod is at a table holding A pebble. The crew watches his every move. He holds the pebble out and drops it dramatically to the ground. When it HITS, he SHAKES his head, amazed.

ROD

Nine point eight meters per second squared. Gravity. F, yeah.

The crew's impressed. Kevin writes it down.

ROD (CONT'D)

Okay, people. It's the home stretch. My contacts are delivering and training is going excellently. I'm happy to report that our first birthday performance is in three days. Three.

The crew claps.

ROD (CONT'D)

DB

That's right. Applaud. You guys earned it.

Kyoko gets up and WALKS OUT of the restaurant. Rod covers.

ROD (CONT'D)

(to Kyoko)

Okay, I'll call you later then.

Al Geiser raises his hand. He wears a short-sleeved dress shirt and a tie.

ROD (CONT'D)

What is it, Al?

AL GEISER

I can't work on the crew anymore.

Rod stares at the floor with his hands in prayer.

ROD

(without looking up)

What's wrong? Don't you believe in the mission anymore?

AL GEISER

No, it's my wife. She says I'm not spending enough time with her.

ROD

Uh huh. Your wife. She doesn't think I can do it, does she?

AL

It has nothing to do with that. It's about our relationship. I put in a lot of hours down at the office and --

ROD

Al, I think we both deserve a little less bullshit here. Does your wife believe in me or not?

A beat.

ROD (CONT'D)

Al?

AL

She may think the mission's a little bit of a pipe dream.

ROD

DB

Son of a bitch! I knew it! That lousy slut!

AL GEISER

Hey, you don't have to talk all blue now...

ROD

I guess the world thought the flying machine was a pipe dream. Now we have airlines. And what about SCUBA? Everyone thought you'd explode under water.

DAVE

No, they didn't.

ROD

Dave, I am this close to ending you.
(then, back to Al)
And what about the skyscrapers?

AL GEISER

What about them?

ROD

Only the Indians were crazy enough to work on them. If we hadn't stolen this country from the red man and turned them all into alcoholics, no one would be living above the sixth floor. Think about it, man!

Al looks at Rod, confused.

ROD (CONT'D)

Well, good news, Al. You don't have to worry about quitting anymore. Go home and tell your fat ugly whore of a wife that you got fired. You're out of the crew. I hate you! Get out!

Rod pulls Al from his seat and FROGMARCHES him to the DOOR.

AL

But I'm your ride.

ROD

I'll get a ride from someone else, Judas!

AL

But your car's at my house.

DB

ROD

I don't care. I don't even want my car anymore. Your ugly wife probably looked at it and it melted because of her ugliness!

AL

Come on, Rod...

ROD

Get out, white devil!
(then, losing his
balance)
Uh, oh.

KEVIN

Rod, what's wrong?

Rod braces himself on a table.

DENISE

It's another dizzy spell.

Rod is calm for a second and then is hit by a first class, and by all appearances grand mal, seizure. He lunges across the cashier counter, knocking down shelves and making unholy sounds.

DENISE (CONT'D)

Rod, this is not hypoglycemia!

Rod spastically heaves back and forth across the restaurant and Denise tries to jam a wallet into his mouth. He finally falls to the ground. His eyes flutter. Kevin and Denise kneel beside him.

DENISE (CONT'D)

Rod, can you hear me?

ROD

I think so. I think I ate too fast.

KEVIN

We're going to the hospital right now!

ROD

Mind your own business, dog. I'll be fine. I just need to lay still for about ninety minutes.
(then, eyes
fluttering)

Out..

DB

Rod passes out. Denise looks at Kevin, deeply worried.

INT. ROD'S ROOM - LATER THAT NIGHT

Rod is in bed reading a book. The only light in the room comes from a tiny lamp on his nightstand. We see that he's reading the dictionary.

He flips through definitions for, "Disease," and "Death," and "Dizziness."

He stares off into the middle distance, haunted.

EXT. FIELD - DAY

Kevin and Rod are examining a ramp. The crew argues in the background.

ROD

(off crew)

They're doing some good work, these men.

KEVIN

Denise has been really great, too. You know she's going to medical school next year.

ROD

As I said, men. You're running a tight ship, Kevin. At this rate, we should be in Vegas well before Labor Day. When is Labor Day?

KEVIN

It's at the end of the summer.

ROD

Okay. That's right then. How are you doing on getting me the minimum of four hundred and fifty thousand dollars for the jump?

KEVIN

We're never going to get that kind of money.

ROD

Stop the stinkin' thinkin' and visualize your goals. Negativity is not just a river in Egypt.

KEVIN

(beat)

DB

We need to talk about what happened last night.

ROD

Is this about Kyoko? If you don't like her, Kevin, just come out and say so.

KEVIN

Rod, you had a pretty significant seizure yesterday. I'm worried there's something wrong with you.

ROD

Is that it, or can you not stand Kyoko because she's different? Because you're a racist.

KEVIN

What?

ROD

I suggest you behave more like a man the next time you take a shot at my woman, my friend. Don't couch it in fake concern for my health. Or so help me, god, I will put you down like a crippled horse.

Rod grabs Kevin by the throat and pins him to the ground.

KEVIN

Rod... aaahh...!!!

ROD

What do you call her behind my back? Nip? Chink? Slant?

KEVIN

No! Rod...!

Rod lets Kevin go and hugs him tearfully, rocking him back and forth.

ROD

I'm sorry, Kevin. I have a very short fuse where capital-H hatred and capital-I intolerance are concerned.

KEVIN

But --

ROD

DB

No, no. You don't need to explain. You're my brother and I love you. We all have our prejudices. The key is to work through them with love and understanding. I won't give up on you.

KEVIN

But, that's not --

ROD

Stop fighting it, Kevin. It's time to let love rule. Say it. "Let love rule."

KEVIN

Let love rule?

ROD

There you go. The healing has begun. I love you, little brother. And don't worry about the money. I have a way to make this work.

Rod SMOTHERS a confused Kevin as Denise watches nearby. Genesis kicks in and plays over the following:

STUNT SEQUENCE:

EXT. BIRTHDAY PARTY #1 - DAY

We see Rod's back as he runs, on fire, through a banner that reads, "Happy Birthday, Timmy" and toward a party of horrified third graders. Kyoko SHOOTs with her video camera.

Rico grabs a tablecloth and smothers Rod with it. Denise runs in with a fire extinguisher and SPRAYS the fire out. Kevin turns Rod over. He opens his eyes.

KEVIN

Rod, are you okay?

ROD

Okay, I know this is our first gig, but Dave, you have to be faster with the tarp. I take two monster steps. On the third, you've got to be there.

DAVE

You're right. I totally blew it. I left the tarp in the truck. I'm such an asshole!

DB

ROD
 It's in the past. On the plus side:
 Rico and Denise, good work with the
 tablecloth and fire extinguisher.
 Very nice improvisational thinking.

DENISE
 Thanks.

RICO
 I smothered four Republican
 guardsmen with a tablecloth once.
 It took forever for them to die.

ROD
 Okay.
 (then)
 Well, that's not the easiest way to
 make forty dollars, my friends, but
 we are on the board.
 (then)
 I'm out.

Rod collapses. Kyoko stands over him with her camera.
 Denise looks at Kyoko with full-fledged hatred.

INT. FEED SHOW - DAY

It's a big warehouse filled with lawnmowers and farm
 equipment. We see a sign that says, "PUT A PARTY HAT ON A
 BEAR: WIN 80 DOLLARS!" Rod's crew stands outside a cage
 where Rod holds a party hat and gingerly approaches a
 muzzled bear. His eyebrows are singed. Kyoko moves in
 close for her shot.

Rod carefully holds the cone of the hat with one hand and
 the rubber band with the other. He gently leans in to place
 it on the bear's head but the bear swats him to the ground.
 The crowd CHEERS. Denise looks away. She can't watch.

Rod approaches the bear again. The bear lunges at Rod and
 PINS his neck to the side of the cage. Denise screams. As
 Rod goes unconscious, he uses all his remaining strength to
 move his arm and SLAP the hat on the bear's head.

ROD
 Count it! That's eighty! I'm out.

Rod COLLAPSES. Denise runs into the ring to help. Kyoko
 keeps shooting.

EXT. BIRTHDAY PARTY #2 - DAY

DB

The crew, children and parents look nervously into a pool where a rope leads. Denise turns to Rico and Kevin, worried.

DENISE

Kevin, do something.

Rico waves her off. Kevin grabs the rope and yells to the other crewmembers.

KEVIN

Get him up!

They pull a milk canister out of the pool and FUMBLE with the lock. No one can find the keys. Rico pulls a gun out of his waistband and BLASTS the lock off the canister. Denise screams.

Parents shield their children. Kevin and Rico open the lid of the canister and pull out a contorted, semiconscious Rod. He immediately vomits on himself.

KEVIN (CONT'D)

Rod, Rod. Say something.

ROD

(groggily)

Thirty-nine thousand eight hundred dollars to go... I'm out.

He passes out. Denise runs in to help him as Kyoko gets in the way with her camera.

EXT. MATTRESS STORE OPENING - DAY

Rod prepares to CATAPULT himself over a three-story stack of mattresses. Kyoko lays on her back to get an artsy high-angle shot. Denise looks at her with seething contempt.

Rod is shot right into the side of a building. Glass shatters everywhere. Denise can barely look. We hear a voice through the broken glass.

ROD (O.S.)

Thirty-nine thousand six hundred...
Out.

INT. FOUR H FAIR - DAY

Rod stands in front of a fenced in area wearing boxing gloves and trunks. He addresses the crew as Kyoko continues to roll tape.

ROD

DB

The last couple of weeks have been super intense and quite frankly most of my stunts haven't exactly gone as planned. But we've earned some money and I've learned lots about myself --

Kyoko moves to Rod and starts to duct tape her video camera to his head.

ROD (CONT'D)

Hey, ho, what?

Kyoko keeps duct taping. Rod tries to act casual.

ROD (CONT'D)

Cool. First person shooter. Very interesting idea, Kyoko. Very French New Wave.

(in pain, off tape)

Ow. That really rips out the hair there. Okay. OW. Very good. Ow.

Kyoko finishes duct taping and walks away. Denise watches her, hate filling her eyes. Rod stands there, Kyoko's video camera causing his head to list to one side.

ROD (CONT'D)

As I was saying, if I go home today with this prize money -- check that -- when I go home today with this prize money -- the dream will be officially underway. Sure, we'll be woefully short of the forty-one-thousand dollar mark but Kyoko and I stayed up really late last night and figured out some innovative ways to cut corners in Las Vegas.

Rod REVEALS a Hello Kitty notebook with more bar graphs and pie charts. Kevin is pissed.

ROD (CONT'D)

As you can see in addendum 267A -- we can live in our cars and make the ramps out of balsa wood.

Denise shares a concerned look with KEVIN.

KEVIN

Excuse me, Rod. That's not safe.

ROD

You're not safe. None of us are safe. What's the point?

KEVIN

What?

ROD

Kevin, I'm so in love and full of beans right now, I could jump those fountains without my moped! And not even you and your constant emotionally undermining can drag me down.

KEVIN

That is not what this is about, Rod. This is about my role in the group being taken over by Kyoko. I don't think it's right. And I don't like it.

ROD

Well, I don't like your attitude.

The bell RINGS.

ROD (CONT'D)

We'll finish this later, compadre. It's showtime. Dave, what do I need to know?

Dave looks up from a book about animals.

DAVE

(reading)

Platypuses are the only mammals that lay eggs. The males also have a hidden claw that's poisonous like a snake.

ROD

I was hoping for something a little more applicable for the task at hand but that's fine. I didn't know that about our brother, the platypus either. Thank you for that, Dave.

DAVE

You're welcome.

Eugene and Rico grab a bucket and head to Rod's corner. Denise stops Rod as he steps into the ring.

DENISE

DB

Rod, I don't think you should do this. This guy looks mean.

ROD

He may be mean but I have opposable thumbs.

WE REVEAL

Rod's opponent is a KANGAROO. He also wears trunks and gloves. A referee holds them apart.

REFEREE

Okay, you know the rules. We want a clean fight. No hitting below the belt. Winner outlasts the kangaroo. Good luck.

Rod and the kangaroo TOUCH GLOVES and return to their corners. The bell rings and they come out SWINGING.

KEVIN

Rod, protect your flank!

The kangaroo gets in some good body blows. Rod is against the ropes. Then Rod fights back, landing some solid shots. Thirty seconds of evenly fought boxing goes by. The bell rings. Rod JUMPS up and down.

ROD

I did it, I did it! I'm pretty tired but I did it.

KEVIN

Rod, it's an eighteen round fight.

Rod looks at the kangaroo. It SNARLS at him.

ROD

Uh oh.

INT. RING - LATER

A FLURRY of PUNCHES. Rod and the kangaroo are neck and neck. It's an evenly matched fight. The crew screams encouragement to Rod from his corner.

EUGENE

Err, punch him in the ukuleles!

Dave looks up from his animal book. He calls out to Rod.

DAVE

DB

Here's something. Spit in his face!
They hate that!

Rod tries to spit in the kangaroo's face. Nothing happens.
The kangaroo connects with a clean jab.

DAVE (CONT'D)

(off book)

Sorry. Kangaroos don't hate that,
camels do. My bad.

Kevin and Denise watch the fight, concerned. Rod lands
another nice shot to the kangaroo's head. It snaps back, a
spray of sweat and spit SPRAYING the front row. The
kangaroo responds with some nice combination work. Rod's
impressed.

INT. ROD'S CORNER - LATER

Rod's corner. Rod's getting some water. Kevin rubs him
down as Eugene spits on his mouthpiece to clean it.

ROD

(off mouthpiece)

Eugene, gross, Jesus.

EUGENE

Don't worry, sissy. The only thing
you can catch from me is a permanent
case of the clap.

KEVIN

Alright, Rod. You know what to do.

ROD

Work the body.

KEVIN

Work the body.

INT. RING - LATER

Rod is POUNDING the kangaroo's kidneys. The kangaroo is in
pain. He rears up and gives Rod a shot with both feet. Rod
is VAULTED across the ring. The crew screams at the
referee, outraged. The referee ignores them. Rod catches
his breath.

INT. RING - LATER

Rod is in his corner. Eugene licks Rod's mouthpiece.

RICO

His right eye's cut, Rod. He can't see a damn thing. Keep working that eye.

ROD
(muffled)
Alright.

Dave runs in with some firecrackers.

DAVE
Take this, light it and shove it up that little bastard's ass. That'll stop him.

ROD
(muffled)
No, Dave. I love animals. They're nature's edible cartoons.

Rod tries to stand. He can hardly hold his head up with the weight of the camera. Denise moves in with scissors.

DENISE
This is ridiculous. This camera's got to go.

Denise cuts the camera off Rod's head. But the tape pulls and rips at his hair. Rod screams in pain.

ROD
(muffled)
Ow, ow, ow, ow, ow!

DENISE
I'm sorry, I can't watch you suffer with that thing on your head anymore.

The bell rings. Rod leaps up, his eyes watering hard.

INT. RING - LATER

Rod and the kangaroo hold onto each other and sway, exhausted. The bell rings.

REFEREE
The winner! Rod Kimble!

ROD
Yes!

Rod DANCES victoriously. The kangaroo goes to his corner, defeated.

ROD (CONT'D)
Suck it, marsupial!

THE REFEREE

Hands a giant check to Rod for five hundred dollars. Rod holds it over his head victoriously.

IN THE BACKGROUND

Rod notices Kyoko being led away in handcuffs by the police. He CALLS OUT to her.

ROD (CONT'D)
Kyoko! Kyoko!

She looks right through Rod as she's led away. Rod is frantic. He turns to Dave.

ROD (CONT'D)
What's happening? Where are they taking her?

DAVE
We didn't want to tell you during the fight but Kyoko got caught shoplifting a crossbow. They caught her on the security cameras.

DENISE
I knew she was up to something.

ROD
They have security cameras at a 4 H Fair?

DAVE
These things are a lot more sophisticated than they used to be. They also sell waterpipes. Get it? Waterpipes.

ROD
God damn it. Not a crossbow. Why did she do it? Why?

RICO
Maybe she wanted to murder one of us in our sleep. I say we take her out first.

DENISE
I'll do it.

RICO

I like you.

Kevin walks in.

KEVIN

Rod, they want to interview you for the local news.

ROD

Sorry, Kevin, those media jackals are going to have to wait. I've got to go save my lady.

Rod puts the giant check under his arm and leaves.

KEVIN

What's he talking about?

Denise points over at Kyoko being loaded into a police car.

KEVIN (CONT'D)

What did she do now? She's gonna wreck everything.

DENISE

She already has.

Denise walks away, really bummed out. Kevin looks at Denise, for the first time realizing her true feelings for Rod.

INT. JAIL - LATER

Rod still has his boxing gloves on and carries the giant check under his arm. Kyoko sits quietly in a cell. Rod runs to the bars.

ROD

Oh, Kyoko. What have they done to you?

Rod tries to reach his boxing gloves through the bars to hug Kyoko. He gets the gloves stuck and then panics until he's able to pull them out. Officer Manta appears.

OFFICER MANTA

Hi, Rod.

ROD

Officer Manta, we meet again. Did Denise call in the pigs on Kyoko, too?

DB

OFFICER MANTA

I'm going to forget that you just called me a pig.

ROD

So am I. Tell me, Officer Manta, what do I need to do to get my ladylove out of here?

OFFICER MANTA

Bail's set at five thousand dollars.

ROD

(thinking)

Kevin gave me three and I earned two -- so that's five. And we can't do the stunt for any less than six. I was going to borrow one more thousand from Kevin. But now if I give you five we have zero.

OFFICER MANTA

I'm sorry, Rod, I didn't understand a word of that. But the bail is the bail. Charges have been filed.

ROD

I understand. You're doing your job and I respect that. I'll need a moment alone to process all this new information. Excuse me, Kyoko. Officer Manta.

Rod bows and walks slowly away from the cell. He stops by a payphone. He calmly takes the phone off the receiver and slams it repeatedly until the whole thing breaks apart into tiny pieces. Change explodes everywhere. Rod dives on the floor and throws the change against the wall awkwardly with his still-gloved hands.

Exhausted and crying, Rod pounds the demolished payphone with his gloved fists.

INT. JAIL CELL - MOMENTS LATER

Rod re-enters, hair messed, but calm.

ROD

Love first then all else follows.

He hands the giant check to Officer Manta.

ROD (CONT'D)

DB

You'll receive the balance of her bail in money orders. You might also want to add on the cost of a payphone. Thanks.

INT. HOUSE OF PIES - NEXT DAY

Rod sits at the head of a table. The crew is gathered -- Dave, Rico, Eugene, Denise and Kevin. Rod speaks very dramatically.

ROD

I've got great news for everyone. Kyoko is out of jail.

No reaction from the group.

ROD (CONT'D)

The D.A. is reviewing her case and we're praying for leniency.

(then)

Here's the not so good news. I used all of the money we've earned in the last six weeks from contests and birthday parties, an amount in excess of three thousand dollars after mysterious city taxes were factored in, to gain her freedom. I also used the three thousand Kevin gave me. We now have zero dollars for the dream.

The crew stares at him, quietly furious. Rod is a little unsure how to handle it.

ROD (CONT'D)

Okay. Everyone's shocked. That's understandable. But I think the only way to work through this is with communication and humor --

Kevin stands up, walks over to Rod and PUNCHES him in the jaw. Rod drops out of frame like a sack of hammers.

ROD (CONT'D)

Nicely played, Kevin. I deserved that. Okay, let's dialogue.

KEVIN

I sold my car to give you that money. Because I believed in you. And I believed in the dream. And you throw it away? For some criminal?

DB

ROD

I'm in love, Kevin.

KEVIN

How can you be in love with someone who doesn't talk back? That's not love. That's delusional! You're delusional. Frank was right. You're never gonna do this jump. You never follow through on anything.

Kevin storms out. Rod is devastated. The crew members look at each other, stunned.

ROD

Excuse me, everybody, but I just got my heart broken into a million pieces. I'm going home to watch cable with my ladylove.

Rod exits, destroyed.

DAVE

Whoa! Did you guys just see that?

DENISE

This is all because of Kyoko. The second she showed up, everything went to hell.

RICO

Women. You can't kill 'em. You can't kill 'em.

INT. KYOKO'S HOUSE - LATER

A somber and sad Rod opens the front door of a darkened suburban house. He calls out for Kyoko.

ROD

My ladylove? Are you home?

We hear a TV in the distance. Rod walks into the living room and sees a light coming out from behind a false wall.

ROD (CONT'D)

Kyoko? Dearest?

Rod pushes the false wall open.

INT. KYOKO'S VIDEO WORK SPACE - CONTINUOUS

DB

Rod then sees Kyoko sitting in front of a bank of expensive-looking video monitors and editing machines. Rod tilts his head to the side, confused.

ROD

Kyoko?

Kyoko turns and looks at him expressionless and then returns to her work. Rod sees the image on the monitors. It's Rod doing the street luge.

ROD (CONT'D)

Hey, that's me.

Rod then sees stacks and stacks of DVD's in boxes. His picture and Japanese text is all over them.

ROD (CONT'D)

This looks like me, too. Kyoko, what are you doing here?

Rod sees shipping labels.

ROD (CONT'D)

Shipping labels?

Rod then sees a stack of cash.

ROD (CONT'D)

And cash?

(then)

Kyoko? Are you making money off of my stunts?

Kyoko ignores him. Rod starts to understand.

ROD (CONT'D)

Oh my god. I destroyed the dream because I loved you. But you don't love me. You love money. Blood money! Literally!

Rod picks up a stack of cash and throws it at the wall.

ROD (CONT'D)

I loved you, Kyoko, and you date-raped my dreams! My life is all lies! Frank was right. I am a ball-less wonder! There's nothing to live for anymore! I'm going to drink myself to death!!!

Kyoko just looks at Rod blankly. Devastated, he RUNS out. Passionless, she returns to her editing.

EXT. SUBURBAN MINI-MALL - LATER

Rod STUMBLES through the parking lot of a supermarket/mini mall with a bottle of Peppermint Schnaaps. He GUZZLES some and falls into a parked SUV setting off the alarm. A woman, CATHY, 30's, walks up with her cart of groceries and young child.

CATHY

Rod? Rod Kimble? Is that you?

ROD

Yes, it's me, Cathy. At least for the time being. Until I die. Which should be soon if I'm lucky.

CATHY

What are you talking about? What are you doing?

ROD

I'm Leaving Las Vegas!

Rod bawls and RUNS away.

EXT. BEHIND A SUPERMARKET - DAYS LATER

Rod is passed out beside a dumpster under a pile of trash. He is covered in empty Schnaaps bottles and Skittles wrappers. A stray dog runs in, PEES on his leg and runs off. Rod doesn't move.

A hand comes into frame and tries to WAKE him up.

VOICE

Excuse me, sir? Sir?

Rod WAKES with a start.

ROD

Ah!

PULL BACK TO REVEAL

Three impressive-looking and well-dressed Japanese business people. They are AKIRA, the boss, 60. YAGUCHI, 50, a woman, and the second in charge. And TAKESHI, 20's, the young Turk.

ROD (CONT'D)

Am I dead? Is this heaven or hell?

(then)

Who are you Asian people?

DB

AKIRA

My name is Akira Tatsukura. These are my associates Yaguchi Niamora and Takeshi Ayato. We work for the Kobayashi Corporation in Osaka.

All three executives bow and present their business cards to Rod with both hands.

AKIRA (CONT'D)

It is an honor to meet you, Rod Kimble.

ROD

How do you know me? What do you want?

AKIRA

We are the Japanese distributors of your stunt tapes produced by Kyoko Suzuki.

ROD

Kyoko's last name is Suzuki? That's so cool.

YAGUCHI

You are very famous in Japan, Rod Kimble.

ROD

I am?

TAKESHI

Very. You're super awesome. Balls to the wall super good time awesome.

ROD

I like you, Takeshi.

Takeshi smiles and BOWS.

AKIRA

Kyoko called us and told us about your dream to jump the fountains at Caesar's Palace.

ROD

Really? Did she feel bad about date-raping my dreams and stealing my money for her bail?

AKIRA

DB

No. But between you and me, Kyoko's a little not right in the head. She finds wonderful American programming but she's a few spicy handrolls short of a bento box, if you catch my meaning.

ROD

Great. Now I'm hungry.

YAGUCHI

We are honorable people, Rod Kimble. We want to make things right. We have a proposal. We will bankroll your dream to jump Caesar's Palace if you allow us to film the events for Japanese television.

AKIRA

We love your courage.

ROD

I'm not courageous. Look at me. I'm a sad, scared, drunk man-child in a river of pee. I'm a disgrace.

TAKESHI

Only a courageous man can experience the depth of true sorrow.

ROD

(beat)

Goddamn. I really like you, Takeshi.

Takeshi BOWS again.

AKIRA

We will offer you a very handsome cash prize for this jump.

ROD

Cash prize? How much?

YAGUCHI

Five hundred thousand dollars.

ROD

U.S.?

YAGUCHI

That's right.

ROD

DB

My god. That's fifty thousand more than I need to save Frank's life!

(then)

You're not dying on me, Frank! Not while the Japanese draw breath!

AKIRA

You must love this Frank very much.

ROD

More than anything. But he sure as hell doesn't love me.

Akira and Takeshi nod solemnly.

YAGUCHI

Well, Rod Kimble, do we have a deal?

Rod jumps to his feet.

ROD

F yeah! Let's do this thing!

Rod collects his new Japanese friends in a hug.

ROD (CONT'D)

I love you! I love you all! I don't need Kevin anymore. You're my family now!

EXT. TRAINING FIELD - DAY

Rod is walking with Takeshi who WRITES on a clipboard. Eugene, Dave and Rico watch them suspiciously. Denise walks over to Rod.

DENISE

Rod, what's going on? Who is this?

ROD

Don't worry, Indigo Girl. It's great news. I'll explain it all in a minute.

Takeshi turns to Rod.

TAKESHI

Rod, last question. Which vehicle will you use for your performance?

Rod taps the MOPED.

ROD

Right here.

DB

Takeshi considers the dilapidated bike.

TAKESHI

It is in disrepair.

ROD

Well, be that as it may, it has a lot of sentimental value. I know you'll find this impossible to believe, but in high school I got teased a lot. I'd ride my moped to school and the kids would call it the fagrider. Sometimes they'd paint the word "fagrider" on its side and sometimes they'd pee on it. But that all just made me stronger. This moped has become a symbol of my ability to demonstrate courage in the face of adversity.

Takeshi nods and makes a notation in his clipboard.

TAKESHI

Get new stunt vehicle.

ROD

Very good.

TAKESHI

Okay. I am ready to meet your support staff to determine which weaknesses need supplementing.

ROD

Okey doke.
(calling off)
Fellas. Take a knee.

The crew gathers around. Denise wears another sundress.

ROD (CONT'D)

Team, it's been a crazy week. But I'm proud to tell you, we're back on schedule. The stunt is on. I have the money. But some tough changes had to be made and as a result, Kevin's out.

(gesturing to
Takeshi)
Takeshi's in.

DAVE

When do we get to meet Takeshi?

DB

ROD
(re: Takeshi)
This is Takeshi. The guy I just
pointed to when I said "Takeshi's
in."

DAVE
Got it.

RICO
What happened to Kevin? Is he dead?

ROD
Not legally.

RICO
Can I make it legal?

ROD
No.

RICO
Can I paralyze him?

ROD
No.

RICO
Waist down?

ROD
No.

(then)
Now, Takeshi's father has written me
a blank check to pursue my dream.

TAKESHI
Akira's not my father.

ROD
He isn't?

Takeshi shakes his head.

ROD (CONT'D)
Really? So Yaguchi's not your mom?

TAKESHI
No.

ROD
I wonder why I thought that. Hmm.
(then)

DB

Either way, we have the money for the jump. A lot of money. And I can pay for Frank's transplant.

Eugene, Dave and Denise all look at each other, amazed.

ROD (CONT'D)

I've also decided to make Takeshi the new crew leader.

(introducing him)

Takeshi?

Takeshi steps in front of the group.

TAKESHI

Hello, group. It's an honor to help you in any way I can to complete your noble task. I will do my best!

He bows.

DENISE

I'm sorry, but it doesn't seem right to go on without Kevin.

EUGENE

Yeah. I agree with the dirty slut.

DENISE

Eugene --

EUGENE

What, whore? I said I was with you.

Takeshi pulls out a clipboard.

TAKESHI

First I would like your wardrobe sizes for the jumpsuit uniforms.

EUGENE

Jumpsuits? I'm back in.

Kevin RIDES up on a bicycle. He sees Takeshi measuring Eugene.

KEVIN

Hey, what's going on?

ROD

The stunt is back on, hog! My new family is paying for it and you can go to hell!

DB

KEVIN

What?

ROD

That's right. They love me. They don't think my dreams are lies. They don't think I'm delusional.

(then)

See that guy over there? That's Takeshi. He's my new brother now. I don't need you anymore. Delude on that!

(tearing up)

I don't need you!!!

Rod has another dizzy spell. He falls against Kevin's bicycle and spills his Sprite all over himself.

DENISE

Rod!

KEVIN

Rod, you have to see a doctor. You're going to kill yourself.

ROD

Oh, you'd love that, wouldn't you? You'd love to see me dead. Get out! I hate you!

Kevin jumps on his bike and rides away. Denise takes his pulse and checks his reflexes.

DENISE

Rod, your pulse is racing. You need to see a doctor. Now.

Rod fights off another dizzy spell. He reaches desperately into his pants pockets.

ROD

I'm fine, tough guy.

(then)

Where are all my Triskets?

EUGENE

Oh. I ate them when you were sleeping.

(off Rod's look)

I was looking for change.

Takeshi walks over, concerned.

TAKESHI

DB

Are you alright, Rod Kimble? You seem ill.

ROD
Just a dizzy spell. Happens all the time. I'll be fine.

TAKESHI
You should see a doctor.

ROD
Okay.

Rod follows Takeshi to his car. Denise hangs back, baffled.

DENISE
What? No way.

INT. HOSPITAL - LATER

Rod is sitting on an examination table in a paper gown. Takeshi is there with him.

ROD
It's funny, isn't it? One day you're alive and the next you're dying. Just like Frank.
(breaking down)
Oh, god. I don't want to die!

TAKESHI
You must be strong, Rod. Too many people depend on you.

ROD
You're right. Thank you, Takeshi. I know I've only known you for thirteen hours but I don't know what I would do if you weren't here.

TAKESHI
It's an honor that you rely on me.

A doctor enters and flips on a computer. We see a fancy looking MRI image.

DOCTOR
Okay, Rod. Here's an MRI of your brain. Do you see this black mass right here in your frontal lobe?

ROD
Oh god, what is it, doctor?

The phone RINGS.

DOCTOR

Excuse me.

The doctor picks up the phone and gets engrossed in a conversation. Takeshi and Rod stare at the MRI image.

ROD

(crying)

I can't take this, Takeshi.

(then, angry)

F this hospital! F medicine!

Rod pulls the picture of his father and Evel Knievel out of his wallet.

TAKESHI

Who is that, Rod Kimble?

ROD

My father. He was a stuntman, too. He used to test Evel Knievel's bikes for him before the big jumps. One afternoon, the old man was testing a bike for Evel in the Houston Astrodome. 27 buses in a row. That was nothing for the big guy. He did that kind of thing all the time and he let Evel get the glory. Anyway, that day Pops nailed the takeoff but when he landed something terrible happened. The front wheel exploded like a cannonball and the handlebars went right through his head. It was a mess. Blood was everywhere. His teeth were ground to a powder and the front of his face exploded out of the back of his skull. He died instantly.

TAKESHI

My god. That's horrible.

ROD

Jumping the fountains at Caesar's Palace was the old man's lifelong dream. When my mom married Frank I insisted on keeping my last name to honor my father. I guess in a way, I became a stuntman to fulfill his unfinished legacy. I mean, not in a way. That's exactly what I did.

DB

TAKESHI

My god, Rod Kimble. Bravery is in your blood.

ROD

Yes. Let's just hope death isn't.

The doctor hangs up and returns to Rod.

DOCTOR

Okay. As I was saying, this MRI indicates definitely one of two things.

ROD

I knew it. I'm F-ed.

DOCTOR

You either have two weeks to live --

ROD

Hold me, Takeshi.

DOCTOR

-- or, it's nothing.

ROD

Jesus. Why didn't you say that one first!

DOCTOR

I like to give the bad news first. It's how we were taught at Johns Hopkins.

(then)

We'll know more after the results of the blood work come back.

ROD

How long will that take?

DOCTOR

Two weeks.

ROD

But I may be dead in two weeks.

DOCTOR

That's right.

Rod just looks at the doctor.

ROD

DB

So there's no way of knowing if that's going to happen until it happens?

DOCTOR

Exactly.

ROD

Just like life.

A long beat.

ROD (CONT'D)

Why didn't you just tell me nothing and then check in on me in two weeks?

DOCTOR

I don't make the rules, Rod.

ROD

I know you don't. Thank you, Doctor. This is a heavy blow and I'll need time to deal with it.

DOCTOR

You're very brave, Rod. Most people crumble when I tell them news like this.

ROD

Most people don't have the unconditional support of their brother.

He pats Takeshi's hand that's resting on his shoulder. The doctor exits.

ROD (CONT'D)

You know what this means, Takeshi. We have to accelerate the timetable for the jump.

TAKESHI

That's exactly what I was thinking. I'll make all the necessary arrangements.

A beat.

ROD

God dammit, you are such a better brother than Kevin.

DB

EXT. LAKE - LATER

Rod stands at lakeside and plays his French horn. There is no sadness, just detachment. But his music is still really bad. Denise CROSSES in.

DENISE

Hey Rod, I thought you might be out here. What did the doctor say?

ROD

I'd rather tell you when the rest of the guys are assembled for maximum dramatic affect.

DENISE

Oh. Okay.
(then)

Did he do a CAT scan? MRI? Blood work?

ROD

He did it all, kid. I only want to lay out the info once. So the detes will have to wait.

Rod goes back to PLAYING the HORN.

DENISE

Rod, I need to talk to you about something that's been on my mind for a while now.

ROD

Shoot, killer. Don't cost nothing.

Rod continues his SHRIEKING horn tune.

DENISE

Rod, I've been keeping some feelings inside for awhile now and I just can't keep them bottled up anymore. And now that you and Kyoko have split up, I've decided to go for it. Life's too short.

ROD

You have no idea.

(then)

I think I see where this is going.

DENISE

You do?

DB

ROD

Denise, I've seen the way you look at Kyoko. I know how furious she made you.

DENISE

You do?

ROD

I know what you're thinking. Here's Rod Kimble: superstar. He's got the weight of the world on his shoulders. How would he ever notice something so small as a gesture or a look? But I'm sensitive, Denise. I love music. And animals. Nothing gets by me.

DENISE

So you understand my feelings?

ROD

Of course. The fact that she and I were together drove you insane.

DENISE

Exactly.

ROD

Look, it's got to be tough living in a world where you're not encouraged to express your true feelings.

DENISE

Yes. And that's why I'm expressing them right now. So I need to know something. Rod, what are your feelings toward me?

ROD

I think you're awesome, D-rock. And if you want to make a go at Kyoko, you got my blessing. But just be careful. She steals.

Rod winks, gives Denise a little chuck on the chin and crosses out. Denise watches him go, totally confused.

DENISE

What?

INT. HOUSE OF PIES - LATER

DB

Rod has the crew assembled -- Rico, Dave, Denise and a sleeping Eugene. Takeshi's there with a supportive hand on Rod's shoulder.

ROD

Troops, I have received some potentially devastating news today and as a result, we have pushed up the timetable for the stunt.

DENISE

Oh no. What is it?

Rod breaks down and starts crying.

TAKESHI

You can do it, Rod. Be strong for the others.

ROD

(wiping away tears)

You're right. They need my strength.

(then)

Okay. I either have a horrible brain disease and will be dead in two weeks or... there's absolutely nothing wrong with me and I'm perfectly fine. They won't know for sure until the test results come back.

DENISE

(rocked)

Oh my god.

RICO

If you want to die with dignity. I'll take you out. You won't feel a thing.

ROD

Thank you, Rico. But I'll pass for now.

DENISE

When do the test results come back?

ROD

Two weeks.

DENISE

But that means --

DB

ROD
That's right, D-train. I'll either
be dead with bad news or alive with
good news.

DAVE
Cock sandwich!

Dave punches the wall.

DAVE (CONT'D)
Owww!!!!!!!!!!

DENISE
What are we gonna do, Rod?

ROD
(breaking down)
I don't know.

Takeshi squeezes Rod's shoulder. Denise is about to CRY.

TAKESHI
Cleansing breath, Rod. There is a
plan for you. You have a destiny.

Rod pulls himself together.

ROD
That's true. That's my strength.
Thank you, Takeshi.
(then)
F disease! Death can't stop me! In
one week we leave for Vegas and in
nine days, I will have achieved the
dream. And in five days after that
I may be dead. So go home and get
packing, men. We will not be
deterred.

The crew guys disperse, inspired.

DENISE
Rod, I am so sorry. Is there
anything I can do?

ROD
(tearing up)
Pack. Don't stop packing.

DENISE
Okay.

DB

She reaches out and touches Rod's arm, consolingly, as she leaves.

TAKESHI

That was very brave.

ROD

I actually didn't mean to send them home. We still have a lot of training to do.

(then)

Hold me, Takeshi.

Rod hugs Takeshi. Takeshi looks over at the comatose Eugene.

TAKESHI

Should we be concerned about him?

ROD

No, he slips back and forth between life and death all the time.

EXT. OLIVIA'S BACKYARD - LATER

Rod and Olivia are on tiny swings side by side. Rod keeps getting his arms and legs tangled as he drinks his Snapple.

ROD

So I just wanted to stop by and say goodbye before I leave for Las Vegas. I don't get to see you too much since I got fired from the bus route. And I wanted to thank you for all your help with the birthday parties.

OLIVIA

Timmy's mom's still pretty mad at you.

ROD

I know.

OLIVIA

I thought you weren't supposed to leave for another two months.

ROD

We've pushed the timetable up for reasons I'd rather not go into for fear that I would worry you unnecessarily.

DB

Olivia's little brother, JASPER, 2, wanders by and stands right in front of Rod.

JASPER
I'm thinking of a jungle creature.
He's from the raccoon family and
starts with a "c."

Rod looks at him blankly, then:

JASPER (CONT'D)
It's a hard one.

ROD
Yeah, I'll say...
(turning to Olivia)
Do you know this?

OLIVIA
Yeah.

ROD
What is it?

OLIVIA
I can't tell you.

JASPER
Do you give up?

ROD
No, yes. What is it?

JASPER
Coati.

ROD
Coati? What is that? Is that an
animal?

Jasper spins in place talking to himself.

JASPER
Coati... coati...
(then, to Rod)
Can I have a sip?

ROD
Uh, sure.

Jasper takes the Snapple, puts his mouth around the opening creating suction and jams his tongue down into the bottle. He drinks. Rod watches in horror. Jasper finishes with a pop and hands the bottle back to Rod.

DB

ROD (CONT'D)

Keep it.

(then)

It's getting late. I'd better go. I just want you to know, if something happens to me during the stunt, or I happen to die suddenly from a mystery illness within the next two weeks, you're a great kid and I hope you have a nice life.

OLIVIA

Thanks, Rod. You know, I wish you could find as much meaning in life as you do in death.

ROD

Okay. Whatever that means.

(then)

Olivia, can I ask you something? And I want you to be frank. Do you think I have the stuff to do this jump?

OLIVIA

You're the only one who can answer that, Rod.

ROD

I knew you were going to answer with a riddle. It's like talking to Yoda.

OLIVIA

I've got to go. Here, I want you to have this.

She hands him a GIANT PINK WATCH. Rod loves it.

ROD

A watch. Thanks.

OLIVIA

Not just a watch. It's a watch, walkie-talkie and phone.

ROD

With Barbie on it. It's so cool.

OLIVIA

(showing her watch)

Look, I've got one, too. This way we can be in contact at all times. It runs on Nextel technology.

DB

ROD
 (tearing up)
 You're the best, Olivia. I'll never
 take it off. Never!

Olivia hugs Rod.

OLIVIA
 Good luck, Rod.
 (then)
 Come on, Jasper.

She takes her brother by the hand. Jasper goes to Rod and gives him a hug. Olivia and Jasper walk away. Rod looks at his watch, then calls after her.

ROD
 Hey, what's my number?

Olivia and Jasper go into the house.

INT. FRANK'S ROOM - THAT NIGHT

Rod writes a note as Frank SLEEPS in the background.

ROD (V.O.)
 Dear Frank, by the time you read
 this, I will be at the airport
 checking my bags and having my shoes
 sniffed by police dogs. I'm doing
 my dream stunt earlier than
 expected. I'm sorry you can't come
 but this is something I need to do
 alone in front of a live Japanese
 television audience. I will be
 making enough money for you to get
 your transplant and even if I don't
 survive I've made arrangements to
 make sure you get the money. But I
 really want to live so I can pound
 your head in when you get well and
 then you'll finally love me.

He thinks for a beat.

ROD (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 Kevin is dead to me but if he wants
 to talk I'll be at the Bellagio
 Hotel. Suite 210. Love, Rod. P.S.
 Tell Mom I said hi.

Rod leaves the note and starts to leave the room. Just then
 he HEARS Frank stirring in bed.

DB

FRANK
(unintelligible)

Rod goes to Frank.

ROD
Frank?

Frank indicates to Rod.

FRANK
Come closer.

ROD
What?

FRANK
Closer.

Rod moves in closer.

FRANK (CONT'D)
Closer still.

Rod's ear is now right in front of Frank's mouth.

FRANK (CONT'D)
(labored whisper)
Everything you think you know about
your real father is a lie.

ROD
What?

FRANK
The truth is in the picture. Look
at the picture.

ROD
What truth?

FRANK
He's alive. You have no destiny.

Rod pulls the Evel Knievel picture out of his wallet. Marie enters with some laundry. Rod turns to her, stricken.

ROD
(off picture)
It's all lies?

MARIE
Rod, I can explain.

ROD

LIES??!!!

MARIE

I was trying to protect you.

ROD

What is the truth? I want the truth.

MARIE

(long beat)

Your dad left me you were only four. He was a cashier at a tire shop. One day, Evel Knievel came through town and posed with everyone in the store. And that's where this picture came from. It's the only picture I have of your father. Well, I didn't know how to explain to a four-year-old boy that his father just up and ran off to Dubuque with a stripper so I let the white lies build.

ROD

He ran off with a stripper?

MARIE

Her names was Nancy.

ROD

Nancy. Gross!

MARIE

Rod, you always such a wonderful imagination as a boy. You started making up all these fantastic stories because of this picture and I just didn't have the heart to tell you it wasn't true. I thought it was a just a phase you'd grow out of. But the stories kept getting bigger and bigger. Before long, they took on a life of their own and there was no turning back. So I played along. But only because I didn't want to hurt you. I'm sorry, Rod. But you have to believe me -- I did it out of love.

ROD

Oh dear sweet asscracking Christ!
What is true in this world????!!!

FRANK
That you're never going to do this
jump.

ROD
Agghghg!!!

Rod goes to punch Frank. But stops at the last second.

ROD (CONT'D)
Agghghgh!!!

Rod runs out.

EXT. LAS VEGAS - DAY

Establishing shot of the strip.

INT. LIMO - DAY

Rod is in the back with Akira, Takeshi and Yaguchi. He
clutches his French horn and looks at the picture of his dad
and Evel Knievel.

ROD
(off photo)
He's wearing a nametag. Why didn't
I notice that before?

AKIRA
So, Rod, I was able to make the
impossible happen. Japanese
television station NHK has agreed to
preempt normal programming and
broadcast your stunt live. But I
had to incorporate some added danger
elements in order to make the event
more marketable.

ROD
What kind of danger elements?

AKIRA
Sharks, explosives and fire.

ROD
Do it! Put snakes in my seat! I
don't care! I fear nothing now!

AKIRA
Takeshi, get the Australian sand
vipers. Very deadly.

Takeshi nods and makes a notation.

AKIRA (CONT'D)

I admire your sense of danger, Rod.

ROD

I guess you could say danger's been the only constant in my life.

(hissing)

Danger never lies.

AKIRA

You know, I was something of a daredevil when I was younger, Rod.

ROD

Oh.

AKIRA

Yes. I used to ride my bicycle through my town and jump it over sticks. People would call me, gaikessan, crazy bike. I always dreamed of jumping my bicycle over the river near my house. Every day I would go to the river's edge and try to muster the courage to do it. But I never could. I was too scared. I never followed through on my dangerous dreams. Deep down, I have felt like a failure all my life. That's why I push myself so hard in business -- to overcompensate for this gnawing self-hatred forged in childhood. In a lot of ways, I'm using you to overcome these feelings of low self-worth.

ROD

Just like a real father.

Rod looks out the window again, HAUNTED.

EXT. CAESAR'S PALACE - DAY

Establishing.

EXT. CAESAR'S PALACE FOUNTAINS - DAY

The limo pulls into the parking lot followed by a van containing Rod's crew guys. There are lots of cranes and trucks and Japanese men in JUMPSUITS. We see a GIANT SHARK TANK and stacks of DYNAMITE. Rod gets out of the limo as Takeshi gestures grandly.

DB

TAKESHI

Rod, look. The fountains. The dream has become a reality.

Rod walks to the FOUNTAINS.

ROD

(to fountains)

So, Old Man. We finally meet. You can't run away from me now with a dirty filthy stripper, can you? CAN YOU??!!

Rod PUNCHES the fountain water. Takeshi stands with him.

TAKESHI

That's it, Rod. Get it out. It's an emotional time.

ROD

I'm punching you. Tell me that you love me!!! Tell me that you love me!!!

Rod's CREW gets out of the van and looks around at all the jump preparation they were not involved in.

RICO

(re: Japanese crew)

When did Charlie get here?

DAVE

And, look, they have patches on their jumpsuits! What a bunch of mother f-ers!

EUGENE

I need a toilet.

Eugene wanders off. Denise walks over to Rod.

DENISE

Rod, are you alright?

He stops punching. He looks at her, drenched.

ROD

No, Denise. I am not alright. I am far from alright.

DENISE

Why? What is it? Let me help you.

ROD

DB

You can't. It's up to me now. And
me alone.

(then, dramatically
re: fountains)
Poppa must be destroyed.

Denise looks at him, a little confused. Takeshi puts his
hand on Rod's shoulder again.

TAKESHI
Come, Rod Kimble, we have much work
to do.

ROD
I am ready. Where do we begin?

TAKESHI
We must train.

ROD
Bring the pain!
(karate chopping the
air)
Kayaaaa!!!!

TRAINING MONTAGE -

Accompanied by more GENESIS, TOTO OR BOSTON.

- Rod and Takeshi do Tai Chi on the lawn of the Bellagio.
- Rod in Caesar's Palace pool. He's not a strong swimmer. Takeshi holds stopwatch.
- Rod runs up and down the ramp. Takeshi cheers.
- Rod meditates next to the shark tank.
- Rod in his insane three-story high roller room at the Bellagio. Takeshi makes him a milkshake made of fish, yogurt and seawater. Rod gags it down.
- Rod and Kyoko stand by their car in an abandoned part of the desert playing French horn and trumpet. Rod smiles.
- Rod watches the Japanese crew assemble pyrotechnics. The American crew guys still look bitter. Takeshi gives Rod the thumbs-up. Rod nods.
- Rod runs up and down the people mover at Bally's.
- Rod and Takeshi scale the climbing wall at Gameworks.

-- Rod puts his moped aside and Takeshi gives him his new super powerful motorcycle. He accelerates and is thrown from it immediately. Takeshi helps him up.

INT. BELLAGIO BAR - NIGHT

Rod is sitting at the bar with Takeshi. WE SEE the Japanese crew guys look over at the American crew. They make round-eye gestures and laugh.

DAVE
Did you see that? Those f-bombs are making fun of us.

RICO
More Charlie bullshit. They're gonna be sorry. I have ways of killing that are totally untraceable.

DAVE
Like what?

RICO
Two words, asshole. Ice bullets.

EUGENE
(oblivious)
I didn't see them do anything. In fact, I can't see anything.
(then, feeling in front of himself)
Hello?

Takeshi stands and holds up his glass.

TAKESHI
A toast!

Everyone holds up their glasses.

TAKESHI (CONT'D)
To Rod Kimble. The most courageous man I've ever met. We met as business colleagues but you have stolen my heart. To my brother, my hero, my everything.

Everyone CLINKS their glasses and drinks.

ROD
Wow, that was pretty heavy, Takeshi. Thanks.

TAKESHI

You have given me hope in the spirit
of man and destiny.

Rod's face falls. He smiles through the pain.

ROD

Destiny...
(then, destroyed)
Excuse me.

Rod RUNS outside. Concerned, Denise follows.

EXT. BELLAGIO FOUNTAINS - LATER

Rod stares horrified at the giant fountains. Denise comes
outside.

DENISE

Rod?

ROD

Why are there fountains everywhere
in this town?! I can't escape them!

Denise takes Rod by the shoulders and looks in his eyes.

DENISE

Rod, talk to me. What is wrong?

ROD

I'm a fraud, D-rock. Everything I
thought I knew about me is wrong.
My real father wasn't a stuntman.
He was a loser who liked strippers
and abandoned me. I have no
destiny. I'm a fraud. I'm a loser.

DENISE

Destiny's about way more than
following in your father's
footsteps, Rod. It's about finding
your own.

ROD

But I don't know what to believe in
any more.

DENISE

Why don't you try believing in this.

Denise kisses him. Rod PULLS BACK, SHOCKED.

ROD

DB

Whoa. Whoa! What was that?

DENISE

It was something I've been wanting to do for a long time.

ROD

But you're... you're a gay.

DENISE

No, I'm not. Why would you think that?

ROD

You know what? I have no idea.

DENISE

Rod, if something happened to you tomorrow and I didn't let you know how I felt, I wouldn't be able to live with myself.

ROD

Jesus H. Why didn't I know about this before there were three different ways for me to die? Why is life so confusing? Why, lord, why???

Denise KISSES him again.

ROD (CONT'D)

Then again, sometimes it's best to not keep asking questions.

They START MAKING OUT like crazy.

EXT. STRATOSPHERE ROOF - LATER

Rod and Denise MAKE OUT LIKE CRAZY on the ROLLERCOASTER.

EXT. TREASURE ISLAND - LATER

Rod and Denise MAKE OUT LIKE CRAZY as a pirate ship battle EXPLODES behind them.

INT. CIRCUS-CIRCUS - LATER

Rod and Denise MAKE OUT LIKE CRAZY at the ROTATING BAR as ACROBATS fly over their heads juggling FLAMING batons.

EXT. VEGAS STRIP - LATER

DB

Rod and Denise stand in the middle of the road MAKING OUT LIKE CRAZY.

EXT. CAESAR'S PALACE FOUNTAINS - LATER

Rod and Denise MAKE OUT LIKE CRAZY standing in the water.

INT. BELLAGIO HOTEL ROOM - LATER

Rod and Denise MAKE OUT like crazy as Rod fumbles to open the door with his plastic credit card key. A Hotel Employee arrives to help them open the room. Rod and Denise continue to MAKE OUT like crazy. The doors opens. They fall into the room awkwardly. The Hotel Employee pushes Rod's leg inside the room and shuts the door discreetly.

INT. BELLAGIO HOTEL ROOM - NEXT MORNING

Rod stands out on the patio with his eyes closed.

ROD

Caw!!! Caw!!!

Denise comes outside.

DENISE

Hey.

Rod jumps.

ROD

Oh, Denise. It's you.

DENISE

I didn't mean to scare you.

ROD

No. I was just talking to some desert sparrows and I thought they were talking back. In English.

(then)

What are you doing up?

DENISE

I was wondering where you were. It's so early. You should come back to bed and get some more sleep for the jump.

ROD

No, ma'am. My whole life I've been sleeping. After last night, I think I'm finally awake.

DB

DENISE

Rod, that's so sweet.

ROD

I know.

(then)

And I want to be even wider awake
when I meet my maker.

DENISE

What? Rod, I don't want you to meet
your maker.

Denise hugs him.

ROD

Sorry, Denise. That's a little out
of my hands now.

EXT. CAESAR'S PALACE - DAY

The parking lot has been transformed into a JAPANESE TV SHOW set. There are huge colorful bleachers with bunting and huge signs filled with JAPANESE KANJI CHARACTERS. TV cameras, trucks and workmen are everywhere hurrying to make sure everything is ready for Rod's big jump.

Rod's AMERICAN CREW and Akira's JAPANESE CREW wear similarly styled jumpsuits and work on separate sides of the parking lots. They shoot dirty looks at each other. Dave FLIPS them the bird.

INT. LIMO - CONTINUOUS

Rod and Denise sit in the back, holding hands, as they arrive at Caesar's Palace. Rod wears a spectacular jumpsuit designed by Akira's team for the event. It's silver with red stripes. He looks like ULTRAMAN. It's covered in Japanese letters.

ROD

This jumpsuit is really
uncomfortable. It's grabbing me in
the most unforgiving places.

DENISE

Then wear your regular outfit. We
packed it with the gear.

ROD

No, ma'am. My Japanese father
figure, Akira, designed this. I
don't want to let him down.

DB

The limo comes to a stop.

DENISE

We should probably act like what happened last night didn't happen last night. At least for now. It could get weird with the guys.

ROD

Denise, I agree our crew is like a Swiss precision timepiece but I will not hide my feelings for you under a bushel or any other basket-like construct that hides light and/or feelings.

Rod gets out, followed by Denise.

EXT. CAESAR'S PALACE PARKING LOT - CONTINUOUS

Rod walks with much difficulty in his way too tight jumpsuit.

TAKESHI

Hello, Rod. Hello, Denise. How are you feeling today, Rod?

ROD

Extremely sexually satisfied, Takeshi, thank you very much. Denise and I had intimate relations last night. Of the adult, sexual variety.

DENISE

Oh my god...

ROD

Denise, don't be embarrassed. It's Nature. Capital N. For nasty.

(then)

Yes, Takeshi, we did it last night. All night. In all positions imaginable.

DENISE

Rod...

ROD

We were like filthy little animals.

DENISE

Rod.

DB

ROD

What? I'm proud of us, baby. I want the world to know that we did things that would make monkeys blush.

DENISE

I'm gonna check in with Rico.

ROD

Good thinking, lover. LOVER!!!

Embarrassed, Denise walks away. Rod turns to Takeshi.

ROD (CONT'D)

I never thought I'd love again after Kyoko ripped my heart out of my chest. And now look at me. I've fallen again. And now I'm going to die. Ain't life a bitch?

TAKESHI

Only a true artist like has the courage to face the contradictions with such vitality and spirit.

ROD

God, you totally get me, Takeshi. Kevin never would have said that. I hate Kevin. Why hasn't he called?

TAKESHI

Please do not concern yourself with your brother. You must keep your mind on your courageous stunt work. How is your head? Are you dizzy?

ROD

Yes. But I'm also pretty hung over. And this sun's not helping. And neither is this jumpsuit.

TAKESHI

Try this.

Takeshi hands Rod a thermos. Rod DRINKS and GAGS.

ROD

Agh, it's so hot! And chunky!

TAKESHI

It has curative powers. Drink up.

Rod tries to drink more and keeps GAGGING. Dave APPROACHES.

DAVE

Rod, we got a problem.

ROD

Dave, there is no such thing as a problem. There are only challenges which make us stronger. What's the challenge?

DAVE

It's the jumpsuits, man. They have no ventilation. The guys are passing out.

ROD

Just pour water on their heads, they'll be fine.

DAVE

I did. I don't think we should make Eugene wear the jumpsuit. And if he doesn't wear his Rico and I shouldn't wear ours because we're a crew and we should stick together. Especially against those Japanese douchebags. I bet they're the ones who made our jumpsuits hotter. They probably did it to make us look like assholes. Well, they're the assholes!

ROD

You're saying no jumpsuits?

DAVE

Eugene's old, man.

ROD

Oh, poor baby's eighty-seven. Let's all feel sorry for Eugene because he's eighty-F-ing-seven and he has to wear a polypropylene body suit in a hundred and thirteen degree weather.

DAVE

Rod --

ROD

Well, my jumpsuit is driving my nards into my abdominal cavity and I have to jump over sharks and fire with snakes in my seat! I'm the one who's going to be charred and

DB

eviscerated on Japanese television!
Do you hear me complaining??? DO
YOU???!!!

DAVE
I'm sorry. We'll wear the
jumpsuits.

ROD
(a beat, then
softening)
No, Dave. I'm sorry.
(then)
I was out of line right there. I
don't know if it's the heat or this
boiled snake meat I'm drinking, but
that was unacceptable. You're a
good man, Dave. I apologize.

DAVE
That's okay.

ROD
We're all under a lot of pressure,
old chum. Let's find our collective
center and get through this thing.
And if that doesn't work, I have
some Vicodin in the limo.

Dave nods. An awkward beat, then Rod karate chops the air.

ROD (CONT'D)
Waaah...

He finishes with one final insane kick-boxing flourish.

ROD (CONT'D)
Yah!

DAVE
That's cool.

ROD
I know.

In the distance, Rod sees something.

ROD (CONT'D)
Holy f-ing crap. He's here.

DAVE
Who?

Dave turns. We see Frank on a gurney with tubes and wires.

ROD

Frank.

ON FRANK

Clinging to life. Marie holds crushed ice to his lips.

MARIE

Here Frank, chew some ice.

Frank mutters and chews. Rod walks up to them, stoically.

ROD

Mom. Frank. What are you doing here?

MARIE

Rod, we had to come. I hated how we left it earlier.

FRANK

(weakly)
I didn't.

MARIE

Rod, please forgive me?

ROD

That's okay, Mom. I understand why you did what you did. I totally forgive you.

(re: Frank)

But this little jackhole's gonna get a beating.

FRANK

Suck my balls.

MARIE

I knew this was good to bring him here. You bring out a side of him, Rod.

Frank tries to spit at Rod.

MARIE (CONT'D)

Rod he's been unconscious for ten days. Now look at him. He's got the zest for life again.

FRANK

You're gonna chicken out. No balls.

Rod lunges at Frank but punches his pillow instead.

ROD
I can't wait to kick your teeth in,
Frank! I can't wait!

Rod runs off.

ON A SWIRLING GRAPHIC --

Japanese characters fly across the screen followed by really important dramatic music. A super cute graphic explodes.

INT. JAPANESE TV BROADCAST BOOTH - CONTINUOUS

...A male and female Japanese broadcaster sit at a desk. They are AKI OZAWA and MORIMASA KOIZUMI. Behind them we can see the famous Caesar's Palace fountains.

AKI
(all Japanese)

MORIMASA
(all Japanese)

AKI
(all Japanese)

MORIMASA
(all Japanese)

Morimasa then SCREAMS something in Japanese and points at the camera. We cut to their correspondent on the scene.

EXT. CAESAR'S PALACE PARKING LOT - CONTINUOUS

The reporter, ETSUYA, wears a rainbow tuxedo with a giant blue afro and clown shoes. He stands with Rod.

ETSUYA
(all Japanese)

ROD
Whatever he said. Double it!

Rod walks away. Etsuya screams and points at the camera.

EXT. CAESAR'S PALACE - MOMENTS LATER

Takeshi gives instructions as Rod spaces out.

TAKESHI
Now Rod, you'll be fine as long as you keep the bike at 43 miles per hour. Keep your eyes closed over the flames and don't worry about the

sharks. I dropped five hundred pounds of salmon in the tank this morning when they weren't looking so they're not very hungry. Also --

(then)

Rod? Rod?

ROD

Yes?

TAKESHI

You weren't listening to any of my important last minute instructions.

ROD

I know. I'm preoccupied. It's gonna sound crazy but it feels like something's missing.

TAKESHI

Is it something we can buy with our corporate money?

ROD

No. It's Kevin. I miss that little scrotum sucker.

TAKESHI

I'm sorry, Rod.

ROD

F it. And F him! And F Frank, too. It's time to see what I'm made of! Maybe literally.

Rod turns to Denise.

ROD (CONT'D)

Denise, if I don't make it on the other side, please know that last night was the most sexually filthy and spiritually satisfying nights of my life.

He ZOOMS off. Denise just smiles at the crew, not psyched.

ROD

Drives past the crowd. It's a blur of screaming, waving and laughing.

He finishes his practice lap and drives awkwardly to the top of the ramp. He almost stalls and falls over. He is definitely not in 100% control of the Yamaha.

DB

Rod surveys the jump. The SHARKS thrash around in the tank.

ROD (CONT'D)

Jesus. They don't look not hungry.

He closes his eyes and revs his engine.

ROD (CONT'D)

Soul of a manboy avenging
complicated father issues...

He hears a platoon of emergency vehicles move into position.

ROD (CONT'D)

That's not cool for confidence.

Just then, Rod sees a man run through the crowd screaming.
It's KEVIN. He calls up to Rod.

KEVIN

Rod! Rod!

ROD

Kevin?

KEVIN

I got the test results! You're not
going to die!

ROD

What?

KEVIN

It's right here.

(off document)

You're fine! It was nothing. I had
to tell you before the jump.

ROD

I'm not going to die?!

KEVIN

No!

ROD

I'm not going to die!!!

Rod awkwardly CLIMBS down the ramp scaffolding to hug Kevin.

ROD (CONT'D)

I'm sorry about saying I had a new
brother.

KEVIN

DB

I'm sorry for saying you were deluded and never follow through on anything.

ROD

That's okay. All that matters is we're back in each other's lives again.

(then, terrified)

Wait. I can't do this jump.

KEVIN

What?

ROD

I have too much to live for. You, Denise, Takeshi. Animals. Music.

Akira and Yaguchi run in followed by Denise.

AKIRA

What's going on here?

ROD

I can't do this jump. I got the test results back. I'm not dying.

DENISE

Oh Rod! That's fantastic.

She hugs him.

ROD

And now I want to find meaning in life not death.

(then)

That little cracker Olivia was right. Son of a bitch.

AKIRA

I'm sorry. There's no backing out now. Contracts are signed.

(pointing to cameras)

We are live on NHK.

YAGUCHI

Yes, live.

ROD

Not for long. Not me. Look at those sharks. I don't know what I'm doing. I can barely shift gears on that motorcycle.

YAGUCHI

What about the money for Frank's heart transplant? What about kicking in his face?

ROD

I'll sell my lungs on the black market. I'll get the money somehow.

AKIRA

Rod, if you don't do this jump, Frank wins. He predicted you would back out.

ROD

What? How do you know that?

AKIRA

You are miked. I was sitting in the control room. I heard everything.

ROD

I can't do it, Akira!

AKIRA

You have to do it, Rod. Do you want Frank to be right about you?

ROD

No.

AKIRA

Frank says you have no balls.

ROD

But I do have balls. Denise saw them. She did things to them. It was ballcrazy madness.

Denise closes her eyes, humiliated.

AKIRA

You must show them to Frank. You must do the jump.

ROD

You don't care about me. I'm just a paycheck to you.

AKIRA

It may have started that way, Rod. But like Takeshi, you've won my heart, too. Do the jump.

ROD
 This is so complicated. I've
 learned my life lesson. I want to
 live!

AKIRA
 Life won't be worth living if Frank
 wins.

ROD
 Goddamn it! I need to vanquish all
 father figures now and forever. But
 I'm doing it my way.
 (then)
 Kevin, bring the green suit and
 cape!

KEVIN
 Aye aye, Rod!

DENISE
 Rod --

ROD
 See you on the other side of the
 sun, lady.

ETSUYA --

Stands in front of a camera and shakes his crazy blue fro.
 We see Rod struggling with his jumpsuit in the background.

ETSUYA
 (in Japanese)

Etsuya makes crazy faces and dramatically points to camera.

ON THE CREW --

Kevin finds Rod's old lucky green suit in a trunk.

KEVIN
 Rod's wearing the old suit.

Kevin runs off.

DAVE
 I knew it. F these jumpsuits.
 Rico, strip!

Rico and Dave start to strip.

EUGENE
 I'm out.

Eugene passes out from the heat. Some drunk guys in the crowd start ripping off their clothes, too.

INT. BROADCAST BOOTH - CONTINUOUS

AKI
(all Japanese).

MORIMASA
(all Japanese)

In the bottom corner we see a man and woman parallel parking a car. Aki and Morimasa laugh and then mime driving motions.

EXT. CAESAR'S PALACE -- CONTINUOUS

Rod is now wearing the green suit. He secures his cape. Etsuya comes over with a microphone. Rod screams into it.

ROD
Let's f-ing do this thing!

The crowd goes crazy. Rod swipes Etsuya's mike, jumps on his bike and ZOOMS away. Etsuya raises his palms, not knowing what to do. He points at the camera, dramatically.

ROD

Rides through the parking lot. He screams at the crowd.

ROD
(into microphone)
Who wants to see some m-f-ing
stuntwork????!!!

The crowd goes crazy. Rod almost loses control of his YAMAHA. But then gets control back.

ROD (CONT'D)
(into microphone)
OW!!!!!!

He ZIPS back up to the top of the ramp, skidding to a stop and just barely avoiding falling over the lip.

TAKESHI

Cues the lights. They dim dramatically. Suspenseful music kicks in. Splashes of light and pyrotechnics turn the fountains into multi-colored dreamcoat. The crowd cheers.

ROD

Revs his engine and speaks into the microphone.

ROD (CONT'D)

Ladies and gentlemen, what is
destiny? What is fate? What is
free will?

The crowd goes berserk.

ROD (CONT'D)

I dedicate this jump to fathers and
father-figures everywhere. I hope
in some way all of their sons manage
to jump them.

(then)

Frank, I'm going to get you well,
you snarling cur! And then I'm
going to uncork the ass-beating of a
lifetime on you. And you will love
me!

(then)

Peace!!!

Rod SLAMS the microphone against the ground. He REVS his
engine and stares down the ramp at the fountains.

ROD (CONT'D)

Here it is, Old man, Poppa, Big
Daddy. I vanquish thee!!!

And with that, Rod guns the engine and SHOOTs down the ramp
at an incredible speed. His bike fishtails as Rod scrambles
to stay on it. He bears down on the ramp...

THE CROWD

Goes insane.

THE JAPANESE BROADCASTERS

Watch sternly.

ETSUYA

Blesses himself.

THE CREW

All watch naked.

DENISE

Can't watch.

DB

MARIE

Watches, hands folded in prayer.

FRANK

Smiles, welcoming the inevitable.

ROD

Hits the ramp and gets airborne...

WE PULL BACK TO REVEAL

He hit the ramp at the most violent and awkward angle possible. Rod shoots into the air, EXPLOSIVES GO OFF!

FLAMES SHOOT INTO THE SKY!

A SHARK jumps out of the water and tries to bite Rod who is falling through the air next to his motorcycle.

SLO-MO CLOSE-UP ON ROD

He gives Kevin a confident thumbs-up. Kevin gives the thumbs-up right back. Rod smiles.

REGULAR SPEED

Rod CLEARS the fountains SIDEWAYS. His Yamaha launches into the fourth floor of the hotel as hits the ground hard!

Twisting and flailing like a ragdoll, Rod HURTLES across the parking lot in the most violent crash imaginable. The crowd gasps in horror.

Rod finally comes to a skidding stop under an ambulance. EMT's run to him. He is not moving. Kevin, Takeshi and Denise run to him, too.

INT. JAPANESE TV BROADCAST BOOTH - CONTINUOUS

Morimasa and Aki watch transfixed.

MORIMASA
(solemnly in
Japanese)

AKI
(also solemn)

Aki solemnly points at the camera, solemnly.

EXT. CAESAR'S PALACE FOUNTAINS - CONTINUOUS

Kevin, Takeshi and Denise are at Rod's side.

KEVIN

Rod? Rod can you hear me?

Rod does not move. He looks dead.

DENISE

Oh my god, no. Rod!

TAKESHI

Rod, according to the rules, you can only get the prize money if you stand up. Rod, please stand up.

KEVIN

Damn it, man! We'll be lucky if he breathes let alone stands up.

TAKESHI

I'm sorry, Kevin. I'm just trying to stay positive. I care about him, too, you know!

KEVIN

I know you do, Takeshi. I know you do.

Kevin and Takeshi have a moment. The EMT's are using paddles to defibrillate him. He's flatlining.

ZOOM IN

On Rod's unconscious face.

We see Evel Knievel standing at the gates of heaven.

EVEL KNIEVEL

Come on, Rod, run into the light.

ROD

Who are you?

EVEL KNIEVEL

I'm God.

ROD

No, you're not. You're Evel Knievel.

EVEL KNIEVEL

What's the difference?

ROD

You're right.

ZOOM OUT

The paramedics are still working on Rod. He smiles. Kevin is crying. So is Takeshi.

EMT

We're not getting any vitals.

DENISE

Rod, no!

ZOOM IN

On Rod's smiling face.

Rod stands at the gates of heaven with Evel Knievel.

EVEL KNIEVEL

Rod, since I'm all-knowing is there any question you'd like to ask me about life or the universe?

ROD

Yes, Evel Knievel, there is something. It's a burning question I've been carrying with me forever.

EVEL KNIEVEL

Ask away.

ROD

Why did my father abandon me?

EVEL KNIEVEL

(beat)

Because he's a tool.

A long beat. Rod just looks at Evel Knievel.

ROD

That's it?

EVEL KNIEVEL

That's it.

ROD

I thought there'd be a lot more to it than that. More complicated feelings and motives.

EVEL KNIEVEL

Nope. Sometimes people are just shitty. You're dad was shitty. And the trick as an adult is to get over whatever shitty things happened to you in your childhood and not to pass the shittiness on to anyone else. And believe me, that can be hard. That can take more strength and courage than a million stunts.

ROD

Huh.

A beat.

EVEL KNIEVEL

Okay. Now chase me into the light.

ROD

But that's death.

EVEL KNIEVEL

I know. I'm Evel Knieval. Let's die together.

ROD

Okay.

Rod runs after Evel. He's distracted by high-pitched beeps.

ROD (CONT'D)

What's that noise?

EVEL KNIEVEL

Chase me!

Evel Knieval disappears but Rod gets disoriented.

ROD

What's that beeping?

ZOOM OUT

Rod calls out, waking up.

ROD (CONT'D)

What's that beeping?!

DENISE

Rod, you're alive!

Denise and Kevin are stunned. Rod sees it's his Barbie watch.

DB

ROD
Holy crap, Olivia's watch.

Rod WEAKLY HITS a button. We hear a little boy.

JASPER (O.S.)
...I'm thinking of an ocean creature
that begins with an L...

ROD
Jasper...
(then)
I'm alive! I'm alive!

Rod pushes all the EKG paddles and medical personnel away
and slowly tries to crawl to his feet.

KEVIN
Rod, no. Stay still.

DENISE
You could have internal injuries.

ROD
I must get to my feet for the prize
money. Must save Frank's life.

TAKESHI
(to Kevin)
See?

INT. JAPANESE TV BROADCAST BOOTH - CONTINUOUS

Aki and Morimasa hug each other with happiness. They both
point to the camera.

EXT. CAESAR'S PALACE PARKING LOT - CONTINUOUS

Rod struggles and stumbles.

CROWD
(chanting)
Rod, Rod, Rod...

Kevin tries to help him.

ROD
No assistance. That's against the
rules.

For longer than is comfortable, the crowd, the crew, Marie,
Frank, Takeshi, Etsuya... all watch Rod stumble to his feet.

After a last painful lunge... HE MAKES IT! Rod stands up!
The CROWD EXPLODES WITH APPLAUSE!

AKI AND MORIMASA --

Jump up and down.

AKIRA AND YAGUCHI --

Hug. They then spontaneously start MAKING OUT. Even
they're surprised by this.

ETSUYA --

Runs up to Rod and puts the microphone in his face as Rod
stumbles to Frank.

ROD (CONT'D)

I did it, Frank. I did it. I won
the money for your transplant! Do
you love me now?

FRANK

Not even close.

Rod pulls his fist back and clocks Frank with a CRACK.
Marie SCREAMS.

ROD

I'm sorry, Mom. But he had it
coming.

Rod walks away. Etsuya runs in and shoves a microphone in
his face.

ETSUYA

(all Japanese)

ROD

Yes, blue fro man. I do have
something else to say.

Rod stumbles to Denise as medical personnel attend to Frank
in the background. Rod struggles to get down on one knee.

ROD (CONT'D)

Denise? Will you marry me?

DENISE

Oh my god. Rod. Yes. Yes!

The crowd goes crazy.

ROD

...I'm out.

Rod falls out of frame, unconscious. Music KICKS in.

Pull back to reveal Takeshi hugging Kevin. Then Akira hugging Yaguchi some more. Rico hugs a Japanese crewmember. Dave hugs Eugene. Morimasa hugs Aki. The husband and wife trying to parallel park on Morimasa and Aki's show hug.

And finally, there's a little twinkle off the fountains and we pull back and up, up, up and...

FADE OUT:

THE END

DB