

GREETINGS FROM JERRY

by

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(MUSIC: BAND OF HORSES' "THE FUNERAL")

A GROUP OF PEDESTRIANS stands waiting for the light to change. They represent a wide range of humanity--from the BUSINESSWOMAN to the DELIVERY BOY, the CONSTRUCTION WORKER to the VAGRANT. All appear to be miserable...*except for:*

THE HANDSOME YOUNG MAN IN THE DESIGNER SUIT standing front and center, doing a little dance. Happiest guy in the world.

This is JERRY (late 20s). We might not like him.

A passing car zooms through a puddle, soaking everyone *but* Jerry...who miraculously remains bone dry.

Everyone but Jerry staggers back from the curb, stunned and furious. Jerry turns around, offering a shrug and a smile.

JERRY

Good things just happen to me.

Then he GETS DRILLED BY A SPEEDING CAR THAT HOPS THE CURB, CRASHING HORRIBLY O.S.

JERRY (V.O.) (CONT'D)

They *used to*, anyway. All the time.

(CHORUS KICKS IN)

TITLE CARD: **"GREETINGS FROM JERRY"**

A pair of doors burst open and a TEAM OF EMERGENCY MEDICAL PROFESSIONALS hurrying a gurney through as they urgently attend to its passenger: JERRY, A BLOODY MESS.

EACH DOORWAY the dying Jerry glances into as he rolls by it shows not a hospital room, but a GLIMPSE INTO HIS OWN PAST...

JERRY (V.O.)

Some people have a hard time making friends. I never did.

DOOR #1: ELEMENTARY SCHOOL CLASSROOM -- SIX-YEAR-OLD JERRY IS DANCING ON A DESK, TO THE DELIGHT OF HIS CLASSMATES.

JERRY (V.O.) (CONT'D)

But my social skills had no negative effect on my academic performance.

DOOR #2: SCHOOL AUDITORIUM -- NINE-YEAR-OLD JERRY PROUDLY
HOISTS A SPELLING BEE CHAMPIONSHIP TROPHY.

JERRY (V.O.) (CONT'D)
He who exceeds in the classroom
flounders on the field of play, right?
Not in my case.

DOOR #3: BASEBALL FIELD -- TWELVE-YEAR-OLD JERRY IS MOBBED
AT HOME PLATE AFTER A GAME-WINNING HOME RUN.

JERRY (V.O.) (CONT'D)
And I never had much trouble
navigating the greatest obstacle in
the history of mankind.

DOOR #4: HIGH SCHOOL HOUSE PARTY -- FIFTEEN-YEAR-OLD JERRY
IS FEELING UP A GIRL; ANOTHER GIRL TAPS HIM ON THE SHOULDER.

TEENAGE FLASHBACK GIRL
Want to see if mine are better?

CURRENT JERRY -- Vomits blood, being rushed ahead into...

3 INT. EMERGENCY ROOM -- A SHORT WHILE LATER 3

DOCTORS and NURSES work feverishly to keep Jerry alive,
affixing, detaching and exchanging assorted medical devices.

JERRY (V.O.)
I might very well have been the kind
of person you hate. But let me say
in my defense that every good thing
I achieved in my life, both large
and small, was a result of *absolutely*
no effort on my part.

Jerry violently convulses before his heart monitor FLATLINES.

JERRY (V.O.) (CONT'D)
That probably didn't come out right.

(END MUSIC.)

DISSOLVE TO:

4 EXT. PLATTITUDES BUILDING -- DAY 4

An oversized, hipper-than-thou structure on a needlessly
expansive stretch of property. A sign at the front drive
bears the logo of "PLATTITUDES - 'GREETINGS WITH ATTITUDE'".

5 INT. PLATTITUDES - HALLWAY -- DAY

5

Jerry (A FEW YEARS YOUNGER than when we last saw him; MID-20S) steps up to a closed office door. Behind him is MUG (mid-20s)--unassuming and gentle, perpetually ill-at-ease.

MUG

Can I tell you a secret?

About to open the door, Jerry stops.

MUG (CONT'D)

I'm kind of nervous.

JERRY

Can I tell you something obvious?

You need better secrets.

(extends fist)

Let's do this.

Mug high-fives Jerry's fist-bump. Jerry opens the door into--

6 INT. PLATTITUDES - SETH'S OFFICE -- CONTINUOUS

6

Jerry hop-steps and chucks a rubber ball at a CO-WORKER, knocking the Xbox controller out his hands: this is PHILIP (mid-20s)--loud and boisterous, eager to please.

Mug throws his own ball across the room at SETH (mid-20s)--hipster-geek cool, casually confident--who's working at his desk. The ball goes wide, knocking over a lamp.

JERRY

Two-on-one, Seth. Philip's out.

PHILIP

I thought we were on break.

JERRY

There are no breaks in Throwball.

SETH

My *lamp* looks pretty broken.

JERRY

I'll give you a free shot at Mug.

MUG

Hey...

PHILIP

Take it like a man.

SETH
I don't want to play.

JERRY
So you're conceding?

SETH
Yes. You and Mug can be the all-time office dodgeball champions.

JERRY
It's not dodgeball, it's *Throwball!*
"Dodgeball" implies escape and empowers the victim.

MUG
Throwball favors the strong!

JERRY
And we are the all-time champions.

Jerry extends a fist, which Mug high-fives.

JERRY (CONT'D)
Really?

PHILIP
"All-time" going back to when you invented the game...*this morning?*

JERRY
Technically, last night.

SETH
At any point while you were hammering out the game's myriad details, did you get a chance to work on the proposal for the new series that you were supposed to turn in this morning?

JERRY
No.

MUG
{Bleep} gave you more time?

JERRY
No. I worked the ideas out on the drive to work today and gave them to Fat Asshole first thing.

PHILIP
Bullshit.

SETH

There's no way that's going to fly.

In the doorway appears FAT ASSHOLE (30s)--the guys' boss.

FAT ASSHOLE

Hey, douchebags. I'm treating us all to a liquid lunch today. And maybe if you're lucky, Jerry will give the rest of you free advice on how to do your fucking jobs.

(to Jerry)

One of the best proposals I've ever seen, J-Dog. The whole series is a go.

Fat Asshole ducks back out of the room, and everyone turns to glare enviously at Jerry. Seth flings a ball past him.

JERRY

Oh, now you want to play.

7 EXT. CITY STREETS -- DAY

7

(MUSIC: DOES IT OFFEND YOU, YEAH'S "WE ARE ROCKSTARS")

A line of brand-new luxury vehicles snakes its way through traffic at unsafe speeds.

JERRY (V.O.)

I had a very easy, insanely high-paying job, and I owed it all to the friends I made in college.

AT THE WHEEL OF THE MERCEDES CONVERTIBLE IS SETH.

JERRY (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Seth was the one who started it all. He was always a hustler, and he had the job at Plattitudes lined up even before our senior year. He made his name in the peer-to-peer teenage market, and opened the door for the rest of us.

DRIVING THE CADILLAC ESCALADE IS PHILIP.

JERRY (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Philip followed Seth, and what he lacked in seniority he quickly made up by carving himself the biggest slice of pie in the greeting card industry: immediate-family birthdays.

(MORE)

JERRY (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 He might not have been the most
 creatively challenged, but he was
 the top earner out of all of us.

RIDING SHOTGUN WITH PHILIP IS MUG.

JERRY (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 Nobody was quite sure how it happened,
 but Mug ended up cornering the market
 on pet cards: cards to people from
 their dogs, cards to dogs from other
 people's cats, cards congratulating
 people when their cats and their
 dogs have kittens and puppies. You'd
 be surprised how well those things
 sell. You might also want to be
depressed by it...but good for Mug.

JERRY DRIVES THE BMW M6.

JERRY (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 I was the all-purpose romance guy.
 The cards could be funny, the cards
 could be sad...but no matter what,
 they always read as completely
 heartfelt and genuine. Truth be
 told, I was just a softie at heart.

8 INT. JERRY'S NICE APARTMENT -- NIGHT

8

Nice new fixtures, nice new furniture, nice new plasma TV.
 An enviable bachelor pad.

JERRY (O.S.)
 (building in intensity)
 I'm a happy person with happy things.
 I'm a happy person with happy things.
 I'm a happy person with happy things.

9 INT. JERRY'S NICE APARTMENT - BEDROOM -- CONTINUOUS

9

Jerry's in bed, banging away at a FEMALE ESCORT.

JERRY
 (approaching climax)
 I'm a happy person with happy things!
 I'm a happy per... *Happy! Things!*

Fin. Jerry rolls off of the escort, spent. She sits up and
 hangs her legs over the side of the bed, lighting a cigarette.

ESCORT #1
 Do you always say that during sex?

JERRY
 (genuinely unaware)
 What was I saying?

A SECOND ESCORT appears on the other side of Jerry, her attention on an end table.

ESCORT #2
 Hey, can I finish this coke?

JERRY
 Knock yourself out.

While the escort sets up lines of cocaine for herself and her colleague, Jerry reaches into an end table drawer. He produces a check register and a pen.

ECU CHECK REGISTER -- The pen records a debit of "\$2000"...but pauses at the "DESCRIPTION OF TRANSACTION" column.

JERRY -- Thinks for a moment...

JERRY (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 When you think of highly lucrative careers, "greeting card writer" probably isn't at the top of your list.

ECU CHECK REGISTER -- Jerry writes in: "RESEARCH".

JERRY (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 That's where Fat Asshole comes into play.

10 EXT. CITY STREETS -- DAY

10

Back to the RACING LUXURY VEHICLES.

JERRY (V.O.)
 In a world that made sense, a brainless degenerate of his vile sort would be lucky to live off of pre-owned urinal cakes. But the world does *not* make sense...

Taking the lead is a HUMVEE with FAT ASSHOLE at the wheel, swigging from a flask and HOWLING like a drunken frat boy.

JERRY (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 So Fat Asshole, of course, happened to have been sired by the billionaire CEO of one of the most powerful media conglomerates in the world.

FREEZE FRAME.

JERRY (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 Smart enough to not put his jerkoff
 son in charge of anything important,
 daddy created a whole new offshoot
 for the sole purpose of keeping Fat
 Asshole busy and out of jail. Thus
 was born:

11 OMITTED

11

11A INT. PLATTITUDES - LOBBY -- DAY

11A

Fat Asshole is addressing a CROWD from a podium, standing
 beneath A BANNER DEBUTING THE "PLATTITUDES" LOGO.

JERRY (V.O.)
 The Plattitudes Greeting Company. A
 meaningless branch with endless funds.

FAT ASSHOLE
 The extra 'T' is for 'attitude'!

JERRY (V.O.)
 God bless America...

IN THE AUDIENCE -- Jerry, Seth, Philip and Mug celebrate;
 Mug is botching all the fist-bumps with attempted high-fives.

JERRY (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 Provided that you believe in neither.

CUT TO:

12 INT. VAGUELY IRISH BAR -- NIGHT

12

Jerry, Seth, Philip and Mug are in a booth, throwing back a
 few happy hour drinks. Mug raises a toast.

MUG
 To Jerry. The man of the hour.

PHILIP
 And {bleep}'s current golden boy.

JERRY
 Fuck that fat asshole. It wasn't
 that long ago when he was dropping
 hints he was going to fire me if my
 cards didn't start selling.

The guys drink their drinks, and set down their glasses. As
 if on cue, Philip's cell phone RINGS.

PHILIP

Whup. That's the old ball and chain.

He stands and moves away from the table, answering the call.

JERRY (V.O.)

When a guy refers to his significant other as "the old ball and chain", he's usually being sarcastically affectionate. But in Philip's case, his girlfriend was as close as a human being could get to actually taking the form of steel.

A WHITE FLASH AND CLICK *INTRODUCE*:

13 AN INSERT SEQUENCE OF PHOTOGRAPHIC SLIDES

13

SLIDE #1 depicts PHILIP and his UNPLEASANT GIRLFRIEND, sitting on a couch. He is smiling for the camera while she is looking out of frame at something in ugly annoyance.

JERRY (V.O.)

Philip met her not long after college, literally *the day before* he got rich from his first big commission. Whenever he would indulge the occasional doubt about his girlfriend's commitment...

CLICK. SLIDE #2 depicts a BIRTHDAY PARTY FOR PHILIP'S UNPLEASANT GIRLFRIEND. She's surrounded by a smiling PHILIP and OTHERS (including JERRY and MUG), piles of gifts and a beautiful cake in front of her. She's smoking, disinterested.

JERRY (V.O.) (CONT'D)

He'd take solace in the fact that she was technically with him before he hit it big. Like she deserved credit for sticking with him through "the hard times"--those twelve hours when all he had to live on was his trust fund.

CLICK. SLIDE #3 depicts PHILIP and his UNPLEASANT GIRLFRIEND on BOURBON STREET DURING MARDI GRAS. He's overjoyed; she looks like she's waiting in line at the DMV.

JERRY (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Philip would never be anything more to her than a warm body and an increasingly fat bank account.

(MORE)

JERRY (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 Deep down, we all knew it, but none
 of us had the balls to say it to his
 face. None of us, including Philip,
 was ever much good at confrontation.
 Or truth.

A WHITE FLASH AND CLICK TAKE US BACK TO:

14 INT. VAGUELY IRISH BAR -- NIGHT 14

Where we RESUME SCENE. Philip returns, standing by the booth.

PHILIP
 Hey, Mug... I don't suppose you
 feel like driving me home, do ya?

MUG
 Yeah, no, it's cool. I was gonna
 leave soon, anyway.

JERRY
 You were?

Mug nods, sliding out of the booth.

MUG
 I'll see you guys.

Philip salutes Jerry and Seth, before departing with Mug.
 Jerry gets up and takes a seat across the table from Seth,
 balancing out the abandoned side of the booth.

JERRY
 That was weird.

SETH
 (checking his phone)
 That happens every time you guys go
 out.

JERRY
 Said as if he knew it firsthand.
 All your cool friends are busy
 tonight, huh?

Seth laughs, busted; he puts away his phone.

CUT TO:

15 INT. VAGUELY IRISH BAR -- LATER 15

The bar has become PACKED. Jerry and Seth have maintained
 their booth, now accompanied by TWO YOUNG WOMEN (both mid-

20s). DAPHNE--cute and unassuming--is on Seth's side; her DRUNK FRIEND is on Jerry's.

DRUNK FRIEND

So, okay, wait. So, was that, like, your guys' major in college? You majored in greeting cards?

Everyone laughs--Drunk Friend, a little too loudly.

JERRY

No. We majored in English.

DAPHNE

How'd that work out?

JERRY

Me think us both be talk good now.

DAPHNE

I mean how did you get from one thing to the other?

JERRY

(gestures to Seth)

That's a question for the social climber. He had the connections, I just went along for the ride.

DRUNK FRIEND

You're a "social climber"?

SETH

Offensive notion. Suggests that I'm not already at the top.

Drunk Friend laughs too loudly again.

DAPHNE

(to Drunk Friend)

Come to the bathroom with me.

The girls slide out of the booth and move off; Jerry and Seth wait the cursory five seconds before talking.

JERRY

Are you leaning in a particular direction?

SETH

The drunk one.

(off Jerry's surprise)

Rather not make an effort tonight.

JERRY
Bless your misogynistic heart.

16 INT. JERRY'S BMW -- NIGHT

16

Daphne and Jerry are making out in the car, which is parked in the street outside DAPHNE'S APARTMENT BUILDING. Daphne pulls away but stays close, her eyes filled with lust.

DAPHNE
Yeah. I think I have to go inside.
(off Jerry's look)
I mean by myself.

JERRY
Wow. For future reference? There are several much less suggestive ways to deliver that previous line.

DAPHNE
Maybe you could show me how to do it in a greeting card.

JERRY
Ouch. *Ouch.*

DAPHNE
(laughs)
I'm just jealous because your job is cooler than mine.

JERRY
What's not cool about being a banquet waitress?

DAPHNE
Har, har. You don't talk like a greeting card writer, you know. You haven't said a cheesy thing all night.

JERRY
You doubt my capacity for cheesiness?

DAPHNE
Show me what you got.

They separate. Jerry takes a moment to "get into character":

JERRY
With so much unknown in life, the only promise worth anything is the one made blindly.
(dramatic turn)
Promise me, Daphne.

DAPHNE
Promise you what?

JERRY
Promise what you don't know.

DAPHNE
(beat, amused)
Okay. I promise.

JERRY
(drops act, gloating)
You just promised to give me your
phone number.

DAPHNE
Oh, *burn!* Guess what, though?

Daphne reaches into her purse, producing a scrap of paper.

DAPHNE (CONT'D)
I wrote it down an hour ago.

She hands the paper to Jerry, kisses him several times
quickly, and skoots out of the car...leaving Jerry LAUGHING.

CUT TO:

17 INT. PLATTITUDES - CONFERENCE ROOM -- MORNING

17

A VIDEO MONITOR is playing in the otherwise DARKENED ROOM.

ON THE MONITOR: A YOUNG WOMAN stands in a kitchen, having
just discovered a very well-lit GREETING CARD. Reading it,
she is moved to tears. She looks up to see her apologetic-
looking BOYFRIEND OR HUSBAND in the doorway.

COMMERCIAL VOICEOVER (V.O.)
*The words are already in your heart.
We just connect them to hers.*

As the happy couple embraces, the PLATTITUDES LOGO appears.

As THE LIGHTS COME UP in the room, A SMATTERING OF APPLAUSE
rings out. Jerry, Seth, Philip and Mug are seated around a
table with Fat Asshole, who now rises.

FAT ASSHOLE
That spot starts airing in every
major market next week, just before
the second printing of Jerry's
phenomenal male-to-female general
romance series hits the shelves.

He initiates ANOTHER ROUND OF APPLAUSE, one that Jerry abstains from, expressing bashful thanks to his friends.

FAT ASSHOLE (CONT'D)
The rest of you abortions go and see if you come up with something half as good as that.

The guys begin to file out of the room, Jerry last.

FAT ASSHOLE (CONT'D)
J-Dog. I want to talk to you in my office. I'm about to make your year.

18 INT. PLATTITUDES - FAT ASSHOLE'S OFFICE -- LATER

18

In the enormous office, Fat Asshole sizes up Jerry from across his enormous desk.

JERRY (V.O.)
There were many things that I disliked about Fat Asshole. But the one thing that I hated above all else was his goddamn word-a-day desk calendar.

P.O.V. JERRY: FAT ASSHOLE'S DESK CALENDAR.

FAT ASSHOLE
The fact is, J-Dog, you're in the zone right now. You're getting things done.

JERRY (V.O.)
What bothered me wasn't that he owned one, that he bought himself a new one every Christmas.

FAT ASSHOLE
I look at you and I can see the gears turning in your head. You're bursting with ideas.

TODAY'S WORD IS: "**PARTURIENT** (*adj.*) -- (1) About to bring forth young; being in labor. (2) Of or relating to giving birth. (3) About to produce or come forth with something, such as an idea or a discovery."

JERRY (V.O.)
It wasn't even that he spent every day forcing that day's word into every conversation as many times as possible.

FAT ASSHOLE
You're *parturient* with them.

JERRY (V.O.)
What *really* drove me insane was that Fat Asshole would never, without fail, have any recollection whatsoever of the previous day's word.

Jerry glances at Fat Asshole's trash can. Though the previous day's page is crumpled, he can still make out: "**MUNIFICENT.**"

JERRY (CONT'D)
That's munificent of you to say.

Fat Asshole stares blankly, *unfamiliar with that word*.

FAT ASSHOLE
I want to capitalize on your hot streak, J-Dog. How would you feel about tripling your commission rate?

JERRY
I'd feel pretty good about it.

FAT ASSHOLE
Then let's take your *parturient* skills on the romance end and apply them bereavement and Spanish.

Jerry stares at Fat Asshole, unable to compute.

JERRY
Bereavement and Spanish?

FAT ASSHOLE
Romance is covered--it's out there, it's selling. But the marketplace is *parturient* with customers who are dying and speaking and Spanish--some people are doing both--and we're not reaching them. I need you to work your magic on those two markets.
(beat)
Whaddya say, Jerry? Are you my boy?

Jerry holds his look on Fat Asshole, his confidence wavering for just a moment.

JERRY (V.O.)
When I was a kid and my father had a new book to promote, he'd always bring us with him on the one leg of
(MORE)

JERRY (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 the trip that took him from where we
 lived then to where I live now.

JERRY (CONT'D)
 (delayed grin)
 You bet.

DISSOLVE TO:

19 EXT. WATERFRONT PIER -- DAY

19

A MASSIVE CROWD packs every inch of this tourist trap that boasts something for everyone: restaurants, carnival rides, a central arcade, and so on.

Just outside the arcade, a THRONG OF CHILDREN is mesmerized by a PUPPET SHOW. Within the stage, two hand puppets have their puppet hands stuffed with candy.

PUPPETEER (O.S.)
 Who wants *candy*?!

The children all SCREAM for the treats, raising their arms in the air. Among them is a SIX-YEAR-OLD JERRY, his hand as high as anyone's. Next to him is his father, GERALD (40s)--Clark Gable handsome, impossibly both masculine and refined.

JERRY (V.O.)
 My legal name was 'Jerry'--it wasn't short for 'Gerald', which was my father's name. That was the one and only decision in my father's life that he left to my mother. He spent every day that followed refusing to acknowledge that it ever happened.

GERALD
 Put your hand down, Gerald. You look like a homosexual.

Six-Year-Old Jerry lowers his arm, heartbroken. Unconcerned, Gerald takes a ponderous drag of his Chesterfield.

20 EXT. WATERFRONT -- A SHORT WHILE LATER

20

Six-Year-Old Jerry reluctantly follows his father along the shoreline, growing progressively further from the fun pier. Gerald carries an ornately designed cane as he walks.

JERRY (V.O.)
 For most of my life, my father walked around with a cane that he didn't
 (MORE)

JERRY (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 need for any physical reason. He
 prided himself on being a
 distinguished man and, as such, he
 believed that a cane reinforced the
 impression to any objective observer.

Six-Year-Old Jerry reacts with embarrassment as A GUY IN A
 WHEELCHAIR rolls past in the opposite direction

JERRY (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 I thought it made him look like a
 douchebag.

Gerald comes to a gradual stop, turning to face the water.

GERALD
 Infinity, Gerald. It's what we all
 want to achieve.

Six-Year-Old Jerry gazes longingly at the distant pier.

JERRY (V.O.)
 All I wanted was some candy.

21 INT. MORNING TALK SHOW STUDIO - STAGE -- MORNING

21

Gerald sits on a couch, being interviewed on-air by the CHEERY
 FEMALE HOST and CHEERY MALE HOST.

CHEERY FEMALE HOST
 Your latest book is titled 'The
 Magellan Cipher', and it features
 the return of your very popular
 recurring character, Professor Desmond
 Booker. What made you decide to
 write another Booker adventure?

GERALD
 I find myself coming back again and
 again to the Booker character because,
 to be honest, I'm mysteriously
 obsessed with him...

BEHIND THE CAMERAS -- While the interview continues, Six-
 Year-Old Jerry is standing by the craft services table,
 staring down an unappealing spread of vegetables.

A CUTE P.A. GIRL (20s) is ostensibly watching over him,
 staring starry-eyed at Gerald.

CUTE P.A. GIRL
 Your daddy is a genius.
 (MORE)

CUTE P.A. GIRL (CONT'D)

I love every one of his books. I know they're too grown up for you right now, but when you start reading them, you're going to find out how lucky you are.

JERRY (V.O.)

What I would find out is that I was the son of an author of highly forgettable, glorified airport novels whose plots usually dealt with paper-thin government conspiracies leading to races against time and whose dialogue and characterizations were piss-poor across the board.

INSERT: A CRASH ZOOM PROMOTIONAL SHOT OF "THE MAGELLAN CIPHER -- A DESMOND BOOKER ADVENTURE"

JERRY (V.O.) (CONT'D)

I would also find out that my father's obsession with his most frequently recurring character, 'Professor Desmond Booker', often described as--

INSERT: ECU A PASSAGE FROM "THE MAGELLAN CIPHER", MATCHING:

JERRY (V.O.) (CONT'D)

"A rakish intellectual with salt-and-pepper hair and a masculine jawline, the distinct contours of his muscular build visible even beneath his high-necked sweater and corduroy blazer"--

INSERT: A FULL-COLOR JACKET PHOTO OF GERALD -- His hair salt-and-pepper, his jawline more or less masculine, dressed in a high-necked sweater and corduroy blazer.

JERRY (V.O.) (CONT'D)

...Was perhaps not so mysterious.

22 INT. MORNING TALK SHOW STUDIO - HALLWAYS -- LATER

22

Six-Year-Old Jerry is wandering the hallways, grossly unattended and completely lost.

GERALD (O.S.)

(quietly, muffled)

*I'm a happy person with happy things.
I'm a happy person with happy things.*

Six-Year-Old Jerry follows the sound of his father's voice, which leads him to a closed dressing room door.

GERALD (O.S.) (CONT'D)
I'm a happy person with happy things.

Without hesitation, Six-Year-Old Jerry pushes the door open--

23 INT. MORNING TALK SHOW STUDIO - DRESSING ROOM -- CONTINUOUS 23

To find himself staring at his father's naked ass, pants around his ankles as he bangs away at the Cute P.A. Girl.

GERALD
 I'm a happy person with happy things!

Neither one of them notices Six-Year-Old Jerry; they just keep going at it. Little Jerry just stares, perplexed.

JERRY (V.O.)
 My mother never came with us on the promotional tours.

24 INT. JERRY'S NICE APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM -- NIGHT 24

Daphne crosses the room from a bookshelf to a console table, a large hardcover book in hand. She looks between the book jacket and something on the table, then smiles to herself.

Jerry emerges from the kitchen, carrying a couple of after-dinner drinks.

JERRY
 That food we brought home is just going to sit in my fridge until it breeds. You should really take it.

DAPHNE
 Looking at the rest of your books, I couldn't figure out why you had so many by *this* guy--they don't fit in. But I just solved the mystery:

She holds up the book jacket photo of Jerry's dad, comparing it to a framed photo, on the console table, of HIM WITH JERRY AT A GRADUATION CEREMONY.

DAPHNE (CONT'D)
 This guy's your daddy.

Jerry takes the book from Daphne's hand, closing it.

JERRY
 I hope you don't think any less of me.

DAPHNE
I'd never even heard of him.
(beat, backpedaling)
Not that that means a damn thing...

JERRY
(laughs)
It's better for me that you haven't.
He returns the book to its place on the shelf.

DAPHNE
Those all the books he ever wrote?
Jerry nods.

DAPHNE (CONT'D)
That last one's from ten years ago.
What happened? He run out of two-
word titles?

JERRY
(uncomfortable)
No. He's, uh...

DAPHNE
Jesus. I am on *fire* tonight...

JERRY
He's not dead.

DAPHNE
Oh, thank god!

Overjoyed, Daphne wraps Jerry in a hug.

25 INT. JERRY'S NICE APARTMENT - BEDROOM -- LATER

25

Jerry and Daphne are all over each other on the bed. A good deal of clothing has been pulled apart, if not off entirely. One of Jerry's hands in spending a good deal of time in Daphne's southern hemisphere, until she finally stops him.

DAPHNE
Wait. Wait, wait, wait.

All motion ceases. Jerry and Daphne stare at each other.

DAPHNE (CONT'D)
I'm having fun.

Jerry grins, moving to resume activity--but Daphne holds up.

DAPHNE (CONT'D)
So I should probably go.

Maintaining his smile...Jerry sighs.

26 INT. JERRY'S NICE APARTMENT -- A SHORT WHILE LATER

26

Jerry is seeing the fully dressed Daphne out the door.

 DAPHNE
I want to tell you something, but
I'm afraid it's going to make me
look like a psycho chick.

 JERRY
You want to boil my rabbit.

 DAPHNE
You don't have a rabbit.

 JERRY
Lucky for him.

 DAPHNE
I don't want to boil your rabbit.
 (then)
Unless you want me to.

 JERRY
Oh, wow--you made it a euphemism.

 DAPHNE
I'm just a little weirded out because
I've never wanted to boil somebody's
rabbit so soon, okay? And the fact
that I do might mean that there's
something... That you and I...
 (off Jerry's look)
Okay, see? See? You know what I'm
going to say, and now I *am* the psycho
chick. I apologize profusely, thank
you for everything, I will see you
in the next life.

Daphne tries to hurry out, but Jerry stops her.

 JERRY
Can't do next life--I'm booked solid.
How about next weekend instead?

Daphne smiles...and pulls Jerry in for a deep kiss. Then she backs away, moving out of the apartment and into the night. Jerry watches her go, all the way.

27 INT. JERRY'S NICE APARTMENT - OFFICE -- A SHORT WHILE LATER 27

Beer in hand, Jerry sits down in front of his computer.
Types in a few words on the keyboard.

ON THE SCREEN -- Is a document with the heading: "BEREAVEMENT
CARD IDEAS". And nothing else.

JERRY -- Pulls his hands back from the keyboard. Stares at
the screen. Sips his beer. Stares at the screen.

Has a thought.

28 INT. JERRY'S NICE APARTMENT - BEDROOM -- LATER 28

Jerry is banging away at someone in bed.

JERRY

I'm a happy person with happy things!
I'm a happy person with happy things!

MATCH CUT TO:

29 INT. JERRY'S NICE APARTMENT - BEDROOM -- A SHORT WHILE LATER 29

A FEMALE ESCORT (a different one from the previous two) and
Jerry are sitting up in bed. She's smoking a cigarette;
he's writing in his checkbook register.

ESCORT #3

That was kinda weird.

JERRY

What was?

CUT TO:

30 INT. PLATTITUDES - JERRY'S OFFICE -- AFTERNOON 30

Mug is seated at Jerry's desk, playing on the computer.
Foam basketball in hand, Jerry "fakes out" the completely
uninterested Mug, before crossing to the far end of the room
where he manages to brick a wide-open slam dunk attempt.

JERRY

That counts. Goaltending.

Mug doesn't react, staring dead-eyed at the computer game.

JERRY (CONT'D)

Are you calling me a liar?

That gets Mug's attention...but he shakes off his thought.

MUG

Aren't you a little worried that it's been a month since {bleep} gave you that new assignment and you still haven't come up with anything?

JERRY

You know I do my best work when I don't focus and just let time take its course. I'll pull something out of my ass at the last second.

MUG

Oh, that's right. I hate you.

JERRY

There's my guy.

Fat Asshole barges in, his hands firmly on Philip's shoulders.

FAT ASSHOLE

We're closing up shop early today, boys. Looks like I was the last one to find out about this poor bastard's engagement, so we're all going out right now to celebrate.

JERRY

(beat; stunned)

Philip... You got *engaged*?

PHILIP

I thought you knew already. Mug didn't tell you?

JERRY

(to Mug, incredulous)

You were supposed to tell me this?

Mug shrugs, staring at the floor.

FAT ASSHOLE

Looks like I'm not the chump after all. Whaddya think about our boy tying the knot?

JERRY

(in spite of himself)

I think it's awful.

Dead silence.

Then...everyone but Jerry--even Mug, a little--LAUGHS. Realizing he's off the hook, Jerry chuckles falsely.

31 INT. RITZY RESTAURANT/BAR -- NIGHT

31

Fat Asshole has commandeered the lounge area for the engagement celebration, which has continued past dinner. There is a LARGE CROWD OF PARTYERS in attendance.

Philip and his Unpleasant Girlfriend, in the flesh--now his UNPLEASANT FIANCÉ (mid-20s)--are holding court on a central couch. Jerry is seated nearby. A WAITRESS sets down a few drinks, including one for Unpleasant Fiancé.

UNPLEASANT FIANCÉ

Excuse me. That looks like a lime.
I ordered a vodka tonic with *lemon*.

WAITRESS

Oh, I'm sorry. I'll get you a slice of lemon.

UNPLEASANT FIANCÉ

No, you won't. You'll take the whole drink back, and get me what I ordered.

The waitress takes the drink back and moves off.

UNPLEASANT FIANCÉ (CONT'D)

Fucking cunt.

Philip pats her leg consolingly. Appalled, Jerry looks away.

Seth--just ending a phone call--approaches with a CUTE GIRL.

SETH

We're taking off.

JERRY

Of course you are.

SETH

Seen Mugsy?

JERRY

He left as soon as dinner was over.
Why's he been acting so weird today?

SETH

He's Mug. He's weird.

While Seth moves to say goodbye to Philip and Unpleasant Fiancé, Fat Asshole approaches. He tussles playfully with Seth before slumping into a chair next to Jerry.

FAT ASSHOLE

These lightweight friends of yours could learn something from you, J-Dog: play as hard as you work. I'm having everybody back to my place after this. We're going all night. Coke, whores, the whole fuckin' thing.

JERRY

I've actually got to watch it myself tonight. Flying back for my dad's sixtieth birthday this weekend. And at some point, I've got to put the finishing touches on those mock-ups.

FAT ASSHOLE

Like they're not already perfect. Overthinking is for unemployed people, J-Dog. Tonight, we party, and we party *hard*.

CUT TO:

TITLE CARD: "FRIDAY - 3:00 P.M."

32 INT. JERRY'S NICE APARTMENT - BEDROOM -- DAY 32

Jerry is dead asleep.

TITLE CARD: "SATURDAY - 3:00 A.M."

33 INT. JERRY'S NICE APARTMENT - OFFICE -- NIGHT 33

Dressed in nothing but boxer shorts, Jerry stares at a BLANK DOCUMENT on his monitor, looking stumped...and *stunned*.

This has never happened before.

JERRY
Fuck.

JERRY (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Fuck.

CUT TO:

TITLE CARD: "SATURDAY"

AIRPORT P.A. ANNOUNCER (O.S.)
This is the final boarding call...

34 INT. AIRPORT -- MORNING 34

Jerry is sprinting through the terminal, a bag slung over his shoulder. Cell phone to his ear, he waits for the BEEP.

JERRY

(panting heavily)

Hey, {bleep}, it's Jerry. I apologize for calling so early--I know it's only six o'clock. But the thing is, I'm getting on a plane in literally seconds and I wanted to leave you a message before I fell out of contact.

(looking O.S., alarmed)

Shit!

UP AHEAD -- Still nearly a hundred yards away, the ATTENDANTS at Jerry's gate are preparing to close the door to the jetway.

JERRY (CONT'D)

(a mile a minute)

Anyway, here's the thing: I realized late in the day yesterday that I'm really not satisfied with any of the mock-ups that I came up with, and I came up with a bunch of new ideas that I all liked better. So I'm going to give those to you sometime next week instead.

Frantically waving his boarding pass, Jerry arrives at his gate just before the attendants close off the jetway. He grins sheepishly as they scan his paperwork.

JERRY (CONT'D)

(gasping, to phone)

If you have a problem with that, too fucking bad.

(beat, laughs)

Just kidding, man. Call me later.

The annoyed attendants usher Jerry through the door and onto the jetway. He's happily exhausted to have made it.

35 INT. COMMERCIAL AIRLINER - FIRST CLASS CABIN -- DAY 35

Jerry is relaxing in his window seat, washing down his lobster with a glass of champagne.

JERRY (V.O.)

For all his bad habits, my dad never had a drink without first raising a toast to his health.

CUT TO:

36 INT. JERRY'S FATHER'S HOME - LIVING ROOM -- DAY 36

Gerald--now 60ish--is encased in an IRON LUNG.

To be fair, it's a *modern* "negative pressure ventilator". The tank has a clear acrylic lid, giving full view of Gerald's supine, bodysuit-laden form. His head sticks out through a malleable gasket that allows him to roll from side to side.

Gerald's nurse/housekeeper, VENEZUELA FROM VENEZUELA--mid-40s, plump--is seated by Gerald's head, on hand to flip the pages of the copy of *The New Yorker* that he is perusing.

VENEZUELA FROM VENEZUELA

(heavy accent)

I think is wonderful what you do for your father, Mister Jerry. Throw him such big party for his birthday.

ACROSS THE ROOM -- Jerry is seated in the furthest chair, sipping a glass of Scotch. CATERERS are bustling back and forth, carrying various platters as they set up for the party.

GERALD

I'm going to pretend to be asleep for the duration, Gerald. I do not share Venezuela from Venezuela's enthusiasm for your little soiree.

JERRY

(beat)

We're calling her that *in front of her* now?

Jerry's older sister, MARGOT (30ish), enters from the kitchen.

MARGOT

Dad, most parents would be grateful if one of their children spent the money that Jerry did putting this together.

(to Jerry)

The caterers didn't bring the right crab puffs. But I know how to make them. Feel like running to the store?

Jerry gets to his feet.

MARGOT (CONT'D)

I need Ricotta cheese, either *part* skim and *not* lowfat or lowfat, *not* skim. Got it?

37 INT. GROCERY STORE -- DAY

37

Jerry is standing in the dairy aisle, a container of Ricotta cheese in each hand. One advertises itself as "PART LOWFAT, PART SKIM"; the other, "SKIM", no mention of lowfat.

He stares at the two containers, confounded.

His PHONE RINGS. Balancing both containers in one hand, Jerry uses the other to answer.

JERRY

Hello?

NOREEN (O.S.)

Oh...hi, Jerry. It's Noreen, from Plattitudes. I thought I would get your voicemail.

JERRY

I only duck work calls during the work week. What are you doing making one on a Saturday?

NOREEN (O.S.)

{Bleep} heard the message you left this morning... I guess he wasn't too happy about it. He asked me to relay a message of his own.

A lengthy pause.

JERRY

We go to commercial, Seacrest?

NOREEN (O.S.)

You're fired.

JERRY (O.S.)

(beat, smirks)
Hilarious. Tell *{bleep}* I'll call him back later.

NOREEN (O.S.)

He won't be taking your calls anymore.

JERRY

I admire your commitment to the bit, Noreen. Why don't you "accidentally" put me through to his cell, then.

NOREEN (O.S.)

No, Jerry. I don't want to lose my job, too. I'm sorry.

DIAL TONE. Jerry's face falls.

THE CHEESE CONTAINERS HIT THE FLOOR WITH A SPLAT.

38 EXT. GROCERY STORE PARKING LOT -- MOMENTS LATER

38

Jerry comes barreling out of the store, phone to his ear.

FAT ASSHOLE (O.S.)
*Sucks that you missed me. Talk to
the beep.*

JERRY
(after the BEEP)
You either owe Noreen a huge bonus
or you should fire her ass. I know
I'm late with those mock-ups,
but...c'mon. She took it too far.
Call me back, all right?

Jerry hangs up, thinks for just a second, then dials another
number. Phone to his ear, he continues to pace.

SETH (O.S.)
*You've reached Seth. I'm unavailable
to take your call...*

Annoyed, Jerry hangs up.

JUMP CUT:

MUG (O.S.)
Hey, it's Mug. Leave a message.

Jerry hangs up.

JUMP CUT:

PHILIP (O.S.)
*Hi, you've reached Philip. Sorry I
missed your call--*

Jerry hangs up, reeling. This is really happening.

JERRY
Holy shit.

CUT TO:

39 INT. JERRY'S FATHER'S HOME - LIVING ROOM -- AFTERNOON

39

Jerry is back in his chair as he was before, with two
differences: The house is FILLED WITH PARTY GUESTS, and
Jerry's glass of Scotch is accompanied by a bottle.

Margot approaches and sits down next to him.

MARGOT
You're being awfully social.

Jerry finishes his glass and immediately refills it. Margot looks around the room, studying the party guests.

MARGOT (CONT'D)
If Mom were here, she'd totally screw up the ex-wife plastic surgery sequence.

THROUGHOUT THE ROOM -- We spot THREE DIFFERENT EX-WIVES OF GERALD, each a different age.

MARGOT (CONT'D)
Pretty inconsiderate of her, never getting any work done. Maybe that's why she didn't come. Didn't want to offset the visual chronology.

Jerry sips his Scotch, staring across the room at Gerald, who--as promised--is pretending to be asleep in his machine.

MARGOT (CONT'D)
You should call her, you know.

Jerry drains his glass and sets it down.

JERRY
Fuck that fat asshole.

He abruptly gets to his feet and moves off, leaving Margot alone. A pause.

MARGOT
I'll go ahead and assume you're talking about someone else.

40 INT. TOWNIE BAR -- LATER

40

Very suburban, very sad. Jerry is seated at the bar. As he signals for a refill, TRACY (mid-20s)--a pleasant-looking townie girl--appears alongside him. Does a double-take.

TRACY
Jerry?

Jerry looks at Tracy, trying to place her. She helps:

TRACY (CONT'D)
Tracy. I haven't seen you since high school!

JERRY

Oh, my god. Tracy! How are you?

TRACY

Do you remember Liz?

She points ACROSS THE ROOM to a GROUP OF ROWDY YOUNG WOMEN, one of whom--LIZ (mid-20s)--wears a costume bridal veil.

TRACY (CONT'D)

We're having her bachelorette party!

41 INT. TOWNIE BAR -- LATER

41

Jerry is the center of attention at the bachelorette party table. He and Liz are racing to see who can chug an Irish Car Bomb faster. Jerry wins. Laughing, Liz sets down her half-full drink, spilling some of it near a pile of gifts.

TOWNIE GIRL

Lizzie, watch out! The presents!

Jerry helps the girls clear the gifts to safety. He glances at an already opened greeting card that he's picked up.

JERRY

Holy shit. I wrote this!

LIZ

Like, for your work?

JERRY

Yeah. We each have our own little signature that they put on the back...

Liz and the girls gather around, staring at--

THE BACK OF THE GREETING CARD -- Towards the bottom is a SMALL FACSIMILE OF JERRY'S HANDWRITTEN FIRST NAME.

JERRY (CONT'D)

See? "Jerry".

LIZ

Ohmigod, that's so crazy!

42 EXT. ALLEY OUTSIDE TOWNIE BAR -- LATER

42

Partially hidden in shadow, Jerry and Liz are making out against a wall. From O.S., we can hear Tracy and the other girls CALLING OUT FOR LIZ.

The voices grow closer, until the group appears around a corner. Jerry and Liz stop, drunkenly embarrassed.

Tracy marches over to them, grabbing a hold of Liz.

TRACY
C'mon, Liz. We're taking you home.

LIZ
(laughing, to Jerry)
Bye. Thanks for all the drinks...

As she leads Liz away, Tracy stares daggers at Jerry.

Before the girls are even out of sight, Jerry's dropped his pants and is pissing all over the wall.

43 INT. JERRY'S RENTAL CAR -- A SHORT WHILE LATER 43

Jerry's at the wheel, ROCKING OUT TO LITA FORD'S "KISS ME DEADLY" ON THE RADIO. Drunk-driving city.

And, as it happens, FLASHING RED AND BLUE LIGHTS appear through the rear window.

CUT TO:

44 INT. SUBURBAN POLICE STATION - HOLDING AREA -- MORNING 44

Jerry is curled up on a bench in a tiny cell, unconscious. An OFFICER appears, loudly sliding open the cell door.

SUBURBAN COP #1
Wake up. Time to go.

45 INT. SUBURBAN POLICE STATION - OFFICE -- A SHORT WHILE LATER 45

Jerry stands defiantly at a desk, where his release is being processed by ANOTHER OFFICER while the first stands nearby.

SUBURBAN COP #2
Is whoever's picking you up going to pay your bail?

JERRY
I'm paying my own bail, thanks.

He makes a show of flipping through his credit cards, before throwing down a platinum one.

46 EXT. SUBURBAN POLICE STATION -- A SHORT WHILE LATER 46

WIDE ON the front of the station as Jerry stands centered to the building. A stretch limo ROLLS INTO FRAME. The DRIVER hops out and hurries around to open the back door.

Jerry gets in; the driver gets in; and the limo rolls away.

MATCH CUT TO:

47 EXT. AIRPORT -- AFTERNOON 47

WIDE ON the arrival terminal as Jerry stands centered to it, bag in hand. A stretch limo ROLLS INTO FRAME. ANOTHER DRIVER hops out and hurries around to open the back door. Jerry gets in; the driver gets in; and the limo crawls away.

48 INT. SETH'S TOWNHOUSE APARTMENT - HOME OFFICE -- AFTERNOON 48

While working at his desk, Seth answers his ringing phone.

SETH
What's up, Jerry.

49 INT. LIMOUSINE -- CONTINUOUS 49

Jerry is riding in the back of the limo, drink in one hand, phone in the other. CUT BACK AND FORTH:

JERRY
You still have that contact at Hallmark?

SETH
Yeah. Why?

JERRY
You think you could get me a meeting with the guy?

SETH
Probably. Now I've got to know why.

JERRY
You haven't seen Fat Asshole this weekend?

SETH
You know I only see him socially when I absolutely cannot avoid it.

JERRY
It's complicated.

SETH
Why the rush? Couldn't you just live off your savings for a while?

JERRY
Have you seen how I live, Seth?

SETH
I'll put in a call tonight.

50 INT. JERRY'S NICE APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM -- LATER

50

Jerry enters, setting down his bag. He puts the house phone on speaker, dialing up his messages. As they play, he flips through his mail.

DAPHNE (O.S.)
(recorded message)
Hey, Jerry. It's Daphne.

Jerry stops, listening up.

DAPHNE (O.S.) (CONT'D)
I'm just calling because I haven't seen you in a while. I'm sure that you've been busy. But if you get a chance, I was wondering if you wanted to get together sometime. Maybe this weekend. So...give me a call when you can. Okay? I hope you're doing well. Bye.

Jerry checks his watch, mulling it over. And...he sits down on the couch, flipping on the TV.

51 INT. BAMBI'S OFFICE -- DAY

51

Jerry's curiously sexy attorney, BAMBI (late 30s), sits on a corner of her desk, facing Jerry in a chair. She maintains a bubbly attitude very much in keeping with her name.

BAMBI
You're fine, sweetie. Since it's a first offense, all you're gonna have to do is pay a few fines and attend a drug and alcohol information class once a week for a couple of months.

JERRY
So I'm not going to get locked up, or anything?

BAMBI
Oh, god, no. You're too cute to be on the inside.

JERRY
Thank you so much, Bambi.

BAMBI
Of course, sweetie. Hugs.

Bambi extends her arms for Jerry, who stands and somewhat awkwardly joins her in an embrace.

52 EXT. STREET OUTSIDE BAMBI'S OFFICE -- A SHORT WHILE LATER 52

As Jerry is about to get into his car, his cell phone RINGS.

JERRY
(answering phone)
Hello?

NOREEN (O.S.)
Hi, Jerry. It's Noreen, from Plattitudes. {Bleep} would very much like to see you in his office right away. It's urgent.

JERRY
Is he going to offer me my job back?

NOREEN (O.S.)
I certainly don't think so.

JERRY
Tell him to find the word "urethra" in his calendar and blow it out that.

NOREEN (O.S.)
If you don't come and meet with {bleep} before the end of the day, Jerry...he will be forced to initiate legal proceedings against you.

53 INT. PLATTITUDES - OFFICE HALLWAY -- LATER 53

Jerry marches down the hall with a head full of steam. He passes by PHILIP'S OFFICE--Philip and Mug are inside.

MUG
Hey!

PHILIP
Jerry!

They come out into the hallway and begin following Jerry, but he doesn't even acknowledge them. He passes by SETH'S OFFICE, and Seth hops right out, looking concerned.

SETH
Jerry, I need to talk to you...

Seth joins the power-walk chase. Jerry takes a few more steps before barging into--

54 INT. PLATTITUDES - FAT ASSHOLE'S OFFICE -- CONTINUOUS

54

Startled, Fat Asshole jumps out of his desk chair...revealing that his belt is unbuckled and his fly is wide open.

JERRY

(pause; revolted)

Why are your pants undone?

FAT ASSHOLE

Why are you trying to set meetings with Gunther Anspaugh?

JERRY

Who the hell is Gunther Anspaugh?

Seth, Philip and Mug crowd the doorway behind Jerry.

SETH

(quietly)

The guy. The Hallmark guy.

FAT ASSHOLE

You think you could set up a meeting with my biggest rival and not have me find out about it? Don't you know who I am?

JERRY

You mean who *your father* is.

FAT ASSHOLE

You're lucky Gunther has ethics. You're lucky he contacted me before agreeing to meet with you. Because as it is, I already have grounds to sue you. When you came to work for me, you signed a *contract*.

JERRY

And that contract became void when you fired me on Saturday!

Philip and Mug REACT, stunned; Jerry's confused by that.

FAT ASSHOLE

That was just something I told Noreen to say because I was pissed at you. You weren't really fired.

JERRY

(apoplectic)

...What??

FAT ASSHOLE

You sure as hell are *now*, though.

JERRY

You can't do that! You can't just tell somebody they're fired and not mean it!

FAT ASSHOLE

You want to talk about things you can't do? You can't coast for three years just because your friends vouched for you. You can't accept a bonus in advance of work and never turn the work in. You can't claim payments to escort services as a research expense!

JERRY

Yeah, I can. I write cards about love. Sex is its physical manifestation.

FAT ASSHOLE

That's a little pedantic.

A beat. Jerry's eyes go right to the word-a-day desk calendar, which Fat Asshole defensively snatches up.

JERRY

I will eat that fucking calendar if today's word doesn't just happen to be 'pedantic'.

FAT ASSHOLE

So what if it is? I already knew that word, anyway.

JERRY

No, you fucking didn't! You don't know anything! You are barely able to function as a human being! If you hadn't been born into obscene wealth, you'd be blowing people on the street for nickels!

FAT ASSHOLE

Make fun of me all you want, asshole. You're the one who's fired.

(presses intercom)

Noreen, send security up to my office.

Jerry develops a thousand-yard stare, defeated.

JERRY
Fat Asshole called *me* an asshole.

FAT ASSHOLE
What?

JERRY (V.O.)
That was supposed to be a voiceover.

55 INT. PLATTITUDES - RECEPTION AREA -- MOMENTS LATER 55

As Seth, Philip and Mug look sadly down from a few floors above, Jerry is ushered towards the exit by TWO BURLY SECURITY GUARDS. They pass by the front desk, where we only get a FLEETING GLIMPSE OF NOREEN (mostly her hair), on the phone...

NOREEN (O.S.)
Yes, {bleep}...Tim 'Ace' Jones is confirmed for ten o'clock tomorrow.

As the guards pause to open the doors, Jerry turns to stare suspiciously at Noreen. Then he gets yanked outside.

56 INT. VAGUELY IRISH BAR -- NIGHT 56

Jerry, Philip and Mug are in a booth, just about the only people in the place. Jerry's hammered, face down on the table. Philip and Mug aren't in the best shape, either.

JERRY
This is such a cliché. Guy loses job, guy immediately drowns sorrows in alcohol while lamenting.

MUG
Yeah, but you got fired twice from the same job in three days. So your situation is made unique by extenuating circumstances.

PHILIP
It's not unlike the Ashley Judd thriller 'Double Jeopardy'...
(checks time)
I really gotta get out of here.

JERRY
(lifts his head)
What? It's still early!

ALL OF THE LIGHTS COME ON IN THE BAR. It's closing time.

57 EXT. SIDEWALK OUTSIDE VAGUELY IRISH BAR -- MOMENTS LATER 57

Jerry, Philip and Mug step outside.

PHILIP

I don't think I should drive. Mugsy,
what say you about giving me a ride?

MUG

Sure. Jerry, you want one, too?

JERRY

Nah. I'm good to drive.

58 INT. JERRY'S BMW -- MOMENTS LATER 58

Jerry slides in behind the wheel and closes the door. Instead of starting the car, he produces his phone and dials a number.

59 INT. DAPHNE'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM -- CONTINUOUS 59

Daphne is sound asleep in bed while her phone RINGS AND RINGS.

60 INT. JERRY'S BMW -- CONTINUOUS 60

Jerry frowns as the ringing goes to voicemail.

DAPHNE (O.S.)

(recorded message)

Hi, it's Daphne. Please leave a message.

JERRY

(after the BEEP)

What are you doing, not answering
your phone? You can't be asleep,
it's only--

(checks time)

Two-thirty a.m. on a Tuesday. I'll
tell you what I'm gonna do: I'm
gonna call back *one more time*, give
you another chance. But that's it.

61 INT. DAPHNE'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM -- LATER 61

Daphne's phone is RINGING AND RINGING AND RINGING. It finally wakes her up. She takes a moment to catch her bearings, looking at the time. Groggily, she answers the phone.

DAPHNE

Hello...?

62 INT. JERRY'S BMW -- CONTINUOUS

62

Jerry is flying down the road, phone to his ear. CUT BACK AND FORTH:

JERRY

Finally! I only called you, like, fifty times!

DAPHNE

What are you doing?

JERRY

I'm coming to see you.

DAPHNE

No, Jerry. I don't think so.

JERRY

Don't tell me that *now!* I'm almost to your house!

DAPHNE

Something tells me you should not be operating a motor vehicle right now.

JERRY

If you get your way, I'll be operating one all the way back home.

DAPHNE

(thinks for a moment)

Fine. Only because I don't want your death on my head, I'm gonna let you come over. But you're giving me your keys and sleeping on the couch.

JERRY

The keys are yours. I think we can debate the second condition...

DAPHNE

(laughing)

No, we can't...

Jerry looks in his rearview mirror, seeing THE FLASHING LIGHTS OF A POLICE CAR. His face falls.

63 INT. URBAN POLICE STATION - OFFICE -- MORNING

63

Jerry, looking haggard in his clothes from the previous night, is settling his bail with an URBAN DESK COP. She's just run his platinum card.

URBAN DESK COP
Still won't go through. You got
another one?

Concerned, Jerry digs into his wallet.

64 EXT. URBAN POLICE STATION -- DAY 64

Jerry sits on the front steps, phone to his ear.

DAPHNE (O.S.)
(recorded message)
*...I really want to know what happened
to you. I'm worried. I hope you're
okay. Please call me back.*

The message ends. Jerry looks at his phone, thoughtful...but then he pockets it. A small coupe pulls up to a stop--no limo this time. At the wheel is Mug.

65 INT. MUG'S COUPE -- LATER 65

Mug's driving; Jerry rides shotgun.

MUG
So, um...was there any, like...man-
on-man action in jail?

JERRY
No. But even without the forced
sodomy--not a recommended experience.

66 EXT. COURTHOUSE -- DAY 66

Jerry is standing on the front landing, waiting for someone. His phone RINGS; he looks at the display:

HIS PHONE -- Indicates that "DAPHNE" is calling.

FOR A FLASH -- DAPHNE IS STANDING RIGHT IN FRONT OF JERRY.

JERRY -- Hesitates for a moment, before selecting "IGNORE".

Bambi comes out of the building, joining Jerry.

BAMBI
Good news and bad news. The good
news is now you don't have to start
taking those weekly classes right
away. The reason for that, though,
is the bad news: You have to first
do two weeks in a rehab clinic.

JERRY

A rehab clinic? Rehab is for drug addicts and alcoholics!

BAMBI

In this state, it's also for second-time DUI offenders. You won't be registered as a patient. They'll know why you're there.

Jerry begins pacing, despondent.

BAMBI (CONT'D)

I'm so sorry, sweetie. It was the best I could get for you outside of actual prison time.

(pause)

Hugs?

They hug.

67 INT. JERRY'S NICE APARTMENT - BEDROOM -- NIGHT 67

Jerry, looking depressed as all hell, is packing a duffel bag. He shows no interest in answering his RINGING phone.

68 INT. JERRY'S NICE APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM -- MORNING 68

Duffel bag by the door, Jerry is locking down his apartment. Passing by the phone, he dials up his voicemail on speaker.

DAPHNE (O.S.)

(recorded message)

Jerry, it's me again. I hate to keep calling you and leaving all these messages, but I still haven't heard from you. I don't know if you're mad at me, or what--

Jerry presses a button.

RECORDED VOICEMAIL CUE (O.S.)

Message saved.

CUT TO:

THE REHAB CLINIC MONTAGE

(MUSIC: "NOTHING'S GONNA STOP ME NOW (THEME FROM 'PERFECT STRANGERS')")

69 INT. REHAB CLINIC - RECEPTION AREA -- MORNING 69

Duffel bag at his feet, Jerry is facing the RECEPTIONIST.

REHAB CLINIC RECEPTIONIST
Do you want to pay the entire fifteen
hundred now or do you want to use
the payment plan?

JERRY
What's the payment plan?

REHAB CLINIC RECEPTIONIST
Half now, half when you check out.

Jerry frowns, producing his last working credit card.

70 INT. REHAB CLINIC - COUNSELOR'S OFFICE -- DAY 70

Jerry's in session with his rumpled REHAB COUNSELOR (50s),
who's reading questions from a list.

REHAB COUNSELOR
Have you ever had any blackouts after
drinking?

JERRY
No.

71 INT. REHAB CLINIC - SMOKING ROOM -- DAY 71

Jerry is crammed in the tiny space with SEVERAL RESIDENTS
puffing on cigarettes. Among them is a PREGNANT WOMAN.

SMOKING PREGNANT LADY
(emphysema voice)
People can judge me all they want.
It's my fucking baby.

72 INT. REHAB CLINIC - COUNSELOR'S OFFICE -- DAY 72

REHAB COUNSELOR
Have you ever been absent from work
or lost a job because of drinking?

JERRY
The opposite, actually.

73 INT. REHAB CLINIC - MEETING ROOM 'A' -- AFTERNOON 73

A MUSCLEBOUND, GOOGLEY-EYED PSYCHOPATH WITH A HANDLEBAR
MOUSTACHE is "in group", Jerry a part of it.

GOOGLEY-EYED PSYCHOPATH
The sticker on my truck said there
was a fuckin' raccoon in there. Did
the cop really fuckin' think there
wasn't gonna be a raccoon?

74 INT. REHAB CLINIC - COUNSELOR'S OFFICE -- DAY 74

REHAB COUNSELOR
Do you ever drive after drinking?
(beat)
Oh. Right.

75 INT. REHAB CLINIC - JERRY'S ROOM -- NIGHT 75

In the narrow room with two beds along either wall, Jerry is lying in his small bed, reading. His SQUAT, BALD HISPANIC ROOMMATE is pacing back and forth, fuming.

REHAB ROOMMATE
(heavy accent)
Fuck that fucking security guy, making
me get off the fucking phone!

He grabs the largest hardback book in Jerry's pile.

REHAB ROOMMATE (CONT'D)
Can I borrow?

76 INT. REHAB CLINIC - MEN'S RESIDENTIAL HALLWAY -- SECONDS LATER 76

Jerry pokes his head out the door and into chaos: Down at the corner of the hallway--near a payphone--Jerry's roommate is mercilessly pummeling a SECURITY GUARD with Jerry's book.

The OTHER RESIDENTS appear at their doorways, entertained by the show. Chagrined, Jerry slinks back into his room.

77 INT. REHAB CLINIC - COUNSELOR'S OFFICE -- DAY 77

REHAB COUNSELOR
Based on what I've observed, I
wouldn't describe you as an alcoholic.
I'm going to classify you as an
"occasional social abuser" of alcohol.

JERRY
You mean like everyone who drinks?

REHAB COUNSELOR
(annoyed)
I could review your file again and
focus on the alcoholic tendencies...

Jerry is quickly on his feet, snatching the paperwork.

END REHAB CLINIC MONTAGE.

78 EXT. JERRY'S NICE APARTMENT BUILDING -- AFTERNOON

78

As a taxi drives away, Jerry lugs his bag to his front door. Taped to it is a piece of paper that reads:

"THREE DAY NOTICE - PAY RENT OR QUIT"

JERRY

Awesome.

Jerry rips the paper off the door and heads inside.

79 INT. AMERICAN GREETINGS OFFICE -- DAY

79

The sprawling, impressive office is appropriate for one of the industry's leading companies. So is the handsome, well-tailored INTERVIEWER seated across from Jerry.

AMERICAN GREETINGS INTERVIEWER

You're a talented guy, Jerry--your work certainly speaks to that fact. Nothing's been decided yet, but I want to be up front with you about something: Should you make the cut to the final group of candidates... You'd have to take a drug test.

JERRY

Okay.

AMERICAN GREETINGS INTERVIEWER

The test would be able to tell if you'd had any drugs in your system over the previous thirty days.

JERRY

That's fine.

AMERICAN GREETINGS INTERVIEWER

(highly skeptical)
Really.

He jots something down on a notepad. Jerry frowns, puzzled.

80 INT. FEELINGS INCORPORATED OFFICE -- DAY

80

Lesser company, lesser office, lesser INTERVIEWER.

FEELINGS INTERVIEWER

This a crucial stage in our company's development. Any right move could make us, and any wrong one could break us. Bringing somebody in with your talent, that could make us.

JERRY

That's very nice of you to say.

FEELINGS INTERVIEWER

On the other hand, bringing in somebody with a history of drug problems...that's a move that could break us. So what is someone in my position to recommend?

JERRY

Um...the first option?

The interviewer snorts, as though such a suggestion is absurd, and jots something down. Again, Jerry looks confused.

81 INT. STEVE'S GREETING CARDS AND HANGING PLANTS -- DAY

81

Not so much an "office" as it is a "filthy apartment". Jerry's seated on a metal fold-out chair while STEVE himself-- the cracked-out owner and sole employee--frantically digs through the large boxes and piles of trash strewn about.

STEVE

All right, fuck it. I can't find my business card. But it's awesome. It says, like, "Steve's Greeting Cards and Hanging Plants", and it's got, like, a picture of a plant.

JERRY

And a greeting card?

STEVE

Huh? No.

Steve digs up a crumpled sheet of paper and a pencil, and hands them both to Jerry.

STEVE (CONT'D)

I want you to write down a number that you think is reasonable, and that you think *I* will think is reasonable.

JERRY

Oh. Okay. Are we talking annual, or bi-monthly, or...

STEVE

We're talking *ten figures*.

Jerry reacts, puzzled by the juxtaposition of what Steve just said and the sight of A CAT CRAPPING ON THE FLOOR.

STEVE (CONT'D)
A phone number.

Jerry looks back to Steve, stumped. A lengthy pause.

STEVE (CONT'D)
Your *dealer's* phone number, dude.
Hook me up and you're totally hired.

82 EXT. JERRY'S NICE APARTMENT BUILDING -- DAY

82

Jerry is seated with Philip and Mug at a table, an island in the sea of his belongings: *yard sale*. OLD LADIES, TWENTYSOMETHINGS and WEIRDOS are poring over the remnants.

JERRY
I'm going to kill that fat asshole.

PHILIP
There's no proof that {bleep} spread rumors through the industry that you're a drug addict.

MUG
Although we did hear that one thing about the phone call.

JERRY
What phone call?

PHILIP
I thought that really happened.

JERRY
What phone call?

MUG
{Bleep}, I guess, told some people that you called his house at, like, three in the morning, and you were all cracked out and rambling.

Jerry stares in disbelief at Mug, rage boiling.

JERRY
First of all, how do you hear something like that and not tell me?

UPTIGHT WOMAN
(to Jerry)
How much for that console table?

MUG
I didn't want you to be embarrassed.

JERRY

I wouldn't be embarrassed, because it didn't fucking happen!

UPTIGHT WOMAN

Excuse me.

JERRY

One time, I did call him pretty early. I had to because I was going to be traveling all day.

PHILIP

Jerry, how much is the console table?

JERRY

But it wasn't three-thirty, it was, like, six. And I called *the office*, not *his house*, specifically because I didn't want to wake him up!

PHILIP

Jerry.

JERRY

And I was talking to him about *work*! I wasn't rambling! I might have sounded a little frenzied, but that was only because I was running to catch a plane! Man, fuck that fat asshole!

PHILIP

Jerry!

JERRY

The console table is fifty dollars!

UPTIGHT WOMAN

Fifteen?

JERRY

Five-zero.

UPTIGHT WOMAN

I'll give you forty if you put it in my car.

Jerry gets up and walks over to the console table.

JERRY

I should seriously sue him for defamation of character, or something.

PHILIP

You wouldn't have enough to go on.

JERRY

He told potential employers that I was a drug addict!

Jerry picks up the table, following the woman to her car.

PHILIP

But you would have to prove that that is specifically what prevented you from getting any of those jobs.

MUG

Yeah. If you tried to say that weren't a drug addict, {bleep} could point out that you had been in rehab.

The Uptight Woman stops on a dime, wheeling around.

UPTIGHT WOMAN

No. I'm not going to support your habit. I don't want the table.

Jerry, Mug and Philip stare in shock at the woman.

UPTIGHT WOMAN (CONT'D)

I was going to get the Ab Roller, too, but forget it.

MUG

(hesitant)

Actually...the Ab Roller's mine.

Jerry turns to Mug, rendered speechless by his own anger.

UPTIGHT WOMAN

How much?

MUG

Fifteen.

The Uptight Woman hands Mug cash and takes an "Ab Roller" off the table. She sneers at Jerry as she walks past:

UPTIGHT WOMAN

Get a job, addict.

Jerry's eyes of fury remained locked on Mug.

83 INT. JERRY'S NICE APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM -- MORNING

83

Just about EVERYTHING IS *GONE*, save for the couch and the enormous TV, which Jerry failed to turn off before passing out. An army of fallen beer bottles surrounds him.

PHONE COMMERCIAL VOICEOVER (V.O.)
(blaring)
Someone is waiting to hear from you.

Jerry snaps awake, alarmed.

ON TV -- A COMMERCIAL FOR A LONG-DISTANCE PHONE COMPANY shows a GRANDMOTHER receiving a phone call from a LITTLE GIRL.

PHONE COMMERCIAL VOICEOVER (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Whether you're brightening someone's day...

LITTLE GIRL (ON T.V.)
Happy birthday, Grandma!

The commercial CUTS TO a YOUNG SOLDIER, talking on the phone with his relieved PARENTS.

PHONE COMMERCIAL VOICEOVER (V.O.)
Setting someone's heart at ease...

SOLDIER (ON T.V.)
I'll be home soon, Mom and Dad.

Inspired, Jerry picks up his phone and dials a few numbers.

PHONE COMMERCIAL VOICEOVER (V.O.)
Or just letting someone know that you're a fucking scumbag...

Jerry pauses, looking in confusion at the TV.

The commercial now shows DAPHNE, having received a phone call from JERRY.

JERRY (ON T.V.)
Sorry I haven't called you in a while. I was busy getting fired and arrested for multiple DUIs. But good news: I'm out of rehab! Wanna hang out? We should probably do it at your place, since I sold all my furniture.

TV Daphne looks appalled.

PHONE COMMERCIAL VOICEOVER (V.O.)
Vericom will bring you together.

THE REAL JERRY -- Stops dialing, setting his phone down. He turns off the TV, disturbed.

Then the phone RINGS. Jerry answers immediately.

JERRY

Daphne?

SUMMER (O.S.)

Um...hi. Is this Jerry?

JERRY

Yeah...

SUMMER (O.S.)

This is Summer. I'm buying your car on Ebay?

CUT TO:

84 EXT. HILLY RESIDENTIAL AREA -- AFTERNOON 84

Jerry's BMW climbs a steep, twisting road in a neighborhood of obvious affluence, each house more impressive than the next. Mug's coupe is following it.

MUG (O.S.)

We just passed the two-and-a-half-hour mark.

85 INT. MUG'S COUPE -- CONTINUOUS 85

Mug's on his cell phone while driving.

MUG

You couldn't have just waited until she could come pick it up?

86 INT. JERRY'S BMW -- CONTINUOUS 86

Jerry's at the wheel, phone to his ear. CUT BACK AND FORTH:

JERRY

My landlord's going to start eviction proceedings if I don't pay my back rent by tomorrow. I can't wait for this money.

MUG

(beat, squinting)
I think one of your brakelights is out.

Jerry looks at Mug in his rearview mirror.

JERRY
Are you shitting me?

MUG
WATCH IT!

Jerry looks ahead to see an ELDERLY NUN crossing the street in front of him, completely oblivious. He jerks the wheel--

87 EXT. HILLY RESIDENTIAL AREA -- CONTINUOUS

87

Tires SQUEALING, Jerry's car misses the nun by inches as it careens of the road and right into an oak tree, its entire front end instantly demolished.

Mug's car pulls up to a stop behind Jerry's and Mug jumps out. The nun has remained completely unaware of the incident, finishing her shuffle across the road towards a CHURCH.

Mug runs up to the wrecked BMW to find Jerry, bleeding from the head and looking dazed, fighting the deployed airbag.

MUG
Jerry! Are you okay??

Jerry opens his mouth to answer, but he's interrupted by the DING of a maintenance alert. A dashboard warning light comes on to indicate: "LEFT BRAKELIGHT OUT".

Jerry and Mug both stare at the light in awkward silence.

88 INT. SUMMER'S FAMILY'S HOME - LIVING ROOM -- NIGHT

88

Through the large front window of the magnificent house, we see Jerry's crumpled car sitting dead in the driveway, as a tow truck is driving off.

Jerry--pressing a cold compress to his head, *clearly suffering from a mild concussion*--and Mug are seated on a couch. Facing them from across a coffee table are SUMMER (16)--in the flesh, BAWLING uncontrollably--and her ANGRY FATHER (50s).

ANGRY FATHER
Just to get you fucking criminals
out of my house, I'm going to buy
what's left of the car for a thousand.

From his pocket he produces a fat roll of hundred-dollar-bills, counts out ten, and drops them on the coffee table.

JERRY
(slurred)
We're not criminals. I was only in
rehab 'cause of the DUIs.

Mortified, Mug snatches the bills and gets to his feet.

MUG

Let's go, Jerry.

JERRY

Wait. A thousand dollars? That's, like...a fortieth of the price we agreed on.

ANGRY FATHER

Since you're so good at math, why don't you figure out how much it's gonna cost me to get that thing back to working condition?

Disinterested, Jerry lets his eyes settle on the nubile Summer. His grin is delirious and entirely unsavory.

JERRY

I'm a happy person with happy things.

With that, Jerry pitches forward--knocking his head on the coffee table--and falls onto the floor, unconscious.

CUT TO:

89 EXT. JERRY'S CRAPPY APARTMENT BUILDING -- NIGHT

89

At long last, Jerry has succumbed to reality and downgraded his living situation. A much crappier-looking building in a much crappier-looking area than his previous residence.

PHILIP (O.S.)

Our presents for you are very similar.

90 INT. JERRY'S CRAPPY APARTMENT - "LIVING SPACE" -- CONTINUOUS

90

The living room and the bedroom are one and the same; the kitchen/bathroom area is partially visible in the background. Jerry is seated on his bed, facing Philip and Mug in a couple of chairs. Each of them is holding a wrapped present.

PHILIP

But that's a deliberate two-pronged attack.

MUG

My idea.

PHILIP

Since you've got your big-ass TV but no TV *signal*, you're probably going
(MORE)

PHILIP (CONT'D)
 to be watching a lot more DVDs. And
 we our proud to present you with two
 titles that have heretofore been
 shamefully lacking in your collection.

Jerry unwraps the DVD from Philip, revealing:

PHILIP (CONT'D)
 'Under Siege'...

Mug thrusts his gift towards Jerry, very excited.

MUG
 And 'Under Siege 2: Dark Territory'!
 (then)
 I wanted to get you the sequel so I
 could say "Under Siege Two: Dark
 Territory".

Jerry stares at the DVDs, nodding ponderously.

91 INT. VAGUELY IRISH BAR -- NIGHT

91

The place is packed. Jerry and some FRIENDS--including Philip
 and Mug--are crammed into a table in the back. At the urging
 of the crowd, Jerry throws back a shot, adding another glass
 to the sea of empties.

FEMALE FRIEND
 Jerry, you didn't open my card!

Jerry finds the envelope she's pointing to, reading the seal.

JERRY
 (to Mug and Philip)
 Plattitudes! Some of your guys'
 work, perhaps.

He tears it open and reads the card, smiling politely.

JERRY (CONT'D)
 Thank you, Jennifer.
 (holds up card)
 Philip? Mugsy? This either one of
 yours?

Mug and Philip shake their heads, Mug looking tense.

PHILIP
 No, sir.

JERRY

Maybe Seth is here in spirit, even if he couldn't bring himself to be here in person...

He flips the card over to check the "signature" on the back, finding that it reads: "ACE".

JERRY (CONT'D)

Who the fuck is 'Ace'?

Suddenly, the air has been sucked out of the party.

92 INT. MUG'S COUPE -- LATER

92

Jerry rides shotgun, cooking with rageahol. Mug is driving; Philip is passed out in the backseat.

JERRY

I just think it's funny that you guys have been friends with my replacement all this time but were afraid to tell me.

MUG

We're *not* friends with him! We hardly even know him!

JERRY

Philip said he was nice!

MUG

Philip's hammered, and so are you!

JERRY

Oh, so he's *not* nice?

MUG

No! Yes! *I don't know!*

JERRY

If he's so nice, why didn't he come with you guys tonight? Is he too busy, out spending my money?

Mug sighs, shaking his head. Jerry simmers for a few moments.

JERRY (CONT'D)

"Tim 'Ace' Jones"... Where the fuck does someone get off calling himself 'Ace'? Is he a fighter pilot? Or the lead guitarist for KISS?

PHILIP
 (shifting, groggy)
 Nah, man... He's nice.

Philip lovingly pats Mug's shoulder and falls back asleep.

Jerry stares daggers at Mug...who turns up the radio.

CUT TO:

THE SPIRALING INTO OBLIVION MONTAGE

(MUSIC: THE KILLS' "FRIED MY LITTLE BRAINS")

93 EXT. SHOPPING DISTRICT SIDEWALK -- DAY 93

Jerry walks down the street, looking hopeful.

94 INT. BANANA REPUBLIC -- DAY 94

PAN ALONG a line of JOB APPLICANTS, ALL OF THEM FIFTEEN- AND SIXTEEN-YEAR-OLD GIRLS, who are folding clothes as quickly as possible for the approval of a MANAGER. All of the piles are looking pretty good, until we reach--

JERRY: no pile; struggling with a cashmere turtleneck sweater.

JERRY
 I don't quite understand what to do
 with the neck, here.

95 EXT. SHOPPING DISTRICT SIDEWALK -- LATER 95

Jerry walks in the opposite direction, looking defeated.

96 INT. VAGUELY IRISH BAR -- NIGHT 96

Jerry is seated among a GROUP OF FRIENDS as Philip is standing, raising a toast.

PHILIP
 Here's to Mug, who's been put in
 charge of his entire department!

Jerry partakes in the CHEER for the sheepish Mug.

97 EXT. SIDEWALK - RESTAURANT BLOCK -- DAY 97

Jerry walks down the street, looking hopeful.

- 98 INT. HIGH-END RESTAURANT -- DAY 98
- Jerry is seated at a round table group interview session with OTHER SERVER APPLICANTS, looking positively stumped under the inquisitive stare of the RESTAURANT MANAGER.
- JERRY
- What *region of France* would I recommend someone select a wine from if they ordered *fish*?
- 99 EXT. SIDEWALK - RESTAURANT BLOCK -- LATER 99
- Jerry walks in the opposite direction, looking defeated.
- 100 INT. VAGUELY IRISH BAR -- NIGHT 100
- Jerry is standing on the fringes of a GROUP OF PEOPLE raising their glasses to Philip.
- SETH
- Let's hear it for the new President of Creative Division at Plattitudes!
- Jerry tries to appear game as everyone CHEERS.
- 101 EXT. TOURIST DISTRICT SIDEWALK -- DAY 101
- Jerry walks down the street, looking hopeful.
- 102 INT. BARNES & NOBLE STORE -- DAY 102
- Jerry is tailing the FEMALE STORE MANAGER through the aisles.
- BOOKSTORE MANAGER
- This might seem weird, since it wasn't you who wrote them, but...
- She stops at a section of books that were all written by Jerry's father. Jerry sighs, tensing. The manager takes a copy of *The Magellan Cipher* off the shelf, pen in hand.
- BOOKSTORE MANAGER (CONT'D)
- Would you mind signing one?
- Jerry stares blankly at her for a moment. Then he just turns away, loosening his tie as he heads for the escalator.
- END MONTAGE.
- 103 INT. VAGUELY IRISH BAR -- NIGHT 103
- Jerry is standing at the bar, his absence not noticed by the GROUP OF PEOPLE in back who are surrounding SETH.

After the toast, Mug peels away from the group and comes over to Jerry.

MUG
Guy gets to start *his own brand*,
bankrolled under the company umbrella.
I still can't fucking believe it.

Jerry says nothing, setting down his empty glass.

MUG (CONT'D)
Need another one?

As Mug waves down the BARTENDER, Seth approaches, happily inebriated. He throws an arm around Jerry.

SETH
You see Debbie?

Jerry follows Seth's extended finger to a corner of the bar...

Where DAPHNE is with a GROUP OF HER FRIENDS.

JERRY -- Blanches.

JERRY
Daphne...

SETH
Right. You guys had a good thing
going for a while, didn't you? What
ever happened with that?

Gathering his courage, Jerry stands up and walks across the bar towards Daphne's group. He stops a couple of feet from her, unnoticed as of yet. Unsteady.

Abruptly, he makes a beeline for the exit.

DAPHNE -- Looks up only to catch a fleeting glimpse of what might be Jerry disappearing out the door.

AT THE BAR -- Mug, turning to hand Jerry his drink, looks confused. Seth takes it, his eyes on Daphne's group.

SETH (CONT'D)
I wonder if Debbie's friend is here.
That chick is a *freak*...

Mug frowns, watching Seth gulp down the drink meant for Jerry.

104 INT. DRUGSTORE -- NIGHT

104

STEELY DAN'S "DIRTY WORK" IS PIPING THROUGH THE LOUDSPEAKERS as Jerry wanders through the nearly unoccupied store, unkempt and completely shitfaced. He's barely able to stay on his feet, knocking items off shelves as he veers in the aisles.

He eventually finds himself in: THE GREETING CARD AISLE. TWO YOUNG WOMEN--both of them still dressed up from a night out and a little tipsy--are perusing the cards.

GREETING CARD GIRL #1
God, they don't have shit here.

GREETING CARD GIRL #2
Just pick one and let's go.

JERRY
What's the occasion?

The girls pause briefly, but are drunk enough themselves to indulge Jerry in conversation.

GREETING CARD GIRL #2
Her anniversary with her fiancé.

GREETING CARD GIRL #1
I already got him a gift and everything, but the card's kind of a big deal this year. 'Cause we've been together for like a really long time, and ever since we got engaged, we've both been kind of worried that, like, the magic's gone. Y'know what I mean? But all they've got left are these blank cards.

JERRY
You got a pen?

GREETING CARD GIRL #2
I do...

Girl #2 digs into her purse, producing a pen.

JERRY
(to Girl #1)
Use that blank card you're holding, write this down: General salutation, name, "On Our 'X' Anniversary"...

Girl #1 is confused, but writes as dictated.

JERRY (CONT'D)

"The day that I met you was one of the greatest days of my life. It was when I first began to dream of how exciting my life could be... And I would never want to go back to it."

The girl takes pause, but writes what Jerry says.

JERRY (CONT'D)

"Because if I did, I would miss every day that I've lived since...when you've made that dream come true."

The girls look at each other, duly impressed.

JERRY (CONT'D)

"Here's to our life together and may I never sleep again, happy anniversary, love"--your name.

GREETING CARD GIRL #1

That's really good.

JERRY

That's what I do. I write greeting cards for a living.

GREETING CARD GIRL #2

Seriously?

JERRY

Yeah. I'm *Jerry*. The romance guy. I write the words that make people love each other...

Jerry attempts to kiss Girl #2--who shoves him away, appalled.

GREETING CARD GIRL #2

What the fuck are you doing?!

GREETING CARD GIRL #1

Let's go.

Both of the girls hurry away.

JERRY

(calling out)

Whatever! Joke's on you, 'cause guess what? It's all fake! Made-up shit off the top of my head, every time, all the time!

At the end of the aisle behind Jerry appears a SECURITY GUARD.

DRUGSTORE SECURITY GUARD

Sir, I think you better leave the store.

Jerry wheels around, redirecting his rant without pause.

JERRY

But is that what I got fired for?
No. I never got called out on that.
You know what I got fired for?
Spanish and bereavement cards! *That's*
what I went out on! *That* was the
end of Jerry! Un-fucking-believable,
right? I mean, who the fuck really
cares about Spanish and bereavement
cards?

The guard's eyes briefly dart to a section of cards. Jerry follows his gaze to a DIVIDER THAT READS: "*SYMPATHY - SPANISH*"

JERRY -- Loses his footing and stumbles into the rack, dragging a pile of cards with him as he falls to the ground.

The guard advances. Jerry staggers to his feet, pulling greeting cards off of himself as he makes a run for the exit.

105 INT. JERRY'S CRAPPY APARTMENT - "LIVING SPACE" -- NIGHT 105

Jerry is slumped on his bed, watching his DVD of *Under Siege*.

More specifically, he's watching it *on pause* as he masturbates to A FROZEN IMAGE OF A TOPLESS ERIKA ELANIAK.

JERRY

I'm a happy person... I'm a happy
person... I'm a happy person...

Approaching climax, Jerry desperately looks for something he can use for cleanup. He grabs the nearest piece of paper--

Seeing that it is a FINAL NOTICE FROM THE ELECTRIC COMPANY.

POP. Every electrical appliance in the apartment shuts off simultaneously, leaving Jerry in DARKNESS AND SILENCE.

KID ON PLANE (O.S.)

What are you doing?

JERRY (O.S.)

My job.

106 INT. COMMERCIAL AIRLINER - COACH CABIN -- DAY

106

Jerry is squished into a middle seat on a full flight. The KID in front of him is leaning over his seat, focused on the GREETING CARD MOCK-UP on which Jerry is working.

KID ON PLANE

What's your job?

JERRY

I write greeting cards.

KID ON PLANE

Like birthday cards?

JERRY

Sometimes.

KID ON PLANE

Is that a birthday card?

JERRY

No. This is a very special kind of card. Nobody's ever made one like it before.

KID ON PLANE

What kind is it?

JERRY

A suicide card.

That gets the attention of the TWO PEOPLE sitting on either side of Jerry.

KID ON PLANE

What's suicide?

JERRY

It's when you kill yourself.

KID ON PLANE

No way.

JERRY

Way. A lot of times, when people kill themselves, they leave a note for other people to read explaining why they did it. They want these notes to be unique, poetic and emotionally impactful. But the problem, Billy, is that people are stupid.

KID ON PLANE

My name's not Billy.

JERRY

Your average American can't string together a coherent sentence, never mind effectively convey any kind of genuine emotion via the written word. Since the dawn of the greeting card industry, people have turned to it to speak for them on birthdays, anniversaries, for get-wells and apologies. So why have they taken matters into their own hands when it comes to arguably the most important thing they'll ever say--their last words? More or less religious-based moral hypocrisy is why, Billy, but that's a much larger issue.

KID ON PLANE

My name's Tyler.

JERRY

I say, no more. As a professional and--at one time--rather accomplished greeting card writer, I'm smashing the only taboo in the business and opening the floodgates to a previously untapped and potentially very lucrative market. What you're looking at is the prototype for the first-ever mass-produced suicide card.

KID ON PLANE

What does it say?

JERRY

Since it is a prototype, I'm sticking to primarily generic yet poignant language. But, like on any card, there'll be plenty of space for the customer to fill in the blanks. Y'know: "My existence is cursed... There's no sense in fighting it... I'm pushing thirty and I have to move back into my father's house, I had ask my sister to buy me the plane ticket just so I could do that..." That kind of stuff.

KID ON PLANE

Is it going to make you rich?

JERRY

It's going to make *somebody* rich.

A FLIGHT ATTENDANT leans across Jerry's row to hand a snack box to the OVERWEIGHT MAN in the window seat.

OVERWEIGHT MAN ON PLANE

(to Jerry)

I don't think it's right to be talking to a little kid about that.

JERRY

And your fourth snack box of the flight is, what--the pinnacle of sound thinking? Let me know if you find my lower right quadrant. I'm seriously fucking worried about it.

With a glare, Jerry gets back to work.

107 OMITTED

107

107A INT. JERRY'S FATHER'S HOME - STORAGE ROOM -- AFTERNOON

107A

Jerry is clearing aside stacks of cardboard boxes, trying to uncover some semblance of HIS CHILDHOOD BEDROOM.

In the doorway stand Gerald--dressed in a monogrammed bathrobe with an oxygen cart at his side--and Venezuela from Venezuela.

GERALD

Despite what you may think, Gerald, I'm not an unfair man. That's why I've decided to defer your first week's rent while you find a job.

JERRY

(stops, taken aback)

You're charging me *rent*?

GERALD

Gerald...I have never been one to say 'I told you so'--

INSERT -- A SERIES OF SMASH CUTS:

108 INT. JERRY'S CHILDHOOD BEDROOM -- THE 1980S

108

A FORTYSOMETHING GERALD stands over a BAWLING LITTLE BOY JERRY, staring at a DEAD HAMSTER on the floor.

GERALD

I told you so.

109 INT. AMBULANCE -- THE 1990S 109

A FIFTYSOMETHING GERALD sits by, smoking, while PARAMEDICS work on a SCREAMING TEENAGE JERRY IN A BASEBALL UNIFORM, HIS ELBOW BENT COMPLETELY BACKWARDS.

GERALD
I told you so.

PARAMEDIC
Sir, you cannot smoke in here!

110 OMITTED 110

110A INT. JERRY'S FATHER'S HOME - FOYER -- HALF AN HOUR AGO 110A

Following the PREGNANT MARGOT inside, Jerry sets his bags down in front of Gerald and Venezuela from Venezuela.

GERALD
I told you so.

RESUME SCENE:

111 OMITTED 111

111A INT. JERRY'S FATHER'S HOME - STORAGE ROOM -- AFTERNOON 111A

GERALD
--But I repeatedly advised you when you got into your previous line of "work" to formulate a *backup plan*. Now that the inevitable has occurred, I feel somewhat responsible. So what may appear to be my taking a hard-line stance is, in actuality, my attempt at making amends.

Jerry resumes clearing space.

JERRY
I have a plan.

GERALD
You can't use any of my cars.

JERRY
Don't need to.

GERALD
And forget trying to sweet-talk Venezuela from Venezuela into being your chauffeur. Her services are needed here at all times.

JERRY
Wouldn't dream of it.

Satisfied, Gerald leads Venezuela from Venezuela away.

VENEZUELA FROM VENEZUELA
Is nice to have you here, Mister
Jerry!

JERRY
(under his breath)
Enjoy it while you can...

112 OMITTED 112

112A INT. JERRY'S FATHER'S HOME - STORAGE ROOM -- MORNING 112A

Weeks have passed, as indicated by the room's progression towards a pseudo-functional living space/home office.

Jerry is seated at a desk, facing a laptop computer whose screen displays a spreadsheet of cold-call phone numbers. Phone to his ear, he's reading aloud from a printed script:

JERRY
Hello, my name is Jerry. I'm calling
on behalf of "Change-Up", the leader
in coin storage technology...

While he rattles off the bullshit pitch, Jerry is sketching
DIFFERENT IDEAS FOR HIS SUICIDE CARD.

DISSOLVE TO:

112B INT. JERRY'S FATHER'S HOME - STORAGE ROOM -- DAY 112B

The room has become more lived-in; JERRY'S FACIAL HAIR SHOWS
SEVERAL MORE WEEKS' WORTH OF GROWTH.

JERRY
A "piggy bank"? Yeah, we've heard
that one before. But I assure you
that all of the monetarial-
organizational devices that Change-
Up has to offer--
(pause)
No..."monetarial" is not a word...

THE SUICIDE CARD -- Is coming along nicely.

DISSOLVE TO:

112C INT. JERRY'S FATHER'S HOME - STORAGE ROOM -- EVENING

112C

Weeks have become months; JERRY ROCKS A HOMELESS-MAN BEARD.

JERRY

"Christmas Special" is just a name,
Rabbi Davisson. The promotion is
available to people of all faiths--
as long as they're penny-pinchers.

(cringing)

I meant *money-savers*...

(DIAL TONE)

Eh, fuck you.

Jerry hangs up.

Barging into the room comes WILL (30ish)--Margot's husband--
who's drunk. Behind him, A CHRISTMAS PARTY IS IN FULL SWING.

WILL

Time to join the party, Mountain
Man.

JERRY

It's not a "Mountain-Man" beard,
it's a "Homeless-Man" beard.

Margot--who is visibly PREGNANT--appears alongside Will.

MARGOT

I'm eating for two, he's drinking
for like *nineteen*. Help us out?

Jerry stands...taking one last glance at his EVER-PROGRESSING
SUICIDE CARD MOCK-UP before heading out of the room.

113 OMITTED
THRU
120

113
THRU
120

121 INT. JERRY'S FATHER'S HOME - UPSTAIRS HALLWAY -- NIGHT

121

The house is PACKED WITH UPPER-CLASS REVELERS. Jerry's first
in line outside the bathroom, obviously having been waiting
for a while. The door swings open and a STOCK BROKER-TYPE
and his GIRLFRIEND come stumbling out, giggling.

STOCK BROKER GUY

All yours, chief!

122 INT. JERRY'S FATHER'S HOME - UPSTAIRS BATHROOM -- CONTINUOUS

122

Jerry steps into the bathroom, closing the door behind him.
He's barely taken a step towards the toilet when he spots:

A MAGAZINE-PAGE POUCH OF COCAINE, LEFT OPEN ON THE COUNTER.

JERRY -- Stops in his tracks.

JERRY (V.O.)
In my defense...it was the Holidays.

CUT TO:

THE STOP-MOTION ANIMATION "COCAINE CHRISTMAS" SEQUENCE

(MUSIC: BURL IVES' "A HOLLY JOLLY CHRISTMAS")

123 **INT. JERRY'S FATHER'S HOME - LIVING ROOM -- NIGHT (STOP-MOTION)** 123

STOP-MOTION JERRY, all coked up, is at the center of a GROUP OF STOP-MOTION PEOPLE, anxiously jibber-jabbering:

STOP-MOTION JERRY
Yeah, yeah, yeah. Yeah, yeah, yeah.
Listen, listen, listen. What I'm
saying is--what I'm saying is--no,
just listen! Listen listen listen!

124 **INT. JERRY'S FATHER'S HOME - STORAGE ROOM -- NIGHT (STOP-MOTION)** 124

Alone, Stop-Motion Animated Jerry snorts some more cocaine.

125 **INT. JERRY'S FATHER'S HOME - DEN -- NIGHT (STOP-MOTION)** 125

Coked-up Stop-Motion Jerry is in the depths of an "intense" conversation with a few other FUCKED-UP STOP-MOTION STRANGERS.

STOP-MOTION JERRY
You guys--I'm serious. You guys--
you gotta understand something. I
fucking *love you guys*. I'm serious.
Nothing else matters. All the rest
is bullshit. It's all about us.

126 **INT. JERRY'S FATHER'S HOME - STORAGE ROOM -- DAWN (STOP-MOTION)** 126

Stop-Motion Jerry finishes his latest dip into the cocaine, then dials up a number on his cell phone.

DAPHNE (O.S.)
(straight to voicemail)
*Hi, you've reached Daphne. Sorry I
missed your call. Please leave a
message.*

STOP-MOTION JERRY
Hey! It's Jerry!
(MORE)

STOP-MOTION JERRY (CONT'D)
 Uh...I know we haven't talked in a while. I just wanted to say hi, y'know...and Merry Christmas. I hope you're doing well. Okay? Call me back. Okay? Merry Christmas. I miss you. I hope you're doing well. Okay. Okay. Uh...bye.

He hangs up the phone, licking at the loose fragments of cocaine dust and rubbing a finger along his gums.

END STOP-MOTION ANIMATION SEQUENCE.

DISSOLVE TO:

127 INT. JERRY'S FATHER'S HOME - LIVING ROOM -- MORNING 127

The house is DEAD SILENT. Jerry is tossing and turning on the couch, wide awake in the worst way.

Eventually, we hear SHUFFLING ABOUT O.S. Venezuela from Venezuela--in her robe, just having woken--pads into view.

VENEZUELA FROM VENEZUELA
 Oh--Mister Jerry. Merry Christmas.

JERRY
 Huh? Yeah. Do you have any downers?

Venezuela from Venezuela stares at Jerry, confused.

JERRY (CONT'D)
 Like, drugs...to relax. To slow down? Sleepy drugs? Vicodin? Xanax? Anything like that around?

VENEZUELA FROM VENEZUELA
 Mister Gerald's old medicine?

Now *Jerry's* confused.

128 INT. JERRY'S FATHER HOME - GARAGE -- MOMENTS LATER 128

Jerry looks on as Venezuela from Venezuela moves aside junk to get at some storage boxes. She opens one up.

VENEZUELA FROM VENEZUELA
 Mister Gerald can't take anymore, because of lungs.

Jerry peers into the box...and is utterly dumfounded.

JERRY
 ...And to all a good night.

SFX: SLEIGH BELLS

He's staring at A STOCKPILE OF MEDICINAL MARIJUANA.

JERRY (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 I know what you're thinking. But I
 actually don't like pot. It gives
 me a headache.

CUT TO:

129	OMITTED	129
129A	INT. JERRY'S FATHER'S HOME - STORAGE ROOM -- DAY	129A

Jerry--HAVING SHAVED OFF HIS HOMELESS-MAN BEARD--is seated
 at his desk, a spreadsheet on his laptop screen...

JERRY (V.O.)
 You know who *does* like pot, though?
 Pretty much everyone else on Earth.

But he's no longer telemarketing.

TWO NERVOUS-LOOKING HIGH SCHOOL KIDS enter the room. One of
 them hands Jerry cash; he counts it, then hands the kids a
 pre-measured baggie full of weed. The kids hastily exit;
 Jerry records the transaction on his spreadsheet.

MATCH CUT TO:

130	INT. JERRY'S FATHER'S HOME - STORAGE ROOM -- DAY	130
-----	--	-----

A MIDDLE-AGED HIPPIE enters Jerry's "office"; the transaction
 goes forth just like the last one we witnessed.

JERRY (V.O.)
 My shit wasn't that good, but my
 prices were. Or maybe it was the
 opposite. What the hell did I know?

Through the window, we see that WINTER IS ENDING...

MATCH CUT TO:

131	INT. JERRY'S FATHER'S HOME - STORAGE ROOM -- DAY	131
-----	--	-----

Through the window, we see that SPRING HAS SPRUNG. A
 HOUSEWIFE waits patiently as Jerry counts her money.

JERRY (V.O.)
 All I cared about was the fact that
 I was no longer selling fucking coin
 storage units over the phone.

Jerry hands the housewife her product with a wink and a smile.
 She exits, and he records the transaction.

JERRY (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 And in some sense, I really did feel
 like a productive member of society.

DISSOLVE TO:

132 INT. JERRY'S FATHER'S HOME - LIVING ROOM -- MORNING

132

Jerry, fully dressed and looking haggard, is dead asleep on
 the couch after his latest night of debauchery.

Venezuela from Venezuela is cleaning the area around the TV;
 she accidentally turns it on and "THE TODAY SHOW" BLARES TO
 LIFE. Jerry awakes with a start.

VENEZUELA FROM VENEZUELA
 Oh! Mister Jerry! I'm so sorry! I
 turn off!

While Venezuela from Venezuela fumbles with the remote, Jerry
 can't help but focus on the broadcast.

ON TV -- MATT LAUER is introducing a guest...

MATT LAUER (ON T.V.)
 When you buy a greeting card, you
 probably don't think much about who
 wrote it.

JERRY
 Wait. Leave it on.

MATT LAUER (ON T.V.)
 But if that card is specifically
 either for or from someone between
 the ages of thirteen and eighteen,
 there is over a *fifty percent chance*
 that it was created by our guest
 today.

ON TV -- "The Today Show" switches cameras to reveal SETH.

MATT LAUER (ON T.V.) (CONT'D)
 ...Is the youngest person in the
 history of his industry to achieve
 (MORE)

MATT LAUER (ON T.V.) (CONT'D)
 the rate of success that he has to date. And this is just the beginning. Seth, you're not even thirty years old, and you're about to introduce your *second* brand of greeting cards. How did it all happen?

Jerry sits up, bitterly fixated on the television. Venezuela from Venezuela exits, leaving the remote at Jerry's side.

SETH (ON T.V.)
 To be honest, Matt, it will actually be my *first* standalone brand. My previous line of cards and merchandise was and is still released entirelyly under the umbrella of Plattitudes, a great company run by my great friend {bleep}.

JERRY -- Grimaces.

SETH (ON T.V.) (CONT'D)
 He's the guy who got me started in the business, and without him, I wouldn't be where I am right now.

MATT LAUER (ON T.V.)
 Tell me about FlipWordz.

SETH (ON T.V.)
 We won't be officially up and running until the fall, but FlipWordz is going to be the first ever international brand of greeting cards, online greetings and related merchandise to be produced exclusively for the teenage market...

An envelope hits Jerry in the face, startling him.

GERALD (O.S.)
 Mail call.

Gerald is standing over the couch, oxygen cart in tow.

GERALD (CONT'D)
 (re: Seth)
 Didn't you used to know him?

Jerry turns off the TV, agitated.

GERALD (CONT'D)

I almost threw that out with your latest backlog. Looks like a wedding invitation.

JERRY

Yeah. My friend Philip. I'm supposed to be a groomsman.

GERALD

"Supposed to"?

JERRY

I'm not sure if I'm going.

Jerry glances out the front window, noticing a TEENAGE STONER loitering at the edge of the lawn. Gerald sees him, too.

GERALD

You should. I have a feeling you could get the time off.

Gerald moves off. Jerry looks puzzled...then concerned.

133 INT. JERRY'S FATHER'S HOME - GARAGE -- A SHORT WHILE LATER 133

Jerry is tossing aside boxes in a panic, digging to get to his marijuana stockpile. He reaches where it should be...

And finds AN EMPTY SPACE. Gerald trashed the stash.

JERRY

(stunned, furious)
Mother fucker.

133A INT. JERRY'S FATHER'S HOME - STORAGE ROOM -- NIGHT 133A

Jerry is on the phone, glassy-eyed with a tumbler of Scotch in hand. His printer is slowly churning out a document.

ANGRY COLD-CALL CUSTOMER (O.S.)

*It's three in the morning, asshole!
I'm gonna call the police!*

JERRY

What if you had to use a payphone?
Are your coins organized enough for
that kind of situation?

The line goes dead just as Jerry's printer finishes...

THE SUICIDE CARD, IN ITS COMPLETED FORM. ITS HEADING READS:
 "LET'S SHARE THE BLAME".

133B INT. JERRY'S FATHER'S HOME - MASTER BEDROOM -- DAWN

133B

All is quiet, save for the RHYTHMIC, MECHANICAL "BREATHING" of Gerald's negative pressure ventilator, inside of which Gerald currently sleeps.

Standing over him is Jerry, out of his mind.

JERRY

You look at me like I'm a disappointment...like I never became the man you are. I've got news for you, Dad: I'm *exactly* the man you are. I took the first thing that came easy to me and made an unreasonably good living at it. I'm well aware that my contribution to the world was absolute bullshit. So was yours. Deep down inside that little black heart of yours, I think you might even know that. But here's where our lives differ: I will not ignore the fact that the jig is up. I tried to keep coasting for a while, sure...but it just wouldn't take. You called it--props for that. Props also for your capacity for self-delusion that has allowed you to live with your head in the sand for fucking decades...another talent I did not inherit.

Jerry raises a BOTTLE OF CARPET SHAMPOO.

JERRY (CONT'D)

That's why I'm checking out.

(removes cap, beat)

But I wouldn't feel right doing myself in without first setting my house in order--or in this case, *yours*. I'm going to do something for you, Dad, that you should have done for yourself a long time ago.

(contemplative pause)

I guess I'll see you in hell.

Jerry leans down and unplugs the ventilator... Then he straightens up and chugs the entire contents of the bottle.

But...the ventilator is STILL "BREATHING". And--for the first time--we realize that there HAD BEEN ANOTHER SOUND occurring in the background. One that has suddenly STOPPED.

THE LIGHTS POP ON as Venezuela from Venezuela enters the room, looking puzzled.

VENEZUELA FROM VENEZUELA
Mister Jerry? Why you unplug vacuum?

Jerry pulls the empty bottle away from his lips, chemical foam bubbling from his mouth. Stunned, he looks at the still-plugged-in ventilator, then back at Venezuela from Venezuela.

JERRY
(gurgle)

Jerry keels over and dies.

BLACK OUT.

DAPHNE (O.S.)
*Jerry... Jerry, wake up, honey.
Everyone's waiting.*

FADE IN:

133C INT. JERRY'S OCEANSIDE MANSION - MASTER BEDROOM -- DAY

133C

Jerry blinks awake, finding himself tucked into imported Italian sheets on what looks like the most comfortable bed in history. Everything--including Jerry's silk pajamas--is PRISTINELY WHITE, interrupted only by the SPARKLING BLUE WATER seen through the enormous window.

Daphne--looking like the sexiest woman alive--is sitting on the edge of the bed, having nudged Jerry out of his slumber.

DAPHNE
Think you slept long enough?

JERRY
(overwhelmed)
Oh my god, Daphne...you would not believe the dream I had. My life was just one disaster after another...I was a total failure. At the end, I killed myself by drinking carpet shampoo.

DAPHNE
That's you in a nutshell, baby. A total failure.

Daphne leans in, giving Jerry a deep kiss.

133D EXT. JERRY'S OCEANSIDE MANSION - PATIO -- A SHORT WHILE LATER 133D

There are patios, and then there are *patios*. Jerry's is a sprawling, multilevel veranda ending in an infinity pool that overlooks the beach below.

Jerry and Daphne step out into a LOW-KEY PARTY in progress. All the HAPPY AND GOOD-LOOKING ATTENDEES REACT in unison to Jerry's appearance, raising their glasses in salute. As Daphne leads Jerry through the crowd, FAMILIAR FACES pop up.

PHILIP

Nice of you to make it to your own party, Jerry...

MUG

Dude, the shrimp is really good. I keep telling myself I'm going to stop eating it when you run out...but you're not running out of it!

DAPHNE

Then keep eating it!

As Daphne and Jerry approach the end of the balcony, Seth looks up from a conversation with some HIGH-SOCIETY TYPES.

SETH

This is guy you should be talking to. He's the social climber.

JERRY

Don't listen to him. I'm already on top.

Everyone LAUGHS, leading inexplicably into...

133E EXT. JERRY'S OCEANSIDE MANSION - PATIO -- CONTINUOUS 133E

A CHOREOGRAPHED, KARAOKE-STYLE MUSICAL NUMBER SET TO KANSAS' "CARRY ON WAYWARD SON"

It starts just after the 1:00 mark of the song; EACH MAIN CHARACTER GETS TO "SING" INDIVIDUAL PARTS. Around the 3:00 mark--while MUG IS "PERFORMING" THE GUITAR SOLO--Jerry and Daphne happily *leap off the edge of the patio...*

JERRY AND DAPHNE'S SEX-PLUMMET -- Takes on a PSYCHEDELIC ATMOSPHERE; wrapped in one another's arms, they effortlessly tear away their clothes and begin to make love...

GERALD (O.S.)
For God's sake, Jerry! Let her go!

SMASH CUT TO:

133F OMITTED 133F

133G INT. JERRY'S FATHER'S HOME - MASTER BEDROOM -- DAWN 133G

Venezuela from Venezuela is desperately trying to escape Jerry's clutches, as he's turned her lifesaving resuscitation of him into a BLUE VOMIT-SOAKED MAKEOUT SESSION.

Abruptly getting his bearings, Jerry releases Venezuela from Venezuela; she scrambles away, MUTTERING PRAYERS IN SPANISH.

Gerald is awake and on his feet, staring down at Jerry.

GERALD
 The reason I hire women who look like that, Gerald, is specifically to avoid lawsuits that might arise from just that sort of behavior.

Gerald heads off after Venezuela from Venezuela.

Jerry remains flat on his back, mortified.

DISSOLVE TO:

133H INT. JERRY'S FATHER'S HOME - STORAGE ROOM -- DAY 133H

Jerry lies in bed, watching his DVD of *Under Siege*. Margot-- FURTHER ALONG IN HER PREGNANCY--is seated at his side.

MARGOT
 So the doctor said no permanent damage. That's good, huh?

ON TV -- *STEVEN SEAGAL* stuffs a rag into a coffee cup, douses the rag with what appears to be some type of alcohol and fills the cup with water. He then places the mixture inside a microwave oven and starts the timer.

MARGOT (CONT'D)
 Pretty lucky for you that Venezuela from Venezuela found the card, since she can't read English.

Jerry tenses, FAST-FORWARDING THROUGH THE DVD.

MARGOT (CONT'D)
 Even luckier for you that I was the first one she showed it to.

Margot flips THE SUICIDE CARD onto the bed.

JERRY
That's just a work thing.

MARGOT
For the job you don't have anymore?

JERRY
I'm looking to get back in the game.

MARGOT
It's got your name on it.

JERRY
So did every other card I wrote.

MARGOT
Not on the *inside*.

An extended silence. Jerry PAUSES THE DVD.

JERRY
For the sake of argument, let's say that what happened the other night was an attempt to end my own life. I failed, Margot. Just like I have at every other fucking thing for what seems like the last thousand years. Business as usual.

MARGOT
Maybe the greeting card thing isn't for you, Jerry. Or maybe it will be, but it just isn't right now. In either case--*so what?* You're smart, you're talented, and all the setbacks in the world are no reason to give up on life.

(beat)
Whatever happened with that girl you were seeing? The waitress? I thought that was going somewhere.

Discomfited, Jerry RESUMES THE DVD. Margot takes the hint.

MARGOT (CONT'D)
I know Dad's expecting you to prove something to him, but fuck that. The only person you have to prove anything to is yourself. It's time you figured out what I--and a lot of other people--already know, Jerry...

ON TV -- TOMMY LEE JONES and GARY BUSEY are arguing in the galley when the MICROWAVE BEEPS. Everyone SCREAMS and dives for cover as STEVEN SEAGAL'S HOMEMADE MICROWAVE-BOMB EXPLODES.

MARGOT (CONT'D)

You're a productive person who's got something to give to the world.

134 INT. COMMERCIAL AIRLINER - COACH CABIN -- DAY 134

Jerry has a seatback in his lap, a LAUGHING WOMAN elbowing him on one side, a SLEEPING MAN drooling on him on the other side and THREE KARATE KIDS pummeling his head from behind.

But his expression remains blank. Jerry is the living dead.

134A EXT. PHILIP'S HOUSE - BACKYARD -- DAY 134A

The spacious and extravagant home is an ostentatious testament to Philip's success. Seated at the edge of the diving board over the very large pool is Jerry, nursing a can of soda.

He begins to let himself very slowly--almost imperceptibly--tilt forward. Closer and closer towards the water...

PHILIP (O.S.)

Don't do it!

Jerry snaps up to see Philip--drunk and smiling--approaching with two piña coladas in hand.

PHILIP (CONT'D)

You can't kill yourself without having a real drink first.

Philip flops down next to Jerry and passes him a cocktail.

PHILIP (CONT'D)

I know the missus said you weren't allowed, but she ain't the missus until tomorrow. The liquor cabinet's still all mine.

Producing a small key, Philip lays it next to Jerry.

PHILIP (CONT'D)

All I ask is that it not be bare when we get back from the honeymoon.

Jerry frowns, annoyed by the dig. Philip doesn't notice.

PHILIP (CONT'D)

(reflective)

Can't believe I'm *getting married* tomorrow. Could you ever have imagined, freshman year, that you and I would be sitting here one day? I have a lot of great things in my life, Jerry. A lot of great things...

Jerry is chewing through his straw to bite his tongue.

PHILIP (CONT'D)

But do I *deserve* what I have? More importantly: *do I want it?*

JERRY

I'll take it off your hands.
(then, quickly)
Most of it.

PHILIP

You ever wonder if the life you're living isn't the one you're supposed to be living?

JERRY

Let's see...I used to live in an awesome apartment; now I live at my father's house. I used to make a living calling my own shots; now I sell coin-storage units over the phone. I used to have money; now I couldn't afford to stay at a hotel for your wedding. I used to have friends; now they all think I'm a fucking joke.

PHILIP

Nobody thinks you're a joke, Jerry--

JERRY

I don't *wonder* if I'm living the wrong life, Philip. I *know* I am. It's proven by every second of my miserable existence.

PHILIP

Everyone's got problems.

JERRY

(scoffs)
I'm the only one sitting *here* who has any.

PHILIP

(angered)

You know what, Jerry? You couldn't even *imagine* the problems in my life.

Jerry stares at Philip in disbelief.

JERRY

You're joking, right?

(beat; slow burn)

I don't have to *imagine* your life, Philip--because *it used to be mine*. And there were no problems. It was a fucking cakewalk! In fact...

Jerry stands up, his anger getting the better of him.

JERRY (CONT'D)

You *don't* deserve what you have! Your whole life is the result of blind fucking luck!

Philip rises, his emotional level matching Jerry's.

PHILIP

And your life is, what--*the fruits of hard labor*?

Jerry looks like he could punch Philip in the face...but he holds back, taking on a false air of calmness.

JERRY

And there it is. I'm one of "those people" now. The people who--unlike you, and Seth, and Mug--actually know what it feels like to not get every single thing you want.

Jerry makes his way towards the door.

PHILIP

You think we've gotten everything we wanted, Jerry? You think *I* have??

JERRY

(stops, wheels around)

What haven't you got, Philip?! What the fuck haven't you got??

Philip suddenly falls silent, looking over Jerry's shoulder.

Jerry turns to see Unpleasant Fiancé--a gargoyle of skin, hair and nail treatments-in-progress--in the doorway.

UNPLEASANT FIANCÉ
What the fuck is going on out here?!

PHILIP
(cowed)
I'm sorry, sweetie.

JERRY
I'm sorry too, *sweetie*. Rest assured,
I will behave cordially tomorrow, so
as not to ruin your magical day.
(to Philip)
Then I'll disappear into history as
one of the unlucky ones.

PHILIP
Jerry, wait...

Jerry heads inside, flashing the liquor cabinet key to
Unpleasant Fiancé as he slides past her.

JERRY
Got your booze, Yoko...

PHILIP
(desperate)
I'm trying to be honest with you!

But Jerry is gone.

REVEREND (O.S.)
You may kiss the bride.

135 INT. CATHEDRAL -- AFTERNOON

135

Philip--in a tuxedo--and Unpleasant Fiancé--in a bridal gown--
smooch before a REVEREND. Behind them, the place is PACKED
BEYOND SIGHT. Might as well be a Kennedy wedding.

As everyone APPLAUDS, Philip and Unpleasant Fiancé--now
UNPLEASANT WIFE--bask in the attention.

Off to the side are Philip's tuxedoed GROOMSMEN--Seth, Mug,
and Jerry among them--all clapping and smiling. Some of
them *fake-smiling*.

136 INT. RECEPTION HALL - DINING AREA -- NIGHT

136

"Grand and ostentatious" is the theme, evident from the scope
of the hall to the last detail of the flatware. Formalities
have been attended to and the party is in full swing--i.e.,
everyone's drunk.

Seated away from the center of the action, Jerry and Seth are kicking back with a couple of beers, taking it all in.

SETH
How long are you staying out here?

JERRY
I'm leaving tomorrow.

They both sip their beers. Moments pass.

SETH
I'm out of town the next two days.
Would it be at all possible for you
to extend your trip until Tuesday?
I want to take you to lunch, talk to
you about something.

JERRY
What did I do?

SETH
It's nothing bad. I'm just too drunk
to get into it right now, not to
mention the fact that I've got a
seven a.m. flight tomorrow.
(checks watch, dismayed)
Holy shit.

JERRY
(looking O.S., stunned)
Holy shit.

Jerry has spotted a WAITRESS across the room...

A waitress who is *DAPHNE*.

SETH
So you think you could you stay in
town for a couple extra days?

JERRY
(inspired, re: Daphne)
Uh...yeah. Definitely.

137 INT. RECEPTION HALL - FOYER -- LATER

137

Outside the dining area, the wide central hall leading to the main entrance is intersected by two smaller passageways: one hosting the public restrooms, the other leading to the kitchen and trafficked exclusively by STAFF MEMBERS.

Jerry is lingering outside the former, a glass of champagne in his hand. Soon enough, Daphne emerges from the latter.

JERRY

Miss, I have a complaint. I think someone's been watering down this champagne.

Needing only a beat to mask her obvious surprise, Daphne matter-of-factly approaches Jerry. She takes the flute from him, downs its contents, and hands back the empty glass.

DAPHNE

What champagne?

JERRY

I have a second complaint.

DAPHNE

(re: tuxedo)

You were in this wedding?

JERRY

Yeah, you met my friend Philip. I was one of his groomsmen.

DAPHNE

(beat, confused)

I thought he was...

(then)

Is that guy Mug here?

JERRY

(oblivious)

I saw you a little while ago and I couldn't believe it. I *can't* believe it. What are the odds we'd run into each other like this?

DAPHNE

Don't take this the wrong way, Jerry, but I didn't have the odds of you being *alive* as very good.

(then)

I got your message you left on Christmas Eve.

A beat. Jerry isn't quick enough to cover his blank stare.

DAPHNE (CONT'D)

You don't remember leaving me a message on Christmas Eve...

JERRY

Daphne, I did a lot of things wrong.

(MORE)

JERRY (CONT'D)

I was all fucked up; I didn't treat you nearly as well as I should have. Not even close. But not a day has gone by when I haven't thought about you. And now, running into you like this...at the risk of sounding cheesy...I think it's fate.

Jerry and Daphne lock eyes, hopeful.

DAPHNE

No.

Daphne looks as surprised as Jerry does at her own response.

JERRY

Okay, "fate" might be too strong a term. What I'm saying is, this is our second chance.

DAPHNE

It might be *your* second chance. But it would be *my*, like...thirtieth.

JERRY

I said I was sorry...

DAPHNE

No, you didn't.

JERRY

(beat)
Okay, well, I'm saying it now.

DAPHNE

Thanks. But you and I are long past apologies, Jerry. That ship sailed after the first hundred times I tried to reach you and heard nothing back...

JERRY

So if we're past apologies...

DAPHNE

...Where the hell were you?

JERRY

...Where are we?

A heavy silence.

Then Daphne abruptly steps forward, wrapping Jerry in a loving embrace. A goodbye-forever embrace.

DAPHNE
Promise me, Jerry.

JERRY
Promise you what?

DAPHNE
Promise what you don't know.

JERRY
Okay. I promise.

DAPHNE
You just promised to take care of
yourself...
(beat, choking up)
And to never call me again.

Daphne moves off faster than ripping off a Band-Aid, making sure not to look back as she disappears around a corner.

And Jerry simply stands alone...looking like he could put a bullet in his head that very second.

DISSOLVE TO:

138 OMITTED 138

139 EXT. UPSCALE DINER -- DAY 139

It's pouring rain on the hip little joint and the rest of the world.

140 INT. UPSCALE DINER -- CONTINUOUS 140

Jerry--staring at the rain--is at a window table with Seth.

SETH
I'm really excited about FlipWordz.
You know the kind of stuff we thought
we were going to be doing when we
started working for {bleep}?
(no response)
Jerry?

JERRY
(blinks out of reverie)
Things that require thought and aren't
completely patronizing and clichéd?

SETH
That's what it's going to be.

JERRY

How did Fat Asshole ever allow you to break away with such a plan? It's contrary to everything he knows.

SETH

I made him a lot of money at Plattitudes. And, due to the fact that he staked me in FlipWordz, he's going to get a big piece of the pie.

JERRY

He's still going to be making money from *your* company?

SETH

Only up to a predetermined ceiling of net profit. We're projecting that it'll be mine, free and clear, after the first year. The important thing is that I'm going to have complete artistic control from the get-go. Speaking of which...

Seth finishes a bite of his lunch and wipes his hands.

SETH (CONT'D)

I was wondering if you'd want to come work for me.

JERRY -- Is stunned.

JERRY

Like...as a janitor?

SETH

More like running a creative division.

JERRY

Are you shitting me?

SETH

You're the most talented out of all of us, Jerry. You always have been.

JERRY

I live with my dad and I sell coin storage units for a living.

SETH

You're also the *laziest* out of all of us, and always have been.

JERRY

Your compliments are confusing...

SETH

I didn't come here to compliment you, Jerry. I came here to offer you a job. And if you accept it--even though you'll be coming in at a high level--I'll be watching you more closely than I'll watch mailroom employees.

JERRY

That's harsh.

SETH

I've got a lot on the line, here. If you're afraid of getting your feelings hurt, walk away. But I'd like to think that you're willing to stop coasting, get back on the rails and seriously apply your talent--maybe for the first time ever.

Jerry sits back, thoughtful.

JERRY

You already have mailroom employees?

SETH

Not yet, actually.

JERRY

(beat, smiles)

Good. I want to be the first one to fire one of those lazy bastards.

Jerry leans forward and clasps hands with Seth, who grins.

SETH

Cancel that return flight. We've got a lot of work to do. And go buy yourself some new clothes, while you're at it--on the company tab, of course. Try to look professional.

They both LAUGH. Jerry's happier than we've ever seen him.

And just like that...outside, THE RAIN STOPS. Jerry and Seth look out the window in surprise as the sun is already starting to break through the clouds.

JERRY (V.O.)

That was a close one.

141 INT. DESIGNER MEN'S STORE -- DAY 141

Jerry is being fitted by a TAILOR for a suit, talking on his cell phone.

JERRY (V.O.)

What the hell was I thinking, ever considering suicide? I was the guy for whom things always just worked out!

JERRY (CONT'D)

Seriously, Mom, this is the break I've been waiting for for years...

142 EXT. CITY SIDEWALK -- LATER 142

Jerry navigates the CROWDED sidewalk with a spring in his step, looking dapper in his brand-new designer suit.

JERRY (V.O.)

All that bad stuff that happened to me? That was like a test.

JERRY (CONT'D)

(to phone)

I'll be honest with you, Margot, things were pretty bad for a while...

143 EXT. CITY STREET CORNER -- LATER 143

Jerry stands at an intersection, on the phone, standing with a CROWD as they wait for the light to change.

JERRY (V.O.)

I had to let all that terrible shit happen so I would appreciate it when the good shit came back around.

JERRY (CONT'D)

...When he wakes up, Venezuela, you tell him that I said I'm a wiser man for the experience. Okay? Thanks.

Jerry pockets his phone, pleased as punch. Unlike the CROSS-SECTION OF HUMANITY he's at the center of, he looks exactly like a person for whom all is right with the world.

A passing car zooms through a puddle, soaking everyone except for Jerry...who miraculously remains bone dry.

As the other people stagger back from the curb, stunned and furious, Jerry turns to face them with a shrug and a smile.

JERRY (CONT'D)

Good things just happen to me.

ANGLE ON THE OTHERS: THE BUSINESSWOMAN, THE DELIVERY BOY, THE MOTHER, THE VAGRANT, ET AL, ALL STARING IN DISBELIEF.

Then A BLUR OF ANOTHER CAR CUTS THROUGH FRAME, PUMMELING THE O.S. JERRY AND CRASHING HORRIBLY. Everyone reacts, horrified.

Everyone, that is, but the VAGRANT...who smiles.

BLACK OUT.

GRADUALLY FADING UP is the HIGH-PITCHED WHINE of JERRY'S HEART MONITOR FLATLINING.

ER DOCTOR #1 (O.S.)
(muffled, distant)
Clear!

The ZAP-THUMP of the defibrillator paddles against Jerry's chest...then the CONTINUOUS BEEP becomes BROKEN UP.

ER NURSE #1 (O.S.)
We've got a heartbeat.

144 INT. EMERGENCY ROOM -- VARIOUS

144

P.O.V. JERRY - FADING IN AND OUT:

We're staring directly up into a harsh fluorescent light on the ceiling as the quickly-moving, BLURRY HEADS AND HANDS OF DOCTORS AND NURSES pop in and out of view from all sides.

ER NURSE #1 (O.S.)
Closed head injury, subdural hematoma.

ER DOCTOR #1 (O.S.)
Let's do a craniotomy and evacuate...

ER NURSE #2 (O.S.)
...Internal bleeding's stopped...

ER DOCTOR #1 (O.S.)
...We'll need to immobilize his jaw before we can deal with the facial contusions...

ER DOCTOR #2 (O.S.)
...Multiple fractures in the pelvis, thigh, femur and tibia...

ER DOCTOR #1 (O.S.)
*...Have to re-break the patella in
 order to repair the knee ligaments...*

ER NURSE #3 (O.S.)
...What's the story with the driver?

ER NURSE #2 (O.S.)
*D.O.A. Toxicology report said he
 was drunk.*

ER NURSE #1 (O.S.)
Let's get the feeding tube in...

FADE TO BLACK.

FADE BACK IN:

145 INT. HOSPITAL ROOM -- DAY

145

Jerry is in bed, propped up and monstrously *fucked-up*. His swollen face is black and purple and covered with abrasions; his jaw is wired shut; a feeding tube is secured to his mouth. Everything down one side of his body--arm, hip and leg--is immobilized in large braces with pins sticking out.

JERRY (V.O.)
 Stupid and irritating people would say that I'm lucky to be alive. But that sentiment only applies to individuals who *hadn't* received a new lease on life less than an hour before they were almost killed.

Jerry's good hand gives a couple of clicks on the morphine button to which he's hooked up.

Mug is standing near the far wall, having affixed a mini-basketball hoop like the one from Jerry's old office. He takes a practice shot, and the hoop falls.

MUG
 (losing it)
Fuck!
 (then)
 I'm sorry, Jerry--I can't fucking deal with this anymore! I'm sorry...

Mug storms out of the room. Jerry looks confused.

146 INT. HOSPITAL ROOM -- DAY

146

Jerry's still bedridden, though his facial wounds have improved somewhat and the pins have been removed from his

various body braces. His jaw is still wired shut. An unfamiliar, UPTIGHT MALE LAWYER is seated at his side.

STRANGE LAWYER

As you know, the man who struck you-- who was killed in the accident--was uninsured. We have since discovered that he had no viable assets, income, or even any next of kin that could be required to compensate you for the damages incurred. Theoretically, you *could* file a claim against the city, but Bambi feels that it would be imprudent of her to move forward on any new cases for you until you have settled up your outstanding debts with our office. I don't suppose you could write a check *now*...

Jerry stares stonefaced at the lawyer, clicking his morphine button a few times.

STRANGE LAWYER (CONT'D)

In any case, Bambi is terribly upset that she hasn't been able to visit you yet. I was authorized to purchase this for you at the gift shop...

The lawyer reaches into a bag at his feet, producing a small stuffed bear with the phrase "HUGS" stitched onto its belly.

STRANGE LAWYER (CONT'D)

Which Bambi would like to represent a proxy hug on her behalf.

Jerry snatches the bear, clutching it to his chest.

JERRY (V.O.)

If nothing else, I can take solace in the fact that this is a bad as things are going to get for me.

147 INT. HOSPITAL ROOM -- MORNING

147

Jerry--his jaw wire finally removed and his facial wounds even more cleared up--is asleep. He blinks awake...

Finding himself nose-to-nose with a grinning Fat Asshole.

FAT ASSHOLE

(overly enthusiastic)
WHAT'S UP, MOTHERFUCKER!

LAUGHING at Jerry's horrified reaction, Fat Asshole backs up, taking a seat.

FAT ASSHOLE (CONT'D)
 Sorry I came so early, but it's the only time I could fit you in. So I heard you just got the jaw unlocked. You've been eating liquid food this whole fucking time, dude? That's *woebegone*.

Jerry musters a condescending grin.

FAT ASSHOLE (CONT'D)
 (abruptly angered)
 Fuck you, man. I was just trying to keep the mood light, here, 'cause of why I came.

Jerry looks concerned. A pause.

FAT ASSHOLE (CONT'D)
 The thing with Seth isn't happening.

JERRY -- Couldn't find the words even if he could speak.

FAT ASSHOLE (CONT'D)
 Due to your medical condition, it's not financially advisable for Seth to have you on staff. It's a startup, so he needs everybody operating at a hundred percent. I know it seems harsh, J-Dog, but what are you gonna do? It's a real *woebegone* situation.

Jerry's eye is twitching. Rigid, he begins clicking his morphine button with a vengeance.

DISSOLVE TO:

148 INT. HOSPITAL ROOM -- NIGHT

148

It's the dead of night and Jerry is wide awake, rhythmically clicking his morphine button: *He's doped out of his mind.*

JERRY (V.O.)
 Once you've given up on life, the worst thing you can do is reconsider. Because if the first fall is a long one...the second one is forever.

Just to the side of Jerry's bed is a LARGE WINDOW looks out into the HALLWAY. Quite inexplicably, the window appears to BRIEFLY FLASH WITH *STATIC*, as though it were a TV SCREEN.

Even *more* inexplicably, the next STATIC FLASH gives way to a SPLIT-SECOND GLIMPSE of STEVEN SEAGAL PERFORMING A ROUNDHOUSE KICK.

Jerry turns to look at the window--or, as it happens...

HIS MORPHINE-ADDLED SUBCONSCIOUS THOUGHTS INTERACTIVE DISPLAY.

OUTSIDE THE WINDOW -- SETH, PHILIP, MUG, FAT ASSHOLE, DAPHNE and GERALD are all POINTING AND LAUGHING at Jerry.

JERRY (CONT'D)

What are you laughing at?

DAPHNE

You, loser. Everybody knew you'd fail.

FAT ASSHOLE

I told everyone you would. And I was right.

Everyone LAUGHS HARDER.

JERRY

Shut up!

OUTSIDE THE WINDOW -- Suddenly it's just STEVEN SEAGAL.

STEVEN SEAGAL

Make them.

OUTSIDE THE WINDOW -- Suddenly it's just TOM BRADY, looking sexy as all get-out as he lights a cigarette.

TOM BRADY

They told me about you.

JERRY

I don't think you can smoke in here...

TOM BRADY

I can do whatever the fuck I want.
I took over your life.

JERRY

Who are you?

OUTSIDE THE WINDOW -- It's just Steven Seagal, showing off some karate moves with a very angry face.

FLASH -- Then it's just Tom Brady again, smoking and grinning.

TOM BRADY
I'm Tim 'Ace' Jones.

JERRY
Bullshit.

DAPHNE SLIDES UP INTO VIEW alongside Brady, wiping her mouth.

DAPHNE
I don't know, Jerry. His cock sure
tastes like it.

JERRY
(horrified)
Oh my god!

Tom Brady and Daphne POINT AT JERRY AND LAUGH MANIACALLY.

Jerry struggles to leave his bed, without success.

JERRY (CONT'D)
Get the fuck away from her!

TOM BRADY
FUCK YOU! I'M TIM 'ACE' JONES!

OUTSIDE THE WINDOW -- Suddenly it's just Gerald.

GERALD
I told you so.

FLASH -- Then it's Seth, Philip and Mug, all smoking cigars
and LAUGHING as they THROW PILES OF MONEY AROUND.

SETH
Where's yours, Jerry?

PHILIP
Yeah, Jerry...where *is* yours?

FLASH -- Then it's just Steven Seagal.

STEVEN SEAGAL
Make them pay.

JERRY
What? *Who?*

FLASH -- Then it's FAT ASSHOLE, LAUGHING and RUBBING MONEY
ALL OVER HIS BODY as TOM BRADY AND DAPHNE DANCE AROUND HIM.

FLASH -- Then it's just Steven Seagal.

STEVEN SEAGAL
The ones who did this to you.

FLASH -- Then it's just Daphne.

DAPHNE
I love it when anyone but you fucks
me.

JERRY
God *dammit!*

FLASH -- Then it's Seth, Philip, Mug and Tom Brady, all
SMOKING CIGARS and LAUGHING.

TOM BRADY
Best friends forever! You might as
well be dead!

JERRY
FUCK YOU!

SETH
You mean he's *not*?

Everyone outside the window LAUGHS HARDER.

FLASH -- Then it's just Daphne, looking forlorn.

DAPHNE
I loved you, Jerry.

JERRY
I loved you! I think I still do!

Daphne presses herself up against the glass, lustful.

DAPHNE
Kiss me.

Jerry begins violently yanking his whole bed towards the
window, straining to hop it towards the imaginary Daphne.
Just as he's about to reach her...

FLASH -- It's just Steven Seagal.

STEVEN SEAGAL
You know what you have to do.

Startled, Jerry flails off of the bed and onto the floor.

END MORPHINE-ADDLED SUBCONSCIOUS THOUGHTS INTERACTIVE DISPLAY.

His face squished against the linoleum, Jerry mutters incoherently as he drifts into unconsciousness.

DISSOLVE TO:

149 INT. HOSPITAL ROOM -- AFTERNOON

149

Jerry is free of his casts and braces, seated in a wheelchair by the window. In his arms he holds his BABY NEPHEW.

Margot is seated in a chair next to Jerry.

MARGOT

Has the physical therapy helped?

Jerry shrugs.

MARGOT (CONT'D)

You've got to at least be excited about getting out of here.

JERRY

I've got nowhere to go.

MARGOT

I thought you were staying with your friend Philip and his wife.

JERRY

Not for long.

MARGOT

What's the plan after that?

JERRY

I'm so grateful that you guys came out to see me. I know it wasn't easy, traveling with the baby and everything--and you, Will, getting the time off work...

WILL -- Futzing with the TV, gives a "don't mention it" wave.

JERRY (CONT'D)

It meant a lot to me to see *somebody* from my family.

Margot takes the baby from Jerry and hands him to Will.

WILL

(to Jerry)

Hang in there, pal. We'll see you soon.

Will exits with the baby.

MARGOT

I've had a couple things with me this whole time, but I promised I'd wait until I was leaving before I gave them to you.

Margot reaches into a bag at her feet, producing a large, oblong, gift-wrapped box. She holds it out for Jerry.

MARGOT (CONT'D)

From Dad. It's probably going to make you mad, but you have to understand that he really thinks it's a nice gesture.

Reluctantly, Jerry takes the gift. He tears away the paper and opens the box, revealing...

GERALD'S ORNATELY DESIGNED CANE -- The very same one from Jerry's childhood.

MARGOT (CONT'D)

You are going to need something for walking around...and, I mean, that's better than a crutch, right?

JERRY

Is the other thing worse or better?

Margot gets to her feet and gathers her belongings, a simple greeting card envelope cinched in her fingers. She bends down to give Jerry a hug and a kiss on the cheek.

MARGOT

Love you, Jerry.

She straightens up, having left the envelope in Jerry's lap.

MARGOT (CONT'D)

Everybody does. In their own way.

With that, Margot leaves.

Alone, Jerry stares at the envelope.

DISSOLVE TO:

150 INT. HOSPITAL ROOM -- NIGHT

150

Jerry is sitting up in bed, staring worriedly at the still-unopened envelope, on which HIS NAME IS WRITTEN IN A FEMININE HAND. Slowly and indecisively, Jerry peels it open.

He removes the greeting card, and begins to read it...

JERRY'S MOTHER (V.O.)

Jerry. It rips my heart out that I haven't been able to be by your side since the accident. As soon as I found out about it, I started making plans to come see you. But when I called the hospital about sending something ahead for you, I found out some very scary news that only made what happened that much worse...

JERRY (V.O.)

It hadn't even occurred to me that I'd lost my health insurance when I got fired from Plattitudes.

As he continues to read, Jerry looks increasingly nauseated.

JERRY (V.O.) (CONT'D)

My mother had taken out a loan and gotten a second job to pay her thirty-year-old son's hospital bills. Not only did that keep her from having the time to come out and see me, she couldn't afford it. She never even told my dad...who could have paid easily.

Jerry begins to CRY, reading the last of the note...

JERRY'S MOTHER (V.O.)

I hope you can forgive me, Jerry, for not being there for you in person. This was not an easy decision to make, and I wish more than anything that I could have done both. I love you with all my heart, and I hope to see you soon. Love, Mom.

Jerry drops the card in his lap, now SOBBING UNCONTROLLABLY. All the shitty things that have happened to him, all the things he's done wrong, a lifetime of holding it in...it's all pouring out now.

He happens to glance at the back of the card, which has flipped over in his lap. It's a "PLATTITUDES" card...and the author "signature" belongs to:

"ACE".

JERRY -- Stops crying on a dime, his expression of sadness and release replaced by one of insane rage.

AT THE HALLWAY WINDOW -- An inexplicable FLASH OF LIGHTNING, and there stands STEVEN SEAGAL, staring at Jerry and nodding: *You know what must be done.*

JERRY -- Nods back at Steven Seagal, a maniacal glint in his eye: *Fuck yeah, I do.*

CUT TO:

151 OMITTED 151
151A EXT. PLATTITUDES BUILDING -- DAY 151A

(MUSIC: ICE CUBE'S "CHROME AND PAINT")

Jerry, dressed in the suit he was wearing when he got hit by the car--it's badly torn in several places and still showing traces of blood stains--pimp-walks through the parking lot with purpose, relying on HIS FATHER'S CANE.

...On his shoulder, he carries A MICROWAVE OVEN.

152 INT. PLATTITUDES - FAT ASSHOLE'S OFFICE -- A SHORT WHILE LATER 152

Jerry sweeps clear some space on the desk in the otherwise unoccupied office and sets the microwave on it.

He opens its door and removes a bottle of alcohol, a jug of water, a rag and a coffee mug: the ingredients for the Steven Seagal *Under Siege* microwave bomb.

Jerry assembles the concoction in the mug, and places it back in the oven. He checks his watch, trying to figure out how much time to put on the clock...when his eyes happen to fall upon THE WORD-A-DAY DESK CALENDAR.

JERRY

Please be something having to do
with vengeance or retribution...

Jerry grabs the calendar, seeing that--

THE WORD OF THE DAY IS: "**GLABROUS (adj.) -- Smooth; having a surface without hairs, projections, or any unevenness.**"

JERRY (CONT'D)

(beat, shrugs)
Whatever.

Jerry places the calendar on top of the microwave and sets the oven timer for 15 minutes.

MAN (O.S.)

What are you doing?

Jerry freezes, not turning around.

JERRY

{Bleep}?

MAN (O.S.)

No. I'm Tim.

ON JERRY -- As fireballs explode behind his eyes.

JERRY

TIM 'ACE'--

Jerry wheels around, finding himself face-to-face with TIM "ACE" JONES (40s)--a small-statured gentleman with a shy and pleasant demeanor...a superstar quarterback, he is not.

JERRY (CONT'D)

(rage derailed)

...Jones?

MAN/TIM 'ACE' JONES

How'd you know that?

JERRY

(pause; searching)

I'm very familiar with the company.

I'm their microwave oven supplier.

TIM 'ACE' JONES

Does {bleep} owe you money or something? 'Cause that 'Under Siege' microwave bomb isn't gonna work.

Jerry attempts to stifle his surprise.

TIM 'ACE' JONES (CONT'D)

You set the timer for fifteen minutes, which *is* when {bleep} would normally get back from lunch. But even if you *could* predict the exact time that a homemade bomb like that is going to explode--which you can't--the mixture's going to detonate way before then.

JERRY

(playing dumb)

A bomb...? 'Under Siege'...?

TIM 'ACE' JONES

Steven Seagal did set the timer for fifteen minutes, but you've neglected

(MORE)

TIM 'ACE' JONES (CONT'D)
 to account for the fact he *turned the power off* when he left the galley. When Tommy Lee Jones and Gary Busey came into the galley *later, they* turned the power *back on* and *then* the bomb exploded.

The two men stare at the running microwave, ponderous.

TIM 'ACE' JONES (CONT'D)
 It's a pretty good movie.

JERRY
 If you view it ironically.
 (then)
 Why aren't you at lunch with everyone else?

TIM 'ACE' JONES
 I never go out to lunch. Way too busy.

JERRY
 (scoffs)
 At *this* job?

TIM 'ACE' JONES
 I know it sounds stupid, but writing greeting cards is the only thing I've ever wanted to do in my life. Problem was, I never used to be much good at it. Not to say that I'm great at it now...but I'm getting better every day. Or at least I'm *trying to* every day.

JERRY
 You were good enough to get a job at this place. Take a fucking lunch break once in a while.

TIM 'ACE' JONES
 I don't want to get complacent. I've worked too hard to let myself take things for granted. The way I see it, if you make your living doing something that always comes easy to you...you're not doing it right.

ON JERRY -- As that hits him like a ton of bricks.

A HISSING SOUND emanates from the microwave. Tim 'Ace' Jones grabs Jerry and pulls him to the floor as the microwave bomb EXPLODES, blasting debris everywhere.

Jerry and Tim poke their heads up, surveying the damage. Shreds of the word-a-day calendar float gently in the air.

JERRY

Thanks, Tim.

TIM 'ACE' JONES

Call me "Ace".

JERRY

No thanks, Tim.

Both of the guys get to their feet.

TIM 'ACE' JONES

Too bad {bleep} didn't get to see this happen. Guy's a real asshole.

Jerry smiles, loving Tim 'Ace' Jones.

JERRY

I should split before he gets back.

TIM 'ACE' JONES

I don't think he's coming back today. There was some kind of accident with one of the guys who works here. I didn't get the details before everybody took off, but apparently it's pretty bad.

JERRY

(alarmed)
Which guy?

152A OMITTED

152A

153 EXT. PHILIP'S HOUSE - BACKYARD -- DAY

153

(MUSIC: DEVOTCHKA'S "THE LAST BEAT OF MY HEART")

SLOW-MOTION:

Mug, Seth and Fat Asshole come running around from the front, finding the backyard to be a crime scene. POLICE OFFICERS and PARAMEDICS roam among NEIGHBORS that have wandered over.

Mug, Seth and Fat Asshole head straight for the pool area, which has been cordoned off with police tape. All three of them react in abject horror to the sight of:

PHILIP'S BODY, in nothing but swimming trunks, floating face down in the water. An upturned drink glass floats near him.

JERRY (V.O.)

"Accidental drowning" was the official word.

MUG -- Falls to his knees, pulling at his hair. His mouth opens in an anguished scream that we cannot hear. His eyes wander across the pool, seeking out--

UNPLEASANT WIFE. She's standing by the back door with some FRIENDS and a couple of DETECTIVES, her mascara having run down her face in now-tried tears. As she exhales a stream of cigarette smoke, her eyes meet Mug's.

JERRY (V.O.) (CONT'D)

But we'll always call it something else.

Mug leaps to his feet, charging at Philip's widow. Seth and Fat Asshole grab Mug before he can get to her; POLICE OFFICERS intervene. Mug strains to break free, a raging madman.

UNPLEASANT WIDOW -- Stares blankly back at Mug, unaffected. Takes another drag of her cigarette.

MATCH CUT TO:

154 INT. CATHEDRAL -- DAY

154

Unpleasant Widow, now dressed in mourning clothes, is still wearing the same expression, staring O.S. at someone. But now the someone staring back at her is--

JERRY. He's standing at the lectern, about to deliver a eulogy to the PACKED HOUSE at Philip's funeral.

Jerry reaches into his jacket pocket, starting to pull out some folded papers--his prepared remarks. But he appears to have second thoughts, taking his hand off them. He's going to speak from his heart.

But then...eyeing the crowd, Jerry thinks better of it. He produces his speech, and begins to read from it.

DISSOLVE TO:

155 INT. PHILIP'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM -- LATER

155

Jerry is seated apart from EVERYONE AT THE FUNERAL RECEPTION, not drinking, not knowing what to do with himself. He looks through the glass doors that open to the backyard.

P.O.V. JERRY: The backyard is clear of any people, save for the ONE GUY seated on the diving board...

Who happens to be PHILIP.

(END MUSIC.)

156 EXT. PHILIP'S HOUSE - BACKYARD -- MOMENTS LATER

156

Jerry comes limping with the cane out of the house, a glass of Scotch in his hand.

JERRY

You can't kill yourself without having a real drink first.

Philip looks up, giving Jerry a halfhearted smile. Jerry sits down next to Philip, handing him the glass.

PHILIP

Nice eulogy.

JERRY

You know what I thought? I really thought I was going to have one of those dramatic moments where the guy has prepared remarks to give, and then at the last second, he throws them aside and gives a heroic speech from the heart.

PHILIP

If anybody knew how to really speak from the heart, guys like you and me would be out of business.

JERRY

You and me are out of business.

PHILIP

Easy for you to say.

A painful pause.

JERRY

I shouldn't have walked away from you, Philip. Maybe if I had stayed, maybe if I'd listened to you...

PHILIP

You could've sat out here with me until the cows came home and I might never have said what I'd wanted to

(MORE)

PHILIP (CONT'D)
 say. And even if I had...it was
 already too late.

JERRY
 If I'd been a better friend to you,
 it never would have gotten that far.

PHILIP
 You were working with limited
 information, Jerry.
 (then)
 Why am I trying to make you feel
 better? Who's the dead one here?

JERRY
 I was, until a couple days ago. At
 least that's how I saw it--and how I
 wanted everyone else to see it. My
 problems were the worst problems in
 the world, Philip. There was no one
 on earth who was suffering as I was
 suffering...especially not my friends.

PHILIP
 And we weren't. Problems are like
 snowflakes. Except...horrible.

JERRY
 Things go so right for so long, you're
 not equipped to handle it when there's
 a bump in the road. So you ignore
 it, which drives you right into
 another bump, then another, and
 another, and the next thing you know--

PHILIP
 You're a corpse, floating facedown
 in your own pool?

JERRY
 I was going to say "you're driven
 right off the road", but the song
 remains the same.

PHILIP
 Mine was more topical.

JERRY
 Abandoned the theme, though--
 (regroups)
 Point is...we were close friends who
 didn't *really know each other*.
 (MORE)

JERRY (CONT'D)

And I think that's because our entire friendship was based on the *good times*. Neither of us--*none* of us, including Mug and Seth--were ever willing or able to deal with the bad times. So when things went bad, individually--*and boy, did they go bad*--all any of us could do was turn inward.

PHILIP

Didn't want to ruin the party.

JERRY

We were so full of shit, Philip. We made our living compressing the range of human emotion into brightly-colored, easily digestible single servings available for three-forty-nine apiece. And the better somebody gets at that--and we were fucking *good*--the less capable a person makes himself of facing anything that doesn't have a gift-wrapped, guaranteed satisfactory result. Whether it's something that makes us unhappy, something we're afraid of...

Jerry follows Philip's gaze into the house, finding UNPLEASANT WIDOW. Stepping in to block her from view is MUG.

PHILIP

Something we really want.

JERRY -- Is floored by his realization.

JERRY

Holy shit. That's what Daphne was talking about!

PHILIP

Smart girl, that Daphne. Probably shouldn't have fucked that one up.

JERRY

Oh, you *think*?

Jerry and Philip LAUGH as Philip finishes his drink.

SETH (O.S.)

Jerry?

Jerry looks up to see that Seth and Mug have come outside.
He turns back to Philip...

Finding only A FULL GLASS OF SCOTCH sitting next to him.

SETH (CONT'D)

Can I talk to you for a minute?

157 EXT. FLIPWORDZ BUILDING -- AFTERNOON 157

Seth's new company. Prime real estate; cutting edge
architecture just being finished.

158 OMITTED 158

158A INT. FLIPWORDZ - ELEVATOR -- SAME 158A

Seth, Mug and Jerry--still with the cane--are ascending.

MUG

I still say it's bullshit. At least
one of you guys didn't know.

JERRY

I *didn't* know until late in the game,
but I did know before you told us.

SETH

I'd known for so long that I'd almost
forgotten about it.

MUG

And you never said anything.

JERRY

He never told *me*, either.

The elevator DINGS, having reached the top floor.

SETH

I'm a self-involved bastard. That's
what has brought us here today.

The doors open onto:

158B INT. FLIPWORDZ - CREATIVE EXECUTIVE FLOOR -- CONTINUOUS 158B

The ultra-modern, expansive space has been partially divided
into three identical offices--all of which are stocked with
pristine, top-of-the line furnishings and materials.

SETH

I call middle. Work it out between
yourselves who gets either side.

Jerry and Mug react, flabbergasted.

SETH (CONT'D)

Philip has put everything in perspective...as Mug can certainly attest to.

(then)

It was {bleep}'s idea to rescind your job offer when you were in the hospital, Jerry--not mine. But what's truly awful about that is the fact that I let him talk me into it without a fight. I'm ashamed of myself. I want to set things right, focus on what's important. You, me and Mug, on our own--like it always should have been.

MUG

This is unbelievable, Seth.

SETH

This is just the beginning. The three of us are going to turn the industry on its head. Anything you guys need, it's yours.

Jerry limps over towards a large sketch easel, fully equipped with full catalog of writing instruments.

JERRY

I've never actually owned one of these. Always did my work on scraps of paper and cocktail napkins...

(then, looking up)

Mug's right. This is unbelievable. This company is going to be great. You--both of you--are going to kick ass. For me to say no to this would be the most difficult thing I've ever done.

(heavy pause)

So that's why I'm saying no.

Seth and Mug react, surprised.

JERRY (CONT'D)

(re: easel)

Love to take this with me, if I could.

159 EXT. BLUFFS OVERLOOKING WATERFRONT PIER -- EVENING

159

In the distance below is the same pier from Jerry's childhood. Pulling to a stop above is a brand-new INFINITI.

160 INT. MUG'S INFINITI -- CONTINUOUS

160

Mug is at the wheel; Jerry sits shotgun.

MUG

You think Philip would've liked it?
He always giving me shit about not
spending money on myself.

JERRY

It's a nice car, Mug. He would have
loved it.

Mug extends a fist; Jerry high-fives it. They sit in silence
for a few moments.

MUG

What are you going to do now, Jerry?

JERRY

(beat, smiles)
Can I tell you a secret?

160A OMITTED

160A

161 EXT. WATERFRONT -- A SHORT WHILE LATER

161

Carrying his easel in its case, Jerry walks with his cane
along the shoreline, moving away from the pier. The same
path he once walked with his father.

162 EXT. SHORELINE -- "MAGIC HOUR"

162

Jerry has finished setting up the easel. He stares at the
blank canvas before him and the expanse of water beyond it.

A FATHER and SON walk past.

Jerry reaches into his pocket and produces a lollipop, which
he unwraps and puts in his mouth.

JERRY (V.O.)

I'm going to see what I can make
happen.

Jerry raises a marker to the canvas.

WHITE OUT.

CREDITS (MUSIC: WEEZER'S "MY NAME IS JONAS"; THE KILLERS'
"THIS IS YOUR LIFE")