

COLD OPEN

FADE IN:

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING/LOBBY - DAY

BEN WHELAN, AN ENTHUSIASTIC, GOOD-LOOKING TWENTY-SOMETHING AND HIS SLIGHTLY MORE UPTIGHT, SARCASTIC BEST FRIEND **TUCKER DOBBS**, ARE STRUGGLING TO CARRY IN LUGGAGE AND BOXES AS BEN CALLS BACK TO SOMEONE STILL OUTSIDE.

BEN

The neighborhood is amazing - just step over that - you are definitely not gonna regret moving in here.

SMACK. THE FRONT DOOR CLOSSES IN THE FACE OF BEN'S OLDER, COOLER, WAY MORE ATHLETIC BROTHER **DANNY WHELAN**, WHO IS LOADED DOWN WITH A COUPLE OF HUGE GYM BAGS. BEN QUICKLY LETS HIM IN.

DANNY

Yeah, I feel pretty lucky.

BEN

Sorry. We'll get you a key. But quick trip down full disclosure highway - we're kinda, sorta, technically, illegally sub-letting it from Tucker's grandma, so, you know, if anybody asks--

TUCKER

You're cousins of mine from Jamaica who are on their way to a small liberal arts college outside of Albany to start a better life. (OFF BEN'S LOOK) Trust me, it's the details that sell it.

THEY DUMP THEIR STUFF IN FRONT OF THE ELEVATOR.

BEN

(TO DANNY) Nobody is going to ask.

Everyone in the building is great.

SUDDENLY, **SABRINA DUNCAN**, 15, A PRETTY BUT TOUGH TEENAGER WHO LIVES TO TORMENT BEN COMES OUT OF THE LAUNDRY ROOM.

SABRINA

Hey, Loser McTool, you left a load of your man panties in the washer again.

BEN

Almost everyone. (TO SABRINA) They're not mine.

SABRINA

Weird. I wasn't even talking to you, but you must get that a lot.

SHE HANDS TUCKER SOME LAUNDRY.

TUCKER

Damn it. They're pink again. How does that keep happening?

SABRINA

(SNIFFING HER RED SWEATSHIRT) Mmmm, smells like springtime. (TO TUCKER) No idea. And you owe me two dollars for the dryer.

BEN

Ignore her. Puberty and her mother both have...

SABRINA

(TO DANNY) You the brother?

DANNY

Yeah, sorry. Hi. I'm Ben's brother Danny.
I just moved here from Canada.

TUCKER

On his way from Jamaica. Were you not
even listening?

BEN

He's a professional hockey player.

DANNY

I've been playing for Calgary for the
last couple of seasons. MVP. Great fans -
but it was definitely time to move on.

BEN

Last week, no notice, he got traded to
the Rangers for a second-string goalie
and a fourteenth round draft pick. (OFF
DANNY'S LOOK) Oh, are we not telling that
part of the story? (TO SABRINA) He plays
hockey.

SABRINA

Wow, I don't know if I've ever cared
about anything less. Uh, yeah, no.

BEN

Lets take the stairs.

SABRINA

Gosh, I hope it was something I said.

RESET TO:

INT. STAIRWELL - CONTINUOUS

THE GUYS LUG DANNY'S STUFF UP THE NARROW STAIRWELL.

BEN

So I was thinking maybe we could put a little party together. You know, ask Penny and whoever else you want. This calls for a real "Welcome to New York" blow out.

DANNY

Honestly, not really in a celebrating kind of mood.

TUCKER

And I promised Vanessa I'd go to a barbecue at her folks tonight.

BEN

Oh, one more thing about the building - it's infested with wusses! What's the matter with you two? Don't you get how amazing this is? My brother and my best friend. It's never gonna get any better than this. We need to be celebrating. Plus, I already ordered the keg.

THEY TURN UP ANOTHER FLIGHT.

BEN (CONT'D)

This is it. We're young. We're single.
(TO TUCKER) Or we could be with a well-worded text.

(MORE)

BEN (CONT'D)

These are the moments we're always going to look back on. (FALLING ON LUGGAGE)
Okay, maybe not this exact moment but you know what I mean.

DANNY

(HELPING HIM UP) Yeah, I know what you mean. Lets make some calls.

RESET TO:

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING/HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

THE GUYS CONTINUE UP THE LAST FEW STEPS. SABRINA IS UNLOCKING HER APARTMENT - THE ELEVATOR IS CLOSING IN THE BACKGROUND.

BEN

Thank you. The three of us together - we're going to rule this town. There's nothing that's gonna stop us.

THE GUYS ALL STOP. THERE'S A **BABY** SITTING IN A CARRIER ON THE MAT OUTSIDE THEIR APARTMENT.

TUCKER

Except for maybe that.

BEN LOOKS TO SABRINA FOR EXPLANATION.

BEN

There's a baby on my doormat.

SABRINA

I know. Somebody left it for you.

AS SHE HEADS INSIDE, THE GUYS LOOK DOWN AT OUR BABY AND WE...

SMASH CUT TO:

MAIN TITLES

ACT ONE

SCENE A

FADE IN:

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING/HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

EVERYONE IS AS WE LEFT THEM. THE BABY IS STILL IN HER CARRIER IN FRONT OF THE DOOR.

BEN

What do you mean somebody left it? Could you possibly be more specific?

SABRINA

Yeah.

BEN

A stork? Gnomes? The UPS guy?

TUCKER

Not the UPS guy. He always makes you sign.

BEN

Sabrina, please.

SABRINA

I don't know. Some woman. I got off the elevator and she said, "Does Ben Whelan live here?" and I said, "Yeah" and she said, "Do you know when he'll be back?" and I said, "Yeah" and she said, "Well?" and I said, "If he wasn't such a big toe he'd be here now. He's coming up the stairs." Then she said thanks, kissed it and got on the elevator.

BEN

Just now?

BEN DROPS HIS BAGS AND STARTS FOR THE STAIRS, BUT STOPS AND COMES BACK.

BEN (CONT'D)

(TO THE BABY) Stay there. (TO TUCKER)

Make sure she stays there.

TUCKER

Stay there.

BEN FLIES DOWN THE STAIRS. AFTER A BEAT.

SABRINA

(TO DANNY) Welcome to New York.

AS SHE GOES INTO HER APARTMENT.

TUCKER

(TO DANNY) I swear, this almost never happens.

CUT TO:

ACT ONE

SCENE B

INT. GUYS' APARTMENT - SHORT TIME LATER

CLOSE ON OUR BABY WHO IS SOUND ASLEEP IN HER CARRIER ON THE COFFEE TABLE. SHE'S BEAUTIFUL. ALL THREE GUYS ARE LOOKING DOWN AT HER. AFTER A BEAT...

BEN GOES TO LOOK OUT THE WINDOWS AT THE STREET BELOW. TUCKER RETURNS TO HIS PHONE CALL AND DANNY CONTINUES LOOKING THROUGH THE DIAPER BAG THAT CAME WITH THE BABY.

BEN

For a woman who just had a baby, she was remarkably fast. I can't believe she just left it here.

DANNY

With you.

BEN

With me.

TUCKER

(ON PHONE) Vanessa, honey, no it's not mine. If it was mine it'd be yours and you'd know. (BEAT) Why would I make something like this up?

JUST THEN A **DELIVERY GUY** RAPS ON THE HALF-OPEN DOOR.

DELIVERY GUY

Hey, you guys order a keg?

TUCKER

Okay, that's one reason. (TO BEN) I could use a little help here.

BEN

(TO DELIVERY GUY) Just, ah, put it on the counter (LOUDLY FOR TUCKER) next to the hookers.

TUCKER

Less help here. (ON PHONE) Vanessa, he's kidding.

DANNY

Wait! Wait! We have a note. (SCANNING NOTE) Her name's Mary.

BEN

I don't know any Marys.

DANNY

The baby's name is Mary. Hi, Mary. It's weird, she kind of looks like a Mary. Hey, remember that Mary you--

BEN

Danny, focus! The mother!? Who's the mother?

DANNY

Oh, uh... Angela.

BEN AND TUCKER POINT AT EACH OTHER. "ANGELA", "OF COURSE."

BEN

Angela. We only went out a couple of times. She was nice. Actress. I don't even remember what happened.

TUCKER

(COVERING PHONE) She dumped your ass and said she never wanted to see you again.

BEN

Right. Thanks. It's coming back to me.

TUCKER

(ON PHONE) No. Angela. Remember that girl you thought was way out of Ben's league? Yeah, her.

BEN

(TO DANNY) Does it say anything else?

DANNY

She's sorry. She didn't know what else to do and she just needs a little time.

BEN

Time? How much time? I'm guessing we've got about twenty minutes before all hell breaks loose.

DANNY

I don't know, she looks pretty zonked.

BEN

I mean me. What am I supposed to do?

DANNY

Relax. While you were downstairs I called Penny.

BEN

Dude, we're cancelling the party.

DELIVERY GUY

Should I take this back?

ALL THREE GUYS

No!

THE DELIVERY GUY EXITS.

DANNY

Penny's a lawyer now - well, almost. I guess the bar's a little tricky - but, trust me, she'll know what to do.

BEN

Wow. Penny Cramer. A lawyer. My money would have been on lady wrestler.

DANNY

I think it's harder to break into that than you think.

TUCKER, STILL ON PHONE, MOUTHS "DO I KNOW PENNY??" TO BEN.

BEN

No. She grew up across the street from us and beat the crap out of me every day of my life. She was like a sister.

PENNY

Knock. Knock.

PENNY CRAMER, A VERY TOGETHER, ATTRACTIVE, NON-THREATENING YOUNG WOMAN, TAPS AT THE DOOR AND ENTERS.

BEN

(HUGGING HER) Penninator!

TUCKER

(ON PHONE) I don't know. It's just an old friend of Ben and Danny's. Penny something. She's hideous. (TO PENNY) Hey, I'm Tucker. (ON PHONE) No she's not a hooker. (SOTTO, TO PENNY) You're not a... Okay, no, I didn't think so.

BEN

You look.... amazing. You haven't changed a bit.

PENNY

I used to weigh two hundred and fifty pounds.

BEN

I know. You sat on my head and gave me a concussion. So, uh, what's new?

PENNY

College. Law school. But what about you - you know, other than knocking up some poor girl and finding the fruit of your loins on the front stoop?

BEN

Actually, not all that much.

TUCKER

Hey, hey, I think she's waking up. (ON PHONE) Ness, I gotta go. No, I am not making this up.

BEN

(TO PENNY) Seriously, thanks for coming.
And don't worry, I know a bunch of people
who didn't pass the bar the first time.

AS BEN MOVES OFF TO CHECK ON MARY, SHE PINCHES THE BACK OF
DANNY'S ARM AND BRINGS HIM TO HIS KNEES.

PENNY

Why did you tell him that?

DANNY

Ow. Ow. Ow.

AND SUDDENLY, CRYING.

PENNY

I didn't pinch you that hard you big--
BUT IT'S NOT DANNY. IT'S MARY. BEN LOOKS PANICKED.

BEN

I didn't do anything. I just said "hi"
and she started screaming. It's
frightening how often that actually
happens.

PENNY BENDS DOWN TO MARY WITH THE THREE GUYS HOVERING BEHIND.

PENNY

(TO MARY) It's gonna be okay, princess.
They're not as scary as they look.

BEN

Aren't you going to pick her up?

PENNY

Me? (THEY ALL LOOK AT HER) What? You see
breasts and you instantly think mommy?

BEN

No, but now that you mention it I might
which is going to cause all kinds of
problems.

PENNY

Fine. Come here, angel.

SHE PICKS UP MARY WHO QUICKLY STOPS CRYING.

PENNY (CONT'D)

There we go. You're going to be okay.
Believe me, I know how hard it is to wake
up in a strange place. (TO THE GUYS) I'm
just making conversation.

PENNY PICKS UP THE DIAPER BAG AND HEADS OVER TO THE KITCHEN.

PENNY (CONT'D)

I bet you're hungry. Is this all you
brought with you? That's okay, we'll
just send one of these boys out for
provisions. Oh, and I think you might
need your diaper changed.

SHE LOOKS TO THE GUYS. AFTER A BEAT...

BEN/TUCKER/DANNY

I'll go.

BEN AND TUCKER MAKE IT OUT THE DOOR FIRST. DANNY IS LEFT
BEHIND. PENNY JUST ROLLS HER EYES AND TURNS BACK TO MARY.

PENNY

Yes, boys are very stupid, aren't they?
Yes, they are. Oh, yes they are.

CUT TO:

ACT ONE

SCENE C

INT. SUPERMARKET - DAY

BEN AND TUCKER ARE IN THE BABY AISLE WHERE THEY'RE ASSESSING THE ABNORMALLY HUGE NIPPLES UNDER THEIR T-SHIRTS.

TUCKER

What do you think?

BEN

(RE:NIPPLES) I don't know. I think these definitely look more real.

TUCKER

Agreed.

THE GUYS TAKE THE PLASTIC BOTTLE NIPPLES OUT FROM UNDER THEIR SHIRT AND TAKE ANOTHER PACK FROM THE SHELF.

TUCKER (CONT'D)

Is it weird they come in a three pack?

BEN

I can't believe this is happening. I just keep thinking I'm going to wake up or someone is going to tell me it's a joke. (OFF TUCKER'S SMILE) What? Are you serious? Is this a joke?

AFTER A BEAT, TUCKER DROPS THE SMILE.

TUCKER

Yeah, you're being punked. People often rent out their babies for elaborate practical jokes. (BEAT) Though that's not actually a bad idea.

BEN

But I'm not ready to be a dad.

TUCKER

Maybe you won't have to be. Maybe all Angela really needed is some time - she might not even want you involved.

THEY STOP IN FRONT OF THE DIAPER SECTION.

TUCKER (CONT'D)

(RE: DIAPERS) How big?

BEN

I don't know. She's about... by about...

TUCKER

So 'small'?

BEN

Better go with medium. You don't want them to be too tight. I hate that. And why wouldn't she want me involved?

TUCKER

You know how women are. They never think guys know anything about babies. Is four enough?

BEN

Dude, she's a baby. She could be here for days. Get the eight pack.

RESET TO:

INT. GUY'S APARTMENT - SAME TIME

PENNY IS CHANGING MARY'S DIAPER WHILE DANNY PUMPS HIMSELF A BEER FROM THE KEG.

PENNY

A final swipe, a little powder, and it's
just pull, tuck and tape. Got it?

DANNY

All the important parts. (SOTTO) Like
never tell a girl your real name.

PENNY DUMPS THE DIAPER AND RINSES HER HANDS.

DANNY (CONT'D)

So can you believe I was traded? Granted
it wasn't my best--

PENNY

Hold her while I get her bottle ready,
would you?

DANNY

Is it still her turn?

PENNY

Danny.

DANNY

I'm not really a baby person.

PENNY

Hold her.

DANNY RELUCTANTLY TAKES MARY BUT HOLDS HER AT ARMS LENGTH.
PENNY GENTLY PUSHES ON MARY'S BACK UNTIL SHE IS AGAINST
DANNY'S CHEST.

PENNY PUSHES DOWN ON DANNY'S SHOULDERS UNTIL HE SITS DOWN ON
THE COUCH, AND THEN PULLS HIM BACK INTO THE CUSHIONS. HE
COULDN'T LOOK MORE UNCOMFORTABLE.

RESET TO:

INT. SUPERMARKET - SAME TIME

BEN AND TUCKER ARE IN FRONT OF THE BABY FOOD SECTION. AS BEN STARTS TO LOSE IT, TUCKER LOADS UP THEIR BASKET.

BEN

What if Angela never comes back? What if this is it? What am I supposed to do?

TUCKER

Smell this.

HE PUTS AN OPEN JAR OF BABY FOOD UNDER HIS NOSE.

TUCKER (CONT'D)

Chicken, carrots and pasta all in this little jar. Gross and amazing all at the same time. (BEAT) It's going to be okay.

BEN

How do you know that?

TUCKER

I don't, but it sounds better than, "you're totally screwed." So if we get some of this for dinner, what do you think she'll want for breakfast?

BEN

She doesn't have any teeth so something on the soft side. Oh, and something for her bottle. See if they have vanilla hazelnut. I can use the rest for my coffee.

A CONCERNED MOTHERLY-LOOKING **CUSTOMER** STEPS IN TO HELP.

CUSTOMER

Excuse me. How old is your baby?

BEN

Good question... (WORKING IT OUT) Angela and I met at that Christmas party in the village - then maybe two weeks later...?

TUCKER

Four. Remember, we went to Aspen.

BEN

Right. Aspen. And we definitely didn't have sex until after I came back.

TUCKER

Really?

BEN

Yeah, I don't know, I wanted it to be special. But she pretty much stopped returning my calls right after--

(REMEMBER THE CUSTOMER) So we're into February. They take like nine months, right, once they're up and running. So, she's three months old?

THE WOMAN JUST STARES AT THE GUYS FOR A SECOND WITH TOTAL DISDAIN - THEN STARTS TO TAKE EVERYTHING OUT OF THEIR BASKET PUT IT BACK ON THE SHELVES.

RESET TO:

INT. GUY'S APARTMENT - SAME TIME

DANNY IS FEEDING MARY. HE'S INTENSELY FOCUSED ON MAKING SURE THE BOTTLE POSITION IS ABSOLUTELY PERFECT.

PENNY

First thing in the morning I'll call a couple of friends who do family law, but I'm sure they'll tell me Ben needs to take a paternity test... (LOOKING DOWN ON MARY) though it's kind of obvious she's his. Same smile. Same ears. Same sparkley little fleck of yellow in the iris.

THIS PULLS DANNY OUT OF HIS MILK BOTTLE TRANCE AND HE STARES AT PENNY WITH A MISCHIEVOUS LITTLE SMILE.

PENNY (CONT'D)

What? Do I have something in my nose? I know you think that's funny but it's not.

DANNY

You like Ben.

PENNY

What? No. That's insane. I tormented the guy everyday of my life.

DANNY

Holy crap, you really do like Ben.

BEN AND TUCKER COME IN WITH GROCERY BAGS.

BEN

We're back.

DANNY

Hey, Ben, you're not gonna belie-- Aaah.

PENNY HAS HIS SHOULDER IN A VISE GRIP.

PENNY

(SWEET) How'd it go? You left and I realized I should have given you a list.

TUCKER

Why? Everyone knows you can't introduce a baby to solid food until it's at least four months old and sitting up on its own. (TO BEN) That woman was mean.

BEN

Did Angela call? (TO DANNY) Are you crying?

OOPS. PENNY LETS GO OF DANNY'S SHOULDER. BEN TAKES A SWIG OF DANNY'S BEER.

DANNY

Nope. She didn't call. (RE: BOTTLE) And I think we're done here.

PENNY PICKS UP MARY.

PENNY

On to our next step. And if you're anything like your dad...

BEN BURPS.

PENNY (CONT'D)

...you'll be a natural.

DANNY

(MOCKING, TO PENNY) It's like music.

PENNY

(TO BEN) Here. Pass on some of your wisdom.

BEN

Me? Hold her. Right now? Are you sure?

IT TAKES HIM A MOMENT TO GET HIS HANDS IN THE RIGHT POSITION, BUT THEN THE SECOND HE'S ABOUT TO TAKE HER, MARY STARTS TO CRY AGAIN. BEN IMMEDIATELY PULLS BACK.

BEN (CONT'D)

Actually, I'm good. Tucker...?

PENNY HANDS MARY TO TUCKER BEFORE HE CAN REACT. HE NERVOUSLY PUTS HER ON HIS SHOULDER AS BEN LOOKS ON.

PENNY

A couple of good whacks and you're done.

HE TENTATIVELY PATS HER GENTLY ON THE BACK.

BEN

What are you doing? Don't hurt her.

PENNY

(TO DANNY) Alright, you're in charge.

DANNY

You're not leaving are you? I'll be good.

I promise.

PENNY

I showed you how to do everything.

DANNY

But I wasn't paying attention.

PENNY

Too bad. I'm not staying and there's nothing you can say that'll make me.

DANNY

Hey, Ben, Penny's going. Ask her to stay.

BEN HURRIES OVER.

BEN

She can't go. You can't go.

DANNY

Wow, I never noticed how sparkley your eyes are.

PENNY

Do they still pay you if you're on injury reserve?

BEN

Penny, please. I can't do this without you.

PENNY

(CAN'T HELP IT) I'll stay.

BEN HUGS HER. PENNY GLARES AT DANNY, BUT THEN LETS HERSELF ENJOY THE HUG. BURP. THIS TIME IT WAS MARY.

TUCKER

There we go. That's what I'm talkin' about. She didn't spit up on my shirt did she?

HE TURNS AROUND. IT'S COMPLETELY COVERED.

EVERYONE

No./Not at all./You're totally good.

CUT TO:

ACT ONE

SCENE D

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING/HALLWAY - DAY

BEN, HOLDING MARY IN HER CARRIER AND THE DIAPER BAG, KNOCKS ON THE DOOR ACROSS THE HALL. SABRINA ANSWERS.

SABRINA

Deadbeat.

BEN

Demon spawn.

SABRINA

I'm not baby-sitting for you.

BEN

Good - because you're the last person on the planet I would ever ask to babysit.

SABRINA

So I guess everyone said, no, huh?

BEN

Please, you have to help me. I'll pay you any amount of money.

SABRINA

A hundred bucks.

BEN

You didn't let me finish. That's equal to or less than five dollars an hour.

SABRINA

Ten.

BEN

Ten? I don't make ten.

SHE STARTS TO SHUT THE DOOR.

BEN (CONT'D)

Fine. Ten. (BEAT) You know what you're doing right?

SABRINA

She can't get out of that thing, can she?

BEN

Nope.

SABRINA

Then I'm good.

BEN RELUCTANTLY HANDS HER THE CARRIER AND THE DIAPER BAG.

BEN

So whatever your mother did to you when you were little - just do the opposite.

BEN WAVES GOOD-BYE TO MARY AND HEADS DOWN THE STAIRS. THE MINUTE HE'S OUT OF SIGHT SABRINA'S WHOLE DEMEANOR CHANGES.

SABRINA

(TO MARY) You are just the cutest little baby in the world. We are going to have so much fun together.

BEN (O.S.)

I heard that!

SABRINA

(ANNOYED) I knew you were there! (SOTTO, TO MARY) I really didn't.

BEN (O.S.)

I heard that too!

CUT TO:

ACT ONE

SCENE E

INT. MERCER HOTEL BAR - DAY

BEN IS WORKING BEHIND THE BAR, EXPERTLY FLIPPING BOTTLES AS HE MIXES DRINKS. PENNY IS ON A STOOL WITH A BUNCH OF PAPER WORK SPREAD OUT IN FRONT OF HER.

PENNY

I remember when you told your mom you wanted to take up juggling and she said it wouldn't lead to anything. Boy, you sure showed her.

BEN

Hey, I'm actually in the management trainee program. You're not the only one who's wandered into a college.

PENNY

(SINCERE) Good for you.

BEN

Thanks.

AND HE SMILES AT HER JUST AS SHE'S TAKING THE LAST SIP OF HER DIET COKE. ALL OF THE ICE COMES TUMBLING OF THE GLASS.

PENNY

Aah, ice down my bra. (QUICKLY) So, we should probably talk about some of this. Actually, there's not much to discuss until Angela comes back and we find out if she actually wants you involved.

BEN

Why do people keep saying that?

PENNY

Since she didn't mention it for the last nine months, that's usually a sign.

(BEAT) But it's not all up to her. Do you want to be involved?

BEN

I don't even know what that means? But how can I not be? I don't want to be one of those guys. And have you seen her? Mary. Not Angela. How am I supposed to say I don't want to see you to that face?

HE NOTICES PENNY STARING AT HIM, CLEARLY SMITTEN.

BEN (CONT'D)

What? Do I have something in my nose?

PENNY

I really am sorry I sat on your head all those times.

SUDDENLY BEN'S PHONE GOES OFF. HE READS THE SCREEN.

BEN

Angela's back. (CALLING OUT) I'm on break!

AND HE LEAPS OVER THE BAR AND RUNS OUT. AFTER A BEAT.

PENNY

(DISGUSTED WITH HERSELF) I'm sorry I sat on your head. Idiot.

SHE DOWNS THE REST OF HER DRINK. MORE ICE. AAAH!

CUT TO:

SCENE F

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING/HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

BEN RACES UP THE STAIRS.

BEN

Wait! I'm here!

NOBODY. HE GOES INTO HIS APARTMENT...

RESET TO:

INT. GUYS' APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

ALSO EMPTY.

BEN

Sabrina! Angela. Mary.

NOTHING. HE HEADS BACK OUT...

RESET TO:

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING/HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

...AND ALMOST CRASHES INTO SABRINA WHO IS CALMLY STANDING IN THE MIDDLE OF THE HALLWAY, WAITING FOR HIM.

BEN

Aaah! Where is she? Am I too late? Did I miss her?

THEN HE NOTICES MARY SITTING IN HER CARRIER ON THE GROUND NEXT TO SABRINA.

BEN (CONT'D)

She's still here. Why is she still?
Where's Angela? Did she say anything?

SABRINA

Yeah.

A BEAT.

BEN

Aah! Please don't make me play this game
right now.

SABRINA

Fine. She wanted me to give you this.

SHE HANDS HIM A LARGE, OFFICIAL LOOKING MANILA ENVELOPE. BEN
OPENS IT AND IMMEDIATELY BEGINS READING.

BEN

They're adoption papers. She's putting
Mary up for adoption and she needs me to
relinquish my rights. (BEAT) I sign this
and I'm not a father anymore.

SABRINA

Ouch. (OFF HIS LOOK) Or "yay!" (BEAT)
Either way you owe me fifty bucks, but
I'll take a check if that's easier.

BEN JUST LOOKS FROM HER DOWN TO MARY WHO'S SMILING UP AT HIM
FROM HER CARRIER.

FADE OUT:

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

SCENE H

FADE IN:

INT. GUYS' APARTMENT - LATER

BEN IS PACING WHILE PENNY LOOKS THROUGH THE PAPERS THAT ANGELA SENT OVER. MARY IS IN HER CARRIER ON THE COFFEE TABLE AS TUCKER TRIES TO MAKE HER SMILE. DANNY POURS A BEER.

TUCKER

(MAKING FACE) Come on, give your Uncle Tucker a smile.

BEN

Dude, quit scaring my kid. (TO PENNY) Can she do this? Can she actually do this?

PENNY

Not without your consent. It's really all about what you want to do now.

BEN

Is curling up in a ball on the floor of my closet and pretending that this isn't happening an option?

PENNY

Do you still do that?

BEN

No. Rarely. I might start again. So, I sign this and Mary has a new daddy?

PENNY

Pretty much. The letter says they already have a young family lined up.

BEN

And what do we know about this "family"?
Do they have a yard? A dog? A pool? Which
is a trick question because pools are
bad.

DANNY

What's the matter with you, dude? You
should be doing backflips - drinks all
around. This is your life-line, phone-a-
friend, get-out-of-jail-free card all in
one.

BEN

So you think I should sign?

DANNY

Hey, I'm not going to tell you what to
do, but... yeah, but the hell's the
matter with you. Yes, I think you should
sign. You can't do this on your own.

BEN LOOKS DOWN AT MARY FOR A BEAT - SHE SCRUNCHES UP HER
FACE.

BEN

What's that face? She looks like Yoda
about to be visited by the force.

TUCKER SNIFFS AND THEN WINCES.

TUCKER

Okay, now we know why Yoda never wore
pants. This kid has got to find another
hobby.

BEN

Clean up on aisle five.

DANNY

You haven't even changed a diaper.

Doesn't that tell you something?

BEN

Yes. Bodily functions make me kind of queasy.

PENNY

Don't let him bully you into this, Ben.

DANNY

I'm not bullying. I'm looking out for him.

THERE'S A KNOCK AT THE DOOR. AFTER A BEAT...

BEN

If I do this - if I let her go - I don't want to talk about it. I never want to hear about it again, okay?

DANNY OPENS THE DOOR. IT'S THE BOYS' VERY SUBURBAN MOTHER, **BONNIE WHELAN-FARLOW**.

BONNIE

Where is my precious little grand-baby?

TUCKER

(TO BEN) I think you're going to be hearing about it.

BEN

Mom, what are you doing here? (TO DANNY)
What is she doing here?! Did you tell
her?

DANNY

I didn't even tell her I was here.

BONNIE

Oh my God, I never thought I'd live to
see this day. (PICKING UP MARY) Oh, she's
just a big ol' pile of love.

TUCKER

I really don't think that's love you're
smelling.

BONNIE PICKS UP THE DIAPER BAG AND MOVES TO THE COUNTER.

BONNIE

I had to hear about my grandchild on the
street. In book club actually. Susie
Cramer couldn't wait to let me have it.

BEN

(TO PENNY) You told your mom?!

PENNY

Oh, okay, yes, now that you mention it,
it might have come up. But I'm almost
positive I said, make sure you don't tell
anyone.

BONNIE

(RE: DIAPER) Is this duct tape? Who did
this to this child?

MARY ACTUALLY DOES HAVE A STRIP OF DUCT TAPE AROUND THE TOP
OF HER DIAPER. BEN, DANNY AND PENNY POINT TO TUCKER.

TUCKER

We were having a closure issue.

BONNIE

Could somebody please get me some
scissors?

BEN

(SOTTO, TO DANNY) I can't sign those
papers now. It's not going to happen.

DANNY

You have to do what you think is right.
I'll totally back you up.

BONNIE

What papers?

DANNY

You're on your own, bro.

AFTER A BEAT...

BEN

Mom. I have some news.

BONNIE

Yeah, you knocked up some girl because
you couldn't figure out the basics of
birth control. We're past that, honey.
(TO MARY) Like father like son.

BONNIE STARTS TO CHANGE MARY, QUICKLY AND EXPERTLY LIKE ONLY A SEASONED MOTHER CAN. TUCKER COMES TO HIS FRIEND'S RESCUE.

TUCKER

Mrs. Whelan. Bonnie. Mrs. Whelan. Mary's mom wants to put Mary up for adoption and for Ben to sign away his rights.

BONNIE STOPS AND GIVES HER SON A LONG HARD LOOK. THEN...

BONNIE

Really? You're thinking about giving up this little girl?

BEN LOOKS TO DANNY WHO QUICKLY LOOKS AWAY.

BEN

Yeah, I'm thinking about it.

AFTER A BEAT...

BONNIE

Good.

BEN

Good? "Good" you think I should sign "good"?

BONNIE

You can't begin to realize the kind of sacrifice it takes to be a parent. When I married your father and you two were born I had to put my dreams on hold.

BEN

What dreams?

BONNIE

Being single and childless. (TO BEN) You know I love you - but I also know you - and you can't raise this little girl. She deserves the best life you can give her. Sign the papers.

SHE KISSES MARY. THEN...

TUCKER

(RE: DIAPER) Damn, you're done? How'd you do that so fast? I turned around for like two seconds. She's good.

BONNIE LIFTS UP THE BABY BUT HER DIAPER SLIDES OFF. IT'S WAY TOO BIG.

TUCKER (CONT'D)

Okay, now I feel better.

HE HANDS HER THE DUCT TAPE.

CUT TO:

ACT TWO

SCENE J

EXT. GUYS' LOFT/FIRE ESCAPE - SHORT TIME LATER

THE GUYS ARE ON THE FIRE ESCAPE. BEN IS TALKING ON HIS CELLPHONE. INSIDE BONNIE IS PLAYING WITH MARY.

BEN

Nine a.m. - she'll be ready. She didn't really have a lot of luggage. Oh, and you're gonna need a truckload of diapers. It's like her absolute favorite thing to do. See you then.

BEN FLIPS HIS PHONE CLOSED.

BEN (CONT'D)

Done. They'll be here first thing in the morning.

TUCKER

You okay?

BEN

(NOT OKAY) Yeah. Of course, I'm okay.

TUCKER

Ben, if you don't want to do this--

DANNY

(QUICKLY) Hey, hey, come on. I thought we weren't going to talk about this. And aren't we supposed to be out ruling the world or something?

BEN

You go. Not really in the mood.

DANNY

Look, it happened. You dealt with it.

This is definitely for the best.

BEN LOOKS IN AT MARY. DANNY GIVES TUCKER A FALL-IN-LINE LOOK.

TUCKER

I thought we weren't... For the best.

Definitely. (OFF BEN'S LOOK) And never mentioning it again. Unless you want to.

But first I'll be, "Baby, what baby?"

Then you'll be all, "Tucker, you know what baby." And I'll say something like, "I thought we weren't going to talk about it". And you'll say--

DANNY

Stop talking, Tucker.

TUCKER

That's funny. Vanessa always says that.

DANNY

Does it work?

TUCKER

No. Sometimes. Usually - but she does have options unavailable to you.

BEN HEADS INSIDE. DANNY STOPS TUCKER FROM GOING AFTER HIM.

DANNY

He'll be fine.

NEITHER OF THEM LOOK LIKE THEY REALLY BELIEVE IT.

DISSOLVE TO:

ACT TWO SCENE

SCENE K

INT. MERCER HOTEL BAR - NIGHT

PENNY AND DANNY ARE HAVING A DRINK. PENNY IS LOST IN THOUGHT.
DANNY LOOKS OVER AT HER AND SMILES.

PENNY

No. Do not. I swear to God, I'm warning
you. No.

BUT HE DOES ANYWAY.

DANNY

So did you always like Ben?

PENNY

You are obsessed. (RESIGNED) I don't
know. Kind of... I guess part of me
always thought maybe someday. But back
then I just figured I was too fat or too
loud or too something.

DANNY

That electrolysis really worked out.

PENNY

(CHECKING HER REFLECTION) Yeah, it did,
didn't it?

DANNY

Well, you have grown up to be a
beautiful, successful woman. I think you
can safely move on from Ben Whelan.

PENNY

Why would I want to do that? I just found him again.

DANNY

I love my brother - but come on - you're you, and he's a bartender.

PENNY

You don't know the first thing about your brother, do you? (BEAT) It's tough when nobody believes in you.

DANNY

I believe in you.

PENNY

I'm talking about Ben.

DANNY

I believe in him, too.

PENNY

Maybe. I just think if every time you try to do something and the entire world says you're going to screw it up, eventually you're going to stop trying. (BEAT) He didn't want to give her up.

DANNY

So? He can't do it alone.

HER PHONE GOES OFF.

PENNY

It's Ben. Your mom had to catch her train
and Satan's little sister has homework.

DANNY

You're going?

PENNY

Well, like you said, he can't do it
alone. Stay. I'll call you tomorrow.

BUT AT THE LAST MINUTE SHE PINCHES HIM ON THE ARM.

DANNY

Ow! What was that for?

PENNY

Making me talk about my feelings. You
know I hate that. (THEN) And go easy on
your brother. He looks up to you.

DANNY

He doesn't look up to me.

PENNY

Of course, he does. In his eyes, you've
got everything.

PENNY STARTS TO GO BUT STOPS AT THE MIRROR AT THE END OF THE
BAR AND CHECKS HER HAIR AND MAKE-UP.

DANNY

(SOTTO) Not everything.

AND IT'S CLEAR AS DANNY WATCHES PENNY THAT HE'S IN LOVE WITH
HER. PENNY EXITS. AFTER A BEAT, DANNY FINISHES HIS DRINK,
TOSSES DOWN SOME MONEY AND GOES AFTER HER.

CUT TO:

ACT TWO

SCENE P

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING/HALLWAY - SHORT TIME LATER

PENNY COMES OUT OF THE ELEVATOR. JUST AS SHE'S ABOUT TO KNOCK DANNY RACES UP THE STAIRS, COMPLETELY OUT OF BREATH.

DANNY

Wait! (CATCHING HIS BREATH) My god,
you're fast.

PENNY

What are you doing?

DANNY

You were... (STILL CATCHING HIS BREATH)
You gotta give me a minute. Whew. Maybe
now I know why I was traded. Okay. You
were right. I didn't believe in him.

PENNY

So why are you telling me?

THIS WOULD BE DANNY'S MOMENT, BUT HE DOESN'T TAKE IT. SHE
GOES TO KNOCK AGAIN BUT DANNY BLOCKS THE DOOR.

DANNY

Don't. He's not going to believe in
himself either if we keep helping.

RESET TO:

INT. GUYS' APARTMENT - MOMENTS LATER

BEN IS PACING BACK AND FORTH ON HIS PHONE. MARY IS ASLEEP IN
HER CARRIER.

BEN

What do you mean you're not coming? But
she's going to wake up any minute now.

(MORE)

BEN (CONT'D)

Those eyes are going to open, she's going
to see me... and well, it's not going to
be pretty. Penny.

HE HANGS UP. HE LOOKS BACK AT MARY WHO IS STARTING TO STIR.
HE QUICKLY DIALS AGAIN.

RESET TO:

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING/HALLWAY - SHORT TIME LATER

DANNY AND PENNY ARE SITTING ON THE STEPS OUTSIDE THE DOOR
WHEN TUCKER HURRIES OUT OF THE ELEVATOR.

TUCKER

What's going on? I left Vanessa in the
middle of a movie. Not happy. Mary's
having some kind of meltdown?

DANNY

I don't think Mary's the problem.

RESET TO:

INT. GUYS' APARTMENT - MOMENTS LATER

BEN IS ON HIS PHONE HAVING A MELTDOWN.

BEN

You're not coming?! (OFF MARY, WHISPERED)
You're not coming? Well, you can just
tell Vanessa... nevermind.

HE HANGS UP AND STARTS DIALING AGAIN.

RESET TO:

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING/HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

SABRINA COMES OUT OF HER APARTMENT TALKING ON HER CELLPHONE.

SABRINA

Would you chill out already? As long as you get my report on photosynthesis done before tomorrow morning, I'm good. Two seconds. I'm already out my door.

BUT SHE STOPS WHEN SHE SEES DANNY, TUCKER AND PENNY SITTING IN THE HALLWAY.

SABRINA (CONT'D)

What's going on, old people?

RESET TO:

INT. GUYS' APARTMENT - MOMENTS LATER

BEN IS IN THE KITCHEN ON THE PHONE, TRYING TO KEEP HIS VOICE DOWN. MARY IS DEFINITELY STARTING TO STIR.

BEN

You said, "two seconds!" How could something come up between your front door and mine?

BEN ANGRILY CLOSES HIS PHONE AND DIALS AGAIN.

RESET TO:

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING/HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

DANNY'S PHONE GOES OFF. LOUDLY! EVERYONE JUMPS ON HIS JACKET.

RESET TO:

INT. GUYS' APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

BEN IS ON THE PHONE BUT CAN HEAR THE RINGING COMING FROM THE HALLWAY. WEIRD. HE OPENS THE LITTLE SECURITY PORTHOLE TO LOOK OUT INTO THE HALLWAY.

RESET TO:

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING/HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

BUT THE HALLWAY LOOKS EMPTY BECAUSE EVERYONE IS SMASHED UP AGAINST THE DOOR IN A VERY CIRQUE DU SOLEIL-ESQUE POSE SO BEN CAN'T SEE THEM.

RESET TO:

INT. GUYS' APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

BEN TURNS AWAY FROM THE DOOR AND LOOKS AT MARY, WHO IS NOW FULLY AWAKE.

BEN

You're up. So, it looks like it's going to be just you and me, kid.

AND SHE STARTS TO CRY.

BEN (CONT'D)

Why can't I ever keep my mouth shut?

Good baby. Don't let the scary man

frighten you. Well, of course you're

frightened, I just told you I was scary.

Okay, I guess we're going to do this.

HE REACHES DOWN TO PICK HER UP, BUT STOPS HIMSELF. HE TRIES AGAIN. BLOWS ON HIS HANDS AND RUBS THEM TOGETHER. FINALLY, HE JUST GOES FOR IT AND PICKS HER UP.

THAT ACTUALLY WENT OKAY. HE PULLS HER INTO HIS CHEST. SHE STOPS CRYING. COOL. BEN STARTS TO SMILE, BUT JUST THEN HE TURNS AND STUBS HIS TOE ON THE COFFEE TABLE. "MOTHER --!" MARY STARTS TO CRY AGAIN.

RESET TO:

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING/HALLWAY - SHORT TIME LATER

DANNY, TUCKER, PENNY AND SABRINA ARE SITTING ON THE FLOOR OUTSIDE THE APARTMENT, SHARING A PIZZA. PENNY IS HELPING SABRINA WITH HER REPORT.

TUCKER

There's no way. He's never even changed her diaper.

DANNY

He can do it. Where's your faith, man?

PENNY SMILES AT DANNY.

RESET TO:

INT. GUYS' APARTMENT - SAME TIME

BEN, WEARING SKI GOGGLES AND YELLOW PLASTIC KITCHEN GLOVES, IS CHANGING MARY'S DIAPER. HE TEARS OFF A PIECE OF DUCT TAPE WITH HIS TEETH. HE TOSSES THE OLD FOLDED UP DIAPER INTO THE TRASH USING BARBECUE TONGS.

BEN

(RE: TONGS) Never using these again.

AND HE TOSSES THE TONGS INTO THE TRASH AS WELL.

RESET TO:

INT. GUYS' APARTMENT - SHORT TIME LATER

BEN HAS A BOTTLE IN ONE HAND AND MARY IN THE OTHER, BUT SHE'S HAVING NONE OF IT, AS TEARS ARE ONCE AGAIN FLOWING.

BEN

Please eat. Look, it's good. (HE DRINKS SOME) Okay, it's not that good. Seriously why don't these come in flavors? Please eat.

RESET TO:

INT. GUYS' APARTMENT - SHORT TIME LATER

MARY IS STILL CRYING AND BEN IS STILL TRYING TO GET HER TO EAT AS HE BOUNCES HER ON HIS LAP. SHE'S HAVING NONE OF IT.

RESET TO:

INT. GUYS' APARTMENT - LATER

NO LUCK. MARY IS BACK IN HER CARRIER AND STILL NOT HAPPY. BEN LOOKS LIKE HE MIGHT BE ON THE VERGE OF TEARS AS WELL, AS SHE REJECTS THE BOTTLE AGAIN.

BEN

Mary, please. You have to eat. I'm
begging you.

NOPE. BUT SHE GIVES HIM A SHRIEK INSTEAD. BEN PACES BACK AND FORTH FOR A MINUTE, AND THEN ABSENTMINDEDLY FLIPS THE BOTTLE INTO THE AIR LIKE HE DOES AT THE BAR. MARY STOPS CRYING.

BEN (CONT'D)

You stopped. What? Do you like that?

Look! Look what daddy can do.

HE STARTS FLIPPING THE BOTTLE. MARY ACTUALLY STARTS TO SMILE. BEN PICKS UP ANOTHER BOTTLE, SEVERAL ARE ON THE COFFEE TABLE, AND ATTEMPTS TO FEED HER WITH HIS FREE HAND.

BEN (CONT'D)

Can you eat something?

AND SHE STARTS TO EAT. BEN LETS OUT A HUGE SIGH OF RELIEF.

BEN (CONT'D)

Ohmigod, you're eating. Thank you. Holy
crap, now I'm crying. Crap, I didn't mean
to say crap. Don't use bad words. I can't
believe you're eating.

BEN SMILES DOWN ON HER AND WIPES AWAY A TEAR.

DISSOLVE TO:

ACT TWO

SCENE R

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING/HALLWAY - THE NEXT MORNING

A COUPLE OF PEOPLE STEP OVER DANNY, TUCKER AND PENNY WHO ARE ASLEEP ON THE FLOOR. DANNY WAKES UP AND NUDGES PENNY.

DANNY

Wake up. It's morning.

PENNY

Where's Sabrina?

DANNY

Her mom made her come to bed hours ago.

TUCKER

Do you think he survived?

RESET TO:

INT. GUYS' APARTMENT - SAME TIME

BEN IS SOUND ASLEEP ON THE COUCH. PULL BACK TO REVEAL THAT MARY IS ASLEEP ON HIS CHEST, SUCKING HER THUMB.

THE PLACE IS A DISASTER, BUT THEY BOTH SURVIVED. DANNY AND TUCKER COME IN, BEN WAKES UP. PENNY WATCHES FROM THE DOOR.

DANNY

Hey.

BEN

Hey.

DANNY

You okay?

BEN

Sure. No problem. (BEAT) I think I want to do this. I love her. I can't let her go.

DANNY AND TUCKER JUST START STRAIGHTENING UP THE PLACE.

BEN (CONT'D)

Did you guys hear me?

TUCKER

Yeah, we heard you.

DANNY

You should probably call the agency. It's almost seven.

MARY STARTS TO WAKE UP AND TUCKER TAKES HER.

TUCKER

Somebody could use a bath. Actually, you both could.

DANNY

I'll get her bottle ready.

TUCKER

We're really going to have to get her on some kind of schedule.

AS OUR THREE MEN START CARING FOR OUR BABY, PENNY SMILES TO HERSELF AND CLOSES THE DOOR.

FADE OUT:

END OF ACT TWO