

Cop House
by
Adam Resnick

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EXT. SUBURBAN STREET - NIGHT

A patrol car slowly drives up the block and stops in front of a house. It's a beautiful winter night with snow falling.

INT. PATROL CAR

OFFICER BRIAN FORD (early 30s) sits behind the wheel observing the house. His police radio crackles in the background. He turns it off and emerges from the car.

EXT. HOUSE - A MOMENT LATER

Brian stands with his ear against the front door. He hears a television. Christmas music. He pauses for a beat, takes a step back, and violently kicks the door open.

INT. HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

TWO WOMEN (early 30s) are sitting on the couch together - rather cozily - watching television. Brian storms into the living room and stands in front of them.

BRIAN

I did not deserve this. I may not be perfect, but I didn't deserve the goddamn apocalypse!

WOMAN #1

Get over it, Brian. I'm tired of this conversation.

BRIAN

You took my heart - both of you, ripped it from my chest, and puked all over it.

WOMAN #2

You're so dramatic. Ever since you were a kid, everything's gotta be a big drama.

BRIAN

Drama? This is a fucking freak show! Do you know how humiliated I feel? How scrambled?

WOMAN #1

Look, get out of here now or I'm calling the cops.

BRIAN
 (losing it)
 I am the goddamn cops, you daffy
 bitch!

He pulls his Glock 22. The women scream as he proceeds to shoot every ornament on the Christmas tree.

BRIAN (CONT'D)
 I am the goddamn cops!

He aims and takes one final shot, blowing the head off the angel at the top of the tree. He spins the pistol on his finger cowboy style and shoves it back in his holster.

BRIAN (CONT'D)
 Merry Christmas, podners.

CUT TO:

A BLACK SCREEN. The following words appear with VOICE OVER:

V.O.
 The Philadelphia County Police Home
 is a facility designed to
 rehabilitate deficient and
 psychologically troubled police
 personnel and return them to active
 duty.

CUT TO:

OPENING CREDIT SEQUENCE ACCOMPANIED BY HEROIC ACTION MUSIC:

Brian exits the house. His ex-wife shoves and punches him as he walks back to the patrol car. FREEZE. ON SCREEN SUPER: *Officer Brian Ford. Assessment: Nervous breakdown coupled with anger issues following divorce.*

EXT. TRAILER PARK

A POLICE OFFICER, mid 30s, knocks on the door of a mobile home. He turns the knob and enters. A second later, he bursts back out, pursued by a TIGER. He SCREAMS as he runs TOWARD CAMERA. FREEZE. ON SCREEN SUPER: *Officer Tony Bernstein. Assessment: Post Traumatic Stress Disorder.*

INT. PHOTOGRAPHY STUDIO

An ATTRACTIVE BRUNETTE in a police uniform, late 20s, poses earnestly for a photographer.

We assume it's for her departmental photo. She suddenly rips off her uniform and is stark naked. The photographer circles her, clicking away as she dances suggestively with her nightstick. ON SCREEN SUPER: *Officer Trish Burkholder. Infraction: Posing for Hustler while on active duty; altering police uniform with Velcro.*

EXT. ROADSIDE - DAY

A PLAIN CLOTHES DETECTIVE, mid-30s, is frisking a family (husband, wife, two kids) who are all handcuffed against a minivan. The husband seems to be desperately explaining to the cop that he's got the wrong people. The detective snatches a stuffed dolphin from the little girl and slits it open, looking for contraband. Stuffing falls out. The little girl cries. The father charges the detective and violently head-butts him. We FREEZE on the impact. ON SCREEN SUPER: *Detective Richard O'Donnell. Assessment: Overzealous police work, unbridled ego.*

EXT. SIDEWALK CAFE

A dapper-looking HISPANIC MAN in his late 30s sips a tropical drink at an outdoor table. A robbery is taking place three feet away from him as a screaming woman attempts to hold onto her purse. The man responds by taking another sip of his drink, lighting a cigarette, and opening the racing form. ON SCREEN SUPER: *Detective Skip Castro. Assessment: Alcoholic; habitual laziness, bullshit artist.*

INT. POLICE CONDUCT REVIEW BOARD

An AFRICAN AMERICAN OFFICER in his late 30s sits facing a panel. One board member drones on as he addresses the officer. The officer sees a fly and swats it away. The fly (which we don't see) lands on his forehead. He gives himself a hard slap. He now gets up and chases the fly around the room, smashing the window with his nightstick when the fly lands on it. The officer chases the fly to the wall, picks up a chair, and bashes the wall repeatedly, creating a jagged hole. Satisfied that the fly is now dead, he gives it the finger and calmly sits back down facing the review board. The panel sits there, mouths agape. ON SCREEN SUPER: *Officer Donnie Sneed. Assessment: ???*

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. SUBURBAN HOUSE - DAY

We SLOWLY MOVE IN on the house.

V.O.

The following story has been approved by the Pennsylvania Council Of Law Enforcement and is intended to highlight the dignity of the men and women in this program. Transcripts available upon request.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. COP HOUSE - THERAPY ROOM

TIGHT on the face of Tony Bernstein. He speaks in a quivering voice.

TONY

Everyone has a breaking point. It's hard enough to sit in front of the TV, night after night, and see images of war, poverty, genocide...but one thing I cannot take, and will not accept, is SOMEONE HIDING MY ROOSTER MUG!

WIDE. Group session. Tony and several other residents of the Cop House sit in a half-circle facing DR. REBECCA WAGNER, the house psychologist. The petite Dr. Wagner, mid twenties, is dwarfed by the group of burly cops. Dr. Wagner is competent and well-schooled, but somewhat naive.

DR. WAGNER

Well, that's a nice launching point for discussion, Tony. Thank you.
(to the group)
I'm sure we're all aware by now of Tony's fondness for this particular mug, how it provides him a measure of security -

TONY

It was my nana's! She brought it with her to Ellis Island!

DR. WAGNER

- but it appears that some people, specifically Skip Castro, insist on tormenting him by hiding it from time to time.

Skip, wearing his blazer and ascot, smiles pleasantly.

SKIP

(slight accent)

Allow me to say first, I have not touched his mug, which technically is not a mug, but rather a short glass with a crude handle.

TONY

The handle makes it a mug!

SKIP

And secondly, it has no roosters. They are clearly pheasants. Therefore, I could not hide something which does not exist.

TONY

My grandparents had a rooster farm in Minsk! They made those mugs by hand and sold them in the village!

SKIP

So which is it? Were they rooster farmers or mug salesmen? Get your story straight, Anthony.

DONNIE

Lay off him, Chico.

Tony holds his hands over his ears.

TONY

I'M BLOCKING HIM OUT! He's a manipulator and he faked his way into the house to avoid police work and he tricks me into doing his chores and he, he --

Tony screams in frustration.

DR. WAGNER

Perhaps we should revisit this issue later.

A smattering of applause from the other cops.

DR. WAGNER (CONT'D)

Let's move on to...Brian.

BRIAN

(sighs)

Lovely.

DR. WAGNER

It's been three months now since the "Christmas tree incident" and I understand your divorce papers were finalized this week. Would you like to talk about that a bit?

BRIAN

Nope.

DR. WAGNER

Perhaps discuss how your job as a police officer may have contributed to the erosion of your marriage and exacerbated your anger issues?

BRIAN

No thank you.

DR. WAGNER

And how that possibly led to your wife leaving you and taking up a lesbian relationship with your sister?

BRIAN

Again, I'd prefer not to discuss it. As fun as that sounds.

From out of nowhere...

DONNIE

THAT PLANT NEEDS WATER!

Everyone jumps. Awkward nervous silence. Skip chuckles.

DONNIE (CONT'D)

You think that's funny, Pedro?
Dying plants? Guys with chicken mugs?

SKIP

(now uneasy)

I didn't say a thing, sir.

DONNIE

Then lose that silly ass smile
'fore I put your face in the deep fryer.

Skip quickly looks very sober. Tony smiles. Donnie goes over and waters the plant. Dr. Wagner continues.

DR. WAGNER

Well, I'm happy that's resolved.

(back to Brian)

You know, Brian, anger management is just that...it's learning how to regulate your emotions.

Brian stares at his shoes.

DR. WAGNER (CONT'D)

But simply bottling up anger isn't realistic or very healthy... especially for someone who's suffered a nervous breakdown.

BRIAN

I prefer the term "emotional detour." It's like my car blew a tire and now I'm walking on a country road to the nearest service station, looking at cows.

TRISH

(sincerely)

That is so poetic.

BRIAN

And I *do* have sadness and regret about my marriage, but I have a more pressing issue these days...

He points at Rich.

BRIAN (CONT'D)

Determining the best way to damage or possibly rip out this man's vocal chords.

DR. WAGNER

Rich, are you still provoking Brian about the vote for next week's therapeutic outing?

RICH

I had the perfect trip planned - the PBA pistol tournament - but my esteemed partner has managed to convince everyone that a Flyers game would be more therapeutic.

BRIAN

I'm your roommate, not your partner.

RICH

All I do is try to help you.
Nothing breaks my heart more than a
broken cop. I'm just trying to
glue you back together, brother.

BRIAN

And obviously inhaling the fumes.
Again, I have no interest in
attending any event related to
police right now. I just want to
keep my head down, do my six months
in the house, then I'll reevaluate
if I still want to be a cop.

RICH

In other words you see me as your
life raft. If that's not the most
touching - I'm misting up over
here. I swear to God.

BRIAN

(to Dr. Wagner)
You see how exhausting he is,
right?

Tony suddenly jumps to his feet.

TONY

Skip just licked my chair!

We see Skip quickly sit up straight like nothing happened.

SKIP

Why would I do such a thing?

TONY

Look! His gin-soaked, germy saliva
is all over the armrest!

SKIP

Anthony, I'm merely sitting here,
minding my own business. (beat)
Just thinking about tigers.

TONY

(apoplectic)
THAT'S IT! You all heard it! He
said the T word! He knows what
that does to me!

DR. WAGNER

Skip - please.
(to Rich and Brian)
(MORE)

DR. WAGNER (CONT'D)

This issue between the two of you is partially my fault. Perhaps allowing everyone to vote on the outing was a mistake...

RICH

(to the other cops)

Look, if we enter that tournament, it'll bring some dignity to the house and look good on our board evaluations. At the very least it might get us some better day assignments. I, for one, would like to get out of this place sooner than later.

TRISH

Not all of us get bad assignments. We do get reviewed. I was on a drug stakeout last week.

RICH

Bully for you. I was working security at a senior citizen bake sale.

BRIAN

Any drive-bys?

RICH

(to Dr. Wagner)

See, now he's provoking me - the only person capable of helping him.

DR. WAGNER

Maybe we should forget the vote and stick with the equine therapy trip as I originally planned. It's causing too much friction.

RICH

No! We're cops, not cub scouts! No one wants to visit the horsey farm! That's what this vote is all about! Making decisions for ourselves!

DR. WAGNER

Well, I'll let this experiment go on a bit longer, but it *will* be resolved by the end of the week.

INT. COP HOUSE KITCHEN - MORNING

The cops sit around the kitchen table finishing breakfast as STUBBS, the house manager (early 60s), posts the weekly assignment sheet. Stubbs, who wears a white kitchen apron, is a surly retired cop from Mississippi.

STUBBS

Alright you mollycoddles - detail list is up and I don't wanna hear no bitchin'! That means you, O'Donnell! Read it and clear your asses outta here!

The cops check out the assignment sheet. There's some grumbling as they disperse. Rich and Brian read the list.

RICH

Hey, looks like they paired us together.

BRIAN

Why, Lord? Why?

RICH

(excited)
Wow! K-9 Unit! Finally some real police work!

EXT. KENNEL - K-9 UNIT - DAY

Rich and Brian are giving tick shampoos to a pair of large German Shepherds. Rich is not pleased.

RICH

This is beneath contempt. A waste of my talents. Trish gets assigned another drug stakeout, and I get *this*? I bust dudes, damn it! That's who I am!

BRIAN

Pass me the conditioner, Baretta.

RICH

I'm about hard police work, I'm about the street.

BRIAN

From what I hear they couldn't wait to get you off the street.

RICH

Well, don't believe everything you hear.

(beat)

What did you hear?

BRIAN

All of it? Or just your last hurrah, when you managed to close down the airport for six hours.

RICH

I make no excuses for that. When I observe nine Middle Eastern men entering an airport terminal holding what appear to be bombs, I act.

BRIAN

It was a bowling team. And they were Hispanic.

Brian hoses off his Shepherd.

RICH

Hey, watch how you're rinsing that dog! These are finely tuned animals. They don't appreciate soap in their eyes.

BRIAN

Is there any aspect of police work you're not an expert in? I'm fascinated.

RICH

Look, Bri, the house is a scarlet letter. We need to show those active duty schmucks what we're made of.

BRIAN

Stop. I know where this is leading. I'm not going to a gun tournament.

RICH

Sometimes we say one thing when we mean the opposite.

Rich rapidly buffs his Shepherd's snout like he's shining a shoe. The unhappy dog curls its lip, but Rich is oblivious.

RICH (CONT'D)

And I care about you too much to listen to mere words coming from your mouth. It's time for a little tough love. A little covert-ops in the name of the common good...

BRIAN

Oh goody. Sounds like fun.

RICH

You think I'm joking?

BRIAN

Not at all. That's what so amusing.

RICH

(getting angry)

If there's one thing that gets under my skin, it's someone questioning my powers.

BRIAN

Sorry, Spiderman.

RICH

That's it!

Rich whips his sponge into the tub, splashing suds in the dog's eye. It leaps out, attacking him. Brian goes about his business, whistling as he dries off the other dog.

EXT. COP HOUSE - BACKYARD - AFTERNOON

CLOSE ON TRISH

TRISH

I'm not changing my vote! I could never do that to Brian.

WIDE. Rich is talking to Trish. The other cops (with the exception of Brian) sit on ratty lawn chairs drinking Budweisers. When a can is emptied, someone grabs a broken tree branch and hits it into the yard next door.

RICH

Look, Trish, I know you have a boner for the guy, but this is in his best interests.

TRISH

End of discussion. I don't converse
with people who talk filth.

Skip walks over swigging a bottle of J&B that he's sloppily
camouflaged with a taped-on Crystal Light label.

SKIP

I would consider changing my vote
if you make it attractive for me.

RICH

Okay, what are we talking about,
Skip?

Skip leans in closely.

SKIP

(low voice)

Sneak me a case of schnapps and do
my assignments for a week.

RICH

(frustrated sigh)

Done.

TRISH

Nice job, Castro. You've avoided
work again. Don't you ever want to
go back on duty?

SKIP

And leave paradise? No gracias,
señorita.

He tips his cap to her and takes another swig of J&B. Rich
haltingly turns to Donnie who's laying on a lounge chair in a
Speedo and cowboy hat, holding a sun reflector to make
himself blacker. Rich, on eggshells, approaches him.

RICH

Hey, Donnie, old sport...

DONNIE

I ain't goin' to no target match!

Donnie reaches for a bottle of tanning oil and takes a gulp.

RICH

It'll benefit all of us...

Donnie swishes the oil in his mouth and spit it out,
partially spraying Rich. He grabs Rich by the shirt.

DONNIE

Guns are for shootin' people, boy.
Wastin' bullets on folly, that's a
sin before God. Isaiah 41:16.

RICH

Let's try another approach - change
your vote and I'll get you laid.

DONNIE

Let's shoot pistols, brother.

He high-fives Rich just as Tony bursts out the door.

TONY

I have the evidence! I have it!

Tony trips, does a complete roll, and is back on his feet.

TONY (CONT'D)

(pointing to Skip)

J'accuse! Your prints match the
prints in the cabinet where I kept
the mug! Now confess!

Tony holds up enlarged fingerprint samples.

SKIP

How was this evidence obtained,
Anthony?

TONY

I borrowed a print kit from Stacks
Carlin down at the 3rd.

SKIP

Stacks Carlin? Do you know he's a
sexual deviant?

TONY

Huh?

SKIP

He's under investigation. They
found things on his computer.
Rabbits, Anthony. The man was with
rabbits. You've acquired police
property, unauthorized, from a
bunny fucker and now your
fingerprints are all over *his*
fingerprint kit. This does not
bode well for you, sir.

Tony's hands start shaking.

TONY

But I...I only...I don't believe you! You're making it up! You're a liar and an alcoholic and you're trying to confuse me and...I WANT MY MUG BACK!

SKIP

I'm sorry, but I cannot be seen with you, Anthony. Not with the company you keep.

Skip heads back to the house as Tony runs after him. Once inside, Skip locks him out. Tony jiggles the doorknob a few times, looks skyward, and screams in frustration.

INT. RICH AND BRIAN'S ROOM - NIGHT

Brian lies in the bottom bunk quietly seething about the voting situation. Rich is in the top bunk, singing.

RICH

Victory is nigh, oh victory is nigh! Shout with voice triumphant, Victory is nigh!

He knocks on the lower bunk.

RICH (CONT'D)

I warned you I was gonna help you whether you liked it or not, didn't I? All I need is one more vote and you're going to that tournament, big boy.

Brian remains silent.

RICH (CONT'D)

Seriously, don't think of this as me imposing my will on you, think of it as me trying to remake you in my own image. Pure, solid, cop.

BRIAN

Rich?

RICH

Yes, friend?

Brian suddenly leaps out of bed clutching a baseball bat. Rich screams like a little girl and runs from the room.

END ACT I

ACT II

EXT. TOWN PARK - DAY

Led by Dr. Wagner, the cops stand in a circle on the grass, shoeless, doing stretches. They're stiff and groaning. Skip, not participating, leans against a tree, elegantly smoking a cigarette.

DR. WAGNER
Okay, I think that's enough
physiotherapy for now...

DONNIE
(O.S.)
Someone get me off this bastard!

We now see Donnie arched backwards on large red exercise ball, unable to get up. Tony gives him a hand.

DONNIE (CONT'D)
Damn thing's a menace.
(to the ball)
The payback's a bitch!

He kicks the ball. It goes flying and knocks over an elderly woman. The cops collapse on the grass around Dr. Wagner.

DR. WAGNER
Well, this was beneficial I think.
A more relaxed setting for today's
session. So, has a decision been
reached regarding the outing?

RICH
It seems we're currently
deadlocked, a tie, but discussions
are robustly moving forward.

DR. WAGNER
That's encouraging. Are there any
issues we need to discuss?

Donnie raises his hand.

DR. WAGNER (CONT'D)
Yes, Donnie?

DONNIE
(pointing to Rich)
The man bought me a whore and the
lady didn't have no ass at all.

Dr. Wagner looks mortified.

DONNIE (CONT'D)

(to Rich)

I told you straight off - meat and potatoes! You want my vote, cook my dinner right!

RICH

(trying to calm him)

I said I'd make it up you. I'll get you not one, but two robust whores with big asses. Are we square?

Donnie considers this and finally nods his head.

DONNIE

We good.

They shake hands. Rich breathes a sigh of relief.

RICH

(to Dr. Wagner)

See? We're learning to work together.

BRIAN

Call me a stick in the mud, but I'm fairly certain that influencing votes by providing sexual favors is against voting procedure. That aside, I can't take much more of this guy and would like to request that he move out of our room.

RICH

(to Dr. Wagner)

He doesn't mean it. That's just his way of saying he'd be lost without me. True, he's recently displayed some bizarre and violent -

BRIAN

If he doesn't move out I can't be responsible for my actions. I've been pricing ice picks. Let your imagination run wild.

DR. WAGNER

(wincing)

Oooh. Well, I certainly see the need for a cooling off period.

(MORE)

DR. WAGNER (CONT'D)

However, we have to be fair about this. We'll flip a coin and the loser will relocate for the time being. How's that?

RICH

Fine. Let the Gods decide.

Brian nods and Dr. Wagner flips a quarter.

INT. TRISH'S ROOM - A SHORT WHILE LATER

An exhausted looking Brian sits on the futon which sags awkwardly. Trish sits on the edge of her bed pouring herself another glass of wine. Candles are burning.

TRISH

I'm kind of flattered that you wanted to stay here.

BRIAN

Well, Donnie's entertaining prostitutes, Tony screams in his sleep and Skip's fermenting raisins in his bathtub, so...

TRISH

Look, I know how you're feeling these days. My divorce hit me hard too. Of course, I blame myself. Amish women don't get divorced.

BRIAN

I've heard that.

TRISH

I'll tell you something else they don't do - they don't become cops and they don't pose for Hustler. Especially in that order.

BRIAN

Life's tricky.

She takes another gulp of wine.

TRISH

It was one hell of a Rumspringa, that's for sure. Late, but intense.

She refills her glass. Brian's on the verge of nodding off.

TRISH (CONT'D)

And now I've come full circle! All I want is a good husband, seven or eight kids, and a little farmhouse somewhere. What am I saying? I'm just rambling...

Beat. She leans in to kiss him. Half asleep, Brian lets it happen - for a second - but then quickly pulls back.

BRIAN

I...uh...sorry, I just...

TRISH

My fault. That was so stupid. I'm sorry. Guess I'm a little drunk. Ha ha.

Beat.

TRISH (CONT'D)

(wounded)

I thought we had a connection.

BRIAN

Uh...

TRISH

You're not like the others. I thought you cared. I could barely stand this place before you got here. But maybe you think I'm a slut too.

BRIAN

No, no, Trish, not at all. I'm just so tired...

TRISH

I think you better leave. I'm feeling very embarrassed right now.

BRIAN

Like this second leave?

TRISH

Out!

INT. HALLWAY - A MOMENT LATER

Brian is shoved from Trish's room.

TRISH

And you know what? The hell with the hockey game. I'm changing my vote. Maybe we do need to bring a little dignity to the house!

She throws Brian's pillow at him and slams her door. A door across the hall swings open. Rich pokes his head out.

RICH

Did I hear that correctly? She's changing her vote? That means I've won. I've won!

(to Brian)

You'll thank me for this one day.

He ducks back inside and slams the door. We hear him loudly singing "Victory Is Mine" through the wall. Another door opens further down the hallway. Two Amazonian prostitutes exit Donnie's room. One is possibly a tranny. A beat later, Donnie takes a step out. He looks wobbly.

DONNIE

(to Brian)

Hey man, bring me my nitro. Quick.

He shuts his door. Brian stands alone, staring down the empty hallway. He mimes putting a gun to his head and pulling the trigger just as we hear a LOUD...

INT. COP HOUSE - BASEMENT - MORNING

...BLAST. Dust falls from the ceiling and the front panel of the furnace clangs to the floor. We WIDEN OUT. Several bottles are lined up on the edge of a ping-pong table. Frozen in terror, Tony stands there, cotton jammed in his ears, holding a huge old hunting rifle.

RICH

Damn it, Tony, focus! You're wasting ammo!

TONY

I can't help it! Every time I aim, Skip yells "Cock-a-doodle-doo." He's taunting me about the mug!

Skip raises his flask to Tony. The other cops are all present, with the exception of Brian. Rich is on edge. Things are not going well. Donnie grabs the gun from Tony.

DONNIE

Alright, everyone back the hell up
and watch how Mr. Clean shoots.

He strips off his shirt and takes aim.

DONNIE (CONT'D)

I don't see bottles, I see bottle
makers. Fat cats. Tax dodgers,
backbiters, polluters and deluders.

TRISH

What?

Rich "shhh's" her, afraid of inciting Donnie. Donnie growls
and pulls the trigger. When the dust clears, the bottle is
still standing but the hot water tank is spraying everywhere.

DONNIE

Damn gun bucks like a mule.

TONY

You did good, Donnie.

DONNIE

Thanks, brother.

RICH

(losing patience)

How are we gonna win this thing if
no one here can shoot a bottle of
Mountain Dew off a ping-pong table?

Skip takes the gun from Donnie.

SKIP

Please. I know this type of weapon
and I know how to use it. When I
was a young boy, I -

He accidentally discharges the rifle. Everyone hits the floor
as the bullet ricochets throughout the basement.

RICH

You're all a bunch of losers! A
disgrace to law enforcement! No
wonder you're in this place! You
deserve each other!

TRISH

Instead of criticizing us, why
don't you take a shot?

RICH

Because I'm prohibited from using firearms due to a prior incident too complicated to explain. Okay?

TRISH

Screw you, Rich. I'm not going to be hollered at. I'm changing my vote back to the hockey game.

The other cops agree. They all head for the stairs.

RICH

No, wait! I'm just pushing you to meet my trademark high standards! You just need some more practice!

The cops are gone. Brian has come halfway down the stairs to investigate. Realizing what's happened, he grins at Rich, gloating.

BRIAN

So much for your covert ops, partner. See you at Wachovia Center.

He chuckles and heads upstairs. Rich stands there, stewing.

RICH

(to himself)

Even proteges need a spanking sometimes.

INT. LAUNDRY ROOM - A SHORT WHILE LATER

A crazed Rich is throwing Brian's clothes and belongings next to a canister of gasoline. Tony wanders in.

TONY

If you're looking for my mug, it's not in here. Hey, what are you doing?

RICH

Just collecting Brian's possessions so I can set them on fire in the backyard.

TONY

(wide-eyed)

Oh my God, it's not lice, is it? I knew it was only a matter of time...

Panicked, Tony quickly exits. Rich drags a large box from the storage closet with Brian's name on it. Under his folded police uniform he finds a stack of awards and commendations that Brian received, including a trophy engraved: CHAMPION MARKSMAN 2007. Stunned, Rich stares at the trophy. He had no idea Brian was a cop of this caliber. Suddenly Brian enters the laundry room holding a baseball bat. Tony sheepishly stands behind him.

BRIAN

Lice, huh?

He raises the bat.

RICH

Bri...wait.

Rich continues to stare down at the box of awards.

RICH (CONT'D)

I had no idea, man. How could you keep quiet about this? I mean, if I had even won one of these awards I'd never shut up about it.

BRIAN

Oh, I don't believe that.

RICH

I feel like a jerk. All this time...me and my big stupid mouth, and it turns out you're the real deal.

Brian slowly lowers the bat.

BRIAN

I was. Once. But not anymore.

RICH

You're more cop than I'll ever be.

BRIAN

I wouldn't be too hard on yourself.

RICH

(perking up)

Now it's my duty to get the fire back in your belly! School's back in session, Scooter. Are you gonna be a good pupil this time or am I gonna have to paddle your ass?

BRIAN

You had to ruin the moment, didn't
you! Goddamn it, Rich!

Rich backs up and something crunches under his shoe. He looks down. It's the headless angel Brian shot off his ex-wife's Christmas tree. Brian kneels down and picks up the pieces. He's momentarily moved by the sight of it...but this quickly turns to rage - directed at Rich.

BRIAN (CONT'D)

Tony, could you give us the room,
please?

Tony quickly exits. Brian raises the bat.

RICH

A little grandstanding, I assume?

INT. DOCTOR WAGNER'S OFFICE

Rich and Brian sit next to each other facing Dr. Wagner. Rich is pretty banged up and his arm is in a sling.

RICH

I just want to put it all behind
us. Even though my only crime is
caring too much, I apologize for
everything. I completely and
unconditionally fall on my sword.

DR. WAGNER

I don't think there's much more one
could add to that, Brian.

RICH

And I want him to represent the
house at the pistol tournament or I
might have to rethink filing
assault charges.

BRIAN

That's it! I'm going to give him
something to file...

Brian grabs a table lamp, ready to bash Rich's head...

DR. WAGNER

Brian!

Brian sits back down and takes a deep breath.

DR. WAGNER (CONT'D)

There's a plaque on the front of this house with words that both of you seem to have forgotten: *We live in a home like no other, Supporting each sister, supporting each brother / Through hard work and hope, We'll realize our dream / Back on the street, Our uniforms clean / With minds now clear, Our mission is true, Bless this house, for seeing us through.*

Long beat.

RICH

Okay, that crap aside, if I could say a word or two here...

Rich rises and starts to pace the room like Clarence Darrow.

RICH (CONT'D)

This has always been about one thing: Brian avoiding the pistol tournament. But why is he avoiding it? I have a hunch: to escape a confrontation. A confrontation with a cold December night some three months ago when he unloaded his service weapon into his ex-wife's Christmas tree as she cowered in the protective yet passionate arms of his biological sister...

Brian finds himself hanging on Rich's every word.

RICH (CONT'D)

...an incident that extinguished the last spark inside his belly that made him a cop, leaving a shattered man, crippled by regret and with a phobia of firearms.

Dr. Wagner is furiously flipping through a psychology book.

RICH (CONT'D)

My conclusion is, only by participating in the pistol tournament will Brian free these demons and finally become whole again.

(beat)

(MORE)

RICH (CONT'D)
But, sadly, it looks like he's not
ready for such a -

BRIAN
Okay. Fine. I'll shoot in the
competition.

RICH
(surprised)
Really?

BRIAN
Under two conditions: When the
tournament's over, you never speak
to me again. And I get the bedroom
back. To myself. Permanently.

DR. WAGNER
I think that sounds like a fair
compromise, Rich.

Rich thinks for a beat.

RICH
All I ever wanted to do was bring
some dignity to the house and help
a broken cop. If this is what it
takes... Done.

He looks at Brian and extends his hand.

RICH (CONT'D)
Friends?

BRIAN
Not part of the deal.

END ACT II

ACT III

MONTAGE WITH MUSIC (Junior Walker's "Shotgun")

With Rich and the others watching in amazement, Brian target practices in the basement, backyard, etc., blowing the shit out of everything Rich can find in the house worth shooting. Everyone cheers him on, especially Trish. Brian finds himself getting into it...getting the fire back in his belly. He wants to win this thing! In some cockeyed way, Rich has awoken his "inner cop." The sequence ends with a bullet exploding Stubbs' beloved clipboard labeled, "CHORE LIST."

EXT. HIGHWAY - MORNING

It's the day of the pistol tournament. The cop house bus travels down the highway. We hear singing from inside.

COPS

*I love to go a-wandering, Along the
mountain track, And as I go, I love
to sing, My knapsack on my back!
Val-deri, Val-dera, Val-deri, Val-
dera-ha-ha-ha-ha...*

INT. BUS - CONTINUOUS

The singing continues. Rich conducts the group, keeping them in time. Stubbs is at the wheel. Dr. Wagner sits behind him, pleased with the camaraderie.

RICH

(to everyone)

Are we gonna kick some ass today?

EVERYONE

Yeah!

RICH

Are we gonna show those active duty
jag-offs with their healthy brains
and fancy badges that we're ready
to rock?!

EVERYONE

Yeah!

DR. WAGNER

Are we going to use this event to
explore our unconscious motives,
needs and defenses?!

Silence. Blank stares.

RICH
In other words, LET'S GET IT ON,
PRICKS!

They all cheer and start singing again.

EXT. CONVENIENCE STORE - A SHORT WHILE LATER

The cops are filing back into the bus after a rest stop, holding snacks and candy. Stubbs is doing a head count.

STUBBS
Where the hell's Ford and
O'Donnell? Dammit, we're on a
timetable here!

INT. CONVENIENCE STORE - CONTINUOUS

Rich and Brian are standing by a display of sunglasses.

RICH
...look, I'm not arguing with you.
I have no doubt about your marksman
abilities. I'm just saying you're
dead without a pair of psyche-out
sunglasses. Here, try these...

Brian puts them on and looks in the little mirror.

RICH (CONT'D)
Now those work. They say "this guy
is all business"...with a touch of
"he could go postal."

BRIAN
Eh. They look a little Jim Jones-
ish.

RICH
Hmmm, maybe. Not quite the message
we're trying to send.

He grabs another pair as they hear the bus honking outside. Through the window they see Stubbs behind the wheel, cursing and motioning for them to get their asses out there.

RICH (CONT'D)
He can wait two seconds. Here, try
these. They've got a little
Stallone/"Cobra" thing going on...

BRIAN
Those are just the Jim Joneses in
silver!

RICH
Are you sure? Let me compare...

Rich examines both pairs of glasses.

BRIAN
Well, you're right and you're
wrong. The frames are similar, but -

They're suddenly interrupted by the sound of a loud scream -
Tony Bernstein's. They look outside and see a man wearing a
ski mask entering the bus. He holds a gun on Stubbs. The
bus door suddenly slides shut and the bus screeches out of
the parking lot. Rich and Brian just stand there, stunned.

RICH
Wow.

EXT. CONVIENIENCE STORE

Rich and Brian run outside. The bus is nowhere in sight.

BRIAN
We gotta call 911!

RICH
We don't have time for that crap!
Come on!

Rich runs into the middle of the street and flags down a Ford
Escort. It screeches to a stop, almost hitting him. Rich
flings opens the passenger side door. A frightened looking
SOCCER MOM stares at him from behind the wheel. He pulls out
his wallet and flashes his Pathmark Bonus Club card.

RICH (CONT'D)
Police emergency!
(to Brian)
Jump in the back!

BRIAN
Are you retarded?

RICH
We don't have time for that debate!
Jump in!

Brian hops in the backseat.

INT. FORD ESCORT - A SHORT WHILE LATER

The soccer mom weaves in and out of traffic.

RICH
No! Left lane! Left, left!

SOCCER MOM
First it's right, then it's left,
make up your mind!

BRIAN
(taking out his cell)
I'm calling 911. This is bull -

Rich grabs the phone and throws it out the window.

BRIAN (CONT'D)
Hey, asshole! I just got that
phone! And I didn't take the
insurance!

RICH
This is our collar, man! We don't
need anyone's help.
(to the soccer mom)
Quick - get in the other lane and
turn right! They're probably
headed for Jersey!

SOCCER MOM
It's a one way street!

RICH
Where's your sense of civic duty?

Rich grabs the wheel and makes the sharp right, turning the
wrong way down the one way street. The soccer mom screams.

INT. COP HOUSE BUS - CONTINUOUS

The carjacker holds a gun on Stubbs as they barrel along.

STUBBS
Watch that gun, boy.

CARJACKER
Just keep your eye on the road, old
man.

STUBBS
You're gonna see how old I am when
I put my foot up your ass.

TONY

I'm getting car sick! All this
speeding and weaving!

The cops quickly move as far away from Tony as possible.

CARJACKER

Get back in your seats!

TRISH

Didn't you hear him? He's about to
throw up! If he throws up, then
I'm gonna throw up!

DR. WAGNER

(shell-shocked)

Four years of college, grad
school...we never went over this.

Donnie takes his shirt and pants off, but keeps his boxers on
(adorned with the Flintstones.) He leans into Dr. Wagner.

DONNIE

(low voice)

Here's the plan - I'm gonna creep
up on his ass, take the gun, blow
his brains out and put his head on
a mop handle.

(holds out a pack of
candy)

Skittle?

DR. WAGNER

No thanks, Donnie. And let's put a
pin in that for now.

INT. SOCCER MOM CAR

They're now driving down a deserted back road.

SOCCER MOM

We're completely lost! Where the
hell are we?!

RICH

Bear with me. I'm waiting for my
internal compass to kick in.

SOCCER MOM

I have to get home and start
dinner!

RICH
What are you having?

SOCCER MOM
What difference does it make?!
What kind of cop are you? You're
driving me crazy!

BRIAN
Welcome to my world, ma'am.

INT. COP HOUSE BUS

Tony Bernstein is in bad shape. He sits there muttering to himself, sweating profusely.

TONY
Need fresh air...blood flow to
brain decreasing...mutiny in
stomach increasing... must
survive...

He wearily rises and starts to unlatch the window. As he does this, he notices Skip secretly pouring some J&B into a container in his lap. Tony sees it's his rooster mug.

TONY (CONT'D)
(completely losing it)
AHHHHHHHHH!!!

He practically sails across the other seats to get at Skip. As the two of them tussle over the mug, it falls to floor and rolls up the aisle toward the front of the bus. Tony chases after it. Skip chases Tony.

TONY (CONT'D)
Stay away! Stay away from it!

SKIP
It's a pheasant, Anthony! A
pheasant!

CARJACKER
(pointing the gun at them)
Sit down! Now! Before I -

Tony trips as he makes a grab for the mug, knocking into the carjacker, who falls onto Stubbs. Stubbs loses control of the bus which skids off the road and crashes into a billboard pole. The billboard collapses and lands in front of the bus. Through the windshield we see a giant horse head with the words, "ALLEGHENY HORSE FARM - NEXT EXIT! FUN FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY!"

INT. SOCCER MOM CAR - CONTINUOUS

They're still lost, but back on a main artery. Brian sits in the backseat with his arms folded.

BRIAN

Everything would've been just fine,
but we had to look at sunglasses...

RICH

Let's not play "what if," okay?
That's a game with no winners.
(suddenly seeing
something)
Stop! There!

At an intersection, Rich spots the crashed bus just as the carjacker starts to flee. Brian jumps out of the car and pursues him on foot. Rich hops out and tries to catch up, but Brian is in much better shape and Rich is soon out of breath. He quickly gives up, completely winded.

RICH (CONT'D)

(yelling out)
Atta boy, Bri! Go get him, man!
We got the collar, kid!

He collapses.

FURTHER AHEAD: Brian tackles the carjacker in a parking lot. We hear sirens approaching in the distance.

INT. COP HOUSE LIVING ROOM - EVENING

The cops and Dr. Wagner sit there watching the news.

NEWS ANCHOR

...and finally, in our "You Can't
Make This Stuff Up" story of the
week, a bus filled with cops from
the Philadelphia County Police Home
was high-jacked in broad daylight
this afternoon as the officers were
on their way to - get this - a
pistol tournament!

The anchor and his co-anchors crack up.

NEWS ANCHOR (CONT'D)

Fortunately, no one was hurt and
the carjacker was apprehended.

FEMALE ANCHOR
 (still laughing)
 By the cops in the bus?

NEWS ANCHOR
 Ahh...no.
 (laughs)
 I think they were a little too
 shaken up.

SPORTS ANCHOR
 (to camera)
 And speaking of shaking things up,
 if you were lucky enough to see the
 Flyers in action today, you saw the
 game of the century...

Dr. Wagner turns off the TV. There's a moment of silence.
 Donnie snores from the rug with an unlit cigar in his mouth
 and clutching a stuffed Dino.

DR. WAGNER
 Perhaps this would be a good time
 to find out if anyone has any
 particular feelings about being
 publicly humiliated.

No takers. All the cops except for Rich and Brian silently
 disperse and head for their bedrooms. Trish squeezes Brian's
 shoulder as she walks by and mouths "Nice job."

RICH
 (to Brian)
 So, what do think, Hoss?

BRIAN
 I think I'm going up to my room -
 my *private room* - and start the
 long arduous process of repressing
 the last week and a half.

RICH
 If you're going up to masturbate
 just tell me. We're partners. You
 can't deny that anymore.

BRIAN
 That sounded a tad homo-erotic.

RICH
 You know what I meant. Grow up.

Brian heads for the stairway.

DR. WAGNER

Brian?

He stops.

DR. WAGNER (CONT'D)

Life does go on after divorce.
What you did today was very heroic.
You should let yourself feel good
about that.

(beat)

With or without masturbating.

Brian manages a slight smile and nods. He heads upstairs.
Rich follows him.

RICH

I'll give you twenty bucks if you
let me back in the room.

BRIAN

No.

RICH

Thirty.

BRIAN

No.

RICH

Forty bucks plus I'll get you laid.

BRIAN

Hey, I forgot, I got you a present.

Brian whistles. The German Shepherd that attacked Rich
earlier comes bounding out of the kitchen and chases Rich up
the stairs. We hear it attacking him OFF SCREEN.

Dr. Wagner now sits alone in the living room looking
exhausted. She reaches for her note pad on the coffee table.
In doing so, she accidentally knocks over Tony's rooster mug
which falls to the floor and shatters. A look of terror
comes over her face.

END OF SHOW