

"Beautiful Girls"

by

Scott Rosenberg

"When you can fall for chains of silver
You can fall for chains of gold
You can fall for pretty strangers
And the promises they hold

You promised me everything
You promised me thick and thin
Now you just say: oh, Romeo, yeah, you know
I used to have a scene with him... "

-- Dire Straits

FADE IN:

A SNOW PLOW

barrels its way down a heavily snowed-under street...

EXT. RESIDENTIAL STREET - KNIGHT'S RIDGE, MA - NIGHT

The snow continues to fall. Picture-postcard perfect. Knight's Ridge is a sleepy little bedroom community some 30 miles to the west of Boston...

The plow is a Fisher 8-foot Power Angle and it is attached to a 1986 GMC K-2500 3/4 ton PICK-UP TRUCK with "ROWAN LANDSCAPE & CONTRACTING" stencilled on the doors... At the wheel is

TOMMY "BIRDMAN" ROWAN

28. Blond and stocky. Former coolest kid in high school. At one time, he commanded the night brigade. Now he plows. He rolls with

KEV

29. Apple-pie face. The thick Wade Boggs moustache does no good - Kev still looks 10 years younger than he really is. Kev is Copperfield to Birdman's J. Steerforth...

Kev hops from the truck and begins to shovel the walk, as Birdman plows the driveway of

EXT. TUDOR HOUSE - NIGHT

A beautiful home. Christmas lights still dangle... Birdman plows with great care... He leaves no crumbs... He studies the windows of the Tudor, looking for signs of life...

They finish quickly... Kev hops back into the truck. He picks up a clipboard, crosses off one last name.

KEV

That's it --

Birdman nods. He looks back at the house. Sighs. Puts the truck in reverse. As it skirts the end of the driveway, an OUTSIDE LIGHT flicks on...

Birdman hits the brakes, a hint of a smile crossing his face. This is not lost on Kev, who snorts...

The Tudor's front door OPENS... A LITTLE GIRL, JODI, 3, bundled up good, trudges out of the house, carrying two pewter MUGS of coffee...

She walks precariously, balancing the mugs, negotiating her way across Kev's freshly-cleared walkway...

Birdman opens the truck door... Leans down to the little girl and takes the coffees...

BIRDMAN

Thanks, Jodi. How are you tonight?

Jodi merely stares at him. Her expression an admixture of terror and confusion...

Birdman hands Kev a mug. Kev slurps at it... Frowns.

KEV

No 'buca --

Birdman doesn't hear him. For the front door has opened again. To Jodi's mother. Birdman watches as

DARIAN SMALLS

28, in ski parka, leggings and Timberlands, walks to the truck. Brown hair up, black eyes, Darian has about her the melancholy air of a Thomas Hardy heroine...

DARIAN

Hey --

BIRDMAN

Hey --

Beat.

KEV

What's the matter, Darian? No Zambuca this time -- ?

DARIAN

It's 5:00 in the morning --

KEV

'Zat make it too late or too early?

DARIAN

(to Birdman)

You guys done for the night?

BIRDMAN

Yeah --

DARIAN

Big storm --

BIRDMAN

Yeah.

Beat. Jodi tugs at her mother's leg...

JODI

I'm cooooooldddd -- !

DARIAN

Okay, baby --

She picks up her daughter. Looks at Birdman. Forces a smile. The shit between them is so palpable it could wear clothes...

DARIAN (CONT.)

(re: the mugs)

I didn't have Styrofoam...

BIRDMAN

I'll get 'em back to you --

Darian nods. Birdman nods. Kev rolls his eyes...

DARIAN

See ya, Kev --

KEV

Yeah.

DARIAN

(to Birdman)

Bye --

Birdman nods again. Watches her walk back to the house, carrying Jodi. Birdman starts up the truck. He looks at Kev, who's giving him the ugly eyeball...

BIRDMAN

What -- ?

KEV

The thing with the Styrofoam really creases me...

BIRDMAN

What are you talking about?

KEV

It's the fifth storm of the season - you'd think she'd get herself a nice sleeve of Styrofoam cups. \$1.99 at your local Shop 'N Save...

Nothing from Birdman. He drives.

KEV (CONT.)

How 'bout I return the mugs this time?

BIRDMAN

How 'bout you shut your hole?

KEV

Chick's married, Birdie.

Birdman drives.

KEV (CONT.)

It's all bad --

The truck drives off into the snow...

ROLL CREDITS

to the Gin Blossoms' nifty ditty "Lost Horizons" ("Drink enough of anything/To make this world look new again...") as we follow the truck through the stormy streets of The Ridge -

-- passing other plows, other sanders, other hearty MEN shoveling out driveways and roads, so the day-workers won't be inconvenienced in their morning commute...

As our credit sequence rolls to a close, we find ourselves at

INT. EXCELLENT DONUTS - LATER - NIGHT

The racks are filled with a colorful diorama of donuts and crullers. The place is fairly crowded with FLOWERS and SANDERS and other members of the town's snow removal team...

A phone RINGS ON in the ear of

PAUL KLAPMAN

29, Winston cigarette, short black hair, layers of thermal, flannel, denim. He is at the pay phone. He looks exhausted, sipping coffee from an enormous Excellent Donuts cup...

He slams down the phone. Goes back to a booth, where Birdman and Kev work on a bag of donut holes.

PAUL

She's not home --

BIRDMAN

She's sleeping --

PAUL

She's not sleeping. She's not home.

BIRDMAN
Where is she?

PAUL
She's banging that guy --

BIRDMAN
She's sleeping.

PAUL
I'll bet you twenty bucks she's banging
that guy --

KEV
What a ridiculous bet.

PAUL
Fuck you. Why?

KEV
Either way - you lose. If you win,
she's bangin'. So you lose. If you
lose, you lose 20 bucks. So you lose...
A lose-lose bet is not a bet to make --

PAUL
I'll kill her...

BIRDMAN
You really think she's with this guy?

PAUL
I really do.

KEV
The meat-cutter?

PAUL
Yeah. Fuckin' meat-cutter. What kind
of future is that? The guy cuts meat --

BIRDMAN
You plow snow...

KEV
At least meat - you can eat.

Paul looks at Kev. Kev shrugs. Paul to Birdman:

PAUL
Why you gotta always bring him around?

BIRDMAN
He's a hell of a shoveler --

Paul drains his coffee. Gets to his feet.

PAUL

I'm outta here. I'll see you at home --

He puts on his hat, his gloves...

BIRDMAN

Don't go by Jan's --

PAUL

You gonna sand my lots -- ?

BIRDMAN

Yeah. Don't go by there --

PAUL

I'm not goin' by there --

Paul leaves the shop.

BIRDMAN

He's goin' by there --

KEV

Money in the bank --

EXT. DUPLEX APARTMENT - NIGHT

A few towns over. Paul is in his '84 Ford F-150 with a 7 1/2 foot Myers plow - "KLAPMAN LANDSCAPE" stencilled on the side.

He chain-smokes Winstons... Staring at the duplex... His mixed-breed MUTT - ELLE MACPHERSON - rides with him...

Paul lowers the plow. Begins to move the snow. MOVE IT INTO the DRIVEWAY of the duplex. A few plow-fuls and the driveway is a five-foot high impenetrable WALL OF SNOW...

CUT TO:

BLURRY. COMING INFO FOCUS --

TWO FAT CHILDREN

cherubic, faces smeared with chocolate, goggle down at us. The GIRL is 5, the BOY is 3...

INT. BIRDMAN AND PAUL'S HOUSE - DAY

They rent the bottom half of this decent-sized two-family.

Birdman is sprawled out on the couch. The two children stand over him... He wakes with a terrified YOWL --

The children chortle evil, little chortles. Their father,
MICHAEL "MO" MORRIS

29, walks around the small living room, picking up beer cans,
raising the blinds... Sun, reflected off all that snow, comes
sizzling through the windows.

Mo is big, doughy, pale. Dagwood Bumstead eyes and a
guileless Irish demeanor...

MO

Rise and shine, Birdman. Rise and shine-

BIRDMAN

What time is it?

MO

Eleven-thirty on a beautiful Sunday
morning. The storm has passed, the sun
is high in the sky --

BIRDMAN

Mo, your kids are so goddamn ugly, you
should need a permit just to take 'em
out in public --

Mo hands Birdman a MUG of coffee. Birdman winces as he
notices the "JODI" printed on the side of the mug.

MO

You're jealous.

The kids, SHANNON and MICHAEL JR. parade around the living
room, gnawing on oversized Sugar Daddys...

BIRDMAN

Look at 'em. They're like little
trolls. They belong under a bridge...

MO

Willie's coming in today --

BIRDMAN

What for?

MO

The reunion. I'm going to get him at
1:00. You wanna come.

BIRDMAN

I gotta work.

Paul comes down the stairs, still mossy with sleep... He sees Mo's kids. Screams...

PAUL
Why you gotta bring them ugly kids
around here, Mo? Damn --

BIRDMAN
It's like being really hung over and
getting a whiff of whiskey, isn't it?

PAUL
Yes. Yes, it is --

MO
Willie's coming in at 1:00 --

Paul nods. Gets coffee. He makes a face at Mo's kids...
They make faces back. Paul grimaces.

PAUL
(to Birdman)
You sand my lots -- ?

BIRDMAN
Yeah. You go by Jan's -- ?

PAUL
Of course --

The back door opens and Birdman's girlfriend, SHARON, enters,
carrying a bag of groceries. She is 26 and pretty, if too
skinny. She immediately sets to clucking over Mo's kids --

SHARON
Oh, golly! Look at you! Look at you
guys! You are soooo adorable --

Sharon gets a towel and wipes the goo off the kids' faces...
Mo shoots Paul and Birdman a gloating grin...

PAUL
Oh, please, Sharon. They're like the
poster children for the Pro Choice
movement --

Paul smears cream cheese on a bagel --

Sharon kisses Birdman, who has retreated to his couch, a
hockey game on the tube...

SHARON
Good night?

BIRDMAN

We did all right --

SHARON

I brought you some stuff. Sandwich
meat, cookies, juice...

BIRDMAN

Thanks. Maybe you'll eat some --

She glares at him. Goes to the kitchen to unpack the bundle.

MO

I'm gonna get Willie. Wanna go, Paul?

PAUL

Nah. I got shit to do --

Paul flops down on the other couch with his bagel...

MO

You guys are great friends --

SHARON

Willie's coming home?

MO

Yeah.

SHARON

Is he still seeing that girl?

MO

I dunno. Come on, kids. Let's go fetch
Uncle Willie at the train station --

The kids are smearing sticky fingers all over a stack of CDs.
Paul leaps to his feet, yanks the discs out of their hands...

PAUL

Mo - Jesus! These kids... The other
day, I go to play AFTER THE GOLDRUSH.
Neil Young. The perfect album.

(sings)

"Well I dreamed I saw the knights in
armor coming/Saying something about a
queen..."

(beat)

I take the disc, get ready to slide it
in - it's covered in nougat --

BIRDMAN

In what?

PAUL

Nougat. You know, THREE MUSKETEER bars?
Nougat. These fat kids, they suck down
nougat like it's nobody's business...

Paul, disc rescued, goes back to the couch...

BIRDMAN

Don't bring those fuckin' kids around
anymore --

SHARON

Tommy -- !

BIRDMAN

What?

SHARON

Watch your language --

BIRDMAN

I'm serious, Mo --

MO

Yeah, yeah --

SHARON

Tommy --

BIRDMAN

They give me nightmares --

Sharon shakes her head. Mo hustles his kids out the back.

MO

Don't get mad, Shar. These guys, deep
in their souls, they yearn for what I
got. They want kids so bad..it hurts
them... You have to be understanding --

Paul WHIPS HIS BAGEL at Mo's head. It misses and sticks to
the wall in cream cheese adhesion... Mo chuckles and leaves
the house...

SHARON

You guys are so vile --

PAUL

Big idiot should be neutered --

EXT. TRAIN STATION - DAY

Mo drives his Bronco towards the train platform, which is
empty, save for

WILLIE CONWAY, 28.

Long hair, long coat. Willie paces between his suitcases.

Mo gets out of the car, comes around. They hug. Mo tosses the bags in the trunk of the car. Willie gets in the front..

MO

You remember Shannon and Michael Jr.

WILLIE

Hi, kids! Wow, Mo, they're... cute.

MO

Good to be back?

WILLIE

I've been back exactly 11 minutes...

MO

You still seeing that chick?

WILLIE

That depends on what you mean by "seeing."

MO

You're not engaged?

WILLIE

No.

MO

It's been, what, 2 years?

WILLIE

Two and a half --

MO

She doesn't put any pressure on you?

WILLIE

That depends on what you mean by "pressure."

EXT. RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOOD - CONWAY HOUSE - DAY

Mo pulls up in front of the small ranch house. Snow banks everywhere give the neighborhood a surreal quality...

Willie takes his bags from the back...

WILLIE

Thanks for the ride, man --

MO

We'll check you out, soon. You'll come over for brunch. Lisa'll make waffles.

WILLIE

Absolutely --

Willie eyes his house, a little uneasy.

MO

Oh, that's nice...

Mo points. Willie looks next door. To where his neighbor, a 13-year-old GIRL, is making an anatomically-correct SNOWMAN.

MO (CONT.)

Those'd be true snow balls --

Willie nods and heads for the house. He and the girl exchange a look as he goes.

Mo climbs back into his car.

MO (CONT.)

Okay, kids. Who wants ice cream?

The kids squeal. And Mo drives off.

INT. CONWAY HOUSE - DAY

Willie enters, kicking the snow from his boots. The house is plain, drab, a woman's touch long absent. A baby grand PIANO is the living room's only flourish...

His father, PETE CONWAY, 62, carries the Sunday paper and the weight of the world...

PETE CONWAY

Hey --

WILLIE

Dad --

PETE CONWAY

When'd you get in?

WILLIE

Just now. Mo picked me up.

PETE CONWAY

The train? You took the train?

WILLIE

Yeah.

PETE CONWAY
Lot a bags. Staying long?

WILLIE
I dunno.

PETE CONWAY
There's some golf on. Would you like to
watch some golf?

WILLIE
Sure.

PETE CONWAY
Put your stuff away. Come down and
watch some golf --

Willie nods. His father stocking-feet-shuffles to the TV
room. Willie goes upstairs.

INT. WILLIE'S BEDROOM

A boy's room. Old, yellowing posters of The Who, The Boston
Red Sox, Larry Bird. A stack of record albums. A stack of
MAD magazines... Willie's bed seems very small...

A KNOCK on the opened door. Willie's brother, DOUGIE, 24, is
there, in underwear and t-shirt... Tall, gangly, thick blond
hair tufting out from under a dirty Boston Bruins cap...

DOUGIE
Yo, man. What up?

WILLIE
Hey, Doug.

DOUGIE
You just getting in?

WILLIE
Yeah. You just getting up?

DOUGIE
Yeah. Wild night. Got wrecked.

Dougie sees Willie's bags --

DOUGIE (CONT.)
You gonna be home long -- ?

WILLIE
I dunno. We'll see --

Dougie nods.

DOUGIE
See Dad?

WILLIE
Yeah, we're gonna watch some golf --

DOUGIE
You missed a helluva storm --

WILLIE
When did the Ryans move out?

DOUGIE
The Ryans? I dunno. Last year?

WILLIE
Who moved in?

DOUGIE
I dunno. It's kind of weird. When you're younger and new people move in to the neighborhood - you like gotta know everything about 'em, you know? Now, I don't even notice.

WILLIE
They got a kid --

DOUGIE
Do they? I don't know.

WILLIE
I think they do.

Dougie nods. Willie nods. Beat.

DOUGIE
I gotta take a shit --

He leaves. Willie lies back on his bed. Stares at the ceiling. Be it ever so humble...

EXT. CONWAY HOUSE - NIGHT

It's just starting to snow. Paul waits outside in his truck.

Willie comes out of the house, climbs into the truck, next to the dog --

PAUL
What's up, bad boy? You remember Elle MacPherson -- ?

WILLIE
Sure. How you doing, man -- ?

PAUL
Jan's banging some meat-cutter.

The truck drives off.

INT. PAUL'S TRUCK - MOVING - NIGHT

Paul slides a tape into the deck. AC/DC.

PAUL
We been having some troubles. Things
started to get crazy about a month ago.

WILLIE
I heard you got The Ultimatum --

PAUL
Yeah. Like fuck that, okay? What right
does she have to give me The Ultimatum?

WILLIE
You been going out seven years --

PAUL
So what? You gonna get into that with
me too? What does that matter - seven
years - what does it matter?

WILLIE
How old is Jan?

PAUL
Why even you gotta be like this?

WILLIE
How old is she?

PAUL
Thirty. She's thirty.

WILLIE
Thirty. Maybe she wants kids...

PAUL
Hey, fuck that, man. So what? I want
kids, too. But what's the rush? Kathie
Lee Gifford had a kid. And she was like
forty-five-fucking-years old --

WILLIE

What's the meat-cutter got to do with anything... ?

PAUL

He's this guy. Cuts meat. Comes into the coffee shop where Jan works. Every morning. She's mentioned him to me before. Just like in passing. He's a character that she tells me about. She tells me about the characters that come into the shop. There's Millie the manicurist. There's Jason the carpenter. And then there's Victor. Victor the meat-cutter...

WILLIE

So he's a character?

PAUL

Just a character she would mention. But I started to get a sense --

WILLIE

He was getting more air-time than Millie or Jason --

PAUL

Exactly. Exactly, you stud. You know.

WILLIE

Who is this guy?

PAUL

You wanna puke? Are you ready to puke? This guy's 40. Divorced. Has three kids of his own. Arrright?

WILLIE

Three kids. So there's no way she's getting any sperm from him --

PAUL

Exactly. But you know what really creases me? Jan's a vegetarian. How 'bout that? The hypocrisy. She's a vegetarian. He's a meat-cutter. You know what I'm saying?

WILLIE

Wow.

PAUL
What kind of life can she have with a
man who stinks of brisket?

CUT TO:

CHRISTY TURLINGTON

ON A MILAN RUNWAY. A PHOTO.

WIDER

she is surrounded by PHOTOS of her contemporaries - Cindy,
Elle, Naomi, Linda, Rachel, Helena, Claudia, Niki, Stephanie,
Kate, Cathy, Paulina, etc. For we are in

INT. PAUL'S ROOM

and the walls are literally covered with MAGAZINE CUT-OUTS
and GLOSSIES of the SUPERMODELS...

Paul cracks two beers. Hands one to Willie.

WILLIE
So are you broken up?

PAUL
We're taking some time. Her call...

WILLIE
What are you gonna do?

PAUL
I got a plan. What about you? You
still seeing that chick in New York?
The lawyer?

WILLIE
Tracy. Yeah.

PAUL
What's up with that?

WILLIE
She's amazing. But what's the next
move? She's definitely looking for
something more serious --

PAUL
They're all fuckin' sisters, man, I
swear --

WILLIE
I dunno --

PAUL
You piano playing?

WILLIE
A few lounge things. Nothing steady.
Birdie and Sharon doing okay?

PAUL
You kidding me? All he thinks about is
Darian Smalls.

WILLIE
Still?

PAUL
And Sharon knows it. Darian moved back
to Knight's Ridge. With husband and
child in tow --

WILLIE
Christ.

PAUL
Every time Sharon looks at Birdie's
face, and sees him thinking of Darian,
it's translated into another ugly pound
when she looks at herself in the mirror.
You see her? She looks like one of
those kids Sally Struthers feeds paste.

They sip their beers. The snow falls outside the window...

PAUL (CONT.)
We need models --

WILLIE
What do you mean?

PAUL
(points to wall)
Models. They're beautiful; they make
tons of money; they always travel so
you don't have to see 'em that much.
Those fuckers that date models have got
it wired, man. My next girlfriend's
gonna be a model...

Paul scarfs at his brew. Willie looks at the wall. From the
dunes of St. Tropez, Niki Taylor offers a sympathetic smile..

EXT. CONWAY HOUSE - DAY

Willie shovels the fresh snow off the driveway... He's
breathing heavy, making more of a mess than he is cleaning.

VOICE (O.S.)

Don't shovel much do you?

Willie looks up. It is the girl from next door. The 13-year-old who was making the snowman...

WILLIE

What makes you say that?

GIRL

Just a feeling. Your technique. It's sloppy. You either live in the city or in a warm climate --

WILLIE

The city --

GIRL

I knew it. You grow up here?

WILLIE

Uh-huh.

GIRL

Don't visit much?

WILLIE

Nope.

GIRL

Your mom dead?

WILLIE

Are you a cop?

GIRL

No.

WILLIE

Yes. My mother's dead.

GIRL

I knew it. Your dad's kind of a sad guy. Your brother's kind of missing that thing... That thing that having a mom gives you... That's a lonely house you got, you don't mind me sayin' --

She has gray-green, almond-shaped eyes. Brown hair cut into a page-bob. Long, thin limbs. Taller than her years. She's a true heartbreaker-in-training... She chomps on her gum...

WILLIE

What's your name?

GIRL
Marty --

WILLIE
As in Martha?

MARTY
I wish. As in Marty. Named for a
grandfather I never even knew. Martin.
So now I'm Marty. Just Marty. A girl
named Marty. It is, I think, the bane
of my existence...

WILLIE
How old are you?

MARTY
Thirteen. But I'm an old soul. You
don't come back here too much.

WILLIE
No. My tenth-year reunion is next
week-end --

MARTY
Heavy. What's your name?

WILLIE
Willie.

MARTY
Willie. I like your hair --

WILLIE
Thanks...

She nods. Big, exaggerated head-bob nods...

MARTY
You're kinda cool --

WILLIE
What do you mean?

MARTY
I dunno. It's just a call. You don't
think you are -- ?

WILLIE
No, I think I am.

MARTY
You are. I think. Maybe not. I gotta
go. See ya 'round --

And she bounds off into her house. Willie watches after her.

WILLIE

Yeah. See ya 'round --

INT. CHIP'S COFFEE SHOP - DAY

A greasy spoon two towns over. In the center island, JAN, 30 - a fryolator angel, lovely despite the hard years etched into her face - sticks an order slip onto the wheel and spins it into the COOK's field of vision...

Jan looks across the restaurant.

JAN

Shit --

PAUL

is working his way along the counter... sticking his nose into the CUSTOMERS' space...

PAUL

You Victor? Are you? Are you Victor?
Excuse me, are you Victor?

The customers shake their heads. He's worked his way down to where Jan stands, arms crossed...

JAN

What are you doing?

PAUL

I'm looking for Victor the meat-cutter.
I hit a cow with my plow and I was
hoping he could slice me up some steaks.
Seems like it'd be a shame to let an
entire cow just rot there on the side of-

JAN

You're not funny, Paul --

PAUL

I'm serious. I had you down for a flank -

JAN

And I don't appreciate you burying my
driveway every time it snows --

PAUL

Okay. That's fair.

JAN

What do you want -- ?

PAUL

I just -- needed to give you this --

He holds out a RING BOX...

JAN

What is that?

PAUL

It's a kumquat. Come on --

JAN

Paul --

PAUL

Can you at least open it?

Jan gnaws on a nail... She doesn't want near that box...

Paul turns to an ELDERLY COUPLE watching nearby...

PAUL

Do you believe this?

JAN

Paul --

He takes her hand, forces her fingers around the box...

JAN (CONT.)

I really don't think I should --

PAUL

This is glorious. Do I hear angels singing? Cherubs harmonizing? Cupid, astride his little love buggy, pulling back the bow -- ?

Jan snaps open the box. Inside is a RING. A little pimple of a diamond, but a diamond just the same... A BROWN diamond.

JAN

It's beautiful, Paul. It's lovely.
It's... brown -- ?

PAUL

Champagne. It's champagne. It's the newest thing. Champagne, not brown...

JAN

Champagne. It's beautiful...

She closes the box. Gives it back to him...

PAUL
What are you doing?

JAN
I can't take it...

PAUL
Why not?

JAN
I can't.

PAUL
Marry me, Jan.

JAN
No.

PAUL
No? Just like that? No?

JAN
No.

PAUL
Jan, Jesus.

JAN
You're so selfish.

PAUL
Selfish? I'll have you know what's
inside that box constitutes some 42
driveways. 42 driveways and maybe a
half-dozen sprinkler systems. Selfish?
I think not.

JAN
We're taking some time. You do this.
It screws everything up.

The shop's proprietor, 300-pound CHIP comes around to them...

CHIP
Paul, what are you doing?

PAUL
Chip, cut me some slack here --

CHIP
You're making a spectacle. Take it
outside... Jan? Outside...

EXT. CHIP'S

They huddle in the cold. Most of the counter-customers have turned around to watch them...

PAUL

I want you to have the ring --

JAN

I've got customers, Paul --

PAUL

Jan --

JAN

Paul --

PAUL

Take the fucking ring -- !

JAN

Oh, that's romantic --

PAUL

I'm sorry, but you've sucked the romance out of this entire thing --

JAN

This is the desperate act of a desperate man. Only when faced with losing me, do you decide you want to spend your life with me --

PAUL

What's wrong with that? I didn't like the alternative... That usually is how one comes to a decision...

JAN

Wrong again, Paul. One comes to a decision based on what one wants, not based on what one doesn't want. Got it? Now, I got customers. I'll see you --

She heads back inside. Leaving Paul with his ring box.

INT. BIRDMAN'S TRUCK - MOVING - DAY

Birdman drives, Willie is beside him...

BIRDMAN

You know Stinky Womack reopened The Johnson Inn?

WILLIE
He did? Why?

BIRDMAN
I dunno. Him and his brother. A couple
of months ago. You wanna go by?

WILLIE
Sure --

INT. THE JOHNSON INN - BAR - DAY

A long varnished bar with brass "mushroom" taps; moose and
deer trophy HEADS on the walls, displaying 12-point baskets.
A roaring fireplace big enough to barbecue a Buick. Cozy.

Willie and Birdman enter. And are immediately fronted by
STANLEY "STINKY" WOMACK, 29.

Stinky is slightly overweight and slightly crazed.

STINKY
What's up, Birdman? Who's that?
Conway? Hey, man! What's up?

WILLIE
Hey, Stinky --

STINKY
Christ. Hey.

Stinky embraces him... In an aside:

STINKY (CONT.)
You wanna lose that "Stinky" stuff,
Will. I'm a bit of a proprietor here --

WILLIE
Sorry, Stinky. What's up with this?

STINKY
Me and my brother re-opened this dump.
Me and my brother and the bank.

WILLIE
How much call is there for an Inn in The
Ridge -- ?

STINKY
We're not gonna run it as an inn... No
beds or nothin'. Just the bar... You
know... You got the fireplace... A small
bar menu. Apps...

WILLIE
"Apps?"

BIRDMAN
He's got all the jargon down --

STINKY
Appetizers. We got apps --

They walk to a rear table where Paul and Kev lush it up --

STINKY (CONT.)
Hey, we got a piano. Maybe you'll
tickle some ivory for us --

BIRDMAN
Maybe for some free apps he will --

Willie and Birdman sit down next to Paul and Kev. They are
quite drunk --

KEV
Willie! Welcome home, bud --

WILLIE
I got one. Been saving it up for months --

KEV
Kick it, junior --

WILLIE
Who was the only man in the majors to
ever pitch two consecutive no-hit games?

KEV
Come on. At least make me sweat.
Johnny Vander Meer. Cincinnati Reds...

WILLIE
When?

KEV
June 11 and June 15. 1938.

WILLIE
He's amazing --

BIRDMAN
Ask him the last time that got him laid.

KEV
Birdie gotta turn sugar into shit every
day of the week --

Paul is staring drunkenly into space...

BIRDMAN

(to Kev)

What's got him creased?

Kev points to the ring box on the table. Birdman picks it up. Opens it --

BIRDMAN (CONT.)

What is it?

KEV

It's a diamond.

BIRDMAN

It's fuckin' brown --

KEV

It's champagne. It's the newest thing -

BIRDMAN

What do you mean?

KEV

It's a trend, man. You're so uncultured. In diamonds. A trend? Champagne... That's a nice stone --

BIRDMAN

That's a brown stone --

He passes it to Willie...

WILLIE

I heard about this. It's big in the diamond trade. They been trying to sell these brown stones. Trying to create a market --

BIRDMAN

"Champagne." They were calling it "Piss" but they weren't moving any units.

WILLIE

Who'd he buy it for?

KEV

Jan.

WILLIE

I thought they broke up --

KEV

They did.

Birdman smacks Paul on the head --

BIRDMAN

What's with you?

PAUL

What?

BIRDMAN

How much you spend for that brown rock?

PAUL

I dunno. What difference does it make?

BIRDMAN

Diamonds are supposed to be colorless.
You got out and buy a colored diamond.
For a girl you're not even seeing? You
been eating retard sandwiches again -- ?

PAUL

I don't need your shit, Birdie.

BIRDMAN

I think you do --

PAUL

I think I don't --

BIRDMAN

I think you do --

PAUL

I think I don't --

WILLIE

(to Kev)

I bet this was exactly what it was like
when Roosevelt met Churchill for the
first time --

BIRDMAN

You're a schmuck --

PAUL

Look who's talking, man. Get off your
high-horse. You're a human GERALDO
episode, for Chrissakes --

BIRDMAN

What does that mean?

Guys -- WILLIE

PAUL
No. Fuck that. Mr. High-horse. You got one broad destroying her marriage and the other one destroying her digestive system... and you just... fuckin'... just ... watch hockey...

BIRDMAN
You wanna cool it, Klapman --

PAUL
What are you gonna do? What are you gonna do, tough guy? Beat me up after class? Dump my books? This ain't high school, meatball. The legend is dead.

KEV
Easy, Paul.. The legend can still fuck you up two times --

PAUL
Bullshit --

WILLIE
Paul --

PAUL
Butt out, Conway! Don't come waltzing back in here and give us your big city bullshit, arrright? Just butt out...

BIRDMAN
Fuckin' loser --

PAUL
Punk --

The four of them sit there, fuming --

Stinky comes over, wielding two trays of potato skins, buffalo wings, fried calamari...

STINKY
Free apps! I got free apps! Is everybody having fun?

KEV
Oh, fuck off, Stinky --

EXT. CONWAY HOUSE - DAY

It's just starting to snow... Marty is next door squashing snow piles with her boots... Willie comes out...

Hey -- WILLIE

Willie Boy... MARTY

It snows here. That's all it does -- WILLIE

Yep. MARTY

What are you doing? WILLIE

Chillin'... MARTY

No school? WILLIE

It's kind of Saturday -- MARTY

Oh, yeah -- WILLIE

She stomps on another snow pile...

I like to mash snow. It gives me a tremendous sense of self-satisfaction -- MARTY
You got a girlfriend?

Why do you ask? WILLIE

You're a dude in flux. If I'm not mistaken, you've come home, back here, to The House Of Loneliness and Tears - to Daddy Downer and Brother Bummer... To come to some sort of decision about life... A life decision, if you will... MARTY

You fancy yourself a perceptive little thing, don't you -- ? WILLIE

MARTY

I dunno about "little thing." I'm the tallest girl in my class... Rumor has it (a pediatrician talking to my mom - he didn't know I could hear him), I may just grow to be 5'10"...

WILLIE

Wow...

MARTY

I'll be hot. So? Am I right? A life decision? You got the full-on HAMLET thing going. You know Hamlet? Danish King? Couldn't make decisions?

WILLIE

I know Hamlet...

MARTY

About that girlfriend --

WILLIE

Yeah. There is one --

MARTY

She wants to get married --

WILLIE

Right --

MARTY

You don't --

WILLIE

Not sure --

MARTY

She fat?

WILLIE

No, -she's quite nice actually --

MARTY

So marry her --

WILLIE

What if I do - and something better comes along?

MARTY

Kind of a silly way to live life isn't it?

WILLIE

Is it?

MARTY

Hey, what do I know? I'm thirteen and suffering from like terminal precociousness? Right?

WILLIE

Yeah. You sort of are --

EXT. BIRDMAN/PAUL'S HOUSE - DAY

Early evening. The snow's just starting to accumulate...

INT. BIRDMAN'S BEDROOM

Birdman and Sharon under the covers... making love. Birdman looks to be a million miles away...

Sharon stops... Pushes him off her...

BIRDMAN

What -- ?

SHARON

It would be nice - if just once - we could have sex and you'd actually be thinking of me...

BIRDMAN

What are you talking about?

SHARON

Tommy, I can't do this anymore --

BIRDMAN

Do what?

SHARON

I thought you were gonna get it out of your system... I was willing to ride it out... But this is ridiculous...

BIRDMAN

Sharon...

SHARON

And you look like such a dweeb... Everyone says so --

BIRDMAN

Do they?

SHARON

She's never gonna leave him... Not for a gardener...

BIRDMAN

I'm not a fuckin' gardener...

SHARON

She's never gonna leave him...

BIRDMAN

I don't know what you're talking about -- I haven't seen her in months... Since we started back up again serious..

SHARON

Forget it, Tommy...

BIRDMAN

You want to end this?

SHARON

That'd be convenient, wouldn't it? Save you the guilt? I end it.

She gets up, covering herself with the top-sheet. She begins to dress...

SHARON (CONT.)

Here's the problem: I get asked out, Tommy. All the time. By really cool men. All my friends say I'm nuts... You guys - Paul, Kev - you can't meet new people. You dig ditches... You don't come into contact with new people. New, young people. I work in an office. With clients and customers. I like to go out with girlfriends... Go to bars... You guys like to sit at home... You are never-ever gonna meet someone new... And when you do - I hate to tell you this, Tom, - but there aren't that many girls out there looking for ditch-diggers whose idea of a perfect evening is ESPN and a twelve-pack of Bud cans.

BIRDMAN

Sharon --

SHARON

Maybe the 22-year-olds... But I think even you've outgrown them. So here's the problem: what do we do? What do we
(MORE)

SHARON (cont'd)

do, when the best days of your life were high school, when you were king of the hill, top cat hot shit... And Darian Smalls was your girlfriend then... So how do I compete? You want that back. You'll never get it - but still... How do I compete with a memory of a way of life that is totally and completely impossible for you to ever have again..?

Underwear on, she slides into her skirt...

BIRDMAN

You're so skinny, Shar --

SHARON

Fuck you! You have no right. My friends say I'm crazy - the guys who ask me out, they'll actually take me to restaurants. And care what they look like when they know they're gonna see me... And talk about the future. Make plans for trips and holidays... And the thing that kills me - the thing that absolutely pisses me off like mad, makes me want to scream and cry and move to another state... Is that I love the ESPN and the twelve-packs. I love the ditch-digger. And I've got news for you, Birdman, I can do a hell of a lot better. A hell of a lot. The thing is - God help me - I don't want to...

She fixes him with a final wounded look. And then she's gone.

Birdman yanks the covers over his head. Hiding out...

EXT. CONWAY HOUSE - NIGHT

Birdman and Kev plow the Conway driveway... Kev does the walk... It's still snowing.

Willie comes out of his house...

WILLIE

Who was the first college basketball player to score more than 2,000 points in two seasons -- ?

KEV

Yawn. Pistol Pete Maravich. LSU. '67-'68 and '68-'69.

Kev walks to the cab with Willie for a hit of Schnappes...

WILLIE

So this is Saturday night in The Ridge?

BIRDMAN

Not exactly Manhattan is it?

WILLIE

Not exactly...

Kev passes the bottle to Willie. Willie takes a slug...

KEV

Come on, man -- It's better than any old
Manhattan... Kick it, Birdie -

And Birdman slips a TAPE into the cassette deck. Lenny
Kravitz' "Mr. Cab Driver" CRANKS from the truck's primo
stereo system...

Kev uses his shovel to air guitar the bass line... He dances
across the driveway...

Bird provides the light show with the truck's high/low beams.

Kev rips it up... Boogeying down...

Marty comes out from next door... To Willie:

MARTY

What's going on -- ?

KEV

Par-tay -- !!!

NEIGHBORS' faces appear at their windows...

Kev grabs Willie and Marty... Forces them to dance...

KEV (CONT.)

Come on, kids! Rock and roll!

Marty shrugs and begins an awkward two-step. Willie,
embarrassed, dances along with her... It's strange - but they
are almost shy with each other...

Pete Conway stands at his front door... Scowling...

HOLD THIS TABLEAU: the snow falling, the landscape creamy
white, Lenny wailing, Birdie's lights flashing, the neighbors
gawking, Willie, Kev and Marty dancing on...

EXT. JAN'S DUPLEX - LATER - NIGHT

Paul and Elle MacPherson are parked in his truck in front of Jan's... He puts out his cigarette and lowers the plow --

-- once again making the apartment's driveway impassable.

EXT. MO'S HOUSE - DAY

A good-sized split-level. Shannon and Michael Jr. chase a neighbor's DOG around the snow...

INT. MO'S HOUSE - DINING ROOM

Mo's wife, LISA, 26, clears away the dishes. Lisa is short, stout, birthing those two rotund creatures took its toll. She tends to be a bit condescending toward Mo's friends...

Willie and Mo sip their coffee at the table.

LISA

... so have you been working much,
Willie?

WILLIE

No. A few nights. I'm actually toying
with the idea of becoming a citizen --

LISA

What do you mean?

WILLIE

I got offered this sales job. Office
equipment. Pretty good base salary,
plus commission... I dunno... They want
an answer by the 1st...

LISA

That sounds great --

She goes off into the kitchen... Mo stares at Willie...

WILLIE

What?

MO

Are you serious?

WILLIE

Yeah --

MO

That's bogus, man --

WILLIE
Why?

MO
You get a sales job, you ain't gonna be able to play the piano --

WILLIE
It's not happening... It's just not. I'm gonna be 30 years old. I gotta start thinking about the future --

MO
You'd be the worst goddamn salesman of all time... I deal with salesmen every day, buddy boy - you are no salesman...

WILLIE
Thanks for the vote of confidence...

MO
Office equipment? What the hell do you know about office equipment?

WILLIE
What the hell do you know about kids? But you're raising two of 'em just fine-

As if on cue: Shannon comes SCREAMING into the house... Michael Jr. is chasing after her, swinging a DEAD CAT at his terrified older sister...

Willie and Mo share a look. Mo calls into the kitchen:

MO
L-Lisa -- ?

EXT. MO'S HOUSE - LATER - DAY

Mo walks Willie out... Mo carries a lumpy garbage bag - he deposits it in the trash...

WILLIE
By and large though, you're happy?

MO
Yeah, man. I was never like you guys anyways. Lisa is the third girl I ever had sex with. And the first two were at bachelor parties and cost me a hundred bucks each --

WILLIE
Can I ask you something?

MO

You wanna know if you masturbate after
you're married --

WILLIE

How'd you know?

MO

Everybody asks. It's the first question
everybody asks --

WILLIE

It's important. Do you?

MO

I'm not gonna answer --

WILLIE

So you do --

MO

A good sixty to seventy percent more
than when you're single --

WILLIE

That's utterly depressing --

MO

Tell me about it --

EXT. GINA'S HAIR - CENTER OF TOWN - DAY

Willie and Birdman stand outside, as GINA BARRISANO, 30, a
heavy-set Italian girl, locks the door of her beauty salon.
Willie holds her dry cleaning; Birdman her groceries...

Gina is on fire. Gina is always on fire. She speaks in
rapid, staccato bursts...

GINA

... Enough, enough... I don't want to
hear it anymore... You guys... Jesus...
You want to know what your problem is?
I'll tell you - MTV, PLAYBOY,
Madison-fucking-Avenue... Lemme explain
something: girls with big tits have big
asses. Girls with small asses have
small tits... You guys are force-fed
every day a barrage of skinny little
chicks with mambo tits that point to the
moon. I got news for you: they don't
exist in real life. They don't. God
doesn't fuck around. He's a fair guy.

(MORE)

GINA (cont'd)
 He gave the fatties, big, giant boobs,
 and the skinnys, droopy little niddlers.
 That's the way it is. C'mere --

She leads them into a corner DRUGSTORE...

INT. DRUGSTORE

Gina goes to the magazine rack. She nods to the CLERK.

GINA (CONT.)
 Hey, Mitch --

She grabs a PENTHOUSE, tears the shrink-wrap off the mag...
 Opens it to the centerfold...

GINA
 See? Lookit that? That doesn't exist!
 When do you ever see that in reality?
 Look at that hair - long, gorgeous, it's
 like a river. It's a fuckin' weave!
 And those tits. I could hang my
 overcoat on them. Tits, by design, were
 invented to be suckled by babes...
 They're purely functional... These --
 (slaps magazine)
 These are decorative... Look at the
 stomach - you could skate on it. The
 Line - she's got The Line going down
 from the cleavage to the naval. Normal
 girls don't got no line. Only the
 anorexic and the air-brushed got The
 Line. Sharon's got The Line, right
 Bird? And it's killing her...

BIRDMAN
 Well --

GINA
 Chicks with tits like this never have
 The Line. They're all fake. They're
 all love dolls. You can practically see
 the seams... Ah, shaved pubis. Of
 course. Pubic hair being so unruly...
 Very key. Look at her legs... They
 start at her neck. Hard and skinny and
 taut. They're like crutches... This is
 a fakery... A sham... This is a breed
 that doesn't exist. They're robots.
 Implants and collagen and plastic and
 capped teeth - all the fat sucked out,
 nose fixed, hair extended, bush shaved.
 (MORE)

GINA (cont'd)

They're not women. They're aliens. They're Beauty Freaks. And they make all the rest of us - with our wrinkles and our puckered boobs and our cellulite - feel somehow inadequate... And that is all bad...

WILLIE

Gina, the--

GINA

But you fuckin' mooks, as long as you think there's a shot, a prayer, a hope in hell (which there isn't, there isn't at all), of you hookin' up with one of these Beauty Freaks, you won't give any of us Real Women anything approaching a commitment... You'll just hang out looking for the next best thing, knowing that when you're 80 years old and can't make it to the toilet and drool all over yourself, you can still marry a cheerleader and start having kids --

WILLIE

I think you're oversimplifying --

GINA

Bullshit. Lookit Paul. With his models on the wall and his dog named Elle Macpherson. How can Jan take him seriously? He's obsessed. You're all obsessed. If any of you had an ounce of self-esteem, self-worth, self-confidence - you'd realize - as stupid as it sounds - beauty is truly skin-deep and you would, if you ever hooked one, get tired of these girls --

She hands Birdman the magazine...

BIRDMAN

Yeah - I'd get tired of her - after about twenty or thirty years...

GINA

Get over yourself:
(to Clerk)
Thanks, Mitch --

She storms out of the drugstore. The guys follow --

EXT. DRUGSTORE

GINA (CONT.)

No matter how lovely the nipple, how lovely the thigh, unless there's some other shit going on in the relationship, besides the physical, it'll get old. You guys, as a gender, have got to get a grip... Otherwise, the future of the race is in doubt...

She grabs her dry-cleaning from Willie, her groceries from Birdman, and stomps on up the street... Leaving them stunned.

WILLIE

Who was that girl?

BIRDMAN

I dunno. Nice ass, though --

WILLIE

Yeah. Great tits --

EXT. RESIDENTIAL ROAD - DAY

Willie drives his father's BUICK. He sees Marty, walking home from school. He pulls over.

WILLIE

Get in --

MARTY

I'm not supposed to accept rides from stranglers...

WILLIE

That's "strangers."

MARTY

Oh. Then I guess it's okay.--

She hops in. He drives...

MARTY (CONT.)

Cool car. Were the Perry Como tapes optional?

WILLIE

Are you an only child?

MARTY

Why do you ask? Cos I got the full-on screaming-for-attention-wise-ass urchin thing going?

WILLIE

Exactly --

MARTY

I got an older brother. He's a squid. He goes to this boarding school upstate, to even further enrich/improve his squid state...

WILLIE

What do you want to be when you grow up?

MARTY

Easy, cowboy. I'm just starting to grasp the fundamental principles of "Spin The Bottle" and you want to know what I'm going to be when I grow up?

She frowns. Willie blinks...

WILLIE

Oh. Right.

EXT. CHIP'S COFFEE SHOP - NIGHT

Jan comes out of the shop, coat thrown over her waitress uniform. She smokes a cigarette...

A MAN walks up to her. He's a big man, 40s, with a moustache. He wears butcher's whites... VICTOR.

They kiss lightly... Victor says something... Jan laughs...

We are watching all this from ACROSS THE STREET... From Paul's truck...

Jan and Victor cross to a corner tavern - THE MOONLIGHT MILE.

Paul lights a Winston off the butt of his old one... Elle MacPherson whimpers in the passenger seat...

INT. THE JOHNSON INN - NIGHT

The bar is fairly crowded. Stinky works the room...

Willie, Paul, Birdman, and Mo drink at their table...

MO

You guys psyched for the reunion, or what?

BIRDMAN

Only you would be psyched for that, Mo. The reunion.

MO
It's gonna be excellent --

BIRDMAN
Anybody worth seeing is long gone from here. Otherwise it'll be like any other Saturday night in The Ridge - except Paul and Kev'll be wearin' ties... I can't believe you came up for it, Conway

WILLIE
Maybe, Birdie, you're just creased cos you were a very big man in high school and now you're not quite so substantial.

BIRDMAN
Blow me --

PAUL
Holy shit --

They follow his gaze -- to where a WOMAN, mid-20s, has entered the bar... She is stunning - long, thick, black hair, dark skin, Mediterranean features. She wears a short fur coat, jeans, cowboy boots... Stinky gives her a big hug...

WILLIE
What is that?

PAUL
That is all good --

BIRDMAN
Damn --

WILLIE
(to Birdman)
We should call Gina - tell her they really do exist --

Stinky walks by them --

BIRDMAN
Stink! C'mere --

STINKY
What?

BIRDMAN
Who's the vixen?

STINKY
You like that?

BIRDMAN
Who is it?

STINKY
My cousin. She's visiting from Chicago -

WILLIE
No way is that your cousin...

PAUL
No way does she share your mongrel blood -

STINKY
Yes she does. And not only is she hot -
she's completely cool...

PAUL
She have a boyfriend -- ?

STINKY
No, she stays in on Saturday nights and
watches Chuck Norris videos --

PAUL
Me, too! At long last love I have found
you --

STINKY
She's got plenty of boyfriends --

PAUL
She is, I think, the future ex-Mrs.
Klapman --

BIRDMAN
Why'n't you bring her over - introduce
her to the boys --

WILLIE
I just want to bathe in her light --

PAUL
I wanna rejoice in her amber glow --

BIRDMAN
Hook us, Stinky --

STINKY
Sure, sure... Wait a sec --

He goes to fetch her...

MO
She's not that nice --

PAUL
So speaks the court eunuch --

Stinky leads her over... Up close, she's even more extraordinary... Blue eyes amid all that black hair... Big lips... A great smile that drives all the old men crazy...

STINKY
Andera, this is Willie, Paul, Mo and Birdman. Guys, this is Andera --

ANDERA
Hello --

The fellas mumble hellos to ANDERA --

BIRDMAN
You want to sit?

ANDERA
Sure --

She takes a seat by Mo... Stinky leaves to yell at a WAITRESS. The guys sit there, staring at Andera. Beat.

PAUL
So, you're from Chicago --

ANDERA
Yeah.

PAUL
What part?

ANDERA
Do you know Chicago -- ?

PAUL
A little. I know Soldier's Field --

ANDERA
Right --

WILLIE
(to Mo)
After Wrigley and Comiskey he's dead in the water --

BIRDMAN
What do you do?

ANDERA
I'm in advertising. What do you guys do?

BIRDMAN

Paul and I own our own businesses.
Landscape/Construction. Mo is a plant
manager - textiles. Willie here is a
musician --

ANDERA

What do you play?

WILLIE

The piano --

ANDERA

Awesome. Will you play something -- ?

WILLIE

Nah --

ANDERA

Come on --

MO

Yeah, come on, Will... Play something --

WILLIE

Oh, okay --

Willie goes to the piano... Mo and Andera follow him over...

Paul smacks Birdman...

PAUL

What'd you have to go and tell her he
was a piano player for, man... ? How
can we compete with that?

BIRDMAN

You can always show her how you spread
mulch - that's awfully sexy --

WILLIE

sits at the piano... He begins to play... He starts with
Chopin's "Funeral March" but after the first somber 8 bars he
suddenly segues into a lilting "Somewhere" from WEST SIDE
STORY, in the major key...

Head thrust forward, face lowered, Willie looks like he's
attempting an intimate communication with the piano - at
least during the softer passages...

Andera looks on, admiring. Mo, too. Birdman looks bored.

Paul looks suicidal.

INT. KELLY'S MOBIL STATION - DAY

A gas station near the center of town... Kev works here... Willie sits listening to Kev, who plays with a YARDSTICK, lecturing a trio of grease-smeared high school DROPOUTS...

KEV

My point is, just like our parents can all remember exactly where they were on November 22, 1963 - the day Kennedy was shot - our generation... Guys of our generation can all remember exactly where they were on November 18, 1985.

MECHANIC

When -- ?

KEV

November 18, 1985. Redskins-Giants. The night Lawrence Taylor shattered Joe Theismann's tibia!

KID

No way, man --

KEV

You think I'm bullshittin' ya? Willie, where were you -- ?

WILLIE

My dorm room. It was a Monday night. Studying for a Psych final with Erica Kline... I was so upset I couldn't even make a pass at her... And I'd liked her since freshman year --

KEV

Thank-you...

He sees something out the window --

KEV

Check it out... Dragon Lady...

Willie can see DARIAN SMALLS pumping gas...

KEV (CONT.)

I was in a bar. With Ducky Lowe and Frank Flannigan. I was eating a chicken parm sandwich and drinking a Bass ale... LT was screaming; I was screaming; the whole damn nation was screaming...

WILLIE
I'll see you guys later --

He goes outside --

KEV
I personally walked with a limp for two
weeks after --

Kev snaps the yardstick in two, approximating Theismann's
leg...

EXT. KELLY'S MOBIL

Darian finishes filling up her Jeep Cherokee... Her daughter,
Jodi, in tow --

WILLIE
Darian -- ?

DARIAN
Willie! Wow! I heard you were back --

She kisses his cheek --

DARIAN (CONT.)
How are you?

WILLIE
Good. You? You look excellent.

DARIAN
Please.

WILLIE
Who's this?

DARIAN
Jodi. Jodi, say hi to Willie --

Jodi hugs her mother's leg --

WILLIE
Cute kid --

DARIAN
Thanks. So what are you back for?

WILLIE
Ah. I dunno. Hang out. Go to the
tenth. Whatever...

DARIAN
You're still in New York?

WILLIE

Yeah.

Jodi is tugging at Darian's belt... whining...

DARIAN (CONT.)

Wait a minute, honey --

Willie smiles at the adorable little girl...

WILLIE

She is something. You gonna have more?

DARIAN

I dunno. Somedays I really want to.
Somedays I don't. It's like being
married. Somedays you want to be,
somedays you don't --

WILLIE

Gotcha -

DARIAN

We should have lunch --

WILLIE

That'd be cool --

DARIAN

I see Tommy every now and then... I go
by there... But I think it makes -
what's-her-name - Sharon Cassidy - I
think it makes her nervous...

Willie nods... Beat...

WILLIE

I'll call you --

DARIAN

Okay. You look good. I like your
hair --

WILLIE

I'll see you. Bye, Jodi --

Jodi buries her face in Darian's crotch --

Willie leaves the station. Darian looks after him --

INT. CONWAY HOUSE - WILLIE'S BEDROOM - DAY

From his bedroom window, Willie sees Marty talking to a BOY
about her age. The boy is on a bicycle, despite the snow...

They shake hands and the boy peddles off...

EXT. CONWAY HOUSE

Willie comes outside... Marty, on her way in, sees him...
Walks over...

What's up? WILLIE

Nuthin'. MARTY

Who's the guy? WILLIE

Andrew Urlitz. He's in my class... MARTY

He your boyfriend? WILLIE

I dunno. I guess... He's okay... MARTY

Seems a little short -- WILLIE

He's twelve-years-old, Willie -- MARTY

Right. WILLIE

Beat. Willie nods. Whistles.

You okay? MARTY

Yeah. Why? WILLIE

You seem a little flavored today -- MARTY

I'm cool -- WILLIE

Cool. MARTY

What do you - uh - what do you do on weekends? You know, kids your age -- WILLIE

MARTY

What we've been doing lately is smoking massive amounts of drugs, binging on Entenmann's, and listening to old Pink Floyd CDs...

WILLIE

Really -- ?

Marty laughs...

MARTY

You are flavored today.

WILLIE

You're kidding --

MARTY

The Entenman's part was true --

Beat.

WILLIE

So you like this guy Andrew --

MARTY

He's okay. He's into male contraception, which is nice for a change --

(off Willie's look)

Joking. You gotta chill, Will --

WILLIE

Yeah --

MARTY

Arrright. Wrap it up. I'm history. Have a good weekend --

WILLIE

You too --

He watches her walk back to her house...

WILLIE (CONT.)

Yo, Marty -- ?

She turns back...

WILLIE

I'll see ya --

She flashes him the "peace" sign. And she's gone...

Willie examines his moist palms. He sighs. To himself:

WILLIE (CONT.)

You do gotta chill, Will --

INT. BIRDMAN/PAUL'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM

Mo plays Nintendo with Kev. Willie is on the phone.

WILLIE

... it's just a small party... I don't know how she's getting him there... Under what pretense... No. I hate them... You ever throw me a surprise party, no jury in the nation will acquit for what I do to you... We're talking razor blades, we're talking lye, we're talking garbage disposal... Okay. Call me tomorrow... Bye -- !

He hangs up...

MO

Was that Tracy?

WILLIE

Yeah --

KEV

She hot -- ?

WILLIE

She's nice.

They turn from their Nintendo... joysticks idle...

KEV

Ascribe a numerical value... Face, body, personality --

WILLIE

I'm not doing that --

KEV

Do it.

MO

Don't be Vile Guy, Kev --

KEV

Grow up, Mo. Do it...

MO

You don't have to do it -

Ohh, I dunno. WILLIE
Face --

MO
Wait! You gotta give us a frame of
reference... A standard --

KEV
I thought I was being Vile Guy --

MO
You gonna do it, you gotta do it proper.

WILLIE
What do you--

MO
Kelly Noonan --

WILLIE
Kelly Noonan? Uh, face - 6, body - 7
1/2, personality - 4...

KEV
I can go there --

MO
Darcy Cole...

WILLIE
Face - 8, body - 9, personality - 6.

KEV
Yes, sir! Jennifer Collins --

WILLIE
Face - 1, body - 2, personality - 3.

MO
Okay, I got it now. So what's Tracy?

KEV
Wait... Lorna Longley -- !

WILLIE
Who -- ?

MO
Porn star...

WILLIE
I don't know her --

KEV

Yeah, you do... A FISTFUL OF VIXENS?
 She has all of her orifices
 simultaneously penetrated by those
 circus midgets...

WILLIE

That's her name? She's good --

KEV

Very talented girl --

WILLIE

Uh... face - 7, body - 9.5,
 personality - the sky's the limit --

KEV

The midgets seemed to get a kick out of
 her --

MO

Now, Tracy --

WILLIE

Okay. Tracy. Uh. Face - a good, solid
 7 1/2, body - a good, solid... 7 1/2,
 personality - a good, solid... 7 1/2...

MO

Sounds excellent --

KEV

All good --

(to Mo; re: Nintendo)

C'mon, you jumped a level --

And they go back to their game... Leaving Willie to reflect,
 somewhat morosely, on his good, solid 7 1/2...

INT. V.F.W. HALL - LATER - NIGHT

Birdman and Sharon walk into the darkened hall... The lights
 FLICK ON and

ALL

SURPRISE -- !

Perhaps 30 PEOPLE are here: Birdman's FAMILY, Sharon's
 FAMILY, Stinky and Andera, Gina Barrisano, etc.... Willie,
 Kev, Paul, Mo...

There's a bar, a few banquet tables, a stereo set-up...

Birdman looks suitably shocked. Sharon kisses him... The

crowd descends...

Paul heads for the stereo...

PAUL

I'm the DJ --

GINA

(to Willie)

Oh, great. Jethro Tull Weekend
begins --

INT. V.F.W. HALL - LATER

Tull's "Locomotive Breath" cranks on the stereo...

The party is in full force. Cake and coffee have been
served, but the bar is getting most of the action...

We SWIRL THE ROOM... picking up snatches of talk:

- Kev is with Birdman's drunken UNCLES:

KEV

Chamberlain was with the Philadelphia
Warriors when he scored 100 points in
one game... March 2, 1962. Against the
Knicks...

- Mo shows PICTURES of his children to an ELDERLY WOMAN.
The woman blanches like she's snorted sewage...

- Paul chats up Andera...

PAUL

Did your cousin happen to mention the
work I do with the orphans... ?

- Birdman and Sharon:

SHARON

Having fun?

BIRDMAN

It's great, baby. Really. Thanks.

He kisses her. He looks up and winces. For there, at the
door to the hall, is

DARIAN SMALLS

looking lovely and carrying a small wrapped PRESENT.

SHARON
What the hell --

Darian walks, a little unsteadily, towards Birdman and Sharon...

Paul shakes his head. To Kev:

PAUL
It's all bad --

KEV
It was all good, now it's all bad --

Darian is before Birdman. Sharon walks off, in a huff --

BIRDMAN
Shar -- !

But she's gone. Sharon's MOTHER and a few of the other GIRLS follow after her... The party has come to a stand-still... And, as luck would have it, the Tull tune ends - plunging the room into a heavy silence...

BIRDMAN (CONT.)
Darian, what are --

DARIAN
I wanted to give you this... For your birthday... I wanted to give you this birthday present...

She giggles... She's bombed... Paul signals to Stinky, who's near the stereo, to play another tune...

Stinky fumbles with the CD player - Van Halen's "Dance The Night Away" cranks high and hard...

Willie drags Gina onto the dance floor, trying to inject a bit of levity...

Paul catches on and yanks Andera onto the floor... Kev grabs another GIRL... Mo hauls the ELDERLY WOMAN...

The party recovers. Soon, everyone is dancing... Everyone is ignoring --

BIRDMAN & DARIAN

who talk on, quietly, in the corner... Sharon momentarily forgotten...

INT. V.F.W. HALL - LATER - NIGHT

Everyone is gone. A CUSTODIAN is folding up the tables.

Willie and Mo sit on the floor by the bar... A bottle of scotch between them... Mostly drained... They're blitzed... Willie more so than Mo...

Stinky comes out of the men's room...

STINKY

I'm gonna give Paul and my cousin rides home - you guys set?

MO

We're cool...

STINKY

Crazy thing, huh? Birdman taking off with Darian...

MO

He just gave her a ride home... She was wasted... He came back...

STINKY

Yeah. Too bad Sharon wasn't still here to see it...

Nothing from the guys. Stinky shrugs and leaves the hall...

Mo staggers to his feet. He futzes with the stereo. Soon, Skynyrd's "Tuesday's Gone" laments from the speakers...

Mo slides back down to sit by Willie. Willie takes another pull off the Glenlivet...

WILLIE

... all I'm sayin' is you have this amazing... thing. This person with all that potential, all that future... This girl is going to be amazing... She's smart, she's funny, she's hot --

MO

She's thirteen --

WILLIE

I know. This is not a sexual thing, Mo. Get over that. This is... I could wait.

MO

What?

WILLIE

I could wait. Ten years. She's 23.
I'm -- 38... No big deal...

MO

You're insane...

WILLIE

No. Hear me out... Did it... Has it
ever occurred to you, that the right
pers-- Do you believe there's one right
person for everyone?

MO

Yeah. Sure.

WILLIE

Lisa's your right person, right? Your
soulmate? The one for you --

MO

Yeah --

WILLIE

Did it ever occur to you, has it ever
occurred to you, that sometimes things
get screwed up? That sometimes the
right person for you may be born at the
wrong time... You ever think of that?
That there exists the right one, but for
the minor inconvenience of being born at
different times in, in, in... time...

MO

So what, like my perfect mate is
wandering around back in the days of
Columbus -- ?

WILLIE

Maybe. Or maybe just a few years.

MO

Willie --

WILLIE

There's so much ahead of her... It's all
so... new. Fresh and new... And vivid..

MO

Willie, this is like the pedophile
mantra... This is what they all say:
innocence, unsullied, fresh and new, all
that shit... You're scaring me here --

WILLIE

This is platonic. This is purely platonic. This girl, though, is gonna be amazing... A thing to behold... And beautiful... She's wise way beyond her years... Very cool girl... I was actually jealous of this kid on the bike. This short kid on the bike. Cos he gets to be her age... Right now. And I get to feel like some vile, old man. I get to feel like, what's his name... ?

MO

Roman Polanski -- ?

WILLIE

Noooo. Nabakov. Like some Nabakov character... Some vile, old, hairy, fat, stinky, putrid man... You just want to say to her, in all sincerity: take me with you when you go --

MO

The girl was a zygote when you were in seventh grade --

WILLIE

What? So you think this is like my way of putting it off... the inevitable... ? You think this is my way of saying I don't want to grow old... ?

MO

I think this is your way of saying you don't want to grow up...

Beat. Willie takes a pull off the bottle... He is weeping now...

WILLIE

I dunno. I used to be a happy guy --

MO

Happiness is overrated...

Willie pauses... Looks at Mo --

WILLIE

I just want something beautiful, man...

MO

We all want something beautiful, Willie.

EXT. SHARON'S HOUSE - LATER - NIGHT

The front door OPENS - to Sharon's MOTHER, in her robe...

Birdman stands in the cold...

SHARON'S MOTHER

She's sleeping, Tom --

BIRDMAN

Can I see her?

SHARON'S MOTHER

She's sleeping...

Beat. Birdman nods.

BIRDMAN

Tell her I was by --

SHARON'S MOTHER

You should know: a lot of planning when
into tonight. Planning, money. And you
drive off with another girl...

BIRDMAN

I gave her a ride. She was drunk...

SHARON'S MOTHER

You do what you have to do, I guess,
Tommy. That's what you do --

Birdman nods and walks to his truck. She calls after him:

SHARON'S MOTHER

Tommy --

He turns back --

SHARON'S MOTHER (CONT.)

Happy birthday --

INT. CONWAY HOUSE - DAY

Morning. Pete Conway comes down the stairs.

He stops short.

Willie is snoring in the foyer, in a fetal position, still wearing his overcoat.

Pete steps over him. Gets the newspaper from the doorway. Heads into the kitchen for coffee...

EXT. MAC'S POND - DAY

The level white plain of the frozen lake is crowded with SKATERS - the riot of brightly-colored winter clothes in stark contrast to the bare trees and black underbrush along the shore, and the high, blue vault of sky overhead.

Willie, in full hangover, follows Mo and his two kids onto the ice - Willie is the only one not wearing skates...

MO

Those guys are over there --

Mo points to a small FRAME SHACK in the middle of the lake. Willie makes his way over...

INT. FRAME SHACK

like an outhouse on runners, covered with wallboard. Paul, Kev and a third GUY - tall, skinny, Ichabod Crane-ugly, sit on beach chairs, around a HOLE in the ice, a foot wide in diameter.

A CROSS-BEAM along the inside of the shack has a series of LINES dangling into the hole. Each line has a red flannel FLAG attached to it that will fly up when a fish takes bait.

The boys are ice-fishing.

A cooler of BEER, a bottle of Schnappes, a minnow bucket full of shiners and they're styling...

KEV

Willie! What up, bro -- ?

WILLIE

Hey, guys --

KEV

Willie, you remember The Sugared One?
From high school --

WILLIE

Sure. Hey, man --

The skinny kid - THE SUGARED ONE - nods hello, sniggering giddily into his brew... Willie notices that Paul and Kev are wearing the same clothes they wore last night --

WILLIE

You guys never went home last night -- ?

KEV

Came right here. The pike is runnin' so they tell us --

WILLIE

Catch anything?

KEV

A coooool buzz --

WILLIE

(to Paul)

Any play with Andera -- ?

PAUL

Nah. She did agree to go out with me, though --

WILLIE

Like a date -- ?

PAUL

We didn't get into specifics.

The Sugared One giggles, a ribbon of snot trailing from his nose... Paul gets unsteadily to his feet --

PAUL (CONT.)

C'mere, I want to show you something --

EXT. FRAME SHACK / MAC'S POND

They emerge, Paul squinting at the sunlight...

Paul walks across the lake, Willie follows...

WILLIE

What's up with The Sugared One?

PAUL

He's out of his tits. It happens when you don't leave town after high school. It'll get all of us. You were lucky. Oh, God --

Willie looks: Mo and his fat kids are daisy-chaining by, all grins and giggles...

MO

Wheeeeeeeeeee -- !

Willie and Paul watch them skate away...

PAUL

Fuckin' Mo's got it wired, man. He's like a retarded person. He doesn't know any better. He doesn't desire new experiences, new women, nothing. He's like the mental patient who doesn't know he's mental, so he's perfectly content..

(beat)

Here you go --

They approach a handsome MAN, 30, teaching a little girl to side-stop... We recognize the girl - it is Jodi, Darian's daughter... So the man must be Darian's husband,

STEVE ROSSMORE

And it is. Steve waves to Paul --

PAUL

What's up, Stevie -- ?

STEVEN

How are you, Paul -- ?

PAUL

Cool, man. Hi, Jodi! Stevie, this is Willie Conway - buddy from high school. Willie, Steve Rossmore, Darian's hub --

WILLIE

Nice to meet you --

STEVEN

Likewise --

PAUL

How you like life in The Ridge?

STEVEN

It's cool. It's mellow. I've been working a lot --

PAUL

Guy has a choice - could live anywhere he wants - chooses The Ridge! Believe that?

WILLIE

Must be a masochist --

Steve laughs...

STEVEN

The wife wanted to come home, what can you do?

PAUL

Oh, a wife thing? We can't go there, Stevie --

Paul slaps him on the back...

PAUL

Take care, buddy... Say hello to Darian... 'Bye, Jodi!

WILLIE

Good to meet you --

Willie and Paul walk back toward the shack...

PAUL

Believe that shit?

WILLIE

He has no idea?

PAUL

He's a blind Yuppie. Hell of a guy. But he's a blind-assed Yuppie. Too busy working on his bonus to notice his wife takin' her love to town --

But Willie isn't listening. Willie has seen

MARTY

across the ice, skating with a group of KIDS her age --

WILLIE

I'll meet you back at the shack, man --

He walks over to where Marty skates... Natch, she's graceful, her movements sublime... When she sees him, she's genuinely pleased... She skates over... Side-stops inches from him...

MARTY

What the heck are you doing here?

WILLIE

My friends are ice-fishing in that shack.

MARTY

Those guys are your friends?

WILLIE
You know 'em -- ?

MARTY
They're here every Sunday. We call 'em
The Drunken Outhouse Boys... And they're
your friends -- ?

WILLIE
Acquaintances, really --

MARTY
Yeah, right --

WILLIE
So where's Scooter?

MARTY
Who?

WILLIE
What's his name? Billy? Tiger?
Pookie? The little dwarf on the bike?

MARTY
Andrew.

WILLIE
Andrew! Where is he?

MARTY
He dorked out on me. I'm not into him
anymore --

WILLIE
No kidding?

MARTY
Nah. He's a turnip.

WILLIE
You got someone new?

She skates a crossover. Tries a little waltz jump... She's
good... She smiles...

MARTY
Yeah. You.

WILLIE
What?

MARTY

You. You're my new boyfriend, Willie.
Are you up to it? Oh, I feel faint --

She collapses into him, sprawling, exaggerated. He catches her --

-- Just as Mo skates by with his kids... Mo stares at Willie, horrified...

Willie releases Marty... She laughs...

MARTY (CONT.)

My hero --

She skates a circle around him, playful now --

MARTY (CONT.)

You gonna marry that girl in NYC?

WILLIE

I don't know. Why?

MARTY

I don't think you should --

WILLIE

How come?

MARTY

You should wait till you're ready. You should wait till you meet somebody who excites you...

WILLIE

She may not be out there --

MARTY

It's like the WIZARD OF OZ, William. The whole time it was right in your own backyard --

WILLIE

What do you mean?

MARTY

Me, Willie. Me and you.

WILLIE

Really?

MARTY

You don't think?

She twirls... All smiles... She's having fun...

WILLIE

We have a little age problem --

MARTY

I know. We're as star-crossed as Romeo and Juliet... It's a tragedy of Elizabethan proportions...

WILLIE

"With love's light wings did I o'erperch these walls;
For stony limits cannot hold love out,
And what love can do, that dares love attempt... "

MARTY

"And the colored girls go: doo-do-do-do-do-do-do-do... "

Her friends, some ten yards away, watch them, schoolgirl snickering...

WILLIE

So what do we do?

MARTY

Alas, poor Romeo. We can't do diddly. You'll go to Penitentiary... I'll be the laughing stock of the Brownies. But, if your love for me is true... you'll wait.

WILLIE

Wait?

MARTY

Yep. Wait. Five years. I'll be 18. We can walk through this world together.

WILLIE

In five years, you won't even remember me --

MARTY

William!

WILLIE

I'm formed, you're not. You've still got changes to go through. You'll change. Then I'll be Winnie the Pooh, to your Christopher Robin...

MARTY

No literary reference is left unturned.
How do you figure Pooh?

WILLIE

Christopher Robin outgrew Pooh. That's how it ended. He had Pooh while he was a child. Pooh and all the gang - Eeyore and Piglet and all of them, were his imaginary friends. But when he matured he didn't need them anymore.

MARTY

That's the saddest thing I ever heard --

WILLIE

It's true. You don't realize it now, but you'll be doing some changing. And I can't be your Pooh --

She sees he's serious. And maybe she was just fooling around all along... Maybe not...

MARTY

You're excellent, Willie --

WILLIE

I know...

MARTY

I'm gonna skate away now, Pooh --

WILLIE

Kick it, Christopher --

She mitten-waves and glides off back to her giggling coterie of girlfriends...

Willie sighs, big time. And walks on back to the shack...

EXT. THE JOHNSON INN - NIGHT

Paul, wearing the first nice shirt we've seen him in, pulls his truck up to the inn, Motorhead's "Too Good To Be True" blasting on the deck. Paul jams it for a few...

... Then honks the horn. Ever the gentleman. The passenger door opens and Andera climbs in, shining like the moon...

PAUL

How are you?

ANDERA

Okay. You?

PAUL
Dandy. Fine and dandy... Shall we go?

ANDERA
Where we going?

PAUL
A little bar I know.

EXT. "THE MOONLIGHT MILE" - NIGHT

The corner joint Jan and Victor frequent. Neon beer signs in the windows. Paul and Andera are at the door.

PAUL
Wait --

He buttons the top button of his shirt. Adjusts his hairline.

PAUL (CONT.)
Okay --

He opens the door for her. They walk into --

INT. "THE MOONLIGHT MILE"

A crowded, smoky joint... A good juke box rocks pretty steady with Van Morrison, The Band, Little Feat... A few COUPLES sway on the small dance floor...

Paul takes Andera's hand and they walk through the place --

Andera is a magnet for warm, lusty looks... Paul, by virtue of his proximity, is awash in admiring glances...

They pass Jan and Victor, at a side table... Jan shakes her head... Paul give them an "oh, what a surprise!" salute and walks on to a back booth... None of this is lost on Andera --

They sit down... A WAITRESS comes around...

PAUL
A bottle of your best champagne --

WAITRESS
We don't have a "best" champagne.
They're all pretty much the same --

PAUL
Whatever --

Paul relaxes in the booth... angling both he and Andera into Jan's field of vision... Paul puts an arm around her, takes a CIGAR from his jacket pocket... rolls it around in his mouth.

The Waitress brings over a bottle of champagne in a bucket and two glasses... She lights his stogie... Pours the bubbly... Leaves... Paul raises his glass...

PAUL

To new friends...

Andera doesn't lift her glass...

ANDERA

What's going on?

PAUL

What?

ANDERA

What are you doing?

PAUL

What do you mean?

ANDERA

What's with this Al Capone thing?

PAUL

Al Capone -- ?

ANDERA

Who's that girl?

PAUL

What girl?

ANDERA

That girl? Over there --

She points to Jan... Paul pushes her hand down... Too late - Jan saw...

ANDERA (CONT.)

Who is she?

PAUL

She's no one. She's my, uh, she's my bookkeeper. Very efficient. Real head for figures --

ANDERA

You're full of shit --

PAUL

I'm serious --

ANDERA
I'll walk right out of here... Make the
biggest scene you can imagine --

PAUL
She's my bookkeeper --

ANDERA
I'm getting ready to scream...

PAUL
She's my cousin --

ANDERA
I'll throw the bottle --

PAUL
She's a Manson girl. I've been tracking
her for the FBI --

ANDERA
(rising)
Here we go --

PAUL
(rapid)
She's my ex-girlfriend, we broke up
after seven years cause she's seeing
that 40-year-old meat-cutting excuse for
a human being and I'm still in love with
her...

(beat)
There! You happy?

Andera sits back down... She smiles...

ANDERA
Why didn't you say so?

Van Morrison's "Crazy Love" plays on the juke ("She gives me
love, love, love, love/Craazy love..."). Andera stands...

PAUL
Please don't make a scene --

She holds out a hand --

ANDERA
You want to dance -- ?

The look on her face would rouse the castrated. Paul
couldn't be more surprised... He takes her hand...

ANDERA (CONT.)
Put out the goddamn cigar --

JAN & VICTOR

drink draft beers at their table... Jan watches as Paul and Andera slow-dance to the Van tune... Andera is all over Paul... Grinding, caressing, nuzzling... Paul tries to be cool, but he's obviously amazed...

VICTOR
Who is that?

JAN
Paul...

VICTOR
No shit? Who's the babe?

JAN
I don't know --

VICTOR
She's gorgeous --

Jan shoots daggers at him --

VICTOR (CONT.)
She is --

JAN
She's probably a pro --

VICTOR
Yeah? Maybe I could run out to my ATM machine --
(off her look)
Just kidding. Jeez...

Jan stamps out her cigarette...

JAN
Can we leave please -- ?

VICTOR
Sure --

She gets to her feet and storms to the exit. Victor throws some cash on the table and follows her out...

PAUL

sees them leave. After they're gone, he howls... High-fives Andera... Shouts to the BARTENDER:

PAUL

Drinks for everyone -- !

Cheers from the crowd. "Touch Me" by The Doors cranks. The joint erupts into festive anarchy, Paul and Andera leading the charge...

EXT. STINKY'S HOUSE / INT. PAUL'S TRUCK - LATER - NIGHT

Paul, still flush with victory, pulls the truck up in front of Stinky's house...

PAUL

That was the greatest... That was the single, greatest evening of my life...

Paul grabs her suddenly... Big kiss... She jerks away, angry.

ANDERA

What are you doing?

PAUL

What?

ANDERA

I have a boyfriend --

PAUL

What difference does that make?

ANDERA

A lot of difference.

PAUL

So what was that back there?

ANDERA

That was for you. You were kind of pathetic. I figured I'd help you out --

PAUL

Come on --

ANDERA

I thought you were still in love with the girl -- ?

PAUL

I seem to be experiencing a miraculous recovery...

She gets out of the truck... Slams the door... Runs inside...

PAUL (CONT.)

What a bitch...

INT. BIRDMAN/PAUL'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Kev is sprawled on one couch, Willie is sprawled on the other. Empty beer cans sprawled everywhere else. Neither guy moves a muscle during this entire exchange --

WILLIE

Early 70s Oakland A's Dynasty. Position by position. First base --

KEV

Gene Tenace. When he wasn't catching.

WILLIE

Second base.

KEV

Pass. Come back to it.

WILLIE

Shortstop --

KEV

Bert "Campy" Campaneris...

WILLIE

Third --

KEV

The Captain. Sal Bando.

WILLIE

Left field --

KEV

Joe Rudi. Though he could come in to play first when Tenace was catching, calling for Claudell Washington to cover left...

WILLIE

Center --

KEV

Bill North --

WILLIE

Right field --

KEV

Reggie --

Catcher -- WILLIE

KEV
When Tenace was on first? Ray Fosse...

WILLIE
Starting rotation --

KEV
James "Catfish" Hunter; Vida Blue;
Kenny Holtzman; Rollie Fingers on in
relief...

WILLIE
Second base...

KEV
Dick Greene. Great fielder. Couldn't
hit...

WILLIE
That's amazing --

KEV
You know what's more amazing?

WILLIE
What?

KEV
Absolutely none of it has any practical
application in real life...

Willie nods. Kev sighs. And they sprawl on...

EXT. OFFICE PARK - PARKING LOT - DAY

The 5:00 exodus - WORKERS spill out of the building, heading
for their cars.

Birdman is in his truck. He sees Sharon emerge. He gets out.

BIRDMAN
Sharon -- !

She sees him. Winces. Heads straight for her car.

BIRDMAN (CONT.)
Shar -- !

SHARON
Don't, Tommy --

BIRDMAN

Come on --

SHARON

No. Please... No...

She gets into her car. Drives off...

EXT. BIRDMAN/PAUL'S HOUSE - DRIVEWAY - DAY

Paul is changing the oil on the Ford... Willie sits nearby in a lawn chair, drinking a beer...

PAUL

... It was enough, I think, that she gave a shit... She gave a shit enough to get mad... To storm out of the joint... It was a revelation to me --

WILLIE

You had an epiphany --

PAUL

I was watching DOCTOR ZHIVAGO the other night. On TNT... And there's a scene where Uncle Alex says to Zhivago: "The Czar and all his family have been shot. Oh, what a dastardy deed! What's it for?" And Zhivago, cool as shit, says: "To show there's no going back."

WILLIE

And that applies how -- ?

PAUL

There's no going back. Me and Jan are through. She's with the meat-man... She'll always care about me... I'll always care about her... But there's no going back... The Czar and all his family have been shot... You see?

WILLIE

Whatever works for you, buddy --

PAUL

"Oh, what a dastardly deed -- !"

INT. KELLY'S MOBIL - DAY

Willie sits, listening to Stinky lecture Kev, The Sugared One, and the grease-monkeys...

STINKY

Sooner or later, a man comes to the realization that if he wants to get laid on a regular basis, he's gotta get married. Yeah, sure, you may put together a good streak of variant nook or land a mighty one who wants to go, go, go without any hubris. But, by and large, if you want it regular, you gotta get married. It's based on a long-standing conspiratorial primacy.

KID

A what?

STINKY

Indulge me. Let's wax historical. Years and years ago - we're talking caveman age - all the women got together and said: "look, if we want the pricks to marry us, we can't be giving the shit away." You guys know how you are - you'd be with a different girl every night, if it was as easy as just seeing one you liked on the street or in the mall and asking her to bed. Guys will do that. But the women won't. Ever wonder why not? Because of this ancient coffee klatsch they had, where it got decided. You see, women have the maternal instinct, they need to have kids. So they devised this plot, at this meeting long ago, which said, and I paraphrase: if we don't start rationing out the sweet stuff, they're never gonna marry us and we'll be stuck in the cave with the kids, with no meat, no fire, no wooly-mammoth blankets, cos Trog'll be out banging that Cro-Magnon bitch, Oogla-

EXT. MILLS PARK - DAY

Snow blankets this playground not far from the high school.

Jodi, Darian's 3-year-old, bundled up in her winter outfit, runs around the jungle gym.

Birdman and Darian sit on the swings. After a few beats of silence:

BIRDMAN

You gonna say something?

DARIAN

I have nothing to say --

BIRDMAN

It's a ridiculous situation. It's making me crazy. It's making you crazy. Sharon. Steve --

DARIAN

Steve isn't crazy. Leave Steve out of it. I've been able to work it so Steve has no idea --

BIRDMAN

Maybe that's 'cause I don't show up bombed at your birthday parties --

DARIAN

Sharon knew way before then --

BIRDMAN

Yeah. Well. Maybe Steve doesn't know 'cause Steve doesn't give a shit.

DARIAN

Don't try that, Tom. Don't try and characterize my marriage as a bad one. Steve's my best friend. He's the father of my daughter. I love Steve --

BIRDMAN

So why you fucking me?

DARIAN

I don't know. But I won't be anymore, will I?

BIRDMAN

No, you won't.

Beat. They watch Jodi giggling in the snow.

DARIAN

I wonder how I'll survive?

BIRDMAN

You'll be fine...

DARIAN

How does the thought of me taking another lover grab you, Tommy?

BIRDMAN

It makes me sick.

DARIAN

Think about it.

BIRDMAN

I have. It makes me sick.

DARIAN

Not sick enough, though --

BIRDMAN

Darian, you do what you gotta do. You gotta take another lover? Take him. You wanna leave your husband tonight, I'll marry you tomorrow. Leave him tomorrow, I'll marry you tomorrow night. But that's not gonna happen. You got a certain lifestyle you gotta have. And you'll never have it on what I make. So you want it both ways. You want it all. You're used to having it all. But I gotta think beyond that. Beyond once or twice a week in bed and a few visits, and feeling like the biggest scumbag on earth every time I see your kid smile at me. That's it. That's all. High school's over. It's time to graduate. Time to go to college.

They continue to sway on the swings. Jodi, unmindful of the reindeer games going on nearby, continues to giggle.

INT. CONWAY HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Pete and Dougie eat franks and beans... The portable TV is on, broadcasting a Celtics game...

Willie is on the phone...

WILLIE

(into phone)

... it's really up to you... It could be fun... as fun as a 10th year reunion can be, I mean... You can meet some of the guys, explore exciting downtown Knight's Ridge... It's your call... Okay... Yeah, sure... Think about it... Right... Talk to you, babe...

He hangs up... Both Pete and Dougie howl about a buzzer-beater on the TV...

But it doesn't go in and they curse.

Sonuvabitch! PETE CONWAY

Motherfuck! DOUGIE

Willie sighs and heads upstairs.

INT. BIRDMAN/PAUL'S HOUSE - PAUL'S ROOM

Paul is putting away his clean laundry... Willie comes in...

WILLIE
I think Tracy's going to come up for the
reunion.

PAUL
No shit? Cool. I gotta get a date --

Willie examines the girls on the wall...

WILLIE
You really gotta take this shit down --

PAUL
Why?

WILLIE
You're like a serial killer --

PAUL
Don't cap on my supermodels, Johnny.
Don't go there --

WILLIE
I'm just saying - it's creepy --

PAUL
Look who's talking, Jerry Lee Lewis --

WILLIE
Fuckin' Mo --

PAUL
Hey, I'm all for it, buddy. Old enough
to sit at the table/Old enough to eat --

WILLIE
It's not like that --

PAUL
Sure, sure --

WILLIE

I'm just saying, you oughtta take 'em down --

Paul turns to Willie, speaking like a practiced orator...

PAUL

The supermodels are beautiful girls, Willie. A beautiful girl can make you dizzy. Like you've been drinking red wine all morning. She can make you feel high, full of the single greatest commodity know to man: promise. The--

WILLIE

What is this?

PAUL

Quiet, I'm into something here. Promise. The promise of tomorrow, the promise of a greater hope, the promise of a better day. This particular ore can be found in the gait of a beautiful girl, in her smile and her soul and the way she makes every rotten little thing about life seem as if it's going to be okay. If we could bottle this promise, we could bottom out the markets for oil, petroleum, gold, crack cocaine. The supermodels - Cindy, Christie, Helena, Claudia, and the rest - that's all they are. Bottled promise. Scenes from a brand new day...

WILLIE

I am now going to check your freezer for human heads --

PAUL

A beautiful girl is all-powerful. But only love can break your heart.

EXT. THE JOHNSON INN - NIGHT

A dusting of snow. It's not even sticking...

INT. THE JOHNSON INN - NIGHT

Willie is at the piano, playing the dirtiest BLUES heard in these parts. A dead drunk version of Clarence Williams' Tin Pan Alley gem "Baby, Won't You Please Come Home."

The place is empty... Stinky reads the sports page at the bar... A few bibulous REGULARS drink away the chill...

Andera enters... She speaks to Stinky... Orders a cocktail...
Walks over to where Willie plays...

He opens his eyes... Sees her... Stops...

ANDERA

That's nice... Sexy...

WILLIE

"... less intense and emotionally
possessed than normal, but no less
effective because of its pointillist
coloration..."

ANDERA

Excuse me -- ?

WILLIE

Those were the teachers' comments after
my first recital... I played Gershwin.
RHAPSODY IN BLUE... When in doubt, go
Gershwin...

ANDERA

Are you drunk?

WILLIE

I dunno, but you're both very beautiful.

ANDERA

You seem kind of sad --

WILLIE

Job requirement... Happy piano players
work the circus...

ANDERA

I think you Knight's Ridge guys take the
ladies way too seriously --

WILLIE

Only until baseball season starts.
Pitchers and catchers report to camp in
two months, two weeks and five days.
You wanna go home with me?

ANDERA

No.

WILLIE

I had to ask. It's a DNA thing... Be
perfectly honest, I don't find you the
least bit attractive --

ANDERA

Really?

WILLIE

Really. Now you want to go home with
me -- ?

ANDERA

No.

WILLIE

I try every angle --

ANDERA

Job requirement --

WILLIE

It probably wouldn't be that great
anyway. My father's snoring might kill
the mood --

ANDERA

Play something else --

WILLIE

What, you don't like boozy, after-hours
musician banter -- ?

ANDERA

Can't dance to it --

WILLIE

You'd be surprised --

Beat. Willie drains his highball... Andera sips at hers.

WILLIE (CONT.)

Okay. You've spurned both my sexual
advances and my attempts at
conversation. I will now reach deep
down into my bag of tricks - you wanna
go ice-fishing?

ANDERA

I'd love too --

WILLIE

Strike Three.
(double-take)
What did you say?

ANDERA

I said: I'd love too --

WILLIE

All good --

EXT. MAC'S POND - NIGHT

The snow continues to fall. A single LIGHT flickers inside

INT. ICE-FISHING SHACK

-- courtesy of an oil-lamp. Willie and Andera sit on separate chairs, covered in blankets. They pass a bottle of cheap Cognac they managed to cage off Stinky --

The lines have been baited and dangle into the ice-hole.

WILLIE

... You know how it is - the beginnings. When you first fall in love. Can't eat, can't sleep, can't dress yourself or concentrate on work. A phone call from her is like seeing a shooting star - makes your day... It's the best feeling, isn't it?

ANDERA

It is awesome --

WILLIE

But invariably, it goes away. It quiets down... It can't last forever. Impossible. It wanes. So my thing is - why get married now? Why not have two, three more of those beginning things - before I settle down into The Big Fade -

ANDERA

"The Big Fade?" That's an awful way to put it. Marriage, I mean --

WILLIE

It's true, though --

ANDERA

In any relationship, you grow, you mature, it can't always be fireworks and drumbeats... But that gets replaced. By love. And understanding. And a sense of commitment and sharing...

WILLIE

Well, I guess that's my problem. I'm Mr. Fireworks and Drumbeats. The rest of that stuff... It's beyond me --

ANDERA

You haven't found the right girl, Willie.
You do, everything will come together...

WILLIE

Tell me this: can you think of anything
better than making love to an attractive
stranger on a cold snowy night, in the
middle of a frozen lake, with a belly
full of cognac and only an oil light to
guide you... Can you think of anything
better -- ?

ANDERA

Hemmorhoid surgery. Pancreatic cancer.
World War III...

WILLIE

Well, sure. Of course. But besides
those --

ANDERA

I should be getting home --

WILLIE

She's coming tomorrow --

ANDERA

That's obvious --

WILLIE

I got no feeling about that. I got a
feeling of overwhelming ambivalence.
I'd rather dread her arrival, than not
give a shit either way --

ANDERA

You got problems, Willie. But you'll be
okay --

Beat.

WILLIE

We don't make-out in restaurants anymore -

ANDERA

What?

WILLIE

In the old days, that could be an entire
evening. An entire perfect evening. A
corner booth. In a dark restaurant...
A bottle of wine. Just giggling and
making out for hours --

ANDERA

People who engage in flagrant public affection are insecure and are non-verbally shouting out to the world "Look, I have someone who loves me!"

Willie gets to his feet, angry, unsteady...

WILLIE

See there's the problem. That really fucking creases me. You are all sisters. Every time we get romantic, you gotta get analytical. Every time we get analytical, you gotta get suspicious we're cheating... You're robbing us of our... essence... Then you go and boo-hoo about why we only want to spend time with the guys... It's because the alternative is so enormously exhausting.

And with that he knocks back the bottle of cognac, draining it... He looks at her, lopsided grin, instantly boomered.

WILLIE (CONT.)

Maybe you should drive --

EXT. CONWAY HOUSE - DAY

A Saab 900 pulls up in front of the house. Willie comes out of the house, all smiles, as

TRACY STEWART, 27

emerges from the car. Tracy is lovely. Brown bangs down to her eyebrows, a high ponytail. Ann Taylor meets Ayn Rand.

They kiss at her trunk. Willie takes her slim garment bag...

He sneaks a peek at Marty's house, but no one's around.

TRACY

You look awful --

WILLIE

I've been drunk for two weeks --

TRACY

Sounds like home --

INT. CONWAY KITCHEN - LATER - NIGHT

Pete and Dougie Conway stare at Tracy across the kitchen table - as if she were some rare bird only sporadically sighted over these parts...

Willie clears the finished dinner dishes before them...

WILLIE

That was superb, Trace. Wasn't that superb, Dad? Tell Tracy how superb that was...

PETE CONWAY

That was superb, Tracy --

DOUGIE

The fact that you can cook, rolled into the fact that you're a successful lawyer and the fact that you're stunning to look at, makes me, just, insane...

WILLIE

Dougie --

Tracy laughs. She's totally at ease with these two maniacs.

TRACY

I'm flattered, Doug --

PETE CONWAY

That was superb, Tracy --

WILLIE

We're gonna shower. We're going to Mo's for a little pre-reunion cocktail thing. You wanna shower first, Trace, or--

DOUGIE

You shower first, Will... We can use that time to bond...

They don't take their eyes off her. Willie frowns --

TRACY

Go ahead, Willie. I'll be fine...

Resigned, he goes upstairs to the bathroom... Pete and Dougie continue The Gaze...

PETE CONWAY

That was superb, Tracy --

INT. WILLIE'S ROOM

He looks out his bedroom window... Marty is below, in her yard, picking icicles off the eaves... She looks a little sad.

Willie opens his window...

WILLIE
Hey --

Marty looks up... Smiles...

MARTY
"ROMEO AND JULIET - The Dyslexic
Version."

WILLIE
What are you doing?

MARTY
Another exciting Saturday night.

WILLIE
You got so many exciting Saturday nights
in your future, kid, it's unreal --

MARTY
Yeah, well. Your lady's here, huh?

WILLIE
Yeah.

MARTY
I saw her. She's pretty...

WILLIE
She's okay... She's not as pretty as you-

MARTY
She's got that boob thing going for her
though --

WILLIE
She can get into R-rated movies too --

MARTY
Two words not in her vocabulary: Lunch
Money...

Willie laughs. Marty picks off a few more icicles...

WILLIE
Marty -- ?

She looks up...

WILLIE (CONT.)
I hope... I hope we stay in touch.
Because I hope, someday, to learn what
you're doing... Because... I think... it
will be something amazing... I really do-

He smiles down at her... She smiles up at him...

EXT. CONWAY HOUSE / INT. TRACY'S SAAB - NIGHT

Willie and Tracy are dressed up fine. Willie is behind the wheel of the Saab. Pete and Dougie stand at their front door, waving goodbye. Forlorn. Willie drives off.

WILLIE

Unbelievable. Those two haven't liked anyone since Steve McQueen died --

TRACY

They're nice.

WILLIE

They're not "nice." They're as far away from "nice" as they could be. If "nice" is London, they're Tokyo...

She leans into him, kisses his neck...

TRACY

Okay. You're nice...

She closes her eyes, nuzzles him. Willie looks at himself in the rear-view... If "nice" is London, he's the friggin' moon.

INT. BIRDMAN/PAUL'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Paul is dressed, jacket and tie. Birdman sits in front of the TV in his sweats...

PAUL

I can't believe you're not gonna go --

BIRDMAN

Have fun, man --

PAUL

You loved high school. People are gonna wonder what happened to you --

BIRDMAN

Tell 'em I'm in Geneva, working on the cure for cancer...

PAUL

I think Kev's using that one --

A horn HONKS outside...

PAUL (CONT.)

You're just gonna sit here like a loser?

BIRDMAN
Channel 38's showing RICH MAN, POOR MAN.
All twelve parts. In a row --

Paul looks amazed...

PAUL
No shit?

The horn HONKS again, impatient now...

PAUL (CONT.)
Susan Blakely --

BIRDMAN
You got it... Julie Prescott --

PAUL
Aw, man. Tape it for me?

BIRDMAN
Nope.

PAUL
Birdie --

BIRDMAN
Nope.

PAUL
I can get out of this reunion thing --

BIRDMAN
Beat it, man --

PAUL
364 nights of the year, I do shit. The
one night. The one lousy night --

HONK!

BIRDMAN
Falconetti...

PAUL
Oh, man -- ! Was there ever a more
terrifying screen villain than
Falconetti?

BIRDMAN
Nope...

PAUL
You gonna watch it?

BIRDMAN
Yep.

PAUL
Bastard.

BIRDMAN
Yep.

He smiles. Paul curses and leaves the house. Birdman's smile fades...

INT. MO'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Perhaps 20 PEOPLE, all dressed to the teeth. Mo and Lisa, Gina, Willie, Tracy, Stinky, Andera and a few OTHERS...

Paul and Kev are with two heavily bimbed-out 20-year-old GIRLS (TIFFANY & JOLIE).

Mo serves booze at the bar... A few platters of munchies are about... Tracy is acquitting herself beautifully. Everyone loves her... Willie stands at the bar with Mo...

Paul comes over to them, laughing at something Tracy said.

PAUL
Willie, my friend, I gotta tell you:
she is delightful --

WILLIE
"Delightful?" Who are you, Rex
Harrison?

PAUL
She's amazing. You talk to her, Mo?

MO
She's great.

PAUL
She's fuckin' amazing! What, may I ask,
is your major malfunction, man? She's
smart, she's funny, she's got a great
ass. Nice rack, so far as I can tell.
Nice rack?

WILLIE
Nice rack.

PAUL
She's rich, she's charming, she's got a
great ass.

WILLIE
You mentioned that --

PAUL
It's that good --

WILLIE
(re: the 20-yr-olds)
Who are the hookers -- ?

PAUL
Kev and I go out with 'em every now and then. They're nice girls. Takes me a week to get the lipstick stains off my dick, though...

WILLIE
Lovely visual --

INT. MO'S HOUSE - HALLWAY

Willie waits outside the bathroom. The door opens and Andera steps out...

ANDERA
Hey. I wanted to talk to you --

WILLIE
I know, I know. She's great. She's the best. What is my problem?

ANDERA
No, no. I just wanted to tell you I had fun last night...

WILLIE
Oh. Yeah. I drank too much.

ANDERA
It wasn't that bad. You only tried to feel me up 4 times on the way home --

WILLIE
I must have been drunk - I usually go for 6 --

Andera laughs and walks down the hall..

ANDERA
Oh, Willie?

WILLIE
Yeah?

ANDERA
She is great...

INT. LIVING ROOM

Stinky is bickering with Gina and Andera --

STINKY
... All I'm saying is, every woman over
the age of 26 is bullshit that she ain't
married and, if you go out with her -
you get the blame for every other guy
that fucked her over and made it so
she's over 26 and not married... You
can't date them. They're crazy.

ANDERA
So what do you do?

STINKY
You go young. The young ones, they're
incapable of giving grief, putting
pressure, or making you feel anything
less than pissa --

GINA
What do you, almost 30, have in common
with some 20-year-old -- ?

STINKY
Plenty. Lookit Paul. Paul, what do you
and Tiff have in common -- ?

PAUL
Uh --

He's completely baffled. He looks at TIFFANY. She shrugs.

TIFFANY
We both bruise easily --

PAUL
Yeah.

GINA
Wonderful --

PAUL
And - and we both like ranch dressing.

TIFFANY
Love.

PAUL
Both love ranch dressing --

This doesn't exactly buttress Stinky's argument...

GINA
That's great, Stinky --

Mo enters the room with a flourish --

MO
Okay, everyone. Let's hit the reunion!

Various cheers and claps... Kev whispers to Willie:

KEV
(re: Tracy)
Rookie phenom, man. She is a rookie phenom...

WILLIE
Yeah, yeah...

INT. SHERATON HOTEL - VALET AREA - BOSTON - NIGHT

The VALET takes Tracy's Saab. Paul and Tiffany wait for them.

PAUL
I'm actually very nervous. I just know that every loser I ever beat up on is now running corporations and writing best-selling novels. And what do I got?

Beat. Tiffany is actually racking her brains to comfort him. She hits on it:

TIFFANY
You've got an excellent truck --

Paul looks at her with adoring eyes --

PAUL
Thank-you, baby --

INT. SHERATON - FUNCTION ROOM - CLASS REUNION

Some 200 PEOPLE, all nearing 30, are gathered here... Several BARS, a DJ set-up, tables and chairs... Typical low-grade banquet hall accoutrements...

Mo and Kev line up a row of SHOTS and chain-chug them... Lisa watches, unhappy --

BY THE REST ROOMS

Kev sees Darian Smalls...

KEV

You look all good tonight, Darian.

DARIAN

Thank-you, thank-you.

KEV

Stevie here?

DARIAN

No. He thought I'd have more fun solo.
He went to his reunion stag. This way
you can mingle, you don't have to
introduce people and all that --

KEV

That's cool --

DARIAN

I haven't seen Tommy --

KEV

He wussed --

DARIAN

He's not here?

KEV

Not here. Not coming. He wussed.

Darian looks most distressed at this news. She was hoping to
see him...

KEV (CONT.)

He didn't tell you -- ?

DARIAN

We haven't spoken in a few --

KEV

Oh.

(beat)

Well, I gotta get back before my date
goes home with the swim team --

DARIAN

Okay. See ya --

KEV

You okay?

DARIAN
I'm fine. I'm fine.

Kev walks away. Darian looks anything but fine --

INT. THE JOHNSON INN - NIGHT

Fairly crowded. Birdman strolls in, bellying up to the bar. He orders a shot of rye and a beer. He checks out the crowd and immediately knows he's made a mistake coming here...

... For, at a SIDE TABLE, Steve Rossmore, Darian's husband, sits with four of his BOYS - ex-frat guys, big and clean-cut and beer-drunk. Birdman turns back to the bar.

BIRDMAN
Shit.

Birdman knocks back his shot... Sips his brew...

INT. SHERATON - REUNION

The DJ is bumping some vintage REO Speedwagon. Andera is slow dancing with The Sugared One... They look really into it... The gang watches. Paul is horrified.

PAUL
I thought she had a boyfriend --

KEV
What difference does that make?

GINA
She knows. She can tell that The Sugared One likes women. Not like you scumbags --

PAUL
What are you talking about? We love women. That's our fatal flaw --

GINA
Bullshit. You hate women. The lot of you. You love each other. Women just give you something to talk to your fellow man about, besides the score of a game or the quality/quantity of the last shit taken --

She storms off and away, leaving the others a little shaken -

TIFFANY
She really needs to get laid --

INT. THE JOHNSON INN

Birdman finishes his beer. A HAND is on his shoulder. He turns around. Steve Rossmore is there... He's shitfaced.

STEVEN

Hello, Tom --

BIRDMAN

Steve --

STEVEN

How come you're not at the reunion?

BIRDMAN

Not into it --

STEVEN

Won't Darian be disappointed --

BIRDMAN

She go?

STEVEN

Yep. Can I buy you a drink?

BIRDMAN

I was just leaving --

STEVEN

C'mon, Tom. One drink --

He waves over the BARTENDER --

BIRDMAN

I really can't...

STEVEN

Okay... So let me see if I got this right... I can't buy you a drink - but you can stick your dick into my wife -

Beat. They hold a long, lean stare --

BIRDMAN

(to the Barkeep)

Shot a rye --

STEVEN

Two --

The Bartender fetches the drinks --

STEVEN (CONT.)

I think it's Knight's Ridge. These fucking working class towns. Girls grow up here, every time they see a toolbelt they get moist --

BIRDMAN

I got an extra one I can lend you, Steve. Hook you up with some vice-grips, ratchet, Aller wrench --

STEVEN

Don't fuck with me, man...

The shots come... Birdman checks on Steve's buddies... They watch him, baleful looks on their scrubbed faces --

STEVEN (CONT.)

Don't worry about them. This is me and you --

BIRDMAN

I don't think it is, Steve. I don't figure you for a guy who fights his own battles. But I'll give you the benefit of the doubt. Though I'll bet a C-note you haven't told them exactly why you're mad at me... That you suspect I'm runnin' your wife... Cos then you might look like a mutt --

Steve chugs his shot... Rises...

STEVEN

I'll be outside --

BIRDMAN

Yo, Steve... I can understand this shit's got you creased, but we don't have to go this way --

STEVEN

I think we do --

BIRDMAN

You think sportin' a busted nose and a neck-brace is gonna keep Darian in your bed -- ?

Beat. If looks could kill, Birdie'd be in Eyeball Auschwitz.

STEVEN

I'll be outside --

He walks off. Birdman shakes his head. Knocks back his shot.

BIRDMAN

Shit.

EXT. THE JOHNSON INN

Steve panthers the parking lot. Birdman comes out --

BIRDMAN (CONT.)

Steve, we don't gotta--

WHUMP! Birdman is hit from behind. The frat boys are there.

Birdman hits the ground, eating snow... THEY ARE ON HIM.
Kicking, stomping, punching... Steve leading the charge...

STEVEN

Now, who's the fuckin' mutt -- !?!

INT. SHERATON - REUNION

Andera and The Sugared One are making out on the dance floor.

Willie sits at a table, watching them... Tracy walks over and sits down on his lap...

WILLIE

You know - she has a boyfriend --

Stinky comes racing through the room, Paul and Kev following.

A drunken Mo punches a hole in one wall. Lisa is mortified.

LISA

Michael -- !

Mo groans like a walloped walrus...

WILLIE

What's going on -- ?

STINKY

My brother just called from the inn...
Birdie got the shit kicked out of him!

Stinky, Paul and Kev leave the room... Mo grabs Willie --

MO

Let's go -- !

LISA

Michael, I don't think you should--

MO

Leave me alone, Lisa. LEAVE ME ALONE!

Lisa looks like he's slapped her. Mo heads for the door...
Turns to Willie --

MO

You coming -- ?

WILLIE

Yeah. Wait a sec. Tracy, I --

TRACY

Go, Willie. Just go --

Willie nods. And follows Mo out the door --

Tracy, Lisa, Andera, Tiffany and Jolie, none of whom even
went to this high school, remain at the reunion --

INT. THE JOHNSON INN

The place is closed. The guys - Willie, Mo, Stinky, Paul and
Kev - enter... Stinky's older brother, FRANK, is there...

FRANK

He didn't want me to call the cops. He
said no cops... But this is crazy...

PAUL

Where is he?

FRANK

Over here --

Birdman sits in a corner booth. He's a bloody mess... And he
breathes like there are broken ribs. He's barely conscious.

STINKY

Birdie! You okay, man -- ?

Clearly he's not --

KEV

We gotta get him to a hospital --

Mo is in Frank's face --

MO

Who did this?

FRANK

I dunno. Some guys --

Mo shakes him --

MO

Who?

FRANK

Hey, cut the--

STINKY

Frank, don't be a douchebag. Who did it?

FRANK

The Rossmore guy. You know, with the hot wife? Him and his pals. They did it--

Mo heads for the exits...

WILLIE

Where you going -- ?

MO

To find Steve Rossmore --

WILLIE

Just wait a second --

Mo doesn't. Mo's gone.

WILLIE

All of a sudden, he's Charles Bronson --

PAUL

Arrright. Wait. Me and Willie'll go with Mo... Kev, you and Stinky get Bird to the hospital... How's that?

KEV

It's a plan --

A truck REVS high and hard outside --

PAUL

That'd be my truck --

Willie and Paul make a dash for the exits...

Birdman moans on in the booth --

EXT. KNIGHT'S RIDGE ROADS / INT. PAUL'S TRUCK - MOVING

Paul drives. Willie and Mo beside him... It begins to snow.

PAUL
It's snowing. I can't believe it. I'm
gonna have to plow tonight -- !

They ride in silence for a beat. Then:

WILLIE
Of course, Birdman was sleeping with
the guy's wife --

MO
So?

WILLIE
I mean it wasn't like he was all that
innocent --

PAUL
He deserved to get thrashed like that?

WILLIE
No, but... This does present something
of a moral dilemma --

Paul and Mo stare at him like he's nuts... Beat.

WILLIE (CONT.)
Arrright. Fuck it. Let's lynch him.

EXT. DARIAN'S HOUSE - NIGHT

The snow is heavier now. Paul pulls the truck up into the
long Tudor driveway we OPENED with...

WILLIE
We got a plan?

But Mo is out of the truck and racing up the drive...

WILLIE (CONT.)
No plan.

Mo is pounding on the front door...

INT. DARIAN'S HOUSE

Steve, in boxers, t-shirt and tube socks, glances out the
window... He picks up his cordless PHONE... dials a number.

STEVEN
(into phone)
Hey. How far are you guys? Yeah. You
wanna turn around and come back? I got
company... Cool beans, dude...

EXT. DARIAN'S HOUSE

Willie and Paul have joined Mo at the door --

WILLIE

I'm getting wicked "villagers outside
Frankenstein's castle" vibes - how 'bout
you guys -- ?

Before they can respond, Steve has opened the door, still in
boxers and tee --

STEVEN

Can I help you, guys?

Mo rips open the storm door and yanks Steve outside, tossing
him into a nearby snowbank --

STEVEN (CONT.)

What the fuck is this -- ?

Mo is apoplectic, wailing, enraged --

MO

You mess with my friends, you mess with
me! You beat-up my friends, you beat-up
me! You take what's mine, you take
what's yours! You go to the fountain,
you drink, you don't drink... !

Willie shoots Paul a look. Paul shrugs. Don't ask me...

STEVEN

I don't know what you're talk--

But Mo is on him, shoving Steve's head into the snow --

MO

Don't you talk back to me, little man --

WILLIE

Easy, Mo --

HEADLIGHTS coming up the long drive... A BMW, loaded with
LINEMEN... Steve having called his buds on their cellular...

STEVEN

The cavalry has arrived. Assholes --

Steve, shivering, gets to his feet... Mo and Paul look to the
oncoming auto...

PAUL

It's all bad.

Paul turns to Willie. But Willie is nowhere to be found --

PAUL (CONT.)

Will -- ?

The BMW roars up to the house... Steve wears the most sanctimonious of grins... Paul looks scared... Even Mo is sobered considerably...

The Beemer comes to a stop... But before the frat-boys can get out of their car, they are BLINDED BY LIGHTS --

-- and an ENGINE growls to life...

It is Paul's TRUCK - Willie at the wheel... He raises the PLOW... Puts the car into gear...

And heads straight for the BMW -- !

The frat boys SCREAM. Willie barrels the truck right at them -
KEE-RUNCH!

The plow hits the driver's side of the car... The guys inside shriek as the car is PUSHED several feet and WEDGED UP against the SNOWBANK on the passenger side... Making it impossible to get out...

Paul howls and points at Willie, who points back at him, just like Worthy and Magic after a particularly fine assist/basket... Mo giggles... Steve is horrified...

Willie shuts off the engine... Hops from the truck...

PAUL

You rock, Johnny. All good --

They high-five... Mo returns his attention to Steve...

MO

Now, where were we, shithead?

Mo grabs the scruffs of Steve's tee-shirt and is about to lay a big fist on him, when --

JODI (O.S.)

Daddy -- ?

She is at the door... In her nightie... Looking all the world like Little Cindy Lou Who from THE GRINCH...

PAUL

What is she doing here?

STEVEN

We had a sitter. I sent her home.

JODI

Daddy? What -- ?

Jodi looks at Mo - the man hurting her daddy - with big, blue wounded eyes...

Mo looks at Steve...

STEVEN

I'm just trying to save my family here,
man --

Mo couldn't be more ashamed... He looks at his friends... Looks back at the little girl... He releases Steve... Sighs. And walks to the pick-up...

Willie and Paul watch him go. Paul turns to Steve...

PAUL

Stay away from us, Stevie Boy. Just stay away forever...

And they go back to the truck... Steve looks at Jodi...

STEVEN

Go inside, honey. Everything's okay --

Willie and Paul climb into the truck. The frat-guys scream from the BMW --

Paul backs up the pick-up... freeing the driver's side of the car. The frat guys explode out... But Paul is already far down the driveway...

They chase after it, but it's slippery and they give up...

At the foot of the driveway, the truck passes Darian Smalls in her Jeep, returning from the reunion... She rolls down her window, her face a question mark. But they don't even give her the benefit of a roll-down. They just drive off...

She watches them leave her home, completely puzzled...

INT. HOSPITAL - WAITING ROOM - LATER - NIGHT

Stinky, Kev, Tracy and Lisa wait...

Willie, Paul and Mo come in...

PAUL

How is he?

STINKY

They took him a while ago. We haven't heard anything --

Willie sits down next to Tracy... She takes his hand...

TRACY

Did you guys do macho things?

Willie shrugs. He watches

MO AND LISA

down the hall a bit.

MO

Did you call Annie? Tell her we'd be late -- ?

LISA

Yes. I told her she could sleep over.

MO

That was good --

LISA

You okay?

Beat. Mo nods. Looks at her.

MO

I'm sorry, Lis --

LISA

Don't. It's cool --

She puts her arms around him. He hugs her. Hard.

PAUL

leans down, whispers to Stinky --

PAUL

What happened to Andera?

STINKY

She went home with The Sugared One. You believe that?

PAUL

I'm having an embolism. Right here, right now... What the fuck?

STINKY
I dunno, man. What can I say?

PAUL
She - she has a boyfriend --

KEV
Here we go --

They look up. Sharon is coming down the corridor. Willie looks at Kev --

KEV (CONT.)
I called her --

Everyone gets up and encircles Sharon --

SHARON
He's going to be okay. He's got a concussion, two broken ribs... Fractured wrist. And he took thirty stitches --

WILLIE
But he's gonna be okay -- ?

SHARON
He's gonna be fine --
(to Kev)
He said to tell you it's snowing and you should clear the lots --

KEV
I'm on it --

The group breaks up, heading for the exits --

WILLIE
Tell him I'll be by tomorrow to say goodbye --

PAUL
Where you going?

WILLIE
I'm going to go back to New York with Tracy --

PAUL
Just like that --

WILLIE
Just like that.

EXT. JAN'S DUPLEX - LATER - NIGHT

Once again, Paul sits across the street in his truck. Watching the apartment and smoking. Elle Macpherson whimpers beside him.

Paul stamps out his cigarette. He slides a tape in the deck. A sad song. John Cougar's "Ain't Even Done With The Night."

Paul begins to cry. An exaggerated blubber. He starts up the truck. We're sure he's going to barricade her in again.

But this time he plows the driveway. Plows it clean... Crying and singing all the while...

From an upstairs window, Jan watches...

INT. CONWAY HOUSE - WILLIE'S ROOM - LATER - NIGHT

Tracy is in bed. Willie comes to tuck her in.

TRACY

The couch is okay -- ?

WILLIE

It's fine. Sorry about the night.

TRACY

I had fun. It's lively around here --

(beat)

How come you're coming back with me?

WILLIE

I dunno. I want to. I don't think I'm going to take the sales job --

TRACY

I don't think you should --..

Beat. He nods. He leans in and gives her a kiss...

WILLIE

G'night --

TRACY

G'night --

INT. LIVING ROOM

Willie stretches out on the couch. He studies the ceiling, listening to the Cougar song, which FADES OFF slowly. "Well, it's time to go home/And I ain't even done with the night..."

INT. HOSPITAL - DAY

Early the next morning. Willie walks down the hall. Kev, in his work clothes, is sprawled out on two chairs in the waiting room. He snores away.

INT. BIRDMAN'S ROOM

Sharon has pulled a chair up to Birdman's bed. She is asleep, her head resting on his belly..

Willie comes in... Birdman opens his puffy eyes... He looks awful.. He manages a weak smile... They whisper their exchange so as not to wake her --

WILLIE

How you doin', Bird?

BIRDMAN

It's all bad --

WILLIE

You look excellent --

BIRDMAN

Paul was by. You guys trashed Rossmore?

WILLIE

Nah. Put the fear of God in him, that's all. He sorta turned out to be a crispy turd, didn't he?

BIRDMAN

He had cause to be creased --

(beat)

You taking off?

WILLIE

Yeah. One of these days, one of these days, man, we're all gonna get our shit together... Guaranteed...

BIRDMAN

Yeah, we'll be the most together dudes in the nursing home --

WILLIE

Take care, Birdman --

BIRDMAN

Come back and visit more often --

Beat. Sharon stirs. Wakes. Sees Willie --

SHARON
 Hi --
 (to Birdman)
 You okay?

BIRDMAN
 All good --

A SQUEAL! And Shannon and Michael Jr., Mo's kids, come tearing into the hospital room, running around crazy --

BIRDMAN
 Oh, no...

WILLIE
 Later, guys --

INT. HOSPITAL - OUTSIDE BIRDMAN'S ROOM

Willie comes out. Mo carries a bouquet of BALLOONS.

WILLIE
 How you feeling today, tough guy?

MO
 Like hell... You're leaving?

WILLIE
 Yeah. Say goodbye to Lisa --

MO
 I will. Say goodbye to Tracy --

WILLIE
 Right.

MO
 You figure that shit out?

WILLIE
 It changes from minute to minute, man.
 Indecision is a disease and I got a
 virulent strain --
 (re: Kev)
 When he wakes up, ask him who scored the
 Bruins 1000th play-off goal --

There's a CRASH from Birdman's room... And Birdman WAILS:

BIRDMAN
 MO-OOOOOOOO -- !

MO
 I better get in there --

Willie
Later, buddy --

EXT. CONWAY HOUSE - DAY

Willie puts their luggage in the trunk of the Saab. He looks at Marty's house, but there's no one around...

Pete and Dougie Conway hug Tracy goodbye... They look like they're going to cry.

Paul pulls up in his pick-up...

Paul
Word is Andera and The Sugared One are engaged --

Willie
I thought she had a boyfriend --

Paul
That chick drains me, man. They're all sisters. Everyone of 'em. Sisters --

Marty (O.S.)
Yo, Willie Boy -- ?

Willie turns. Marty is there, in her yard...

Willie
Hey --

Marty
You outta here?

Willie
Yeah --

Marty
(re: Tracy)
She is a honey-limbed lovely --

Willie
Yeah --

Tracy comes down the walkway...

Willie (CONT.)
Tracy, this is Marty... Marty, Tracy...

Marty
Hey --

TRACY
Nice to meet you --

Beat. Willie studies them, side by side... He looks somehow wistful...

MARTY
You're very pretty --

TRACY
Thank you. You are, too --
(beat; to Willie)
We should get going, hon...

WILLIE
Right --

Willie hugs Paul --

PAUL
So long, Chief --

Willie walks over to Marty and gives her a kiss on the cheek. Marty blushes. Willie probably does too --

WILLIE
Bye, Marty --

MARTY
Later, Pooch --

Paul and Marty lean back against the truck, watching Willie and Tracy go around to the Saab --

PAUL
Ya'll come back now, y'here? We'll be right where you left us. Nothing changes in The Ridge but the seasons --

Willie and Tracy get into the Saab. Paul turns to Marty --

PAUL
So, you're the little neighborhood Lolita?

MARTY
So you're the alcoholic high school buddy shit-for-brains...?

Paul blinks. Scratches his head. Nods. That's me.

PAUL
You want to go ice-fishing?

Sure -- MARTY

Cool -- PAUL

He opens the the passenger door to his truck --

MARTY
Hey, you're not gonna get loaded and
show me your pecker, are you?

PAUL
Please. I got work boots older'n you --

MARTY
Okay. You drive --

He closes the door. Climbs behind the wheel... The truck
heads up the road... We HEAR their dialogue FADE OFF...

PAUL (O.S.)
You got a favorite supermodel?

MARTY (O.S.)
Christy Turlington. She's the best.
I'm hoping to someday approximate a poor
man's version of her look --

PAUL (O.S.)
Christy's cool. Whattya think of Kate
Moss?

MARTY (O.S.)
I'm not into that whole "waif" thing...
I think it raises dangerous standards
for today's women to strive for --

INT. TRACY'S SAAB

is at the top of the street. Willie can see Paul and Marty
driving off... He smiles...

TRACY
That little girl was cute --

Willie nods. You have no idea...

TRACY
What was her name? Marcy?

WILLIE
Marty.

TRACY
As in "Martha?"

WILLIE
She wishes. As in "Martin." Named for
a grandfather she never even knew...

Tracy looks at him a little odd... He's smiling --

TRACY (CONT.)
You ready?

WILLIE
Let's go --

They make for the highway...

Up ahead, Birdman's PICK-UP/PLOW is coming at them, Kev at
the wheel... Kev slows... sticks his head out the window:

KEV
Brad Park, 1983! Game 7 of the Adams
Division finals! Versus Buffalo! In OT!

Willie gives him the thumbs-up and they are gone...

Kev watches them go... He cracks a beer... Notices something
on his windshield... He sticks his hand out the window...

It's starting to snow...

KEV
Shit.

And we play that Gin Blossoms song we opened with... As Kev
puts the truck into drive. Heading off...

...the truck soon lost to us in the gently falling snow.

- The End