

**HOW TO LOSE FRIENDS AND ALIENATE PEOPLE**

Written by

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09/05/07 SHOOTING

**SCRIPT**

**FADE IN:**

**1 TV SCREEN - BLACK AND WHITE MOVIE 1**

...British, fifties, a melodrama. We're looking at an ACTRESS - glamorous, young - but very much in the back ground of the scene - a secretary typing at her desk.

**REVERSE**

A YOUNG BOY sits watching the film, his clothes and the room around him telling us this is England in the 1960s. He is staring raptly at the actress.

**SIDNEY (V.O.)**

All my life I've been a Looky-Loo.

**DISSOLVE TO:**

**2 INT. GOLDEN GLOBES AWARDS - EVENING 2**

**SLOW-MOTION**

We are CLOSE on an extremely handsome YOUNG MAN staring past us with a dazzling smile.

**SIDNEY (V.O.)**

My name's Sidney Young. I'm a journalist...a hack. (Beat) Yeah, that...that isn't me.

We PAN right and down to our hero - SIDNEY YOUNG - thirties, an odd-ball with a knack for getting people to dislike him.

**SIDNEY (CONT'D) (V.O.) (CONT'D)**

This is me at the Golden Globe Awards in L.A. this year. That's my Armani tuxedo. That's a Rolex Sea-Dweller 4000 watch I'm wearing.

Still in SLOW-MOTION we TRACK BACK and see that Sidney is at a table with several other people, all staring raptly past us to the stage which is out of shot.

**SIDNEY (CONT'D)**

Those people all around me - they're all famous. They're my friends.

Beside him sits a beautiful young woman - SOPHIE MAES (20's).

**2.**

**SIDNEY (CONT'D) (V.O.) (CONT'D)**

That's the actress Sophie Maes. This morning she told me she would let me have sex with her if she won the Best Actress Award. Still in SLOW MOTION, Sophie suddenly covers her face with her hands and begins to stand.

**SIDNEY (CONT'D) (V.O.) (CONT'D)**

She just won the Best Actress Award.

Sophie walks out of the shot. Still sporting the fixed smile, Sidney claps in SLO-MO along with everyone else in the room. We TRACK away from Sidney past tables of CELEBRITIES towards an EXIT.

**SIDNEY (CONT'D)**

My life didn't used to be like this.

We PUSH THROUGH the EXIT DOORS and find ourselves impossibly looking at...

**3 EXT. LONDON - LEICESTER SQUARE - LATE AFTERNOON 3**

**4 SLOW MOTION TRACKING SHOT 4**

...a crowd of FANS held back from us by a red rope, craning their necks to see us more clearly, waving, cheering, shouting, cameras flashing... Rain lashes down.  
A CAPTION reads: "Sidney's Life, One Year Ago. Bafta Awards. London."

**SIDNEY (V.O.)**

Looky-Loos. That's what They call you when you stand out in the rain all night just to catch a glimpse of Them going by.  
REVERSE - CELEBRITIES walk down the red carpet, pausing to wave at the fans.

**SIDNEY (CONT'D)**

I used to pretend it was different for me because I was getting paid by a magazine or newspaper, whatever. But that's, you know...I just loved watching Them. I'd stand outside looking in through the window and think what it would be like to somehow get inside. But there was only one way to get past the thin red line that separates the celebrities from the civilians. You had to be famous.

3.

**4A EXT. SECURITY POINT - LATE AFTERNOON 4A**

Sidney stands talking to a young PR WOMAN at the security gate. He has a small, ugly PIG on a leash.

**PR WOMAN**

Babe?

**SIDNEY**

Babe Three. Yeah.  
She looks doubtfully at the pig.

**PR WOMAN**

Babe was a cute little piglet.

**SIDNEY**

Harry Potter used to be a cute little piglet too. What do you want? Tempus Fugits...

**PR WOMAN**

He hasn't got any ID.

**SIDNEY**

How many pigs are coming tonight? Look, I was told to bring him, hand him over to the producer, Bob Milton, inside. You want me to leave him here with you, that's fine...

**PR WOMAN**

No, you can't leave him with me. I've got...Hold on, I'll... She looks around, helplessly. She begins to unhook the red rope. Sidney tries to hide his excitement.

**PR WOMAN (CONT'D)**

If you're positive that you're supposed to... An OLDER PR WOMAN stalks over.

**OLDER PR WOMAN**

**(ICILY)**

Well, well, Sidney Young.

**SIDNEY**

**(RUMBLED)**

Well, well...clipboard Nazi-type woman. She turns to the SECURITY standing beside them.

**OLDER PR WOMAN**

The pig doesn't get in.

4.

She starts to walk away.

**SIDNEY**

What about me?

**OLDER PR WOMAN**

I was talking about you.

**5 MOMENTS LATER 5**

Sidney and the Pig are being "escorted" away from the red carpet by the Security.

**SIDNEY (V.O.)**

The Looky-Loos dream is that one day they will somehow get to mingle with the stars. But the Industry can't allow any mingling. Stars have to be kept away from civilians, have to be quarantined, so they don't become normal. Like us.

They pass a ravishing HOLLYWOOD ACTRESS walking the other way. She looks curiously at the pig as she passes. Sidney stares after her, longingly.

**6 INT. SANDERSON HOTEL - EVENING 6**

TRACKING through the doors and into the lobby of the exclusive hotel.

**SIDNEY (V.O.)**

But after the awards come the parties - the Miramax Party, the London Records Party and, best of all - the Sharps Magazine Party, so exclusive that there are no pass-alongs, no plus-ones, no press.

We find Sidney checking in at the desk.

**SIDNEY (CONT'D)**

(to Receptionist,

**HORRIFIED)**

How much? I only want to stay for one night!

**7 INT. ELEVATOR - MOMENTS LATER 7**

Sidney stands in the rising elevator, suit bag in his hand,

holdall at his feet.

**SIDNEY (V.O.)**

5.

This is where the movie stars can finally relax, secure in the knowledge they are among their own kind.

We see the PIG'S SNOUT poking out of the zip of the holdall.

**8 INT. HOTEL ROOM - EVENING 8**

Sidney turns from the mirror to face us. He is wearing a WAITER'S UNIFORM of white shirt, waistcoat, and bow tie. He is also wearing a WIG and FALSE MOUSTACHE.

**SIDNEY (V.O.)**

And that is when I strike.

He picks up a tray of canapés from the bed and looks down to where the Pig watches him from the floor.

**SIDNEY (CONT'D)**

I want you in bed by ten. And no porn.

He tosses the pig one of the canapés.

**9 INT. HOTEL - EVENING 9**

Sidney, tray in hand, peers around the corner to the entrance to the hotel's roofed COURTYARD. The Older PR Woman we saw earlier stands at the door, a formidable presence. As we watch she greets an approaching CELEBRITY gushingly. Seizing his chance Sidney darts towards the door and, tray held aloft to cover his face, slips through into the courtyard beyond.

**10 INT. HOTEL COURTYARD - SHARPS MAGAZINE PARTY - MOMENTS 10**

**LATER**

...as Sidney emerges from the washrooms, now dressed only in the white shirt and black trousers. He scoops up a

passing glass of champagne, checks his moustache and surveys the courtyard - a room full of glamour: tanned skin, diamonds, beautiful dresses, beautiful suits, champagne. He stands surveying the crowd of A-list celebrities in front of him, dazed.

**SIDNEY**

**(TO HIMSELF)**

You can do this. You belong here.  
You're a star. You're a big,  
bright shining star...

6.

**11 INT. HOTEL ROOM - EVENING 11**

The room is trashed - furniture over-turned, mini-bar open and broken bottles all over the floor. A weird squealing which could almost be human is coming from the bathroom.

**ASSISTANT MANAGER (O.S.)**

Hello? Sir?  
The squealing stops.

**ASSISTANT MANAGER (CONT'D)**

Is everything alright?  
The door opens and the Assistant Manager walks in and stands staring around him in horror. Behind him the pig emerges from the bathroom and slips out of the open door, across the corridor and straight into the open lift...

**12 INT. SHARPS PARTY - EVENING 12**

Sidney is talking to a very famous and very drunk Hollywood

**ACTRESS.**

**SIDNEY**

No, when I'm in L.A. I stay at the Sunset Marquis, when I'm here I always stay at the Sanderson. It's, you know, I don't feel at home these days unless I'm in a

hotel.

**HOLLYWOOD ACTRESS**

So what do you do?

**SIDNEY**

Oh, I'm a writer. Movie writer.

**HOLLYWOOD ACTRESS**

Oh great.

**SIDNEY**

Yeah. Got one in pre-production now. You know it's really weird running into you like this because just the other day I was telling the producer I thought you'd be perfect for the lead. She starts to laugh.

**SIDNEY (CONT'D)**

No, seriously, you would, because, you know, you have this mixture of intelligence and beauty and fragility that we're looking for and, uh...

7.

**HOLLYWOOD ACTRESS**

**(SMILING)**

What's the film?

**SIDNEY**

Tits of Fury.  
She laughs.

**SIDNEY (CONT'D)**

**(SMILING)**

I'm joking, I'm just...It's a bio-pic. About Greta Garbo. That's why I thought of you. You have those amazing cheek-bones and...are they real? Have you had plastic surgery?

**HOLLYWOOD ACTRESS**

No. Have you?

**SIDNEY**

Me? No, hardly anything. A penis reduction as a child, that's pretty much...

She laughs again, snorting into her drink. Sidney can't believe this - she likes him!

**13 INT. HOTEL CORRIDOR - EVENING 13**

The lift doors glide open and the Pig trots out and around the corner. The PR Woman is still at the door to the courtyard, berating one of her staff. The Pig sails past them both, unnoticed, and disappears into the party.

**14 INT. SHARPES PARTY - EVENING 14**

A YOUNG MAN sits drinking at a table. He slips a little bag of Ecstasy from his pocket and takes one.

**UNDER THE TABLE**

As the Young Man pushes the bag back into his pocket. The Pig sits at his feet watching as the little bag slips back out and DROPS to the floor. The Pig sniffs at the bag...

**15 SIDNEY AND HOLLYWOOD ACTRESS 15**

...still talking. The place is crammed now, and hot. Sidney wipes sweat from his forehead.

**HOLLYWOOD ACTRESS**

Oh god, I'm drunk.

**SIDNEY**

Are you?

8.

**HOLLYWOOD ACTRESS**

I'm so drunk. I haven't eaten and...

**SIDNEY**

You feel okay? Because my room's just upstairs if you want to lie down or, or loosen any, you know, morals or...

**HOLLYWOOD ACTRESS**

**(LAUGHING)**

What is your name again?

**SIDNEY**

Clark. Clark Baxter.  
He takes a sip of his champagne and his moustache comes loose and hangs limply from his face.

**SIDNEY (CONT'D)**

How'd you do?  
The Actress stares at him in surprise but Sidney doesn't notice - he is staring past her to where there is something of a COMMOTION amongst the guests. The PR Woman is hurrying across the room, hissing into her ear-piece. Somebody screams. Then to Sidney's horror a group of guests scatter in panic and the cause of the commotion is revealed: the Pig charges into view, heading straight for him.

**SIDNEY (CONT'D)**

**(MUTTERING)**

Oh, shit...  
The Pig suddenly skids to a halt and stares at Sidney with hot eyes. The PR Woman follows the Pig's gaze and spots Sidney.

**OLDER PR WOMAN**

**(INTO HEADSET)**

Sarah, get security! Code Red.  
Sidney Young got in!

**HOLLYWOOD ACTRESS**

**(FEARFULLY)**

Who's Sidney Young?  
Before Sidney can answer the Pig charges.

**SIDNEY**

Oh, shit!  
Sidney turns and legs it.

**ACROSS THE ROOM**

We are looking OVER THE SHOULDER of a tall grey-haired MAN who stands in the shadows watching Sidney run past. This is CLAYTON HARDING, his face hidden for the time being.

9.

He lights a cigarette with a thoughtful air and watches Sidney's flight, rolling the BOOK OF MATCHES between his fingers.

**BACK WITH SIDNEY**

...as the Pig catches up with him and lunges at his ankles. Sidney screams, trips and flies through the air, wig spinning free, hurtling straight towards a table of startled celebrities. We FREEZE FRAME.  
SUPERED TITLE - "How To Lose Friends & Alienate People."  
We hear the opening of David Bowie's Star.

**16 INT. HOTEL CORRIDORS - LATER 16**

As the TITLES and song continue we see a protesting Sidney and Pig being escorted by Security through the endless corridors of the Hotel.  
Titles End.

**FADE OUT.**

**FADE IN:**

**16A EXT. LONDON FLAT - DAY 16A**

A seedy flat in Shepherds bush.

**17 INT. SIDNEY'S FLAT - BEDROOM - AFTERNOON 17**

Sidney lies in bed reading a newspaper in his underwear. A phone is RINGING in the next room.  
Sidney begins to cut out a photograph from one of the papers - Sidney struggling with an irate Clint Eastwood and some Security Men. The phone continues to ring.

**SIDNEY**

**(CALLING)**

Will you get that? (Beat) Will

you get the phone?

Sighing he gets up and scratching himself, stumbles through to...

### **18 LIVING ROOM 18**

...which we see is, bizarrely, an OFFICE - full of an odd assortment of JOURNALISTS, desks, antiquated computers and an old fax machine. The walls are lined with past covers from Sidney's magazine - The Post-Modern Review. One bears a photograph of Victoria Beckham with the title "Posh Spice? Like Fuck She Is."

**10.**

A JOURNALIST is talking on the phone by the door. The other phone is still ringing.

#### **JOURNALIST**

Look, we don't hate celebrities at the Post-Modern Review, okay? We just don't think they should be taking themselves so seriously. For us a celebrity is a text to be deconstructed. Apart from Costner obviously.

Sidney edges past him to where a LARGE WOMAN and a histrionic THIN MAN are in the middle of a argument, encouraged by the other members of staff.

#### **THIN MAN**

##### **(SHRILL)**

I wouldn't do this the honour of calling it a review. It's a puerile, personal attack in, in alcoholic prose, in which incidentally you manage to misquote both Derrida and Lyotard. I am a...

#### **LARGE WOMAN**

##### **(CALMLY)**

Girl.

#### **THIN MAN**

...an internationally respected

academic and...

**LARGE WOMAN**

Prick.

**THIN MAN**

...author of a very well received  
book on the history of culture  
and a...

**LARGE WOMAN**

Fuckwit.

**SIDNEY**

(threading his way past)  
Couldn't one of you answer the  
phone?  
As the argument continues behind him he reaches the phone  
with a bored YOUNG MAN sitting by it.

**SIDNEY (CONT'D)**

Will you answer that? What do I  
pay you for?

**YOUNG MAN**

You don't pay me.

**11.**

**SIDNEY**

Just get the phone!  
The Young Man answers the phone.

**YOUNG MAN**

Post-Modern Review.

**THIN MAN**

Sidney, if she doesn't apologise  
I'm quitting.

**SIDNEY**

(to the Large Woman)  
George can't leave. You'll have  
to apologise.

**LARGE WOMAN**

Why can't George leave?

**SIDNEY**

He owns the fax machine.  
Sidney notices the Young Man is staring at him with a  
scared expression.

**SIDNEY (CONT'D)**

What?

**YOUNG MAN**

It's Sharps Magazine.  
Sidney stops smiling.

**YOUNG MAN (CONT'D)**

We're finished.

**SIDNEY**

We're not finished.

**YOUNG MAN**

They sue, we're finished.

**SIDNEY**

Shut up. (To the others) Will you  
be quiet!  
They ignore him and continue bickering. Sidney picks up the  
phone.

**SIDNEY (CONT'D)**

Sidney Young.

**MAN (O.S.)**

(over phone, gravel

**VOICED)**

This is Clayton Harding. I'm the  
editor of Sharps Magazine.  
Sidney is visibly thrown.

**12.**

**SIDNEY**

Ah, Lord Vader.

**19 INT. CLAYTON'S OFFICE - DAY 19**

SHOOTING FROM BEHIND Clayton Harding's swivel chair - all

we can see is Clayton's grey hair, his custom-built desk and the enormous office in front of him. He is smoking. As he talks he rolls a BOOK OF MATCHES between his fingers.

**CLAYTON HARDING**

I saw you at my party, just before you ruined it with your little pig stunt.

**SIDNEY (O.S.)**

**(OVER PHONE)**

You liked that?

**CLAYTON HARDING**

Sure.

On his desk we see a few copies the Post-Modern Review - glimpses of stars on the covers - Catherine Zeta-Jones, Orlando Bloom... Clayton's hand sifts one copy from the others and holds it up - the cover depicts CLAYTON HIMSELF

patrician handsome, stern, photo-shopped so that he appears to be NAKED. A headline reads "Clayton Harding - The Editor's New Clothes?"

Clayton's shoulder's heave with a snort of repressed laughter.

**CLAYTON HARDING (CONT'D)**

(examining the cover)

I especially liked the part where Clint Eastwood beat the shit outa ya.

**20 INT. MAGAZINE OFFICE - CONTINUOUS 20**

Sidney lights a cigarette, trying to seem casual.

**SIDNEY**

We're not scared of you, Harding. You want to sue, go ahead and sue. It's like Jimmy Stewart said, (a poor Stewart impersonation:) "You sit up there and you spin your little webs and you think the whole world revolves around you and your money. Well, it doesn't, Mr... Mr..."

**21 INT. CLAYTON'S OFFICE - DAY 21**

Clayton is still flicking through the magazines.

**CLAYTON HARDING**

Potter.

**SIDNEY (O.S.)**

**(OVER PHONE)**

"Mr. Potter..."You go ahead and  
sue if you want, but I warn you,  
if you strike me down, I shall  
become more powerful than you can  
possibly imagine.

An ASSISTANT walks in. Clayton looks up.

**ASSISTANT**

**(SOFTLY)**

Miss Taylor is here sir.

Clayton nods and quickly throws the magazines into a BOTTOM  
DRAWER of the desk. Sidney is still talking over the phone,  
beginning to enjoy himself.

**SIDNEY (O.S.)**

Destroy me and a hundred more  
will spring up in my place - men  
who care nothing for success, men  
who cannot be bought, men whose  
only loyalty is to...

**CLAYTON HARDING**

**(CALMLY)**

I want you to come and work for  
me at Sharps Magazine in New  
York.

**22 INT. MAGAZINE OFFICE - DAY 22**

Sidney stares to where the Thin Man is trying to get out of  
the door with the Fax Machine, the Large Woman struggling

with him. The two fall to the floor. The rest of the staff gather around them.

**STAFF**

**(CHANTING)**

Fight, fight, fight...

**SIDNEY**

**(INTO PHONE)**

Um...could you say that again please?

We hear the sound of an aeroplane engine build as we...

**23 AN AEROPLANE ROARS THROUGH THE BLUE SKY. 23**

**14.**

**24 EXT. JFK AIRPORT - DAY 24**

Sidney emerges from the airport, wearing his crumpled brown suit, dragging his suitcase behind him. He stares around, excited to be here.

**25 EXT. NEW YORK - HELL'S KITCHEN - EVENING 25**

Sidney drags his suitcase down the quiet street and stops outside an apartment block, checking the address.

**26 INT. STAIRS - EVENING 26**

An elderly Polish lady - MRS KOWALSKI - is leading Sidney up the stairs of the building.

**MRS KOWALSKI**

This magazine you are working for? It is good?

**SIDNEY**

It's Sharps Magazine. You know  
Sharps? It's sort of society,  
fashion, crime, finance,  
Hollywood celebrities...

**MRS KOWALSKI**

**(SCORNFUL)**

Hollywood. Sodom and Gomorrah.  
Now everybody is celebrity. You  
take out your breasts, you are  
celebrity.

**SIDNEY**

(eyeing her chest

**DOUBTFULLY)**

Well, I think it depends on the  
breasts but...

**MRS KOWALSKI**

**(OBLIVIOUS)**

In Poland, someone was famous  
because they had done  
something...Marie Curie...Pope  
John Paul...

**SIDNEY**

Yeah, they don't make  
entertainers like that any  
more...

Mrs Kowalski cuffs the back of his head. Sidney is somewhat  
surprised by this familiarity, having only just met the  
lady. She opens an apartment door.

**15.**

**26A INT. APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS 26A**

Mrs Kowalski shows Sidney into the small and cheaply  
furnished apartment. Sidney's boxed possessions stand in a  
corner.

**MRS KOWALSKI**

They brought your things

yesterday.

**SIDNEY**

**(LOOKING AROUND)**

Yup, this is good. This is...I  
can put my drum kit just over  
there and, uh...  
She stares at him.

**SIDNEY (CONT'D)**

That's a...that's just a joke.  
They're just little...congas.

**MRS KOWALSKI**

When do you start work?

**SIDNEY**

Tomorrow morning.

**MRS KOWALSKI**

Well, you need to be fresh, make  
a good impression. (Leaving) Go to  
bed.

**SIDNEY**

Just what I'm going to do...

**27 INT. BAR - EVENING 27**

A drunken Sidney dances frenetically on a small dance floor  
made of squares of flashing color, compensating with  
enthusiasm for what he lacks in coordination. The women on  
the floor shuffle further and further away from him.

**28 EXT. STREET - EVENING 28**

Sidney walks down the street, staring bright eyed at the  
city around him, in love with New York. A SEXY WOMAN in a  
short dress passes him. Sidney ogles her as she walks into  
a BAR.

**29 INT. BAR - EVENING 29**

Sidney finds the Sexy Woman sitting at the bar. There is an  
empty stool beside her. Sidney sidles into it.

16.

**SEXY WOMAN**

**(TO BARMAN)**

A Kona please.  
Sidney gestures to the Barman to make it two. He sits trying to think of something to say. The barman returns with their drinks.

**SIDNEY**

(raising his glass)  
Hi, my name's Clark. Clark Baxter.  
The Woman looks at him without expression. Sidney sips his drink, grimaces.

**SIDNEY (CONT'D)**

**(TO BARMAN)**

What the hell's that?

**BARMAN**

That's a water sir.

**SIDNEY**

Well that's...that's not right, is it? That's not...put a dash of beer in that.  
A young woman has been sitting on the other side of Sidney. This is ALISON OLSEN (20s) smart, attractive, dressed in an elegant but no-nonsense suit. She is writing in a NOTEBOOK. She looks up and notices Sidney.

**ALISON**

I'm sorry, my boyfriend's sitting there.  
Sidney gets up and examines the stool.

**SIDNEY**

Is he? He's fucking small isn't he?  
He smiles at the Sexy Woman, hoping to get a laugh. Alison examines Sidney coolly, points to the drink on the bar in front of Sidney.

**ALISON**

That's his White Russian. He'll  
be here in a second.

**SIDNEY**

**(TO BARMAN)**

Can you reserve these seats?

**BARMAN**

Nope.

Sidney sits down and turns back to the Sexy Woman.

**17.**

**SIDNEY**

I'm a journalist. Work for a  
little periodical you might have  
heard of called Sharps Magazine?  
Sidney produces a card and waves it vaguely.

**SIDNEY (CONT'D)**

I'm the Cultural Editor.  
Alison takes the card from his hand before he can put it  
away again.

**ALISON**

(to Sexy Woman)  
This is a library card. (Reading  
it) From Glow-cesther...

**SIDNEY**

(snatching it back)  
That's...not that one...  
(Searching wallet) I've got it  
somewhere...I just...  
The Sexy Woman gets up and walks away. Sidney watches her  
go bitterly.

**SIDNEY (CONT'D)**

**(TO ALISON)**

Happy now?

**ALISON**

Just doing my bit for the gene  
pool.  
He produces the PHOTOGRAPH of him being held in a headlock  
by Clint Eastwood.

**SIDNEY**

Who's that there with Clint Eastwood?

**ALISON**

Morgan Freeman?

**SIDNEY**

No, in the headlock.

**ALISON**

You had this laminated?

**SIDNEY**

Oh just give it...  
He snatches the photograph back, catching Alison's glass in the process. Her drink SPILLS over her notebook - soaking the page she has been writing.

**ALISON**

Shit!

**18.**

**SIDNEY**

It's okay. It's okay. I've got it.  
He tries to blot the page with a napkin, smearing the ink.

**ALISON**

Just...just leave it!  
She examines the book, furious.

**SIDNEY**

Sorry.  
He tries to think of something to say.

**SIDNEY (CONT'D)**

It's pronounced Gloucester by the way.

**ALISON**

**(ICY)**

Are you going to get off that seat?

**SIDNEY**

No.

**ALISON**

**(BEAT)**

Do you know the meaning of Karma?

**SIDNEY**

The curry?

**ALISON**

(inscribing a circle in

**THE AIR )**

What goes around, comes around.  
The moment is approaching when  
you will pay the price for being  
an asshole. When my boyfriend  
gets here I'm going to put my  
pacifist leanings to one side and  
encourage him to take you outside  
and...  
Her cell-phone rings. She answers it.

**ALISON (CONT'D)**

Hello? Hi, honey. (Beat) Oh.  
(Beat) no, no, it's...don't worry  
about it. I'll see you then.  
She hangs up, avoiding Sidney's gaze, embarrassed and  
annoyed.

**SIDNEY**

Boyfriend not coming?

**19.**

She stares straight ahead, gathering her things.

**SIDNEY (CONT'D)**

**(CONCILIATORY)**

Listen, I'm sorry. Do you  
think...?  
She turns to him.

**SIDNEY (CONT'D)**

Do you think I could have his  
drink?

Alison gives him a cold smile, controlling her temper. She spots a heavily made-up WOMAN walking past.

**ALISON**

Bobbie?

**WOMAN**

Hey!

**ALISON**

You want a seat? I'm just leaving.

**WOMAN**

Thanks.

The Woman takes Alison's place at the bar.

**SIDNEY**

(to the newcomer)

Hello.

He slides the PHOTOGRAPH over to her.

**SIDNEY (CONT'D)**

Guess who that is with Clint Eastwood.

Alison gives a small smile and leaves.

### **30 INT. SIDNEY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT 30**

Sidney and the Woman dance drunkenly around the room to the music blaring from Sidney's stereo. The track finishes and they stand gasping for breath.

**WOMAN**

I'm gonna powder my nose. Why don't you put on something a little more romantic?

She staggers off down the hall. Sidney, giddy with excitement, searches through some LPs and puts one on his old turntable. It's Ace of Spades by Motorhead. He staggers around, playing air-guitar for a moment.

**20.**

The music is suddenly switched off. He turns to find Mrs Kowalski standing beside the record player, staring grimly at him.

**SIDNEY**

Mrs Lebowski...

**MRS KOWALSKI**

Kowalski. You know what time it is? The music blaring, your door open...

**SIDNEY**

(trying to seem sober)

Was it? Fuck. I mean, shit.

Sorry. I just...met an old friend and brought them back...

The Woman staggers back into the room, her back to us. She is NAKED. She is also surprisingly muscular.

**SIDNEY (CONT'D)**

...for a little...

He notices the woman. His gaze drops to below the waist.

**SIDNEY (CONT'D)**

...penis.

Mrs Kowalski turns and takes in the view. Nobody moves.

**31 INT. BEDROOM - MORNING 31**

A hung-over Sidney wakes up in his bed, light streaming through the window.

**32 BATHROOM 32**

He examines his reflection, psyching himself up for his first day.

**SIDNEY**

You can do this! You can do this!

He hums the fanfare from the Rocky theme.

**33 LIVING ROOM 33**

Sidney walks into the room, still humming the theme tune, shadow boxing. He opens the blinds and turns to the couch. The "Woman" wakes up from where she has been sleeping on the couch and gazes blearily at Sidney.

**SIDNEY**

Quick coffee Bob and then you've got to go.

21.

We hear the opening of Brian Ferry's version of The 'In' Crowd as we...

**34 EXT. TIMES SQUARE - MORNING 34**

As the song continues we see Sidney swagger down the busy sidewalk towards us. He is wearing sunglasses and a T-shirt emblazoned with a photograph of Keanu Reeves and the caption "Young, Dumb and Full of Cum." The T-shirt is riding up a little over his belly.

**SIDNEY (V.O.)**

This is my city.

He stops at a gleaming chrome entrance and stares up at the Heywood Building towering above him.

**35 INT. HEYWOOD BUILDING - ENTRANCE SECURITY - MORNING 35**

As the song continues Sidney, still swaggering, is escorted through the formidable looking security by a thin and chic ASSISTANT. The entrance hall arches above them, a vast and impressive cavern of chrome and glass.

**SIDNEY (V.O.)**

This is my building.

**36 INT. LIFT - MOMENTS LATER 36**

Sidney leans nonchalantly against the wall of the lift examining the Chic Assistant and two stunningly beautiful MODELS who are in conversation. Sidney manages to catch the attention of one of the models and flashes what he believes is a rakish smile. In return he receives an icy glare.

**SIDNEY (V.O.)**

These are my models.

**37 INT. SHARPS MAGAZINE - CORRIDOR - MOMENTS LATER 37**

The Chic Assistant leads Sidney down a curving, red carpeted corridor, past a chrome wall inscribed with the giant logo of the magazine. They reach a set of double doors which the Assistant opens for Sidney...

**SIDNEY (V.O.)**

And this...

Sidney walks through into...

**38 CLAYTON HARDING'S OFFICE 38**

Harding swings around in his chair to glare at us, a cigarette in his mouth.

**22.**

**SIDNEY (V.O.)**

...is my Boss.

**CLAYTON HARDING**

What the fuck are you wearing?  
The song grinds to an abrupt halt. Sidney loses a quantity of swagger. He examines his T-shirt.

**SIDNEY**

You like it? I brought you one.  
He takes a T-shirt from his satchel and hands it to Harding.

**CLAYTON HARDING**

Thanks.  
Casually he flings the shirt out of the open window behind him.

**CLAYTON HARDING (CONT'D)**

Next time you come here dressed like that, you follow the shirt.  
You understand?  
Sidney nods dumbly.

**CLAYTON HARDING (CONT'D)**

Sit down. How was the flight?

**SIDNEY**

**(SITTING)**

Good. Thanks for the business

class tickets, Clay.  
Harding regards him gravely.

**CLAYTON HARDING**

That was a mistake. And don't  
call me Clay.

**SIDNEY**

Oh. Well, if it's any consolation  
I got downgraded anyway.

**CLAYTON HARDING**

**(GRAVELY)**

That is some consolation.  
Sidney notices that the copy of The Post-Modern Review is  
on the desk - Clayton NAKED.

**SIDNEY**

**(NERVOUSLY)**

Ha! That was just a little, uh...  
as it happens I'm a big fan of  
your earlier, funnier work. Snipe  
Magazine that was...that was  
really good.

**23.**

Harding stares at Sidney.

**SIDNEY (CONT'D)**

Yeah, you've...you've actually  
been a big influence on me and I  
really think together we can  
inject a bit of that Snipe spirit  
into this magazine. Now I've got  
a few ideas that I'd like to...

**CLAYTON HARDING**

**(INTERRUPTING)**

You think you've arrived, doncha?  
Well I hate to break it to you,  
but you're only in the first  
room. It's not nothing, don't get  
me wrong, but there are plenty of  
people in this town who never  
made it past the first room.

After a year or so, maybe longer,  
you'll discover a secret doorway  
at the back of the first room  
that leads to the second.  
Eventually, if you're lucky,  
you'll discover another doorway  
back of the second room that  
leads to the third.  
He gazes at Sidney through narrowed eyes.

**CLAYTON HARDING (CONT'D)**

There are seven rooms in all.  
You're in the first, I'm in the  
seventh, and doncha forget it  
Sidney has been listening with a frown of concentration.

**SIDNEY**

**(BEAT)**

So...if I make it to the Seventh  
Room - will I become a true Jedi  
Knight?  
Harding exhales smoke and puts out his cigarette.

**CLAYTON HARDING**

Which brings us to the subject of  
your sense of humour. I had a  
look through your "magazine"  
here.

**SIDNEY**

What'd you think?  
Clayton swivels in his chair and stares thoughtfully out  
over the Manhattan skyline.

**CLAYTON HARDING**

Oh, I thought it was...kinda  
snarky. And bitter. And...  
witless.

**24.**

Sidney digests this. Clayton seems lost in thought.  
Finally...

**CLAYTON HARDING (CONT'D)**

I'm going to try you out in the I  
Spy Section.

**39 INT. CORRIDOR - DAY 39**

Sidney is hurrying to keep up with LAWRENCE MADDOX (40's) as he strides down the corridor. Lawrence is Canadian, handsome, one of the golden boys of the magazine and arrogant with it. Other EMPLOYEES pass them as they walk, heads down, expressions serious. The place is a model of quiet, professional industry.

**LAWRENCE MADDOX**

(glancing at Sidney's

**CLOTHES)**

Well, Sidney. We've only just met but already I perceive I am in the presence of a rare comic sensibility.

**SIDNEY**

Thanks.

**LAWRENCE MADDOX**

I know your Hi-jinx gave you a certain notoriety back in Olde England but things are going to be a bit different here. Harding wants me to be your Rabbi, show you the ropes. Are you aware of what we do at I Spy?

**SIDNEY**

You photograph famous people when they're drunk?

**LAWRENCE MADDOX**

**(IGNORING HIM)**

I Spy is the nation's window onto High Society. The Looky-Loos read us because...well, They Weren't There. The Glitterati read us because we tell them They Were There. For this system to work we have to know where There is.

**SIDNEY**

So...when we go out to clubs and things...would that, would that be on expenses or...?

**LAWRENCE MADDOX**

This isn't a vacation. It's a vocation.

25.

Maddox sweeps around the corner into an open-plan office area. Fact-checkers and Assistants buzz around.

**LAWRENCE MADDOX (CONT'D)**

When we do go out you're going to have to wear something more suitable.

**SIDNEY**

Okay. What do you mean by suitable?  
Maddox gestures at Sidney's body.

**LAWRENCE MADDOX**

Something that covers all of this up.  
He starts to check messages on his desk. Sidney, trying to seem at ease, stares at a black and white PHOTOGRAPH on the wall.

**SIDNEY**

Is that Mussolini?

**LAWRENCE MADDOX**

(Beat.) )  
No, Sidney, that's Richard Heywood. The owner of this magazine.

**SIDNEY**

Oh. Looks a little like, uh... (pointing to the child in the photograph, smiling) Who's this funny looking kid? Is that his son?  
Maddox stares at him.

**LAWRENCE MADDOX**

**(ICILY)**

That's his daughter, Elizabeth; now my wife.  
A SUBTITLE materializes like a halo around Maddox's head.

It reads: Do Not Fuck with Me.

**SIDNEY**

**(FLUSTERED)**

Really? Well, she's very...isn't she? Really, very...  
Someone walks up behind Sidney.

**LAWRENCE MADDOX**

Miss Olsen here takes care of the gallery openings, book launches and other intellectual fare. Can you find our new rookie something to do?

**26.**

Sidney turns to find Alison behind him, eating an apple. She eyes him coldly.

**ALISON**

I hear the Cultural Editor's job is up for grabs?

**40 LATER 40**

Alison sits working at her computer. Sidney appears and perches on the edge of her desk.

**SIDNEY**

Listen, seeing as how I'm going to be sitting just over there, don't you think we should try and put last night behind us?

**ALISON**

No. Get off my desk.

**SIDNEY**

I'm not sure what I'm supposed to be doing. (Beat) Are you going to help me out?

**ALISON**

Okay. Which way did you come in? Sidney stares at her. Alison takes some contact sheets from her desk and shoves them at him.

**ALISON (CONT'D)**

Chris Blick exhibition opening.  
Caption it. Now get off my desk.  
One of the magazines gorgeous Fashionistas - INGRID - walks  
past.

**INGRID**

**(TO ALISON)**

Hi!

**ALISON**

Hi, Ingrid.  
Ingrid stares at Sidney's outfit, thrown.

**SIDNEY**

(a wolfish smile)  
You going to introduce me?

**ALISON**

This is Clark Baxter. (Noticing  
Ingrid's gaze) He's English.

**INGRID**

(That explains it)  
Ohh...right.

**27.**

**SIDNEY**

Actually it's Sidney. Sidney  
Young. Clark Baxter is my alias.

**INGRID**

Why do you have an alias?

**ALISON**

He uses it when he's trying to  
pick up transsexuals.

**INGRID**

**(CREEPED OUT)**

Nice to meet you.  
She walks on.

**SIDNEY**

**(TO ALISON)**

I take it you knew about Bob and  
didn't tell me?

Alison inscribes a circle in the air with her finger  
without looking up.

**41 LATER 41**

Sidney is on the phone. He is staring at some contact  
sheets.

**SIDNEY**

Hello, is that the Parsons  
Gallery?

**WOMAN'S VOICE (O.S.)**

Yes, it is. This is Celia Parsons  
speaking.

**SIDNEY**

This is Sidney Young from Sharps  
Magazine? We're running some  
photographs from your opening of  
the Chris Blick exhibition, and I  
just need to caption them. I was  
wondering if you could help me  
identify some of the people?

**WOMAN'S VOICE**

**(OVER PHONE)**

All right.

**SIDNEY**

Thanks. So...Chris Blick. Man or  
woman?

**WOMAN'S VOICE (O.S.)**

What?

**28.**

**SIDNEY**

Is Chris Blick a man or woman?

**WOMAN'S VOICE (O.S.)**

**(BEAT)**

Are you sure you're calling from  
Sharps magazine?

**SIDNEY**

Yes, I am.

**WOMAN'S VOICE (O.S.)**

**(ICY)**

Tell me Stanley, why have they  
given you this assignment if you  
don't know who one of the most  
famous artists in America is?

**SIDNEY**

I...I don't really know.

**WOMAN'S VOICE (O.S.)**

**(SNAPPING)**

He's a man.

**SIDNEY**

Okay. Is he an old man?

**WOMAN'S VOICE (O.S.)**

**(BEAT)**

He's an older man, yes.

**SIDNEY**

(staring at a

**PHOTOGRAPH)**

Okay, I've got two old men here -  
so is he the fat one?

**WOMAN'S VOICE (O.S.)**

**(BEAT)**

You do realize that Clayton  
Harding is a personal friend of  
mine?

**SIDNEY**

**(BEAT)**

What's that got to do with  
anything?

**WOMAN'S VOICE (O.S.)**

Right.

She hangs up. Beat. Sidney looks around, hoping no-one was listening. He re-dials.

**WOMAN'S VOICE (O.S.) (CONT'D)**

Parsons gallery.

**SIDNEY**

Is he the one with the wonky eye?

**29.**

She hangs up again.

**CUT TO**

**42 INT. LOBBY - LIFT - DAY 42**

Sidney, coming back from lunch, gets into the lift eating a HAMBURGER. Another of the magazine's Fashionistas - ANNA - gets into the lift and tries to hold the door open for an approaching friend. The doors swish shut, Anna pulling her hand out of the way just in time. The lift rises.

**SIDNEY**

It's fashion sensitive. If you're not wearing Prada it'll take your arm clean off.

Anna stares at this strange man with the burger, baffled.

**ANNA**

But I am wearing Prada.

The lift stops and she gets out. Alison gets in, sees Sidney and winces. She takes out a book and pretends to read. The lift begins to rise again.

Through it's glass doors we see the different floors passing, different publications - each a hive of sober, hard work. Sidney stares at them.

**SIDNEY**

**(MOUTH FULL)**

This isn't what I expected.  
Alison recoils slightly.

**ALISON**

What did you expect?

**SIDNEY**

I don't know. The Algonquin circle. Dorothy Parker. Martinis. Quips. Look at them. Not one of them is drunk.

**ALISON**

It's called being a professional. You should try it some time.

**SIDNEY**

There's something you should understand. I'm not really one of you.

**ALISON**

By "you" do you mean "human?"

30.

**SIDNEY**

I mean the glossy posse. Bunch of Zombies, writing about "Pets of the Stars" but acting like they're working for the UN. I'm here to shake things up a bit. Where are you from?

**ALISON**

Not that it's any of your business, but I'm from Port Huron, Michigan.

**SIDNEY**

Right. Small town girl. (Hannibal Lector impersonation) I bet you could only dream of getting out. Getting anywhere - yes, Clarice? Getting all the way - to the N...Y...C. (Dropping the impersonation) Take my advice, don't go taking this celebrity fluff seriously. For a moment Alison is speechless with anger.

**ALISON**

You...you...arrogant...

The lift stops and a TALL WOMAN enters. She is expensively dressed, wears Chanel dark glasses, an expression of granite and an air of superhuman froideur.

Alison exchanges the slightest of nods with her and stares tensely ahead. Only Sidney, busy chewing, is oblivious to the plunge in temperature.

For a moment there is only the soft whir of the lift. Then Sidney begins to choke on some burger. He wheezes for a moment, gagging.

The Woman stiffens slightly but shows no other sign of having noticed the revolting noises coming from behind her. Alison closes her eyes.

Sidney gives a violent cough and a chunk of chewed burger and coleslaw flies out of his mouth and lands on the back of the oblivious Woman's Prada jacket.

Sidney notices and raises a tentative hand to brush the offending item away.

Before he can move Alison silently takes his wrist in a vice-like grip.

#### **43 CORRIDOR - MOMENTS LATER 43**

Alison is haranguing Sidney.

31.

**ALISON**

**(HISSING)**

Are you insane? That was Lawrence's wife, Elizabeth! Her father owns Sharps!

**SIDNEY**

That was her? The Mussolini baby? He stops.

**SIDNEY (CONT'D)**

I could go back and tell her I'm...

**ALISON**

No! Listen to me - you do NOT approach Elizabeth Maddox, you do NOT talk to her! Don't even make eye-contact with her? Do you

understand?

**SIDNEY**

Am I supposed to be afraid?

**ALISON**

Yes.

**SIDNEY**

I don't know the meaning of the word fear.

**ALISON**

I'm sure there are many words you don't know the meaning of!  
She walks on, shaking her head in disbelief.

**ALISON (CONT'D)**

When I think of all the people who would kill to be where you are. And you lumber in here, spitting food, haven't got the brains God gave a mollusc...why did Clayton hire you?

**SIDNEY**

**(FOLLOWING HER)**

Snipe Magazine.

**ALISON**

What?

**SIDNEY**

When Clayton left college he started this little magazine called Snipe. Fantastic. Took aim at every self-important celebrity in town. Completely fearless. It was like my magazine but twenty years earlier.

**(MORE)**

**32.**

**SIDNEY (CONT'D)**

That's why he's hired me. I am the young Clayton Harding. He looks at me and sees his glory days.

**ALISON**

**(SARCASTIC)**

His glory days? Sharps has won fourteen National Magazine awards and increased its advertising pages by more than 60 percent since he took over. He's paid millions of dollars a year. He lives in a Bank Street townhouse, and weekends in the Hamptons. Clayton Harding is one of the lynchpins of the media-industrial complex. Sidney stops to examine his reflection in a window.

**SIDNEY**

Yeah, but don't worry. I think I might still be in time to save him.

**44 INT. SIDNEY'S APARTMENT - EVENING 44**

The phone is ringing. Sidney walks in from the bedroom, changing into his old brown suit. The answer machine kicks in.

**SIDNEY (O.S.)**

(over answer machine)

You've reached Sidney Young. I'm sorry but my answering machine is out of order, so the voice you are hearing is actually me. The machine BEEPS. Sidney smirks at his joke and is reaching for the phone when we hear the caller - an older man, an upper-class English accent.

**OLDER MAN'S VOICE (O.S.)**

(over answer machine)

Sidney? Are you there?  
Sidney stops in his tracks, something complicated and fearful crossing his face.

**OLDER MAN'S VOICE (O.S.) (CONT'D)**

Sidney? Are you there?  
Sidney tiptoes back out of the room.

**OLDER MAN'S VOICE (CONT'D)**

If you're there Sidney, answer the phone.

We hear the opening of Fly Me To The Moon by Julie London

33.

**45 INT. TOWN CAR - EVENING 45**

Sidney sits in the car beside Alison and Maddox, staring out the window, entranced by the bright lights as they pass by...

**46 EXT. HOTEL - FUND-RAISER PARTY - NIGHT 46**

The rooftop swimming pool of a hotel. Flowers everywhere, including in the pool. Guests mill around drinking. We find Sidney working his way through the throng to where Alison stands.

**SIDNEY**

**(MOUTH FULL)**

There's a couple of hundred  
grands worth of food here and I  
swear I'm the only person eating  
it. You want some?

Alison recoils. Sidney does a little nerdy dance to the  
music as he eats.

**SIDNEY (CONT'D)**

This place is amazing. It's wall  
to wall totty.

**ALISON**

Wall to wall what?

**SIDNEY**

Totty. Babes. Sexually attractive  
women.

**ALISON**

Do you mind?

**SIDNEY**

What?

Maddox joins them. A man passes, nods respectfully at

Maddox.

**SIDNEY (CONT'D)**

Look at that. All night people have been treating us like we're royalty. In London, the journalist's motto is "Everybody hates us and we don't care."

**LAWRENCE MADDOX**

Well, now you're one of the High Priests of what's Hot and what's Not. So what were you two talking about?

**34.**

**ALISON**

Sidney was just marvelling at the abundance of "Totty" here.

**LAWRENCE MADDOX**

**(ENJOYING THIS)**

Uh-oh. I don't think Miss Olsen approves of you, Sidney. Sidney watches some beautiful women pass, dripping diamonds.

**SIDNEY**

I shouldn't be here. I get thrown out of places like this.

**LAWRENCE MADDOX**

This? This is a McDonald's. I hate disease parties. (Off Sidney's puzzled look) Fund-raisers.

Someone's CELL PHONE RINGS. All of the guests automatically check their cells.

An OLDER ATTRACTIVE WOMAN walks over - she's a little drunk.

**WOMAN**

Lawrence Maddox? Oh my goodness... Long time. Maddox examines her coolly.

**WOMAN (CONT'D)**

Rachel!  
Lawrence barely bothers to conceal the fact he doesn't remember her.

**LAWRENCE MADDOX**

Rachel. How are you?

**RACHEL**

Well, I'm just wonderful.  
Wonderful. How are you?  
Lawrence smiles and looks around him without answering.  
Rachel tries again.

**RACHEL (CONT'D)**

Funny I should run into you. I've just done this great little film called Five Boroughs and it's you know, low-budget, first-time director but very, uh, moving and... Hey, maybe you could do a little...?

**35.**

A handsome YOUNG MAN passes by. Maddox instantly turns away from Rachel.

**LAWRENCE MADDOX**

**(SMOOTHLY)**

Angelo, good to see you.  
Rachel hovers for a moment, embarrassed by her abrupt dismissal then slips away. Sidney watches her go, feeling for her.

**SIDNEY**

**(TO MADDOX)**

You know that was Rachel Petkoff? She's a fantastic actress. Hasn't done anything for years, but, in her day...

**LAWRENCE MADDOX**

**(COOLLY)**

I'm sure.

**SIDNEY**

Seriously, I've heard about that film. I think she's going to make a come back. We should get there first, do a profile or something before everyone else...

Maddox isn't listening. Instead he greets a fat, angry-looking VERY YOUNG MAN. This is VINCENT LEPAK, wearing his customary SHADES.

**LAWRENCE MADDOX**

**(FAWNING)**

Vincent! Great to see you. Children, I'd like to introduce you to Vincent Lepak, enfant terrible and in, my opinion, the most exciting new director in American cinema. Vincent nods, frowning, looks around.

**VINCENT**

I think this is the worst fundraiser I've been to in my whole life.

**LAWRENCE MADDOX**

It's a rat fuck, isn't it?  
Sidney walks away.

**47 ANGLE ON RACHEL 47**

...standing at the parapet, smoking, staring out over the city with red eyes. Sidney appears beside her.

**36.**

**SIDNEY**

Excuse me? Aren't you Rachel Petkoff?  
Rachel turns to look at him.

**SIDNEY (CONT'D)**

This is sort of embarrassing but...  
He holds out a napkin.

**SIDNEY (CONT'D)**

Could I have your autograph?  
Rachel, suspecting she is the target of ridicule, looks around to see if there's an audience.

**SIDNEY (CONT'D)**

I'm a big fan.

**RACHEL**

**(HARD)**

Is that so?

**SIDNEY**

Absolutely. I must have seen everything you've been in. Those episodes of The Love Boat and the Bionic Woman? The Song Birds, In The Night...I've even seen your first ever TV appearance. The Twilight Zone - House of Mirrors. Right?

**RACHEL**

**(THROWN)**

Right...

**SIDNEY**

My all time favorite? A Day Too Long. (He means it) You were really great in that.  
Rachel stares at him. She hides her emotion with a bright smile.

**RACHEL**

**(LAUGHING)**

What's your name, honey?

**SIDNEY**

Sidney Young.  
She takes the napkin and pen, her face glowing.

**RACHEL**

**(WRITING)**

Sidney Young. I'll remember that.

**48 ANGLE ON VINCENT 48**

...holding court to Maddox, Alison and some of the Glitterati. Sidney joins them, eating more food.

**VINCENT**

You look around and it's all  
shit. No-one is making movies  
that are fucking worthwhile.

**LAWRENCE MADDOX**

I'd have to disagree with you,  
Vincent.  
Vincent looks at him, displeased.

**LAWRENCE MADDOX (CONT'D)**

You're making movies that are  
worthwhile.  
Vincent accepts this with a curt nod.

**VINCENT**

This is what I'm saying. You have  
to inspire yourself. I am my role-  
model. I want to be me...  
He stares angrily around, handing his empty glass to his  
waiting assistant who immediately replaces it with a full  
one from a passing tray. Sidney watches him with dislike.

**SIDNEY**

**(SUDDENLY)**

Greatest film ever made?

**VINCENT**

Excuse me?

**SIDNEY**

What's the greatest film ever  
made? (To Alison) Go on. Have a  
guess.

**ALISON**

**(IRRITATED)**

Well, that's...I don't think  
there is one single film that...

**SIDNEY**

Have a guess.

**VINCENT**

**(SNEERING)**

Yeah, have a guess - what is the greatest film ever made?

38.

**ALISON**

**(EMBARRASSED)**

I don't, uh...well personally I love La Dolce Vita but...

**SIDNEY**

Incorrect. Con Air.

**ALISON**

**(BEAT)**

I beg your pardon?

**SIDNEY**

Uhuh, Con Air. It's got everything. Malkovich for your acting chops, Nicky Cage for action, Buscemi for comedy, John Cusack for the Gays. It's a smorgasbord.

The group study him, trying to work out if this is irony or idiocy. Maddox is staring daggers at him. An extremely thin, fashionably dressed woman smiles at Sidney.

**WOMAN**

I don't think we've been introduced?

**LAWRENCE MADDOX**

Mister Young, this is Eleanor Johnson, Queen of New York. Eleanor this is Sidney Young. He's from England and he's our very own Idiot Savant. Without the Savant.

**ELEANOR JOHNSON**

Well, it's always nice to have fresh blood at these things. (To Maddox) Which reminds me, I'm here with Sophie Maes, I want you to meet her. New film, The Suffragette coming out, the buzz is A-mazing. The release is tied in with the roll-out of the Reebok campaign, and now Louis Vuitton's on the line. This train is leaving the station Lawrence.

**SIDNEY**

**(TO ELEANOR)**

So, you're a publicist?

**ELEANOR JOHNSON**

I don't really like that word, Sidney.

**SIDNEY**

What should I call you?

**39.**

**ELEANOR JOHNSON**

You can call me Eleanor.  
She stares past him, across the pool.

**ELEANOR JOHNSON (CONT'D)**

There she is.  
They turn to see a young woman standing across the pool from them. This is SOPHIE MAES - a natural beauty, statuesque, no make-up, hair simply pulled back. Sophie tries to walk around the pool to join them but finds she can't work her way through the crowd. She turns to her right but finds her way similarly blocked. She hesitates for a moment and then with a shrug climbs down into the pool, the water up to her chest, and begins to walk through the floating flowers towards them. Sidney stares at her, TRANSFIXED. Alison notices this with some contempt. Gradually everyone notices Sophie and stops to look. Having reached the other side, Sophie ascends the pool steps, laughing, her dress clinging to her: Venus rising from the waves. The Photographers appear, snapping merrily away.

**LAWRENCE MADDOX**

**(MURMURING)**

Oh, this one will go far.

**49 INT. HOTEL - LATER 49**

Sophie, still in her wet dress, Eleanor and Sophie's ENTOURAGE are striding through the hotel's corridors, on their way out. Maddox, Sidney and Alison are with them.

**ELEANOR JOHNSON**

(on cell phone)

Where's the car? What's it doing at the back? Forget what I said.

I want the car at the front. Now.

Sidney finds himself walking alongside Sophie and Maddox, trying not to stare at Sophie's breasts.

**SOPHIE MAES**

...I just think it's terrible the way we're still exploiting animals. That's why, you know, I won't wear fur or leather, I won't wear make-up, I'm vegetarian.

**SIDNEY**

I'm with you...

**40.**

Sophie turns to him with a vague smile.

**SIDNEY (CONT'D)**

I won't eat anything with, you know, eyebrows.

He snickers nervously.

**SIDNEY (CONT'D)**

Or if it can chuckle. I won't eat animals that can chuckle.

**SOPHIE**

I'm sorry, I can't understand your accent?

**SIDNEY**

**(EMBARRASSED)**

Nothing, just, uh...So you're an actress? Have I seen you in anything?

**SOPHIE MAES**

I don't know. Have you?

**SIDNEY**

**(BEAT)**

No. (Trying again) So you haven't won any Oscars yet?

**SOPHIE MAES**

No.

**SIDNEY**

Because I would certainly vote for you for best supporting dress! Huh, huh, huh....

**SOPHIE MAES**

**(STRUGGLING TO**

**UNDERSTAND HIM)**

I haven't been nominated for anything.

**SIDNEY**

No, I'm just...I'm saying you look...

They have reached the front entrance of the hotel. Eleanor steps between them.

**ELEANOR JOHNSON**

**(TO SOPHIE)**

Are you ready dear?

The front doors glide open to reveal a LEGION OF PAPARAZZI waiting outside. As Sophie steps outside there is a sudden roar of photographers shouting and the night sky blazes white as HUNDREDS OF CAMERAS FLASH SIMULTANEOUSLY.

REVERSE - the group framed in the entrance-way - blinded by the glare, squinting. Only Sophie has her eyes open, smiling, looking like a star.

**50 EXT. OUTSIDE HOTEL - MOMENTS LATER 50**

The Paparazzi are still crowding around the group as they make their way to the waiting car.

**LAWRENCE MADDOX**

**(TO ALISON)**

We're going on to the Circle Club. I'll see you tomorrow.

**ALISON**

**(TIGHT)**

Okay. Good night.  
Maddox slips his jacket around Sophie's shoulders.

**SOPHIE**

Aren't you cold?

**LAWRENCE MADDOX**

I'm from Canada, land of ice and snow.  
They get into the car. Sidney tries to follow them.

**SIDNEY**

Budge up.

**LAWRENCE MADDOX**

Where are you going?

**SIDNEY**

I'm coming to the club.

**LAWRENCE MADDOX**

Sorry, you're not on the list.  
A small CHIHUAHUA - CUBA - on Sophie's lap snarls at Sidney.

**LAWRENCE MADDOX (CONT'D)**

See? Even Cuba says so.  
Maddox closes the door and the car glides away, Sophie kissing the dog on the nose. The Paparazzi hurry back to the entrance as another celebrity emerges, leaving Alison and Sidney staring after the car.

**SIDNEY**

**(FUMING)**

That's... that turns my stomach.  
Pawing her like that. He's old  
enough to be her father.

42.

**ALISON**

**(IRRITATED)**

No he isn't.

**SIDNEY**

Yes he is. I started producing  
sperm when I was thirteen, so you  
know, technically...

**ALISON**

For your information he wasn't  
pawing her! He was just doing his  
job! In case you haven't noticed  
Sharps has to have a star on the  
cover every month. And most of  
those stars are clients of  
Eleanor's. So do not piss her  
off.

**SIDNEY**

She's a flak. Hacks don't take  
orders from flaks. And I don't  
think you can call that "doing  
his job." The man had no blood  
left in his upper body...

**ALISON**

**(SNAPPING)**

Will you...? Oh, and next time  
you want to do the hilariously  
ironic I love Con Air skit would  
you mind...?

**SIDNEY**

I wasn't being ironic...

**ALISON**

...would you mind not involving me, especially in the presence of Vincent Lepak who happens to be very important.

**SIDNEY**

Yeah, I could tell by the way he was allowed to stay up past his bed time.

The car disappears into the distance. They watch it go.

**SIDNEY (CONT'D)**

Do you think she'd go out with me?

**ALISON**

Who?

**SIDNEY**

Sophie Maes. You think she'll go out with me?

**43.**

**ALISON**

No. Girls like Sophie don't date journalists. As far as she's concerned, you're the help.

**SIDNEY**

What do you know? A lot of these starlets are lonely. They spend their time looking for a man. Alison starts to walk away.

**ALISON**

This is New York, Sidney. Women only date men who are successful...

**SIDNEY**

I'm going to be successful.

**ALISON**

(as she goes)  
...and tall.

**51 INT. SHARPS MAGAZINE - I SPY AREA - MORNING 51**

Sidney sits in front of his computer reading the on-line New York Post Page Six. A story on the previous night is accompanied by a large picture of Sophie in her clinging dress. Above the picture is the title Venus Envy. Sidney stares at the picture, entranced. Alison sits at her desk, watching him with contempt. Maddox appears beside them.

**SIDNEY**

Have you seen this? She's everywhere.

An ASSISTANT walks over with a MUFFIN BASKET for Maddox.

**ASSISTANT**

From Sophie Maes.

**LAWRENCE MADDOX**

(reading the card)

"Thanks for a great night." What a sweet kid. Oh, Sidney, about last night - word of advice. Don't talk to the celebrities, okay? Sophie said you made her feel uncomfortable.

He walks off with a slight smirk. Sidney glowers after him.

**44.**

**52 INT. SHARPS MAGAZINE - CORRIDOR - MORNING 52**

Sidney walks down the corridor. He slows, his expression changing suddenly. SIDNEY'S P.O.V - Elizabeth Maddox is walking down the corridor towards us, face set. Sidney keeps on walking, staring to one side of Elizabeth. As they draw level, the heel of one of Elizabeth's shoes snaps off and she lurches sideways, colliding with the wall before sprawling onto the floor in front of Sidney. Sidney hesitates. He notices Alison watching with baited breath from the other end of the corridor. For a moment nobody moves then Sidney steps over Elizabeth's prone form without a word and keeps on walking.

Alison gives a sigh of relief, nods in approval and walks on.

**53 INT. MEETING ROOM - DAY 53**

Clayton heads a monthly staff meeting. A rather smug Maddox is just finishing a pitch.

**LAWRENCE MADDOX**

...so Brad's people finally got back to me and they've agreed. We've got the whole afternoon, before the shoot. People clap. Harding nods approvingly.

**CLAYTON HARDING**

Good work Lawrence. Okay, well, if that's it for... He starts to get up.

**SIDNEY**

So, I was thinking, Clay... Clayton, pauses, frowning. Sidney turns to the room, cocksure.

**SIDNEY (CONT'D)**

Paris Hilton. I do a profile on her as if she's this complete recluse, this hermit...(laughing) I try and track her down and, you know, "Who is the elusive Paris Hilton and why is she so publicity shy?" He laughs for a moment. No one joins in.

**45.**

**CLAYTON HARDING**

That's first room stuff, Sidney. And call me Clay one more time and see what happens. Harding stalks out of the room. Blushing, Sidney stares after him, nodding vaguely. As he gathers his notebook he becomes aware of the smirks on the faces of Maddox and the others as they leave.

**54 INT. BREAK AREA - AFTERNOON 54**

Alison sits with her notebook and pen. Behind her some of the magazine's glamorous Fashionistas - VICKY, INGRID and ANNA - are examining some clothes.

**VICKY**

No, I'd love these but I'm so fat  
I couldn't...

**INGRID**

Get out of here!

**ANNA**

You look totally rexy.

**INGRID**

**(TO ALISON)**

Alice?  
Alison hides her irritation with a smile.

**ALISON**

Alison.

**INGRID**

Tell Vicky she looks rexy.

**ALISON**

Rexy?

**INGRID**

Anorexic.

**ALISON**

**(TO VICKY)**

Well...you do look like you could  
do with a few more pounds.

**VICKY**

Oh god, that's so sweet.

**INGRID**

**(TO ALISON)**

By the way, post-shoot clear out.  
Got some Gucci pants here that  
are way too big for us. You wanna  
try?

46.

**ALISON**

(another tight smile)

No, thanks.

She looks up as Sidney sits heavily beside her, stares at her with puppy-dog eyes. Alison tries to ignore him for a moment.

**ALISON (CONT'D)**

I don't mean to be rude Sidney  
but...what the fuck do you want?

**SIDNEY**

Listen, you know how things work  
around here. How am I going to  
get something in the magazine?  
Alison stares at him.

**ALISON**

I thought all this "fluff" was  
beneath you?

**SIDNEY**

It is but...things have changed.

**ALISON**

What's changed?

**SIDNEY**

Look, I know people think I'm a  
bit of an idiot and maybe I  
haven't started off too well  
here, but I want...I want...  
He seems so awkward that Alison begins to soften a little.

**SIDNEY (CONT'D)**

...I want to have sex with Sophie  
Maes. (Beat) Before Maddox does.  
Alison's expression turns to disgust.

**ALISON**

You're loathsome, you know that?

**SIDNEY**

**(OBLIVIOUS)**

I know he's got a head start on me but I'm going to win her back. Once I get my hooks into a girl, they never get free.

**ALISON**

Like ring-worm.  
She gets up and stalks out. Sidney glances through the glass partition and sees MADDOX walking past.

**47.**

**SIDNEY**

**(TO HIMSELF)**

The gloves are coming off.  
We hear the opening of Brigitte Bardot's Moi Je Joue as we...

**55 INT. ELEVATOR - DAY 55**

Sidney is pitching to Clayton in the elevator.

**SIDNEY**

Okay. Celebrity Trash Cans. The contents of celebrity trash cans are revealed and readers have gotta guess who the trash belongs to... Five bottles of Jack Daniels, a court order, and a copy of Mein Kampf? Mel Gibson!

**CLAYTON HARDING**

(getting out the lift)  
First Room, Sidney. First room.

**56 EXT. OUTSIDE CIRCLE CLUB - EVENING 56**

A small group of GLITTERATI pass the immense line of hopefuls waiting outside the club and are ushered inside by the DOORMAN at the entrance. Sidney walks confidently up, pretending to talk into his cell. The Doorman stands in his way, impassive. Still talking Sidney turns and walks away as if nothing has happened.

**57 INT. ELEVATOR - DAY 57**

Sidney standing with a MODEL-TYPE in the elevator. He takes a LAMINATED PHOTOGRAPH from his wallet and shows it to her.

**SIDNEY**

(pointing at the snap)  
Guess who that is with Clint Eastwood?

**MODEL**

Morgan Freeman?

**SIDNEY**

No, not...why's everyone say...?  
There! In the head-lock!

**58 INT. CLAYTON'S OFFICE - DAY 58**

Sidney pitches to a closed door in the office. He is holding a LARGE PIECE OF CARD on which is drawn a TREE decorated with the heads of various CELEBRITIES.

**48.**

**SIDNEY**

It's a Shag Tree. It illustrates all of the sexual pairings of Hollywood's top stars and how they interconnect...  
From under the door slides a piece of paper on which is written First Room. We hear a TOILET FLUSH.

**59 EXT. OUTSIDE CIRCLE CLUB - EVENING 59**

Sidney approaches the Doorman , takes a ten dollar bill from his pocket and hands it to the Doorman. The Doorman crumples the bill up and throws it away. Without a word Sidney begins to walk away. He comes back and picks up the crumpled note and then heads off again.

**60 INT. CLAYTON'S OFFICE - DAY 60**

Harding is eating lunch at his desk. He looks up and finds Sidney staring down at him with puppy-dog eyes. Beat. Harding sighs.

**CLAYTON HARDING**

If I give you an interview will ya leave me the fuck alone?  
Sidney smiles. The song ends.

**61 INT. STUDIO - DAY 61**

Nathan Lane shakes hands with Sidney as he sits down.

**NATHAN LANE**

Nathan Lane. Nice to meet you.

**SIDNEY**

Great to meet you Nathan. I'm a big fan. I love that rat thing you played in The Lion King.

**NATHAN LANE**

**(PLEASANTLY)**

Actually he's a meer cat.

**SIDNEY**

(absently, checking his

**NOTES)**

Uhuh... Now, I've been doing some research and I think you're probably quite a private man. Am I right?

**NATHAN LANE**

Well...

**49.**

**SIDNEY**

Which is fine, but today, I think

it would be great to get behind  
the mask.

**NATHAN LANE**

**(BEAT)**

Uh, I don't think there really is  
a mask as such, and I don't wanna  
be a pain, but what I really  
wanna talk about is the new play,  
keep it about the work, you know?  
Is that okay?

**SIDNEY**

Absolutely. Of course. So, first  
question - are you Jewish?  
Nathan stares at Sidney.

**NATHAN LANE**

I don't see what the relevance of  
that is.

**SIDNEY**

Okay. Next question. The rat  
thing - that's gotta be Disney's  
first gay animal, right? So, I  
was wondering - are you a  
homosexual?  
Beat. Nathan looks like he might hit Sidney.

**62 INT. CLAYTON'S OFFICE - DAY 62**

Clayton glares at Sidney from behind his desk.

**CLAYTON HARDING**

What did I say to you?

**SIDNEY**

What...?

**CLAYTON HARDING**

What did I say to you?

**SIDNEY**

I just...

**CLAYTON HARDING**

What did I say to you?

**SIDNEY**

Don't upset anyone.

**CLAYTON HARDING**

Don't upset anyone.

50.

**SIDNEY**

I was just trying to...probe.

**CLAYTON HARDING**

You wanna probe become a proctologist, okay? You can't ask musical comedy stars whether they're Jewish or gay. From now on just assume they're all Jewish and all gay, okay?

**63 INT. I SPY AREA - DAY 63**

Sidney is on the phone. He has been idly applying magic tape to his face, contorting it into a grotesque grimace. The headline of a magazine open in front of him reads: "Everyone Loves A Lord: Why British Titles Drive New York Women Crazy."

**SIDNEY**

I'd like to apply for an American Express card please? (Beat) Hon. Sidney Young. (Beat) As in Honourable. H-O-N. (Beat) It's a British title. Across the desk Alison watches him with contempt.

**SIDNEY (CONT'D)**

The Queen? Yeah, I know the Queen. Just fill in the form will you?  
Sidney suddenly notices Sophie Maes and Eleanor Johnson walking towards them. Sophie looks more STYLED than before. She is holding her Chihuahua, Cuba, which is dressed in a tiny coat. Sidney DISAPPEARS UNDER THE DESK. We hear a RIP as he yanks the tape off his face.

**SIDNEY (O.S.) (CONT'D)**

(in pain, under desk)

Oh, fuck...!

**LAWRENCE MADDOX**

**(WALKING OVER)**

Hey! Cuba!

He pets the dog, who greets him enthusiastically.

**SOPHIE MAES**

**(TO LAWRENCE)**

He likes you.

**LAWRENCE MADDOX**

**(SMILING SMOOTHLY)**

Well, I'm one of the Friends Of  
Cuba.

**51.**

He laughs, Sophie smiles, not getting it. Alison seems  
immersed in some paper-work.

**LAWRENCE MADDOX (CONT'D)**

So how's it feel to be a star?

**SOPHIE**

No, don't! It's so embarrassing!  
That picture's everywhere now.  
And I had no idea the dress was  
so see-through! And people are  
talking like it was some kind of  
stunt.

**ELEANOR JOHNSON**

**(SMOOTHLY)**

Such a cynical age. Hello  
Sidney.

Embarrassed, Sidney gets up from under his desk.

**SIDNEY**

Hello! Didn't, didn't know you  
were coming in...?

**ELEANOR JOHNSON**

Lawrence is taking us to lunch at  
Cipriani.

**SIDNEY**

**(JEALOUS)**

Oh great. That's great.

**SOPHIE MAES**

Lawrence? Could I leave Cuba here? He doesn't like Italian food.

**LAWRENCE MADDOX**

Of course you can. He can stay in my office. Sidney? Fetch Cuba a bowl of water, will you?  
Sidney stares at him.

**SIDNEY**

(forcing a smile)  
Of course.

**64 WATER-COOLER 64**

Eleanor is getting a cup of water from the cooler. Sidney joins her, waiting to fill the dog's bowl.

**ELEANOR JOHNSON**

That is a lovely ring. Where is that from?

52.

Sidney looks at the wedding ring he wears on his little finger.

**SIDNEY**

**(EMBARRASSED)**

It was my mother's. She gave it to me.

**ELEANOR JOHNSON**

**(SMILING)**

Oh, you Sweetie. That is very, very... (dismissing the topic) So, listen... You've met Vincent Lepak haven't you, Sidney?

**SIDNEY**

Uhuh.

**ELEANOR JOHNSON**

He has a new movie coming out soon and Lawrence is overstretched as it is. How would you like to write a story on him? Alison, at the photocopier nearby, listens. Sidney smiles, filled with hope.

**SIDNEY**

A story? Absolutely. That would...I'd love to...

**ELEANOR JOHNSON**

**(SOFTLY)**

Well, great. Maybe we could get together and discuss the angle?

**SIDNEY**

Okay. (Beat) What do you mean?

**ELEANOR JOHNSON**

Well, I'd need to know how we're going to present Vincent, check the story, so on.

**SIDNEY**

**(BEAT)**

You want copy approval?

**ELEANOR JOHNSON**

**(SMILING)**

Any stories written about my clients need to be in their best interest, that's all. If things work out with Vincent we could maybe talk about a follow up story on Sophie? What do you think?

Alison listens, her face registering her distaste.

Sidney looks over at Sophie, struggling with himself.  
Finally...

**SIDNEY**

**(RELUCTANTLY)**

I'm sorry, Eleanor, I don't...I  
don't work that way.  
Alison stares with surprise at Sidney. He just went up in  
her estimation.

**ELEANOR JOHNSON**

**(AMUSED)**

Sidney dear, think of it like  
this: you write about one of my  
clients, you are borrowing some  
of their "star-light" to help  
sell your magazine. All I'm  
saying is quid pro quo.  
Sidney is unable to hold back a snicker.

**SIDNEY**

Their star-light?  
Eleanor's face hardens.

**65 MOMENTS LATER 65**

Sidney watches Sophie, Maddox and Eleanor as they walk  
towards reception.

**66 INT. MADDOX'S OFFICE - LATER 66**

Sidney cracks open the door and peers inside. Cuba sits in  
the middle of the floor, staring at him. He emits a low  
growl.  
Sidney slides into the room.

**SIDNEY**

Hello Cuba. I'm Uncle Sidney,  
come to see how you are. You  
wanna play? You wanna little  
play?  
He takes a RUBBER BALL out of his pocket and holds it up  
for the dog to see.

**SIDNEY (CONT'D)**

Fetch!  
He tosses the ball in the air. Cuba runs after it and

trots back, stumpy tail wagging, the ball in its teeth.

**SIDNEY (CONT'D)**

That's it! That's it!

**54.**

He strokes the dog.

**SIDNEY (CONT'D)**

We're gonna be best pals aren't we? You're going to like me more than that prick Maddox, aren't you? Fetch!

He tosses the ball again which promptly bounces off the wall straight out of the half open window.

**SIDNEY (CONT'D)**

No!

Cuba is already running towards the window...

Sidney's yell slows and distorts as we move to SLOW

**MOTION...**

Sidney springs forward, leaping onto the desk and then in one bound onto a FILING CABINET by the window, sending it rocking slightly forward.

Cuba, bounding forward, jumps into the air...

Sidney just manages to slam the window SHUT as...

**BACK IN NORMAL TIME...**

Cuba bounces off the glass with a yelp and drops to the floor.

Sidney heaves a sigh of relief.

Then a METAL SCULPTURE on the tilted filing cabinet slides forward and drops with a TERMINAL THUD ON THE DOG BELOW.

Silence.

Sidney stares down to the floor.

**SIDNEY (CONT'D)**

**(SOFTLY)**

Cuba?

**67 INT. CORRIDOR - LATER 67**

Sidney stands at the lift holding a bulging bag.

**SIDNEY**

(waiting for the lift)

C'mon...C'mon...

Alison walks past, sees him and does a double-take.

**SIDNEY (CONT'D)**

(seeing her coming)

Shit, shit, shit...

**55.**

**ALISON**

That's my bag.

**SIDNEY**

I'm just...just borrowing it.

I'll bring it straight back.

**ALEX**

What are you talking about? Give  
it back.

She reaches out to take the bag. Sidney holds on  
desperately.

**ALISON**

Stop it! Give me the...

She tugs violently, pulling the bag open. A small PAW lolls  
out. Alison freezes staring at it. Silence.

**ALISON (CONT'D)**

**(SOFTLY)**

Oh my God.

**SIDNEY**

**(WHISPERING)**

It was an accident.

**ALISON**

Oh my God.

**SIDNEY**

I was just trying to make  
friends. Please don't tell her.  
Please don't tell her.

**SOPHIE MAES (O.S.)**

**(CALLING)**

Cuba? Cuba?

Startled, Sidney darts into Maddox's office.

**67A INT. MADDOX'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS 67A**

As footsteps and voices approach Sidney tugs wildly at Maddox's window, trying to open it. Alison follows him in.

**ALISON**

What are you doing? You can't...!

He jerks the window open and empties Cuba out of it, slamming it shut just as Sophie, Eleanor and Lawrence walk in.

**LAWRENCE MADDOX**

Alison, have you seen Cuba?

**56.**

**ALISON**

**(BEWILDERED)**

W-What?

She darts a glance over to where Sidney stands with his back to the window, gazing at her pleadingly. From behind him comes a faint creaking sound.

**ELEANOR JOHNSON**

**(SNAPPING)**

Sophie's dog! Have you seen him?

Sidney hangs his head, awaiting the coup de grace.

**ALISON**

Uh...no. No idea.

Sidney stares at her in amazement.

Behind him Cuba's body appears at the window, rising into view on a WINDOW WASHING PLATFORM. A Window Washer, stands at the other end of the cradle, bobbing his head to the music in his headphones.

Alison stares at the dog in horror while the others talk, oblivious.

**LAWRENCE MADDOX**

Don't worry, he couldn't have got very far.

**SOPHIE MAES**

**(WAILING)**

Cuba? Cuba!  
Cuba trundles on up to the sky.

**68 INT. CLAYTON HARDING'S OFFICE - DAY 68**

Clayton stands at the window. He is DRUNK. There is a knock at the door and Sidney walks in.

**SIDNEY**

**(NERVOUSLY)**

Clayton? Have you got a minute?  
Clayton lights a cigarette, stares out of the window.  
Sidney comes in.

**CLAYTON HARDING**

Did they find that rat yet?

**SIDNEY**

No...Not yet. I think maybe he got out the building?  
Sidney hovers.

**57.**

**SIDNEY (CONT'D)**

Congratulations on the Man of the Year thing. How was the lunch?

**CLAYTON HARDING**

I don't know. Thousand dollars a plate, all I could taste was ass. I'm kissing their ass, they're kissing my ass. (Beat) I get this dream sometimes. Someone's set fire to the building - Heywoods - Sharps magazine - the whole thing, it's going up in flames. My analyst thinks it's an anxiety dream. I never tell him how happy

I am watching the fucker burn.  
Sidney isn't sure what to say. Finally...

**CLAYTON HARDING (CONT'D)**

What do you want?  
Sidney takes a deep breath.

**SIDNEY**

I want to do a story on Vincent Lepak. Not a puff-piece. Something funny, but with teeth. The kind of thing Snipe would have done. Everyone's treating him like he's a genius and he's an idiot.  
Clayton notices the CLOSET-DOOR beside him and opens it. He stares at the rows of blue shirts hanging in there. He takes an armful out and examines them.

**CLAYTON HARDING**

Look at these things. How'd I get a closet full of blue fucking shirts?

**SIDNEY**

Um...I don't know.

**CLAYTON HARDING**

I don't know either. This is an office for Christ's sake! Why've I even got a fucking closet?  
He drops the shirts.

**CLAYTON HARDING (CONT'D)**

Do it.

**SIDNEY**

(he can't believe it)  
Do it?

58.

**CLAYTON HARDING**

Fuck it. Yeah. Do it. He's an annoying little prick. Go take him down. This is your shot.

**SIDNEY**

Thanks Clayton!

**CLAYTON HARDING**

You're my little Hit Man.

**SIDNEY**

**(BEAMING)**

I'm your little Hit Man!

**CLAYTON HARDING**

Go do it!

**SIDNEY**

**(HAPPILY)**

Okay!

He scuttles out. He ducks back around the door.

**SIDNEY (CONT'D)**

You could call me The Jackal!

**CLAYTON HARDING**

Out.

**SIDNEY**

**(HAPPILY)**

Okay!

He ducks back out again.

**69 INT. TRIBECA GRAND HOTEL - NIGHT 69**

Sidney is waiting in the lobby. A slightly spaced YOUNG WOMAN approaches him.

**ASSISTANT**

Mister Young?

**SIDNEY**

Yes?

**ASSISTANT**

I'm Sophie Maes' assistant. I'm afraid Sophie isn't here right now.

**SIDNEY**

(looking past her)

Look I know she's in. I'm not a

stalker. I just know she's upset about losing her dog and...

59.

**ASSISTANT**

**(FIRMLY)**

She isn't here.

**SIDNEY**

**(SIGHING)**

Well, can I at least check that she got my present?

**ASSISTANT**

Okay. Did you send the flowers?

**SIDNEY**

**(SNORTING DERISIVELY)**

Flowers? Yeah, 'cos she doesn't get enough flowers, does she? No, I sent her the fish.  
The Young Woman looks suddenly nervous.

**ASSISTANT**

Oh.

**SIDNEY**

Gold-fish. In a bowl. Did she get them?

**ASSISTANT**

Yes, but...they were dead.

**SIDNEY**

**(BEAT)**

All of them?

**ASSISTANT**

Yeah. It was kinda shocking. Were they dead when you sent them?  
Sidney stares at her.

**SIDNEY**

What? No, they were... Who sends people dead fish?

**ASSISTANT**

**(BEAT)**

The Mafia?

**70 INT. BAR - EVENING 70**

Alison sits at the bar, staring at her notebook, a pen held in her hand. A WHITE RUSSIAN sits on the bar beside her. Sidney slides onto the stool beside her. She looks up and sees he is holding a glass bowl of water with three dead fish in it.

**60.**

**ALISON**

My God, you're like a serial killer.

**SIDNEY**

This wasn't me. (Beat) I...I laid him to rest. Cuba I mean. I took him over to...

**ALISON**

**(QUICKLY)**

I don't want to know.  
Alison checks the door, looking for someone, a little uncomfortable.

**SIDNEY**

Okay. (Beat) Well, I just...I just wanted to say...about not telling them...I really appreciated it. It was good of you and, and...you know...not many people would, uh...  
He stops, tongue-tied. Alison takes pity on him.

**ALISON**

It's okay.

**SIDNEY**

**(BEAT)**

Why didn't you?  
Alison sighs.

**ALISON**

You don't need my help to screw  
up here, Sidney. I mean, the only  
things you make are mistakes and  
stains.  
The BARMAN arrives, stares at the bowl of fish  
disapprovingly.

**BARMAN**

Can I help you?

**SIDNEY**

(following his gaze)  
Just a couple of straws please.  
Stony-faced, the Barman walks off. Despite herself, Alison  
smiles. Sidney smiles back. He notices Alison's NOTEBOOK on  
the bar.

**SIDNEY (CONT'D)**

Can I ask you something? How come  
you've always got the notebook?  
Is it a diary or something? Am I  
in it?

**61.**

**ALISON**

It's...it's a novel I'm working  
on, alright?

**SIDNEY**

Wow.

**ALISON**

Go ahead. I know. I'm a walking  
cliché.

**SIDNEY**

No - a novel, that's...that's  
pretty impressive. You're writing  
it by hand?

**ALISON**

Yeah, it...I don't know. It keeps  
it separate from the magazine  
work. Makes it seem special.  
He stares at her.

**SIDNEY**

You're full of surprises, Sister.  
Suddenly he notices the White Russian beside them.

**SIDNEY (CONT'D)**

So...you waiting for your  
boyfriend?

**ALISON**

**(UNCOMFORTABLE)**

Uh, yeah, so...

**SIDNEY**

What's he do, the mystery guy? Is  
he a hack too?

**ALISON**

**(BEAT)**

Actually he's a poet.

**SIDNEY**

Really? What's he look like?

**ALISON**

**(LAUGHING)**

What?

**SIDNEY**

Just most poets you see aren't  
really good-looking, are they?  
Spend their time stuck in a room,  
end up looking like Golem. Is  
he...?

**ALISON**

He's very handsome, thank you.

**SIDNEY**

**(GLOOMILY)**

Right.

**ALISON**

You know what I don't understand?  
You're desperate to get a story  
in the magazine - so why wouldn't  
you play ball with Eleanor, write  
the puff-piece?

**SIDNEY**

I resent being bribed to gush  
sycophantically about a star,  
okay? I choose to gush  
sycophantically.  
Alison stares at Sidney trying to figure him out.

**SIDNEY (CONT'D)**

It's okay anyway. Clayton's given  
me a story. I'm on my way.

**ALISON**

**(SMILING)**

Well, that's good.  
Sidney smiles back at her. They look at each other...it's  
almost the start of a MOMENT...  
Then suddenly on the TV above the bar, a MOVIE TRAILER  
begins. Distracted Sidney turns to watch - it's Sophie  
Maes' new film - The Suffragette - Sophie, a glamorous  
Emily Pankhurst...  
Sidney looks back to Alison but she has turned away,  
suddenly awkward.

**SIDNEY**

**(EMBARRASSED)**

Okay, well...better get  
going. (Leaving) You take my  
advice, you'll get yourself a  
boyfriend who's going to show up  
once in a while.  
He leaves. Beat. Alison stares at the empty stool beside  
her.

**71 INT. MEETING ROOM - MORNING 71**

Clayton is rounding up another staff meeting. Sidney sits

trying to contain his excitement.

**CLAYTON HARDING**

Which makes it...a half page left. Lawrence? Any ideas?

63.

**LAWRENCE MADDOX**

Yeah. Rachel Petkoff, fabulous sixties actress, one of my all time favourites. Just made a wonderful movie called Five Boroughs. I think she's poised for a come-back and I think we should get there first, do a profile.

Sidney stares at him in disbelief. He looks over to Alison who avoids his gaze.

**CLAYTON HARDING**

Sounds good. Let's do it. Okay that's it people.

**SIDNEY**

Uh...Clayton?

**CLAYTON HARDING**

What?

**SIDNEY**

Did you read my story on Vincent Lepak?

Clayton frowns down at some papers, feigning distraction.

**CLAYTON HARDING**

What? Oh, yeah. That's...that's not going to work.

Sidney can't believe it. Clayton gets up to leave.

**CLAYTON HARDING (CONT'D)**

Oh, and for those who haven't heard, Alison is going to be running the I Spy section from now on as Lawrence here has just gone up in the world. He is replacing Greg Roberts as Deputy Editor.

Lawrence smiles modestly as the room applauds. Sidney looks like he is going to implode.

**72 INT. CORRIDOR - LATER 72**

Maddox passes Sidney in the corridor. Sidney glares after him. Suddenly...

**SIDNEY**

Rachel Petkoff? One of your favourite actresses? You'd never fucking heard of her! That was my idea!  
Lawrence stops and turns back.

**64.**

**LAWRENCE MADDOX**

So it was. You have any more good ideas don't forget to bring them to my new office.  
He is about to walk on but remembers something.

**LAWRENCE MADDOX (CONT'D)**

By the way, there've been complaints about you skulking around the water-cooler, trying to talk to women. It's inappropriate behaviour.

**SIDNEY**

**(LIVID)**

What? You spend half your life chatting up the staff!

**LAWRENCE MADDOX**

When I do it it's called flirting. When you do it it's called sexual harassment. Consider this an official warning. I won't tolerate sexist behaviour.  
He walks off. Sidney glowers after him.

**73 INT. LAWRENCE MADDOX'S OFFICE - DAY 73**

Lawrence is holding a meeting in his new office - half a dozen heads of departments sit around drinking coffee. Lawrence sits behind his desk, enjoying his new authority.

**LAWRENCE MADDOX**

I know that wasn't Greg's way of working but Greg isn't deputy editor any more. I am, and I'm making changes.

There is a knock at the door and Sidney walks in with an attractive BLONDE WOMAN in a long coat and dark glasses.

**LAWRENCE MADDOX (CONT'D)**

What?

**SIDNEY**

Uh, Lawrence? This lady's been looking for you?

**LAWRENCE MADDOX**

(to the woman)  
Can I help you?

**WOMAN**

Are you Lawrence Maddox? The new deputy editor?

**65.**

**LAWRENCE MADDOX**

Yes?

**WOMAN**

Well, I've just come to say congratulations on your promotion.

**LAWRENCE MADDOX**

**(MYSTIFIED)**

Thank you. I'm sorry, you are...?

**WOMAN**

I'm your present.  
The Woman produces a Beat-Box from behind her back and

switches it on. She drops her coat to reveal underwear and stockings underneath. Maddox stares in frozen horror as the STRIPPER dances over to him, removing her bra.

**74 INT - INGRID'S OFFICE - DAY 74**

A Very Well-Dressed Middle-Aged Woman knocks on the door and enters.

**INGRID**

Hey Mrs Harding.  
Two Impeccably-Dressed Little Girls follow Mrs Harding into the room.

**INGRID (CONT'D)**

Oh my God! So adorable!

**MRS HARDING**

(to the Little Girls)  
And this is the Fashion Department. [To Ingrid] Where's Mr Maddox now?

**INGRID**

Oh he's down the hall. Room 217.

**75 INT. MADDOX'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS 75**

The staff are staring transfixed as the stripper gyrates her breasts, whirling NIPPLE TASSELS.

**SIDNEY**

(with mock horror)  
Uh, Lawrence? This is...this is sort of inappropriate isn't it?

**LAWRENCE MADDOX**

**(HORRIFIED)**

Will you please...

**66.**

His words are muffled by the bra the stripper drapes over his face. Gleefully, Sidney dances in the background. He

produces a camera and starts to snap away.

**SIDNEY**

Oh God, this is...this is  
awful...

**76 OMITTED 76**

**77 INT. MADDOX'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS 77**

The Stripper, who we suddenly realise is BOB THE TRANSEXUAL in a blonde wig, whips off his/her panties. There is a collective gasp from the room. Sidney can't stop laughing. Suddenly he notices everyone in the room is now staring at the door. He turns to see Mrs Harding and her girls standing, shell-shocked, in the doorway. Alarmed, Sidney side-steps in towards Bob.

**REVERSE - GIRLS' P.O.V**

Bob, impressive breasts bared, stands staring back at us. Sidney, in the absence of anything else to shield him with, is HOLDING BOB'S PENIS.

The rest of the staff stare at us, rabbits caught in headlights. After a beat Lawrence peers around Sidney, a rictus smile on his face.

**LAWRENCE MADDOX**

Hello, Mrs Harding. Girls...

**78 INT. OUTSIDE CLAYTON'S OFFICE - LATER 78**

Sidney sits waiting, obsessively cleaning his hand with a wet-wipe. Through the glass partition we can see Clayton and Eleanor Johnson in the office. They are apparently discussing a mock-up of a new cover for Sharps. After a moment Eleanor comes out of the office and sweeps past Sidney without a glance. Clayton appears in the doorway.

**CLAYTON HARDING**

**(TO SIDNEY)**

Get in.

79 INT. CLAYTON HARDING'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER 79

Sidney sits in front of Clayton.

**SIDNEY**

I didn't know it was Take Our Daughters To Work Day. I didn't even know there was a Take Our daughters To Work Day.

67.

**CLAYTON HARDING**

Shut up. (Beat) You know, when I told my wife I'd hired another Brit, she was excited. She still thinks you're all like something from Pride and Prejudice. But you Sidney ...you're like a British person born in New Jersey. (Shaking his head) Why did I hire you?  
Sidney stares at his feet. Suddenly...

**SIDNEY**

I don't know - why did you hire me?

**CLAYTON HARDING**

I had an attack of nostalgia. It's passed. Like gas.

**SIDNEY**

What was wrong with my story?

**CLAYTON HARDING**

What?

**SIDNEY**

Why did you kill my Vincent Lepak story?

**CLAYTON HARDING**

It wasn't good enough. Plain and simple.

**SIDNEY**

It wasn't good enough?

**CLAYTON HARDING**

We don't do hatchet jobs here.

**SIDNEY**

It isn't a hatchet job!

**CLAYTON HARDING**

This opening quotation - "It's only too easy to catch people's attention by doing something worse than anyone else has dared do it before..." Who are you thinking of here? Vincent or yourself?

**SIDNEY**

He's a talentless, pretentious little twat who thinks cinema began with Tarantino and someone needs to say it. And you told me to do something with teeth! You said...

68.

**CLAYTON HARDING**

I'm trying to run a fucking magazine here!  
Sidney stares at him, angry and disappointed.

**SIDNEY**

"A free press is the last defence against the Tyranny of Stupidity."

**CLAYTON HARDING**

**(IRRITATED)**

Save me your tin-pot philosophy, okay?

**SIDNEY**

It isn't mine. It's yours. First issue of Snipe.

**CLAYTON HARDING**

**(FURIOUS)**

Oh, grow the fuck up, will ya!  
You're not Robin Hood and you  
never were. You bitch about  
famous people for the same reason  
I bitched about them. Because  
they got invited to the Party and  
you didn't. Well you're at the  
Party now so quit bitching and do  
your job! You're on your last  
life here, you understand? One  
more fuck up like today and  
you're gone.

**SIDNEY**

Won't you have to run a decision  
like that past Eleanor first?  
For a second Clayton looks like he might throw his ashtray  
at Sidney. Then he controls himself.

**CLAYTON HARDING**

**(SITTING DOWN)**

Get out.  
Sidney crosses to the door.

**SIDNEY**

(he can't help himself)  
Looks like I was too late to save  
you after all.  
He walks out.

**80 INT. OPEN-PLAN OFFICE - DAY 80**

Sidney walks back through the magazine's open plan area.

CO-

WORKERS stop whatever they're doing and watch him pass in  
silence. Then, slowly, one of them begins to CLAP.

**69.**

Someone else joins in. Then someone else. Soon they're all  
clapping. Someone gets up on their desk, then another...  
Sidney smiles faintly then...  
BLINKS out of HIS DAY-DREAM.  
Everyone around him is working as always, paying him no  
attention.

**81 EXT. CLAYTON HARDING'S HOUSE - THE HAMPTONS - DAY 81**

We are TRACKING through Magazine Staff, celebrities, politicians and children as they mill about the lawns of the sprawling mansion, enjoying the Fourth Of July celebrations which are in progress. Clayton greets guests - the perfect host.  
We find Sidney, wearing unfashionable shorts, socks and shoes. He is talking to Alison.

**ALISON**

You hired a stripper?

**SIDNEY**

I didn't "hire" him. Bob did it for a favour.

**ALISON**

I thought you wanted to be a success here?

**SIDNEY**

I do! It's just...(ruefully) It wasn't me. It was Clark.  
Alison laughs.

**ALISON**

The famous alter-ego? How long's he been hanging around?

**SIDNEY**

Since I was a kid. Anytime something got broken, or the bathroom got accidentally set on fire - it wasn't me. It was Clark. (Beat.) The weird thing is, he kind of took over.

**ALISON**

How old were you?

**SIDNEY**

I don't know, twenty, twenty one...  
Alison laughs.

**70.**

**ALISON'D)**

Well, let me tell you, if only you could get rid of that Clark, you could be a real winner.

**SIDNEY**

**(DEPRESSED)**

Clayton's not going to print anything I write. I've been on salary for six-months and I've written precisely one hundred and seventy five words. On a dollar-per-word basis, I'm the highest paid writer in the history of this magazine. (Beat) He's not going to renew my contract.

**ALISON**

**(SIGHS)**

What did you expect, Sidney? Vincent's one of Eleanor's clients. I told you. They're Untouchables.

**SIDNEY**

I thought Clayton was different. I really did. (Beat) The only thing I'm good at is pissing people off, and he won't let me do it. (Beat) "My glory walks hand in hand with my doom." (Off her look) Troy

**ALISON**

Troy who?

**SIDNEY**

Troy, the movie.  
He stares around him at the other guests.

**SIDNEY (CONT'D)**

Everybody hates me here. You're the only one who'll talk to me.

**ALISON**

You cornered me.

**SIDNEY**

(a little embarrassed)  
No, I mean it. You're the person  
who's been most, you know...  
uh...abusive to me.  
Alison laughs again. They smile at each other.

**SIDNEY (CONT'D)**

You want another drink?

71.

**ALISON**

(beat, smiling)  
Alright. I'll have a beer.  
Sidney walks off.

**82 EXT. BAR - DAY 82**

Sidney is getting a drink at the bar that has been set up  
in the grounds. Suddenly he stiffens, watching as Sophie  
Maes, looking spectacular, walks over to where Maddox and  
his circle are talking nearby.

**LAWRENCE MADDOX**

Sophie, my darling. Looking  
ravishing as always.  
Whilst the two are engaged in kissing cheeks, Sidney takes  
a credit card from his wallet and drops it surreptitiously  
by Sophie's feet.

**JOURNALIST**

**(TO MADDOX)**

You know what I read the other  
day? Your collection of poems -  
The Hollow Heart? Man, they're  
great.  
Sidney reacts to this, feeling troubled for some reason.

**SOPHIE MAES**

You write poems?

**LAWRENCE MADDOX**

In another life.  
The BARMAN is handing out drinks.

**BARMAN**

And a White Russian?

**LAWRENCE MADDOX**

Right here.

Sidney stares at the drink, feeling like he's just been punched in the stomach. Maddox notices him.

**LAWRENCE MADDOX (CONT'D)**

Well, well, if it isn't Sidalee.  
Maddox notices the card at Sophie's feet.

**LAWRENCE MADDOX (CONT'D)**

(picking it up)  
What's this? "Hon Young".

**SIDNEY**

That's...that's mine.

72.

**LAWRENCE MADDOX**

But your name's not "Hon".

**SIDNEY**

(reaching for it)  
It's short for "Honourable".

**LAWRENCE**

(whisking it away)  
As in, "the Honourable Sidney  
Young"?

**SIDNEY**

Can I please...?

**LAWRENCE**

(holding it out of

**SIDNEY'S REACH)**

So how come it says "Hon Young"?  
They made you sound like some  
Korean medical student.  
The people gathered around laugh.

**SIDNEY**

They screwed it up. Please.

**LAWRENCE**

Sidney baby, you don't wanna go faking a British title to impress Sophie. It's the Fourth of July. (Handing back the card): We're celebrating the fact that we threw a bunch of British aristocrats out. Sidney smiles tightly. Suddenly...

**SIDNEY**

Why don't you shut up, Maddox? Beat. The others look to Maddox to see how he will react. Maddox smiles dangerously.

**LAWRENCE MADDOX**

Careful Sidney. Remember - if it wasn't for us you'd all be speaking German.

**SIDNEY**

You're Canadian. If it wasn't for us you'd be speaking French. Sophie giggles. Maddox doesn't like this but before he can answer Sidney walks off.

73.

**83 INT. HOUSE - BATHROOM - DAY 83**

Alison is about to walk into the bathroom when she hears the sound of muffled sobbing and stops. She peers through the slightly open door. HER P.O.V - Elizabeth Maddox stands at the mirror, staring at her reflection. For once she is not wearing her dark glasses and we can see her eyes are red raw from crying.

**84 A LITTLE LATER 84**

Elizabeth walks out of the bathroom, dark glasses back in place, her face a mask once more. She walks off. Alison slips out from a nearby room and watches her go, miserable with guilt.

**85 EXT. HOUSE - LATER 85**

Sidney is staring over to where Alison and Maddox are standing by some trees, deep in conversation. Maddox is tossing nuts into the air and catching them in his mouth.

**SIDNEY**

(muttering to himself)

Choke. Choke.

He puts his fingers to his temples as if to channel telekinetic powers.

**SIDNEY (CONT'D)**

Choke...choke...

Sidney realizes Harding's wife is passing with her two daughters.

**SIDNEY (CONT'D)**

Hello, Mrs Harding. Lovely party.

With a look of alarm she shepherds the girls away. A tall older man dressed in white with a long white beard appears next to Sidney.

**OLDER MAN**

How are you?

Sidney nods gloomily.

**OLDER MAN (CONT'D)**

Has anyone ever told you before that you have an unusually dark aura?

**SIDNEY**

Yup.

**74.**

**OLDER MAN**

You should walk with bare feet as much as possible, ground all that negative energy.

Sidney examines him.

**SIDNEY**

So...you're a wizard or...?

**OLDER MAN**

I'm a spiritual healer.

**SIDNEY**

You can make a living doing that?

**OLDER MAN**

Oh God no. I'm a dentist.  
They stare at the party for a moment.

**OLDER MAN (CONT'D)**

You want to do some coke?

**SIDNEY**

Um...no, thanks.

**86 LATER 86**

Rachel Petkoff stands talking to some other guests. Sidney notices her and walks over.

**SIDNEY**

Hey! Hello again?  
Rachel smiles at him distantly, clearly not remembering him.

**RACHEL**

Hello. (Turning back to the others) No, Lawrence is a wonderful writer. I really felt like he got to the heart of me. Sidney snorts. Rachel turns back to him, faintly irritated.

**RACHEL (CONT'D)**

I'm sorry, have we...?

**SIDNEY**

Sidney. Sidney Young. We met at...  
Another GUEST walks past Sidney and kisses Rachel.

**GUEST**

I saw Five Boroughs the other day  
and wept!

**75.**

Sidney hovers for a moment, ignored, and then walks away.

**87 LATER 87**

Dusk. The guests have gathered on the lawns to watch the fireworks. There are oohs and aahs as the rockets light up the sky. Suddenly...

**SIDNEY (O.S.)**

In-ger-lernd!

Puzzled the guests turn to where a drunk Sidney is standing on the balustrade of the porch of the house.

**SIDNEY (CONT'D)**

In-ger-lernd! In-ger-lerrrrrrnd!

He spots HUGH GRANT amongst the crowd, watching him, puzzled.

**SIDNEY (CONT'D)**

You! Grant! Come on! In-ger-lerrrr...

With that he slips from the balustrade and crashes into the shrubbery below.

**88 LATER 88**

Sidney limps through the trees, dabbing at a scratch on his face. He passes Alison who is sitting on a tree-swing, lost in thought, swigging absently from a bottle of wine.

**ALISON**

You okay?

**SIDNEY**

What?

**ALISON**

I said are you okay?

**SIDNEY**

I'm fine. Yup. Fine. (Beat) You?

**ALISON**

Yup. (Beat) No, actually. I hate my life so, you know, I'm gonna get drunk.

Sidney nods, vaguely. They stand in awkward silence for a moment. Then...

**SIDNEY**

Right...See you...

He walks off. Beat. He walks back into frame suddenly.

76.

**SIDNEY (CONT'D)**

**(FURIOUS)**

**HOW COULD YOU?**

**ALISON**

**(STARTLED)**

What?

**SIDNEY**

How the...You...having an affair with Maddox! I mean...Maddox for Christ's sake! The Man With Hidden Shallows! Jesus! I mean, I used to think you were...I was starting to...I mean, at first I thought you were a pain but then I started to think...but I mean...Maddox? How can you live with yourself?

Alison stares at him, pale, blinking back tears.

**ALISON**

**(QUIETLY)**

I couldn't. That's why I've broken up with him.

**SIDNEY**

Well, that's no...that's, you know...(Beat) You broke up with him?

Alison walks off. Beat. She walks back.

**ALISON**

Which leg did you hurt?

**SIDNEY**

**(POINTING)**

This one.

Alison kicks the leg.

**SIDNEY (CONT'D)**

**OW!**

She walks off again.

**89 EXT. POOL - EVENING 89**

Sidney lies beside the pool staring darkly into the water and nursing the beginnings of a hangover. We hear faint music and laughter from where the party continues in the house behind.

He notices the reflection of the starry sky in the water and reaching out gloomily to hold one of the stars. The reflection dissolves into ripples. When the water settles Sophie Maes reflection stares back at him.

**77.**

She's drunk and a good deal of the movie star mystique seems to have evaporated.

**SOPHIE MAES**

You know what? There's something very damaged about you. Sidney stares at her, not sure what to say.

**SIDNEY**

Huh...  
Sophie lies down beside the pool, plays with a strand of her hair.

**SOPHIE MAES**

Like an animal that's been hit by a car or something. Like a deer or...like a pig maybe? When they walk funny and the other animals keep away from them. Little limpy pig. I'm drawn to sick animals. That's why I picked Cuba - because he had like psychological problems? (Her eyes well with tears) Poor little Cuba. Where is he now?

**SIDNEY**

**(BEAT)**

Huh...  
She wipes her eyes, rolls onto her back.

**SOPHIE MAES**

Jesus, I'm wasted. Are you  
wasted? I'm wasted.  
Sidney watches her.

**SIDNEY**

Congratulations on becoming  
incredibly famous by the way.

**SOPHIE MAES**

Thanks.

**SIDNEY**

**(BEAT)**

What's it like?

**SOPHIE MAES**

What's what like?

**SIDNEY**

Everything.  
She rolls her head to look at him solemnly.

**78.**

**SOPHIE MAES**

Weird. It's happening so fast  
and...it's like it's got nothing  
to do with me. It's like I'm not  
even really here.  
She laughs softly.

**SOPHIE MAES (CONT'D)**

Am I here?

**SIDNEY**

You're here.  
She turns back to look at the stars.

**SOPHIE MAES**

I'm so hungry.

**SIDNEY**

Would you...would you like me to  
get you some food?

**SOPHIE MAES**

Are you crazy? There might still  
be a photographer around.  
They lie in silence for a moment.

**SOPHIE MAES (CONT'D)**

**(DREAMILY)**

You know what would be nice  
though? Some coke.  
She rubs her face, close to falling asleep.

**SOPHIE MAES (CONT'D)**

Probably just as well I haven't  
got any. Coke always makes me so  
horny.  
Sidney opens his mouth but cannot speak.

**90 SIDNEY RUNNING DESPERATELY... 90**

...through the groups of people chatting outside the house.

**SIDNEY**

(out of breath)  
Wizard! Wizard Dentist Man! Need  
Wizard Dentist Man!

**91 DRIVE 91**

Sidney has virtually dragged the Dentist out of his car. He  
is handing Sidney a wrap.

79.

**SIDNEY**

I will never, never, never forget  
this. Thank you!  
He starts to hurry away.

**92 OUTSIDE HOUSE 92**

Alison is weaving unsteadily towards the driveway.  
Sidney hurries past then slows and stops, staring back at  
her.

**93 ALISON'S CAR 93**

Alison stands rooting in her purse for a tip to give the VALET MAN who is holding open the door of her car for her, the engine running.

**SIDNEY**

What are you doing?

**ALISON**

None of your business...

**SIDNEY**

You can't drive. You need to go and sleep this off somewhere.

**ALISON**

Firstly, you are a stupid asshole and I hate you and Secondly... Secondly...

She muses on what she was going to say next. Sidney looks over his shoulder, imagining Sophie waiting for him.

**ALISON (CONT'D)**

Secondly...

**SIDNEY**

Yeah, okay. Listen, you try driving in this state you're gonna kill yourself.

**ALISON**

Who'd care if I did?

Beat. Suddenly she bursts into tears. Surprised, Sidney stands, uncertain what to do.

**ALISON (CONT'D)**

**(SWAYING FORWARD)**

I've got to go. Got to go.

Sidney holds her to stop her falling. He stares back at the pool and then down at Alison.

**80.**

**94 INT. ALISON'S CAR - DRIVING - NIGHT 94**

Sidney is driving. Alison is still drunk.

**ALISON**

**(SLURRING)**

I thought I had it all figured out. A - get the hell out of Port Huron, come to New York. B - do the serious journalism thing to pay the bills while I, you know, write the novel. C- Win a Pulitzer. E...

**SIDNEY**

**D.**

**ALISON**

D - I don't know what D was. Then I took the internship at Sharps and I met Maddox and he was...he was so...and before I know it I'm writing, you know, Ten Tips for the fucking Metrosexual and pretending this is what I wanted but this ISN'T what I wanted! And that's...that's why I hated you...

**SIDNEY**

I didn't know you hated me.

**ALISON**

**(OBLIVIOUS)**

...because you were right about me. I'm a ghoul, writing fluff!

**SIDNEY**

You're not a Ghoul. You're a Zombie.  
Alison leans her head against the window.

**ALISON**

But he isn't the person you think he is, okay? Maddox. That's just a front. He thinks he's let himself down by giving up the poetry and he's unhappy. And the marriage is a sham, I mean... I

just...I couldn't end it. I just  
couldn't and...

**SIDNEY**

(can't take anymore)  
Look, I don't need to hear this.

**ALISON**

**(STUNG)**

Fine.

**81.**

She begins to root through her bag.

**ALISON (CONT'D)**

Need a cigarette. Where are my  
fucking cigarettes?

**SIDNEY**

You don't smoke.

**ALISON**

Oh yeah.  
She looks at her reflection in the window.

**ALISON (CONT'D)**

Do you think I have low self-  
esteem? Am I afraid of a real  
relationship? Do I think an  
affair is all I deserve? I mean,  
okay, he's handsome and  
successful and he's great in  
bed...

**SIDNEY**

**(IRRITATED)**

Could you just be quiet?  
He realises she has started to cry.

**ALISON**

When I told him I couldn't see  
him any more...I don't know if he  
cared. I love him and, and I  
don't know if he cares!  
Sidney watches, moved.

**SIDNEY**

**(RELUCTANTLY)**

Well, I'm...I'm sure he does.  
He's probably just not very good  
at expressing his emotions.

**ALISON**

**(SOBBING)**

I'm so fucking sophisticated! I  
mean there's not even a little  
bit of Port Huron left, right?  
I've got the haircut and the job  
and I've got the parties and I've  
even, I've even got the affair  
because that's what sophisticated  
fucking people do!

**SIDNEY**

Alright. Alright. Don't, you  
know, get snot everywhere...

**ALISON**

Oh G-God...

**82.**

**SIDNEY**

What?  
Alison lurches down out of sight and is sick on Sidney's  
shorts.

**95 INT. CAR - LATER 95**

Sidney is driving through Manhattan, the windows down.  
Alison is asleep.

**SIDNEY**

Alison? What's your address?  
(Beat. Shaking her) Alison?  
Alison snores loudly. Sidney sighs.

**96 INT. SIDNEY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT 96**

Sidney staggers up the stairs carrying Alison over his shoulder. Alison is moaning.

**SIDNEY**

**(HISSING)**

Shut up will you? You'll wake the old witch up.

He stops suddenly and turns.

Mrs Kowalski glowers at him from the doorway. Sidney freezes - a sickly smile on his face.

**SIDNEY (CONT'D)**

Did...Did we wake you?

**ALISON**

**(SUDDENLY WAILING**

**DRUNKENLY)**

**OH GOD! I'M A WHORE! I'M A WHORE!**

An ELDERLY MAN appears behind Mrs Kowalski staring at Sidney. Long Beat.

**SIDNEY**

**(NUMBLY)**

Hello Dad.

**97 INT. SIDNEY'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - NIGHT 97**

Sidney, Mrs Kowalski and Sidney's father - RICHARD YOUNG - sit drinking coffee. Richard has an absent-minded air, wears a somewhat shabby jacket. Sidney seems to have almost physically shrunk in the presence of his father. Some music is playing in the next room. Alison dances drunkenly past the doorway, wearing Sidney's jacket.

**83.**

**ALISON**

(as she goes by)

Love this song...

The three stare after her. Sidney coughs.

**SIDNEY**

She, uh, she isn't actually a prostitute.

**RICHARD YOUNG**

**(MILDLY)**

Oh good.  
Alison dances back into the room.

**ALISON**

Sooo, Sidney's dad. Good to meet you. I'm Alison. I'm from Port Huron. (To Mrs Kowalski) And you must be Sidney's mom?

**MRS KOWALSKI**

**(SHOCKED)**

No I am not!

**ALISON**

Oh, okay. My dad married again too, so that's cool. (To Richard) You wanna dance?

**RICHARD YOUNG**

**(KINDLY)**

No thank you.

**ALISON**

Okay. Where are my cigarettes?  
(feeling in the pocket of the jacket) What is that?  
She produces the wrap of coke that the elderly man had given Sidney.

**ALISON (CONT'D)**

Oh, hey, is that....?  
She stops herself. Everyone stares at the wrap.

**RICHARD YOUNG**

I think it is probably cocaine.  
Sidney closes his eyes.

**SIDNEY**

It wasn't actually for me. I was going to give it to this young actress...  
He realises this isn't helping and trails off.

84.

**ALISON**

**(OBLIVIOUS)**

So, hey, visiting your boy.  
That's nice. You must be pretty  
proud of him, huh?

**SIDNEY**

**(DYING)**

I think you should lie down  
Alison.

**ALISON**

He's doing just great at the  
magazine.  
Alison ruffles Sidney's hair clumsily.

**ALISON (CONT'D)**

First we all thought he was kinda  
creepy because he was always  
hanging around the water-cooler,  
hitting on women...

**SIDNEY**

Really Alison, I think...

**ALISON**

But I think that was pretty much  
an act. So, Mister Sidney,  
whatcha doing here?

**RICHARD YOUNG**

**(SMILING)**

Please, call me Richard. I've  
written a little book so I'm  
doing a few talks.

**ALISON**

A book! Hey - I'm writing a book.  
What's yours about? Don't tell me  
- it's a thriller, right?

**RICHARD YOUNG**

**(LAUGHING)**

No, nothing so interesting I'm afraid. I'm a philosopher.

**ALISON**

**(SURPRISED)**

Philosophy? Really? Have you written any...

Alison stops dancing, stares at him, something occurring to her.

**ALISON (CONT'D)**

Oh my God...Richard? R.C. Young?  
You're R.C Young? (To Sidney)  
You...you didn't say...  
Sidney avoids her eye.

**85.**

**RICHARD YOUNG**

**(TO SIDNEY)**

I'd love to hear what you think of the book if you have time to read it.

Alison snorts with laughter.

**ALISON**

What would Sidney know about philosophy?

**RICHARD YOUNG**

Well, he does have a Masters in the subject.

Alison stares at Sidney. She breaks into a snorting laugh again.

**ALISON**

You're shitting me! Sidney?  
He...he likes Con Air!  
She stops laughing, hit by a sudden wave of nausea.

**ALISON (CONT'D)**

I...I don't feel very well.  
Mrs Kowalski stands up.

**MRS KOWALSKI**

Come on. It is time you went to bed. (To Sidney) You can sleep on the couch.

**ALISON**

Okay. Better go before I find out something else I don't know about Sidney.  
Mrs Kowalski turns to Richard.

**MRS KOWALSKI**

It was a pleasure to meet you Lord Young.  
Alison stares at Sidney who smiles weakly.

**98 LATER 98**

Richard and Sidney sit alone.

**SIDNEY**

You should have said you were coming.

**86.**

**RICHARD YOUNG**

**(WRYLY)**

That would have required you answering one of my calls.

**SIDNEY**

I've been pretty busy.

**RICHARD YOUNG**

Which reminds me, I was talking to a publisher friend of mine the other day. He mentioned that they were planning a series of introductory texts on philosophers. I wondered if you would be interested?

**SIDNEY**

**(ANNOYED)**

I have a job, dad.

**RICHARD YOUNG**

Of course, of course. I picked up a copy of your magazine at the airport.

Sidney stiffens a little.

**RICHARD YOUNG (CONT'D)**

Most enjoyable. (Beat) I particularly liked the young Hollywood actress who said she'd like to start her theatre career "somewhere small, like London or England."

**SIDNEY**

**(IRRITATED)**

Why've you always got to do this? It's...it's...

**RICHARD YOUNG**

It was just a joke Sidney...

**SIDNEY**

Actually it's not. Because you're saying that what I do for a living is worthless and...

**RICHARD YOUNG**

I don't think it's worthless. I just think, in your heart, you know you could do more with your life than...

**SIDNEY**

**(ANGRY)**

More? Sharps is one of the most respected magazines in the world. There's a million hacks who would kill to be where I am now.

**(MORE)**

87.

**SIDNEY (CONT'D)**

You know who I interviewed recently? Nathan Lane.

**RICHARD YOUNG**

I don't know who...

**SIDNEY**

I KNOW you don't know who that is! You don't know who anyone is! You thought Brad Pitt was a cave in Yorkshire! But most people do know who they are, okay? And most people wouldn't think that a journalist who gets to mix with stars like that was a, a disappointment!

**RICHARD YOUNG**

**(PAINED)**

I don't think you're a disappointment Sidney. I've never thought that.  
Silence. Richard stands and picks up his coat.

**RICHARD YOUNG (CONT'D)**

**(SADLY)**

I'm sorry. I didn't mean to upset you.  
Sidney watches his father, struggling with himself.

**SIDNEY**

**(QUIETLY)**

Things haven't really been that great. I don't know what it is.  
(Beat) I'm not... getting ahead.  
Richard stops, turns back to his son. Beat.

**RICHARD YOUNG**

**(GENTLY)**

If you're not happy...

**SIDNEY**

No. I'm fine. I know I can make it.

**RICHARD YOUNG**

Einstein said "Try not to become a man of success but rather to become a man of value."  
Sidney doesn't answer.

**RICHARD YOUNG (CONT'D)**

The young lady next door...  
Alison? She wouldn't have  
anything to do with your desire  
to stay would she?

**88.**

**SIDNEY**

What? No. We're just friends.

**RICHARD YOUNG**

**(SMILING)**

I saw the way you looked at her.  
Sidney considers this, knowing it's true.

**SIDNEY**

She doesn't feel that way about  
me. New York women don't date  
losers.

**RICHARD YOUNG**

**(SMILING)**

I suppose not. But Alison is from  
Port Huron, isn't she?  
Sidney stares at him.

**99 BEDROOM - LATER 99**

Sidney peers into the room to check Alison is okay. She  
lies asleep on the bed, moonlight bathing her face. She  
looks beautiful.  
Sidney stands staring at her for a moment and then tip-toes  
back out of the room.

**100 KITCHEN - LATER 100**

Sidney is cooking, humming, happy that Alison is here.  
Alison walks in, feeling dreadful.

**ALISON**

I don't remember very much but  
I'm so, so sorry. I'll get myself  
together and get going...

**SIDNEY**

Why? No, you're all right.  
It's...it's nice to have the  
company.

**ALISON**

**(REMEMBERING)**

Oh God...your father. And that  
woman.

**SIDNEY**

Mrs Kowalski? Don't worry about  
it. The last woman she caught me  
with had a penis, so you  
know...you're a big step up.

**ALISON**

Thanks.

**89.**

She notices a black and white photograph of a glamorous  
WOMAN on the shelf. We recognise her as the woman on the TV  
at the beginning of the film.

**ALISON (CONT'D)**

Who's that?

**SIDNEY**

**(BEAT)**

That's my mother.

**ALISON**

No way!

**SIDNEY**

Yeah, I don't take after her...

**ALISON**

Was she a model?

**SIDNEY**

Actress.

**ALISON**

Wow. Movies?

**SIDNEY**

Some. British, small parts...

**ALISON**

Is she...

**SIDNEY**

No, she died when I was young.  
Without thinking he fiddles with the ring on his finger.

**ALISON**

Must have been pretty cool having  
your mom in the movies.

**SIDNEY**

Yeah, I suppose. I used to see  
her on the TV every now and then  
when I was growing up. Sort of  
weird.  
He carries the plates over to her.

**SIDNEY (CONT'D)**

Here we go! English fry-up.  
Perfect hangover cure.  
Sidney puts a plate of bacon, eggs and sausages in front of  
her. Alison stares at it, going green. Suddenly she darts  
from the room.

**90.**

**101 LIVING ROOM - LATER 101**

Sidney is tidying. He upsets Alison's bag from the couch  
and its contents spill onto the floor - the NOTEBOOK is  
amongst them.  
Sidney stares at it, hesitates and then, unable to resist,  
opens it up and starts to read. Alison walks into the room.  
Sidney looks up guiltily.

**SIDNEY**

Sorry, I was just...uh...(He  
can't think of an excuse)  
...rooting through your private  
possessions...  
Alison sits on the couch, feeling too ill to be annoyed.

**SIDNEY (CONT'D)**

I like the opening.

**ALISON**

You do?

**SIDNEY**

I do. Can I read the rest of it?  
Believe it or not, I'm a pretty  
good editor.

**ALISON**

I don't know. I don't even know  
if I'm going to bother finishing  
it.

**SIDNEY**

"Keep true to the dreams of thy  
youth."  
Alison examines him through narrowed eyes.

**ALISON**

Is that from Troy again?

**SIDNEY**

Schiller.  
She puts her things back in her bag.

**ALISON**

I'll jump in the shower and then  
I really will get out of your  
hair.  
Sidney watches, not wanting her to go.

**SIDNEY**

Oh, I forgot...I got you a  
present.

**91.**

He hands her a bag. Surprised she opens it and takes out a  
RECORD. It's the Nino Rota sound-track to La Dolce Vita.

**SIDNEY (CONT'D)**

I was just walking past this  
music shop on the corner and I  
saw it. I thought it might cheer  
you up.  
Alison is deeply touched.

**ALISON**

That's...I don't know what to say. (Beat) I haven't got a turntable.

**SIDNEY**

Oh. (Beat) Well, you can always come here to listen to it. Sidney takes the record and puts it on the turntable in the corner of the room. He selects the finale music - it's funny and sad, glamorous and romantic... They listen to it for a moment. Sidney starts to dance a little. He cha-cha's over to her and holds out his hand.

**ALISON**

Are you kidding? I could throw up on you again.

**SIDNEY**

C'mon... Alison reluctantly gets up. They dance ironically. Alison laughs a little. Gradually they get more into it, enjoying the music - a man in shorts and a woman in pyjamas, cha-cha-chaing, a summer breeze wafting in the through the open windows behind him...

**DISSOLVE TO:**

**102 INT. I SPY AREA - DAY 102**

Some weeks later. Alison sits at her desk, trying to work. She looks up and catches Maddox watching her with soulful eyes from across the room. She looks quickly away, unsettled. Sidney sits at his desk surreptitiously watching her,

**SMITTEN.**

**92.**

**103 INT. BREAK ROOM - DAY 103**

Autumn. Rain lashes against the window. Alison drinks coffee. Ingrid and Anna are examining a rack of clothes behind her.  
Ingrid is holding up a dress.

**INGRID**

Hey, Alice? Versace. You like?

**ALISON**

I'm good, thanks.

**INGRID**

Honey, everyone needs to change their look every now and then. Especially if they have a new man in their life.

**ALISON**

**(EMBARRASSED)**

What are you talking about?

**104 CORRIDOR OUTSIDE ROOM 104**

Sidney is just about to enter the room.

**INGRID (O.S.)**

Well, that English guy is always hanging around you these days, right?  
Sidney freezes, listening.

**105 BREAK ROOM 105**

Alison blushes fiercely.

**ANNA**

**(LAUGHING)**

Tell me it isn't so.

**ALISON**

**(ANNOYED)**

Of course not.

**ANNA**

Thank God. Can you imagine? He's such a creep.

**106 CORRIDOR OUTSIDE ROOM 106**

Sidney listens sadly to the women laughing inside.

93.

**107 BREAK ROOM 107**

Alison stares at the Fashionistas, annoyed by this. Oblivious, Anna holds up some trousers against herself.

**ANNA**

These are gorgeous, but I'm just too fat.

**INGRID**

Oh don't be crazy! Alice? Is Anna fat?

**ALISON**

**(BRIGHT)**

Not at all. Why, she's so thin I could just take her little spindly body and snap it over my knee like a dry fucking twig.

**ANNA**

**(AUTOMATICALLY)**

Thanks.

**ALISON**

Oh, and for your information Sidney Young has got more going for him than most of the men in this town. She gets up to leave, the others gawping after her.

**108 CORRIDOR OUTSIDE ROOM 108**

Sidney gives a slow smile of wonder - she likes him! Suddenly he realises Alison is about to walk out the door and catch him listening. Panicking he opens the nearest door and runs in, falling straight down a short flight of

stairs and out of sight. Alison walks out of the room and away, oblivious.

**109 INT. SIDNEY'S FLAT - EVENING 109**

E.C.U - On Sidney, staring at us.

**SIDNEY**

Hey Alison, I was wondering if you wanted to... (Beat. Starting again) Hello there. Listen I was wondering if you wanted to see a movie or...a meal...or... (Beat, starting again.) Alison. You wanna go on a date?

We see he is staring at his reflection in a mirror. He slips in a pair of PLASTIC FANGS and smiles toothily.

**94.**

**110 CLUB - MOMENTS LATER 110**

The SHARPS HALLOWEEN BALL is in full swing - guests dancing in fancy dress. Sidney, dressed as Dracula, threads through the crowd. He spots Alison on the other side of the room, dressed as CAT WOMAN. He starts to make his way towards her, a little nervous.

He passes ELEANOR JOHNSON and VINCENT LEPAK. Vincent wears all black and his shades.

**SIDNEY**

I like your costume Vincent.

**VINCENT**

I'm not wearing a costume.

**SIDNEY**

Oh.  
They walk on.

**VINCENT**

**(MUTTERING)**

Idiot.

**SIDNEY**

**(MUTTERING)**

Wanker.

Sidney continues through the crowd to Alison. He puts his Dracula TEETH in.

**SIDNEY (CONT'D)**

Haven't we met somewhere before?

**ALISON**

That's why I don't go there any more.

They smile, but Alison seems a little nervous.

**ALISON (CONT'D)**

I've been looking for you actually. There's, uh, there's something I need to...

**SIDNEY**

(Mumbling through his

**TEETH)**

Me first. Listen I was wondering if you want to go to the movies or maybe for a, uh....

**ALISON**

**(INTERRUPTING)**

What? I can't understand what you're saying.

95.

Sidney pulls the plastic fangs out.

**SIDNEY**

Sorry. I was just saying...

Maddox appears and gives Alison a glass of champagne. He kisses her.

**LAWRENCE MADDOX**

Back in a minute.

He walks off again. Sidney stares dumbly after him.

**ALISON**

**(EMBARRASSED)**

I wanted to tell you. Lawrence has left his wife. We're going to be together. Officially. She watches for Sidney's reaction.

**SIDNEY**

**(DYING)**

Well...that's...that's brilliant.

**ALISON**

Yeah, so...maybe he does care after all, right?

**SIDNEY**

Yup.  
They stand in an awkward silence, watching the party.

**111 INT. WASHROOMS - LATER 111**

A dejected Sidney stands washing his hands. Maddox walks in behind him.

**LAWRENCE MADDOX**

Hello Sidney. Someone said you'd come as a Count but I thought I'd misheard.  
Sidney doesn't answer, turns to leave.

**LAWRENCE MADDOX (CONT'D)**

So Alison told you we were getting together right?

**SIDNEY**

**(TIGHT)**

Yeah.

**LAWRENCE MADDOX**

Yeah. Should have done it long ago but, you know me - just not very good at expressing my emotions. Right?

He watches Sidney's reaction, smirking.

**LAWRENCE MADDOX (CONT'D)**

You must be happy for her, what  
with you being friends...  
Sidney blushes.

**LAWRENCE MADDOX (CONT'D)**

**(LAUGHING)**

Oh Sidalee...I thought as much.  
Did you really think you and  
Alison...? Things really haven't  
worked out too well for you here,  
have they? Ah, well. You gave it  
your best shot.  
He walks out. Sidney stares after him, burning.

**112 EXT. OUTSIDE CLUB - NIGHT 112**

Rain pours down. Eleanor and Vincent climb into a limousine  
and close the door. Sidney runs up.

**SIDNEY**

Wait! Eleanor wait!  
The window glides down.

**ELEANOR JOHNSON**

Yes?

**SIDNEY**

Let me do the profile on Vincent.

**ELEANOR JOHNSON**

**(AMUSED)**

I don't think so.  
The window begins to slide up. Sidney hangs onto it.

**SIDNEY**

You get full copy approval. It'll  
be like you've written it!  
The window stops. Eleanor stares at him, considering.  
Sidney looks past her to Vincent.

**SIDNEY (CONT'D)**

**(DETERMINED)**

Vincent - think about it, think  
how humiliating it will be for

me. I'm begging you.  
Vincent leans over, stares over his shades at Sidney.

**97.**

**VINCENT**

(Beat, enjoying this)  
You don't look like you're  
begging.  
Beat. Sidney kneels down on the side-walk beside the  
limousine. The rain pours down on him. The limousine drives  
away. Sidney stares dumbly up at something across the  
street.

**REVERSE**

On the building across the street is an ENORMOUS ANIMATED  
BILLBOARD L'OREAL ADVERTISEMENT - SOPHIE MAES, in a gold  
ball-gown and make-up, hair coiffured in classic forties  
Hollywood style. As we watch she BLOWS US A KISS.  
Underneath is the slogan - I'm Here...

**113 INT. CLAYTON HARDING'S OFFICE - DAY 113**

Sidney sits in front of Clayton.

**CLAYTON HARDING**

Lawrence Maddox is no longer  
working for Sharps. Seems  
Elizabeth got sick of him  
screwing around and kicked him  
out.

**SIDNEY**

She kicked him out?

**CLAYTON HARDING**

**(IGNORING THIS)**

Richard Heywood doesn't seem to  
like the idea of employing an ex-  
son-in-law. So he's gone. So's  
Alison Olsen.  
Sidney stares at him.

**CLAYTON HARDING (CONT'D)**

Don't worry about Maddox. He's

already lined up something with Gotham Magazine. I'm gonna need someone to hold the fort at I Spy. Strictly on a temporary basis, you understand? One more thing. Eleanor Johnson rang this morning, wondering if you'd like to write a profile on Vincent Lepak. Sidney stares at him.

**CLAYTON HARDING (CONT'D)**

I don't know how you did it but somehow you've made it into the next room.

**98.**

We hear the opening of Pretty Vacant by the Sex Pistols as we...

**114 MONTAGE 114**

**115 INT. RESTAURANT - DAY 115**

As the song continues we see Sidney interviewing Vincent, complete with shades.

**116 INT. STUDIO - DAY 116**

Vincent is wearing a crown, being photographed on a throne. Sidney and Eleanor are watching.

**117 INT. ELEANOR'S OFFICE - DAY 117**

Eleanor is going through Sidney's copy, crossing lines out with a red pen. Sidney watches.

**118 INT. SHARPS MAGAZINE - OFFICE - DAY 118**

Sidney, Eleanor and a Photo-Editor are looking at the photos from the shoot. Eleanor is pointing out a blemish on Vincent's face.

**119 COMPUTER SCREEN - VINCENT'S FACE IN CLOSE UP 119**

...as we watch the blemish disappears.

**120 EXT. NEWS STAND - DAY 120**

Sidney buys a copy of Sharps and flicks through it until he finds what he's looking for - a four page feature entitled Vincent Lepak - Long Live The King. He stares at his byline at the top of the feature.

**120A EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY 120A**

An elegant apartment building.

**120B INT. APARTMENT - DAY 120B**

Sidney is being shown around a chic apartment by a Realtor.

99.

**121 INT. MEETING ROOM - DAY 121**

Sidney is amongst the room full of writers and editors, pitching to Clayton who nods approval and passes on to the next item.

**122 INT. CLUB - EVENING 122**

Sidney and Eleanor are talking with an ACTOR. Sidney is wearing a smart suit, fawning in a suitably restrained manner.

**123 INT. PENTHOUSE APARTMENT - DAY 123**

Sidney is interviewing the Actor, laughing sycophantically at something he has just said.

**124 INT. OFFICE - DAY 124**

Sidney sits at his desk, looking very much the part now in another expensive suit, talking on the phone. His desk is crowded with MUFFIN BASKETS. A COURIER is handing over a GIFT-WRAPPED BOX to him. Sidney opens the box to reveal a ROLEX SEA-DWELLER 4000 WATCH. Sidney stares at the watch.

**125 INT. MOVIE PREMIERE - EVENING 125**

Sidney is drinking champagne amongst the Glitterati, talking to a Producer. Simon Cowell walks past and high-fives him. Sidney throws back his head, laughing at something the Producer said.

**126 INT. SAUNA - DAY 126**

Sidney sits in the steam room, wrapped in a towel, sweating. Slowly the steam envelops him until he has disappeared.

**END OF MONTAGE**

**127 INT. RESTAURANT - EVENING 127**

CLOSE ON SIDNEY'S PHOTOGRAPH - looking as cool as he can. Alison sits alone reading Sharps, staring at Sidney's photo in the "Notes on Contributors" page. She smiles, then glances up, her smile fading. Maddox is walking towards her, drunk and sour faced.

**LAWRENCE MADDOX**

(noticing the magazine)  
Well, well...little Sidalee. I  
feel like a proud Papa.

**(MORE)**

100.

**LAWRENCE MADDOX (CONT'D)**

Listen, I can't stay. Anderson wants me to go to some photographers exhibition. Hot new talent blah, blah...

**ALISON**

Right. (Beat) How hot is she?

**LAWRENCE MADDOX**

Who?

**ALISON**

The new talent?

**LAWRENCE MADDOX**

Do you think you could drop the little wife routine? It's kind of in bad taste.  
Alison stares at him sadly

**ALISON**

I guess you're right. (Quietly)  
What goes around comes around.  
Maddox is about to say something but changes his mind.

**LAWRENCE MADDOX**

I'll see you back home.  
He is about to leave when he notices Alison's notebook on the table.

**LAWRENCE MADDOX (CONT'D)**

**(IRRITATED)**

And will you stop carrying that thing around with you? It's kind of embarrassing.  
He walks off.

**128 INT. BAR - EVENING 128**

Sidney is with Eleanor and Sophie, who now looks every inch the movie star.

**ELEANOR JOHNSON**

Sophie's going to get a Golden

Globe nomination for best actress.

**SIDNEY**

Wow. That's fantastic. (Beat)  
But...the nominations haven't been announced yet?

101.

**ELEANOR JOHNSON**

That is correct so we have absolutely no way of knowing whether or not she will be nominated. (Beat) So, if she is nominated we want Sharps to do a feature. Someone to cover the whole lead up, unrestricted access, the trajectory, the building of this unique brand.

**SOPHIE MAES**

I'm going to have a logo.

**ELEANOR JOHNSON**

Here's the deal. Sophie wants you to do it.  
Sidney stares at her and then at Sophie, stunned.

**SOPHIE MAES**

**(PLEASANTLY)**

You can be my bitch.

**ELEANOR JOHNSON**

Merry Christmas, Sidney. This is a cover story. I think a little celebration is in order.

**129 EXT. OUTSIDE CIRCLE CLUB - NIGHT 129**

Snow falls. Sidney climbs out of a limousine with Eleanor and Sophie.

The women breeze past the Doorman and into the club. Sidney hesitates on the thresh-hold, staring up at the sign above him as if it's a magic portal.

Sidney walks in.

**130 INT. CIRCLE CLUB - LATER 130**

A surprisingly small, ultra A-list club, chic and ironic Christmas decorations.  
Sidney walks past celebrities and beautiful people. He's arrived.

**131 INT. CIRCLE CLUB - NIGHT 131**

Sidney stands with Kevin Bacon playing Six Degrees of Kevin Bacon. People stand around watching.

**KEVIN BACON**

Okay, uh...Clark Gable. Go!

**102.**

**SIDNEY**

Clark Gable to Vivien Leigh (Gone With The Wind), Vivien Leigh to Marlon Brando (Street Car Named Desire), Marlon Brando to Robert DeNiro (The Score) Robert De Niro to Kevin Bacon (Sleepers)!  
The crowd cheers.

**131A INT. CIRCLE CLUB - POWDER ROOM 131A**

A very drunk Sidney stands in a toilet cubicle with a YOUNG ACTRESS doing coke.

**ACTRESS**

Sexiest philosopher?

**SIDNEY**

Uh, tricky, but I'm gonna say Nietzsche. Huge moustache. The Tom Selleck of Nihilism.

**ACTRESS**

Um...most evil philosopher.

**SIDNEY**

Okay. Good. Evil genius philosopher...Hobbes, proto-Nazi, Heidegger - actual Nazi, Hegel - twat. Basically your H's...

**ACTRESS**

Most Hollywood philosopher?

**SIDNEY**

Uh...Bishop Berkely.

**ACTRESS**

What'd he say?

**SIDNEY**

Esse est percipi.

**FIRST ACTRESS**

What does that mean?

**SIDNEY**

If they `aint looking at you, you don't really exist.

**ACTRESS**

**(WEARILY)**

Oh honey, tell me something I don't know...  
Sidney stoops and snorts a line of coke.

**103.**

**132 CIRCLE BAR - NIGHT 132**

Sidney, giddy on champagne, coke and success is dancing with Sophie. He's at the centre of the world.

**133 INT. SIDNEY'S APARTMENT - MORNING 133**

The doorbell rings. Sidney wearing a silk dressing gown wanders through the room from the bedroom and opens the

door.  
Alison stands outside, smiling at him.

**ALISON**

Hey.

**SIDNEY**

**(THROWN)**

Hey.

**ALISON**

Nice robe.

**SIDNEY**

Thanks. It was a gift. Ralph  
Lauren.

**ALISON**

Who from?

**SIDNEY**

Ralph Lauren. I did a piece.  
Beat. He still hasn't invited her in.

**ALISON**

I just wanted to say I heard  
about you getting the promotion.  
Congratulations. I'm happy for  
you.

**SIDNEY**

Thanks. How's things with you  
and...

**ALISON**

**(QUICKLY)**

Good. Fine. Everything's  
...uh...I'm working for this  
little literary magazine. It's  
not the New Yorker but...  
(awkward) So, I've left you a  
bunch of messages...

**SIDNEY**

Yeah. I've been pretty busy.

**104.**

**ALISON**

I thought so.  
Alison stands awkwardly for a moment, smiling, then turns to go.

**ALISON (CONT'D)**

Okay, well...

**SIDNEY**

**(QUICKLY)**

How's the novel coming along?

**ALISON**

**(LAUGHING)**

Oh, well...still working on it.

**SIDNEY**

Well...keep at it. I believe in you.  
Alison smiles, touched.

**SIDNEY (CONT'D)**

I never gave you these.  
He takes some papers from a shelf and hands them to her. Alison looks at them - the are titled "Notes On Alison's Novel." There's a LOT OF THEM. She laughs.

**ALISON**

You know...

**WOMAN'S VOICE**

Sidney?  
Alison looks past Sidney to the bedroom door where INGRID the Fashionista stands in her underwear.

**INGRID**

(a little wave)  
Hey, Alice.  
Sidney looks at her and back at Alison. He gives a little laugh.

**SIDNEY**

(half joking, half

**MEANING IT)**

How did it all go so wrong?  
Alison smiles, gives a little wave and walks away - before he can see how upset she is.

**FADE OUT.**

**FADE IN:**

**105.**

**134 EXT. LA - BEVERLY HILLS HOTEL - DAY 134**

Sophie and her entourage, including Sidney and Eleanor, climb out of a line of limousines and walk into the Hotel. Sidney stands for a moment, looking around him. Hollywood. He's finally here.

We hear the opening of Virginia Plain by Roxy Music.

**135 EXT. BEVERLY HILLS HOTEL - NIGHT 135**

We are swooping in towards the hotel and an enormous BILLBOARD ADVERTISEMENT for Sophie's new film - in pre-production. It's a re-make of Singing In The Rain - with Russel Crowe.

We BOOM down from Sophie's fifteen foot laughing face to find Sidney standing on a slim ledge outside his hotel window. He is drunk and wearing only his underwear. He is also yelling with fear.

The window behind him is crowded with people shrieking with laughter.

Gingerly he edges back to the window and climbs back into...

**136 HOTEL SUITE 136**

It's a wild party. Music is blaring, people are dancing, drinking, laughing.

**SOPHIE MAES**

You didn't do it!

**SIDNEY**

High.

**SOPHIE MAES**

You let me down!

**SIDNEY**

Too high! You couldn't do it. Too high.

Sophie calmly unzips her dress and steps out of it, standing in her underwear. There is applause from the on-lookers. Calmly she steps out of the window onto the ledge and disappears from sight.

The on-lookers crane out of the window, yelling encouragement.

After a moment Sophie appears at another window further along the wall and climbs back into the room to ecstatic applause. She stares imperiously at Sidney.

**106.**

**SOPHIE MAES**

What are you?

**SIDNEY**

Your limpy pig.

**SOPHIE MAES**

What?

**SIDNEY**

I'm your limpy pig!

**SOPHIE MAES**

That's right! Okay, limpy pig. You need to pay a forfeit. Whatcha got?

**SIDNEY**

I've got my little limpy dance. Sidney dances a little, jiggling up and down.

**SOPHIE MAES**

**(SUDDENLY)**

Give me your ring. Sidney stops dancing, his smile fading a little.

**SIDNEY**

I...I can't...

**SOPHIE MAES**

Give me the ring. I want it.

**SIDNEY**

I can't.  
Sophie stares at him through narrowed eyes.

**SOPHIE MAES**

Okay, give me the ring and if I  
win tomorrow, I'll let you have  
sex with me.  
The on-lookers shriek with delight.  
Sidney stares at her. He looks past her to his reflection  
in the window - a drunk man in his underwear, swaying from  
side to side...

**137 INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT 137**

Sidney is back in his own room, alone, a mess. He sits on  
the floor chopping lines of coke on the coffee table. He  
stares groggily at the space on his finger where his ring  
used to be.

**107.**

**SIDNEY**

(muttering to himself)  
You're a star. You're a big,  
bright shining star...  
He snorts a line and, leaning back, flicks blankly through  
TV channels - a sports programme, a news station, a sit-com  
re-run...  
He snorts another line, flicks stations - more sports, a  
music video, a black and white movie...  
Sidney stops, staring at the screen...  
TV SCREEN - we're watching the fifties British movie we saw  
at the beginning of the film. Sidney's MOTHER is typing at  
the desk in the background. She gets up from the desk and  
walks into another office.  
Sidney stares, frozen.  
Sidney's mother passes the LEAD ACTRESS who is staring out  
of the window, smoking. She stares at her sympathetically.

**SIDNEY'S MOTHER**

(Celia Johnson accent)  
Don't worry Mary...you'll meet  
him one day.

**LEAD ACTRESS**

**(SMILING SADLY)**

How will I know when I do?

**SIDNEY'S MOTHER**

Oh, when you meet the One, you'll know...

She walks on.

Sidney stares at the screen.

**138 EXT. BEVERLY HILTON - EVENING 138**

A conveyor belt of limousines arriving outside the Hilton. Rain falls. Celebrities wave to the watching crowds as they make their way up the red carpet, cameras flash... Sophie emerges from a limo, looking amazing. SHE IS WEARING A FUR WRAP. She makes her way up the carpet, Sidney walks behind, smiling vaguely...

**139 INT. BEVERLY HILTON - EVENING 139**

Various celebrities are being interviewed. Sidney stands a little apart, lost in thought.

**LAWRENCE MADDOX**

Well, well... Look at you...

**108.**

Lawrence Maddox stands beside him, something nervous in his manner now, the old confidence gone. He has been drinking.

**LAWRENCE MADDOX (CONT'D)**

Made it all the way to the Seventh Room.

He holds out his hand.

**LAWRENCE MADDOX (CONT'D)**

Congratulations. The wheel of fortune right? You go up, I go down. You're here with Sophie? How about doing your old Rabbi a favour and putting in a good word for me? Maybe a little interview?

Sidney absent-mindedly takes his hand, looking past him.

**SIDNEY**

Is Alison here?

**LAWRENCE MADDOX**

Alison? No, we went our separate ways. Actually she left me. Tells me she's in love with someone else.

Sidney stares at him.

**LAWRENCE MADDOX (CONT'D)**

Nope, not you I'm afraid Sidalee. She threw us both over. Some guy named Clark. I mean...Clark. Can you believe it? But these are the sacrifices we make, right? I don't need to tell you. It's not a vacation. It's a vocation. So listen, about Sophie... But Sidney is no longer listening.

**140 INT. GOLDEN GLOBES AWARDS - EVENING 140**

SLOW MOTION - we move in on Sidney, sitting at the table, listening to the Best Actress award. This is where we first met him.

**SIDNEY (V.O.)**

This is me at the Golden Globes. That's my Armani tuxedo. That's a Rolex Sea-Dweller 4000 watch I'm wearing. I'm inside. I'm at the centre of everything. I'm right where I wanted to be.

Beside him Sophie covers her face with her hands and starts to stand, having just won Best Actress.

**109.**

Sidney stares at her hands - she is wearing his gold ring. We move back into real time, sound swells up, thunderous applause. Sidney claps along with the others. Then he stands up and goes after Sophie.

**SIDNEY (CONT'D)**

(taking her arm)  
I need my ring back.  
Sophie turns back to him, her smile fixed.

**SIDNEY (CONT'D)**

I need my ring back.  
As if puzzled by her inability to make it to the stage,  
Sophie, still smiling, tries to pull her arm free. Eleanor  
is instantly beside them, trying to disengage Sidney's  
hand.

**ELEANOR JOHNSON**

(smiling, hissing)  
What are you doing? Let her go!

**SIDNEY**

She isn't the One. My mother gave  
me that ring and told me I had to  
give it to the One. She isn't the  
One.  
The applause is still going strong. TV Cameras move in on  
Sophie as she starts to struggle, her smile slipping.  
Sidney tries to pull the ring free from her finger.  
Officials move in.

**ELEANOR JOHNSON**

What the fuck are you doing?

**SIDNEY**

**(YANKING)**

Just...Will you...I don't want to  
be on the inside. I don't want to  
be at the Party. I don't want to  
have have sex with you. (Beat) I

**KILLED CUBA!**

Sophie stares at him for a moment then with a shriek  
launches herself at him. They tumble backwards.  
The Officials rush upon them. There are gasps from the  
other tables, people standing up to see what's going on.

**141 INT. MRS KOWALSKI'S FLAT - CONTINUOUS 141**

Mrs Kowalski sits watching the pandemonium on TV.

**110.**

**SOPHIE MAES (O.S.)**

(on the TV)  
You fucking mother-fucking  
fucker!

**MRS KOWLASKI**

**(GRIMLY)**

Sodom and Gomarrah.

**142 INT. APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS 142**

The Sharps Fashionistas are gathered watching the awards on TV in silent horror.

**ON TV**

Sophie kicks out at Sidney, ripping her dress in the process.

**INGRID**

Oh God no...not the Versace...  
Security pile on Sidney...

**143 INT. AIRPORT LOUNGE - CONTINUOUS 143**

Richard Young sits watching the awards on TV. He gives a small smile.

**144 INT. BAR - CONTINUOUS 144**

Alison sits watching on a TV in the corner of the bar.

**ELEANOR JOHNSON (O.S.)**

(On TV - losing it)  
You're finished! You're finished!  
Alison begins to smile.

**145 INT. GOLDEN GLOBES AWARDS - CONTINUOUS 145**

Sidney bursts free from the scrum of Security and begins to run across the room, overturning a table in the process, Officials racing after him.

Sidney sprints for the doors. He notices Vincent Lepak's startled face as he passes it. He stops, ducks back and slaps the back of Vincent's head, knocking the SHADES onto the floor. Sidney stamps on them and runs on. Vincent gapes after him.

**111.**

**146 ANGLE ON CLAYTON HARDING 146**

...watching from his table as the people around him stand up to see the chase. He shakes his head in horror and then tries, and fails, to restrain a sudden bark of laughter...

**147 EXT. BEVERLY HILTON - NIGHT 147**

Sidney bursts out of the hotel onto the red carpet and is momentarily stopped by the sight of the massed PAPARAZZI ahead, behind the red rope. The Paparazzi stare back at Sidney - his face bruised, shirt collar ripped - equally nonplussed. There is a frozen moment then Sidney plunges forward, ducking under the red rope, back amongst his own kind, pushing through them until he disappears amongst the crowd.

**148 INT. LA AIRPORT - TICKET DESK - NIGHT 148**

Sidney stands at the desk.

**TICKET CLERK**

The next available flight is ten am sir. Gets you into New York six thirty PM.  
Sidney sighs.

**149 INT. LA AIRPORT - NIGHT 149**

Sidney sits in the almost deserted terminal waiting for the flight back to New York. He is still wearing his dishevelled tux. He looks down at his tightly clenched hand and slowly opens his fingers to reveal his RING.

**150 EXT. NEW YORK - NIGHT 150**

Sidney is in a cab, still wearing his tux, his travel bag slung over shoulder. He stares out as the cab passes the entrance to a PARK. A sign advertises an outdoor screening of La Dolce Vita.

**SIDNEY**

Stop the car!

**151 EXT. NEW YORK PARK - EVENING 151**

An outdoor CINEMA has been set up. LA DOLCE VITA is playing on a large screen. A crowd sits around the park, watching the movie.

Sidney stands scanning the crowd. He locates Alison sitting near the back.

**112.**

She is holding her notebook, watching the movie. Beside her is the remains of a picnic, with lit candles.

Sidney smiles and starts towards her, then stops. She is sitting next to a MAN. As Sidney watches she rests her head on his shoulder.

Sidney watches, numb, then turns to walk away...

BOB stands in front of him in full drag, waving frantically. He starts to run towards Sidney, who sighs and closes his eyes - as if things weren't bad enough.

Then Bob runs straight past him. Sidney turns to see the Man next to Alison standing up to embrace Bob. The two kiss.

**ON THE GRASS**

Alison watches Bob and her friend embrace with a touch of sadness. Suddenly she realises someone is standing beside her. She looks up and sees Sidney.

She stares at him. Long Beat.

Sidney holds out his hand.

Alison hesitates and then takes his hand and stands up.

**SIDNEY**

How's the novel?

**ALISON**

Finished.

Sidney smiles. He takes the notebook from her and tosses it back onto the picnic blanket. Then he kisses her. As he does so he takes the RING and slips it into Alison's coat pocket.

Then they begin to dance, cha-cha-chaing happily at the back of the park, as the music swells, lit by the flickering light from the screen.

Suddenly Sidney freezes, staring over Alison's shoulder to where we can see he has accidentally thrown her NOTEBOOK onto a lit candle.

It is now ON FIRE.

Sidney shoves Alison aside and dives for the book...

**CUT TO BLACK:**