

"Beautiful Girls"

By

Scott Rosenberg

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"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

as it 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 house. 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...

A hint of a smile crosses Birdman's face. It is not lost on Kev, who snorts...

KEV (CONT.)

Aw, shit --

The Tudor's front door OPENS... A LITTLE GIRL, KRISTEN, 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, Kristen. How are you tonight?

Kristen 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 Kristen's mother. Birdman watches as

DARIAN SMALLS

28, in ski parka, leggings and Timberlands, walks to the truck. Blonde 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

Maybe you should lay off it a bit, Kev. Your nose gets any redder, you could guide my sleigh tonight --

Kev stares at her blankly... She turns to Birdman:

DARIAN (CONT.)

You guys done for the night?

BIRDMAN

Yeah --

Big storm -- DARIAN

Yeah. BIRDMAN

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

I'm cooooooldddd -- ! KRISTEN

Okay, baby... DARIAN

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

I didn't have Styrofoam... DARIAN (CONT.)
(re: the mugs)

I'll get 'em back to you -- BIRDMAN

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

Goodbye, Kev -- DARIAN

Yeah -- KEV

Bye -- DARIAN
(to Birdman)

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

What -- ? BIRDMAN

The thing with the Styrofoam really
creases me... KEV

What are you talking about? BIRDMAN

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... KEV

Nothing from Birdman. He drives.

KEV (CONT.)
How 'bout I return the mugs this time?

BIRDMAN
How 'bout you shut your hole?

Beat.

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 - NIGHT

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

In one booth, opposite two town COPS, sits

GINA BARRISANO, 30,

A heavy-set Italian girl tearing the crown off of her oat-bran muffin, washing it down with an iced coffee...

GINA
... all I'm saying is: the odds of the
jellied side of the toast falling face
down are proportional to the cost of the
carpet...

She sees Birdman and Kev enter...

GINA (CONT.)

Well, well. Look who's here: Captain Kangaroo and his faithful sidekick, Mr. Green Jeans...

BIRDMAN

Nice to see you too, Gina --

They go to a nearby table...

At the rear of the joint, 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 are working on a bag of donut holes.

PAUL

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 hate 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 shoveller --
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 them...

BIRDMAN
He's goin' by there --

KEV
Money in the bank --

Paul passes the booth with Gina and the cops...

PAUL
You seen Jan around?

GINA
I don't eat red meat --

Paul shakes his head and leaves the donut shoppe... Gina shrugs to the cops...

GINA (CONT.)
Nice guy but not too bright. He could hide his own Easter eggs, know what I mean.. ?

CUT TO:

A COMPACT DISC

inserted into an ultra-pimped-out CAR STEREO CD receiver with a 6/5 channel amp, optimized for enclosures...

Kiss' "Do You Love Me" off the DESTROYER disc, CRANKS...

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 - is with him...

The Kiss tune WAILS through the four hi-fi plate system speakers and 10" component subwoofer...

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 INTO 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 one 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 --

BIRDMAN
Jesus -- !

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 "KRISTEN" 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 27 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 --

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... They just don't know it yet...

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 --

SHARON
(under her breath)
Big idiot should be Xeroxed --

EXT. TRAIN STATION - DAY

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

WILLIE CONWAY, 29.

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

Mo gets out of the car, comes around. 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 still living at her place?

WILLIE
We're living together. Yeah --

MO
You're not engaged?

WILLIE
No.

MO
It's been, what, a year?

WILLIE
Eleven months. Going together for
eleven months. Living together for six.

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
You okay with this?

WILLIE
Fine. I'm fine.

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...

WILLIE
Hello, Dad --

PETE CONWAY
When'd you get in?

WILLIE
Just now. Mo picked me up.

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. 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.

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 disc into the deck. Boston. "Piece of Mind" off the first album...

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. She's mentioned him to me before. 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?

INT. BIRDMAN/PAUL'S HOUSE - LATER - NIGHT

Willie and Paul come in with a 12-pack of Budweiser.

Birdman and Sharon are on the couch. Sharon's sleeping on
his lap. Birdman is watching a hockey game on ESPN.

PAUL
Look who's here --

BIRDMAN
(whispered)
Hey --

WILLIE
(whispered)
Hey, Birdie --

Birdman gestures to the slumbering Sharon... By way of
explanation:

BIRDMAN
(whispered)
She doesn't sleep too good. I'll check
you out later --

WILLIE
Okay --

Paul goes upstairs. Willie follows...

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
She hates me... Says she wants nothing to do with me ever again --

WILLIE
What are you gonna do?

PAUL
Don't you worry your pretty little head about it, bro. I got it wired... 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 great. But the one thing about her--

PAUL
(interrupting)
Ah, they're all fuckin' sisters, man, I swear... You piano playing?

WILLIE
A few lounge things. Nothing steady. Birdman and Sharon still 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
We need models --

WILLIE
What do you mean?

PAUL
(points to wall)
Models. They're beautiful; they always
travel so you don't have to see 'em that
much; they make tons of money. Those
fuckers that date models have got it
made, 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..

INT. CONWAY HOUSE - DAY

Willie is on the phone in the kitchen...

WILLIE
(into phone)
... Yes, Mr. Gerron, I'm very
interested... Thank you... next Friday's
good. This way, I can assess some other
considerations and give you a confident
answer... No, sir... This is me being
decisive... To be truly decisive one has
to, uh, weigh the decisions... Great.
Thanks --

He hangs up the phone. Sighs.

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 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
weekend --

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 to the entrance...

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
the--

JAN

You're not funny, Paul --

PAUL

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

Jan ushers him further down the diner...

JAN

And I don't appreciate you burying my
driveway every time it snows like some
kind of drooling, obsessed lunatic with
nothing to live for except to torment me
because I decided to get on with my life
while you decided to destroy yours...

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 rump roast. 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 (CONT.)
Do you believe this?
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

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

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

JAN
I really don't think I should --

PAUL
This is beautiful. Just how I always
pictured it would be. Love in the
afternoon. Harps a-strumming,
angels-a-singing. The whole bit...

Jan snaps open the box. Inside is a RING. A big diamond
ring... A BROWN diamond ring.

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 30
driveways. 30 driveways and maybe two-
and-a-half sprinkler systems. Selfish?
I think not.

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 to her customers. 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?

BIRDMAN

A couple of months ago. Paul and Kev are there. You wanna go by?

WILLIE

Sure --

INT. THE JOHNSON INN - 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?
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
menu... Apps...

WILLIE
"Apps?"

BIRDMAN
He's got all the lingo down...

STINKY
Appetizers. We got apps...

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

STINKY
Hey, we got a piano. Maybe later 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 C.! Welcome home, bud.

WILLIE

Hey, Kev --

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

Paul's buying the drinks, huh, Kev?

Willie picks up the ring...

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.

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?

WILLIE

Guys --

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 --

An oblivious Stinky comes out of the kitchen, wielding two
trays of potato skins, buffalo wings, fried calamari...

STINKY
(Arthur Godfrey)
Free apps! I got free apps!

WILLIE
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...

WILLIE
Hey --

MARTY
Willie Boy...

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

MARTY
Yep.

WILLIE
What are you doing?

MARTY
Chillin'...

WILLIE
No school?

MARTY
It's kind of Saturday --

WILLIE
Oh, yeah --

She stomps on another snow pile...

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

WILLIE
Why do you ask?

MARTY
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...

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

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
Sort of --

MARTY
You don't --

WILLIE
Not sure --

MARTY
She fat?

WILLIE
No, she's quite nice actually --

MARTY
So marry her --

WILLIE
Oh, okay. I knew I came home for a
reason. Thank you...

MARTY
That's it. Tease the little kid...

WILLIE
Sorry...

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

WILLIE
Yeah. You sort of are --

INT. BIRDMAN/PAUL'S HOUSE - BIRDMAN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Birdman and Sharon under the covers. Making love... Birdman
looks to be a million miles away... Sharon watches him...

Birdman opens his eyes... Sees her stare... Stops...

BIRDMAN
What -- ?

SHARON

It would be nice - if just once - 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

It's not what you think --

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

(bad liar)

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...

BIRDMAN

Trenches... I dig trenches...

SHARON

Either way - you don't come into contact with new people. New, young people. You come into contact with suburban families and construction workers. Once in a while, if the stars are in your favor, they'll hire a cute girl at the hardware store or the lawn center... Otherwise, forget it. 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 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

He looks after her. Then yanks the covers over his head. Hiding out.

INT. GINA'S HAIR - CENTER OF TOWN - NIGHT

It's snowing outside the window of this two-chair BEAUTY SALON... Mo's two fat children run amok... Their mother, LISA, 26, attempts to calm them.

Sharon sits in one chair, weeping. Gina sits by her.

LISA

So are you guys broken up?

Sharon merely continues to cry...

GINA

Are you crying just to avoid us?

SHARON

Please. Be my friends and don't make me feel stupid about this for a while...

GINA

You must break up with him. You must. You've got to start now, Sharon. The getting over him part. It's hard, I know... Believe me, I know...

She looks to Lisa... Lisa looks to Sharon. Somewhat sadly:

LISA

She's right --

Sharon merely continues to cry --

GINA

At first, after a break-up, you'll have these visions. Visions of you, the fifty-seven-year-old, unmarried you: you're a librarian; hair in a bun; potato sack dresses; the neighborhood kids call you "The Spinster." And every night you go to your little room, heat up a can of soup-for-one and lament over the cobwebs crowding your womb...

LISA

Yecch... !

GINA

But these visions fade away... Really... It takes time. But you will get over him. It'll take two years. You'll be 29... It would be better if you were younger. If you were, say, 24 now, you'd be 26 when you got over him... But we don't get to choose these things...

LISA

They choose us...

GINA

So 29...

LISA

That's not exactly ancient...

GINA

That's not exactly 30...

LISA

Which is good...

GINA

Which is very good...

SHARON

You can say what you want - and I admit it looks bad - but no one knows what it's like when it's just the two of us... You know, behind closed doors...

LISA

Okay. That's fair. So how is it?

SHARON

Not so good lately...

GINA

The man can't commit. The man can't commit. The man can't commit...

SHARON

How come every time a relationship doesn't work out, we say it's cos they can't commit. Shouldn't we shoulder some of the responsibility?

Her friends look stunned. Lisa slaps a hand over her mouth... Gina crosses herself...

GINA

That's just the grief talking... That's not you...

LISA

That's not Sharon Cassidy...

GINA

It's just a girl - a grief-stricken girl - who happens to look like Sharon Cassidy...

LISA

I'm still not sure if they're broken up.

GINA

Oh, they're broken up all right. Shar?

Sharon looks up from between her tears...

SHARON

Tommy's birthday is next week. Maybe I'll have a surprise party for him --

GINA

Shar --

SHARON

Will you guys help me organize it?

Gina and Lisa. A look.

SHARON (CONT.)

Will you -- ?

Gina shakes her head. Sighs.

GINA

Sure, Sharon --

LISA

Whatever you want...

EXT. JAN'S DUPLEX - LATER - NIGHT

Paul and Elle Macpherson are parked in his truck in front of Jan's... He slides a CD into the deck... Black Sabbath.

"Paranoid" ("Finished with my woman/cos she couldn't help me with my mind... ")

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

Willie and Mo sip their coffee at the table... Lisa shows Willie a framed PHOTO of Lisa and the kids on a boat in a lake...

LISA

... and then Michael and my father fell off the boat and into the lake, but he still managed to get the picture...

MO

It was classic...

WILLIE

Sounds it...

Lisa laughs...

LISA

So have you been working much, Willie?

WILLIE

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 back 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 never 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. And 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 lumpen 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

I prefer to think of it as diverse --

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

Willie and Birdman stand outside, as Gina locks the door of the salon. Willie holds her dry cleaning; Birdman her groceries...

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 tits have small asses... You guys are force-fed every day
(MORE)

GINA (cont'd)
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. 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
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... 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. 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.
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

Eat me. 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. Birdie. Sharon's the real deal. Darian Smalls is just some poor excuse for a goddess. But she farts and you act as though you've fallen into a rose garden. 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... Remember: behind every beautiful girl, there's a guy who's bored of fucking her...

She returns the mag to the shelf...

GINA (CONT.)

(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 the road home from school. He pulls over.

WILLIE
Get in --

MARTY
I'm not supposed to accept rides from
strangers...

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, to even
further enrich/improve his squid state.

WILLIE
What do you want to be when you grow up?

MARTY
Easy, cowboy. I'm still trying 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... Def Leppard's "Love And Affection" on the
deck...

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, Kev 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...

AT THE BAR - a half-dozen TOWNIES, men in their fifties, in
boots and blue clothes, drink the hard day's work from their
bones...

Paul gestures to the townies...

PAUL
Check it: Husky Pete and Rizzo and
Sammy B. and all them. Work all day.
Drink all night. For forty fucking
years. And two weeks of every year they
(MORE)

PAUL (cont'd)
take a vacation - go to the Cape and
drink all day and drink all night.

BIRDMAN
This little observation contain anything
resembling a point?

PAUL
Yes, Birdman. If we don't watch out -
if we don't step up - we're gonna be
just like Husky Pete and Rizzo and Sammy
B. and all them...

Beat. The fellas study the old townies...

KEV
Cool...

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...

BIRDMAN
What is that?

KEV
That is all good --

Willie picks up an imaginary phone. Speaks into it:

WILLIE
Hello, Gina? Willie. They do exist.

He hangs up the phantom phone. Stinky walks by them --

PAUL
Stink, who's the vixen?

STINKY
My cousin. She's visiting from Chicago.

KEV
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 a serious boyfriend --

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

STINKY
Lemme introduce you --

He goes to fetch her... They five of them sit there, making
last minute adjustments...

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, Kev, Mo
and Birdman. Guys, this is Andera --

ANDERA
Hello --

The fellas mumble hellos to ANDERA --

WILLIE
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
What part of Chicago are you from?

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...

PAUL
That's great. Advertising's great --

They all nod in agreement... Andera shrugs...

ANDERA
I'm into that. Creating it gently.
Seeing beyond tomorrow. Playing for
silver. Playing for gold...
(beat)
What are you guys into?

Willie, Kev, Mo, and Paul merely stare at her in open-mouthed
trances... Birdman smiles...

BIRDMAN
Right now, I think they're into comas.

Andera smiles. A smile you'd eat through a wall of maggots
just to look at...

BIRDMAN (CONT.)
Paul and I own our own businesses.
Landscape/Construction. Kev works with
me. Mo is a plant manager - textiles.
Willie here is musician...

ANDERA
What do you play?

WILLIE
The piano.

ANDERA
Right on. Will you play something?

WILLIE
Nah --

ANDERA
Come on --

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

Willie goes to the piano. Mo, Kev and Andera follow him over.
Paul smacks Birdman....

PAUL
What'd you have to go and tell her he
played the piano, 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, he looks like he's
attempting an intimate communication with the piano - at
least during the softer passages...

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

Paul looks suicidal.

INT. PAUL'S TRUCK - - MOVING - LATER - NIGHT

Paul drives Willie and Kev...

PAUL
Aw, man... She was the best... Total
R.T.C. babe... Total...

WILLIE
R.T.C.?

PAUL
Reason To Continue, man. Total Reason
To Continue... God-damn... "Creating it
gently." What did that mean? I don't
even know what that means, but she said
it, I got serious wood...

KEV
She looks weird here in The Ridge...

WILLIE
She does...

PAUL

Oh, yeah... She's like an alien... She's like from fuckin' Venus... Somewhere around here, there's a little space pod thing, covered in brush, that'll take her back to her planet after her mission is complete... And my mission is to make her mission - me...

He cackles to himself and fires up a butt... Kev shrugs to Willie...

INT. BIRDMAN'S TRUCK - MOVING - NIGHT

Birdman drives Mo home... Mo's drunk...

MO

I mean, she wasn't that nice, was she?

BIRDMAN

She was pretty nice...

Beat...

MO

I think you can go crazy with this whole thing...

BIRDMAN

What whole thing... ?

MO

The women thing... Too many... Too many women...

BIRDMAN

What the fuck are you talking about?

MO

The thing... The whole thing... A guy could get thousands of women and still want that one more... It's like a problem... Some analogy could be made but I can't, uh, make it, right now... You want this one, and this one, and this one... It's bullshit... Get the one - the one woman - and just... stay...

BIRDMAN

Stay? Stay where -- ?

MO

Stay...

(searches for the word)

... true...

BIRDMAN
"True?"

MO
(nods)
True...

Mo nods drunkenly... Leans against the window...

Birdman studies him for subtext... Drives on...

INT. KELLY'S MOBIL STATION - DAY

A gas station near the center of town... Keve 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 (CONT.)
Check it out - Dragon Lady...

Willie can see DARIAN SMALLS pumping gas...

KEV (CONT.)

I was in a bar. With Ducky Lowe and Jay Steeves. 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, Kristen, 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

Kristen. Kristen, say hi to Willie --

Kristen hugs her mother's leg --

WILLIE

Cute kid --

DARIAN

Thanks. So what are you back for?

WILLIE
I dunno. Hang out. See the guys. Go
to the tenth. Whatever...

DARIAN
You're still in New York?

WILLIE
Yeah...

Kristen is tugging at Darian's belt, whining...

DARIAN
Wait a minute, honey --

Willie smiles at the adorable little girl...

WILLIE
She is something. You gonna have more?

DARIAN
I don't know. 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, Kristen --

Kristen 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

Nothin'. 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

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

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 Entennman'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 - NIGHT

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

WILLIE
(into phone)
I told him I'd let him know... I mean,
what the hell... He's waited this
long... Exactly... Okay... Call me
tomorrow... Bye -- !

He hangs up...

MO
Was that Tracy?

WILLIE
Yeah --

KEV
She hot -- ?

WILLIE
She's nice.

Mo and Kev 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 --

WILLIE
Ohhh. I dunno. Let's see. Face--

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

KEV
I thought I was being Vile Guy --

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

WILLIE
What do you--

MO
Kelly Noonan --

WILLIE
Kelly Noonan? Uh, face - 6, body - 8
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 1/2,
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...

Paul comes downstairs...

PAUL
Are we gonna do this or what?

MO
Let's go --

And Mo and Kev follow Paul outside. Leaving Willie to
reflect, somewhat bemused, on his good, solid 7 1/2...

INT. BIRDMAN'S TRUCK - MOVING - NIGHT

Birdman and Sharon are dressed up fine. Birdman drives...

SHARON
The reservations are for 8:00, Tommy.
We're very late --

BIRDMAN
We're fine. Relax --

SHARON
The hostess said: if we're not there by
eight, they reserve the right to give
the table away --

Sharon grimaces slightly and grabs her belly...

BIRDMAN
So we'll go someplace else --

SHARON
You love "The Bearded Pony." I mean,
that's why I chose it. Cos I know you--

BIRDMAN
Sharon. Relax. You gotta relax,
babe --

This time, Sharon's grimace is more severe. She moans...

BIRDMAN (CONT.)
What's wrong -- ?

She sinks in her seat...

SHARON
Oh. Tommy. Oh. My stomach. Oh. I
feel... Please... Pull over...

BIRDMAN
What --

SHARON
I need to find a bathroom... There...
Ohhhh.... !

Up ahead, the SIGN for the local Veterans of Foreign War Hall
glows eternal...

BIRDMAN
Sharon, what's the--

SHARON
PULL OVER -- !

He slams the truck to a halt... Comes around to open the door
for her... She staggers from the truck...

BIRDMAN
See now, if you don't start really
fucking eating this is gonna happen all
the ti--

SHARON
Not now, Tommy. Christ, not now --

And she lurches past him toward the V.F.W. Hall...

Birdman follows...

EXT. V.F.W. HALL

Birdman and Sharon come to the dark entrance... She leans up against the front stoop, catching her breath...

SHARON
See if it's open...

Birdman walks past her... The door is open... But it is dark.
Birdman enters the

INT. V.F.W. HALL

Into the pitch... When, suddenly, the lights FLICK ON and

ALL
SURPRISE -- !

"Birthday" by The Beatles cranks over the stereo speakers...

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

There's a bar, the stereo set-up, banquet tables covered with
crabfeast accoutrements...

Birdman looks suitably shocked. Sharon creeps in behind
him... Kisses him...

BIRDMAN
You scared the shit out of me --

SHARON
I know. Wasn't I great -- ?

The crowd descends...

Paul heads for the stereo...

PAUL
I'm the DJ --

GINA
Oh, swell. Jethro Tull Weekend
begins --

INT. V.F.W. HALL - LATER

Tull's "Living In the Past" cranks on the stereo...

Birdman still wears his bib... He's devouring crab... He
watches Sharon in a cluster of girls... She's eating. Sure,
it's only a baked potato and an ear of sweet corn, but it's
something...

She catches his look... They share a smile... Sharon is
glowing... Shoot, Birdman probably is too...

PAUL

is working Andera...

PAUL

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

KEV

very drunk, walks over to Sharon and a few of the others...

KEV

... Sharon... You did the... It's a spectac, of... Everybody's arou-- the crabs can't really be... They're...

Birdman comes to his rescue...

BIRDMAN

I interpret for the drunk... What he's saying, Sharon, is thank-you for a terrific evening, the surprise was shocking and wonderfully executed, all of our friends are here, and the crabfeast added just the right touch... You are, without a doubt, the butterfly's boots...

Kev, stupefied, looks from Birdman to Sharon... Nods...

SHARON

Thank you, Kev... That's so nice of you.

Kev bows... Everyone laughs... Sharon throws her arms around Birdman's neck... Long kiss... Applause...

Sharon looks up and winces... For there, at the door to the hall, is

DARIAN SMALLS

looking lovely and carrying a small wrapped PRESENT.

And now everyone sees her... Birdman is stunned...

Darian walks, a little unsteadily, towards Birdman --

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.

Gina is florid...

GINA

I'll kill her --

She moves toward Darian... Sharon stops her...

SHARON

No... Don't... Let's just go --

GINA

No way, I'm gonna--

SHARON

Gina -- !

There's something in Sharon's voice... A quiet resolve... A conclusion in her eyes...

SHARON (CONT.)

Let's go --

GINA

That a girl --

And she heads for the exit. Gina and Lisa following --

BIRDMAN

Sharon -- !

But she's gone... Her friends with 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

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... Willie 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 a GIRL on to 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 an 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. The CUSTODIANS are 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...

STINKY

Sure...

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 -- 39... 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
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, you're scaring me here --

WILLIE
This is platonic. This is purely
platonic. This girl, though, is gonna
be amazing... A thing to behold... 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. Mo takes a pull off the bottle... Willie is a tad
teary now...

WILLIE
I dunno, man. I used to be a happy guy ~
Mo hands him the bottle. Willie takes a pull...

WILLIE (CONT.)
I just want something beautiful, Mo...

MO
Yeah. Well, who doesn't, Willie?

EXT. SHARON'S HOUSE - LATER - NIGHT

The house is dark. 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 went into tonight. Planning, money. And you drive off with another girl...

BIRDMAN

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

Movement behind Sharon's Mother. It is Sharon... Birdman sees her...

SHARON'S MOTHER

Sharon --

Sharon comes to the door... Still coolly resigned...

SHARON

I'm fine...

Sharon's mother walks into the recesses of the house...

SHARON (CONT.)

What -- ?

BIRDMAN

I just wanted to --

SHARON

You don't have to apologize, Tom. I'm fine...

BIRDMAN

No, but I --

SHARON

I feel okay. A little tired. I think I ate too much --

BIRDMAN

Sharon --

SHARON

No.

BIRDMAN

Can't we just--

SHARON

No.

And she closes the door.

Birdman nods and walks to his truck. Sharon opens the door and calls after him:

SHARON (CONT.)

Tommy --

He turns back --

SHARON (CONT.)

Happy birthday --

And she closes the door. And he stares... It's freezing out, though that's not why he shivers...

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

The 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, and Kev 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 C.! What up, bro -- ?

WILLIE

Hey, guys --

Willie notices that Paul and Kev are wearing the same clothes they had on last night --

WILLIE

You guys never went home last night -- ?

KEV

Came right here. The pike is runn in' so they tell us.

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 --

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.

PAUL (CONT.)

Oh, God --

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

MO

Whoooooooooooo -- !

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

dcisrc 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 Kristen, 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, Kristen! Stevie, this
is Willie Conway - buddy from high
school. Willie, Steve Rossmore,
Darian's hub --

WILLIE
Nice to meet you --

STEVEN
Likewise --

Paul slaps him on the back...

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

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-Dry-Heaving-Cheese-Eating-
Filth-Needing-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. 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...

My hero -- MARTY (CONT.)

She skates a circle around him, playful now --

You gonna marry that girl in NYC? MARTY (CONT.)

I don't know. Why? WILLIE

I don't think you should -- MARTY

How come? WILLIE

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

She may not be out there -- WILLIE

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

What do you mean? WILLIE

Me, Willie. Me and you. MARTY

Really? WILLIE

You don't think? MARTY

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

We have a little age problem -- WILLIE

MARTY

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

WILLIE

"What light through yonder window breaks/Tis the east and Juliet is the sun... "

MARTY

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

Willie laughs. Marty's 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 feelings for me are 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
(MORE)

WILLIE (cont'd)
and Piglet and all of them. 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...

... He 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 are we going?

PAUL
A little bar I know...

INT. "THE MOONLIGHT MILE" - SALOON - NIGHT

The corner bar Jan and Victor frequent. 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 and 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 it makes me crazy...

(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, first --

JAN & VICTOR

drink draft beers at their table... Jan watches as Paul and
Andera slow-dance to the Morrison 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... He takes her hand...

VICTOR (CONT.)
Not gorgeous like you... Extra-special
walking-talking-girl-of-my-dreams
gorgeous. But gorgeous just the same...

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.

Paul is suddenly transmogrified into Zorba The Greek...
Leading all in a festive dance... The joint erupts into
jubilant anarchy, Paul and Andera leading the charge...

INT. PAUL'S TRUCK - LATER - NIGHT

Paul is still flush with victory...

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're rather
pathetic, Paul. I wanted to help --

PAUL
Come on --

ANDERA
I'll see you later, Paul --

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

PAUL
What a bitch...

Beat. He considers. He rolls down the passenger window...

PAUL (CONT.)
(shouts)
I'll call you -- !
(beat)
Uh, thanks -- !

INT. BIRDMAN'S TRUCK - MOVING - LATER - NIGHT

He drives along this cold, deserted night. Supertramp's
"Take The Long Way Home" warbling from the deck...

Up ahead, in the darkness, walks a FIGURE.

It is Andera.

He pulls up alongside her. Their breath comes out in white
plumes, like comic-strip balloons...

BIRDMAN
What are you doing out so late?

ANDERA
I was with your friend. Paul.

BIRDMAN
He's not my friend. He lives in my
house. I got termites. I got roaches.
I got Paul. You want a lift?

ANDERA
No... It's nice to be able to walk after
dark...

BIRDMAN
It's one of the few perks of life in The
Ridge...

ANDERA
It's a good one...

He nods... Beat...

ANDERA (CONT.)
So why do they call you "Birdman?"

BIRDMAN
When I was a kid I used to jump off the
roof of our garage. I thought I could
fly.

ANDERA
Do you still?

BIRDMAN
What?

ANDERA
Think you can fly?

BIRDMAN
Sure. I just choose not to...

Beat...

BIRDMAN (CONT.)
Can I ask you a question?

ANDERA
Go --

BIRDMAN
How long you been going out with your
boyfriend?

ANDERA
Eight months. Why?

BIRDMAN
It's good?

ANDERA
It's very good.

BIRDMAN
He makes you happy?

ANDERA
Yeah. I look for that in a man. The
ones that make me miserable... They
don't seem to last...

BIRDMAN
Right...

ANDERA

I like to hear four words before I go to sleep. Four words. "Good Night, Sweet Girl." That's all it takes. I'm a sucker, I know. But a guy who can muster up those four words (or, at the very least, a reasonable facsimile of those four words), is a guy I want to be with...

Andera shrugs. Smiles. It's freezing. She rubs her nose with one mittened hand... Even red-faced and runny-nosed, she may just be the loveliest thing in the universe...

BIRDMAN

You know: even red-faced and runny-nosed, you may just be the loveliest thing in the universe...

ANDERA

I know...

BIRDMAN

It's cool that you know...

ANDERA

I know...

BIRDMAN

It's cool that you know that it's cool that you know...

She nods...

ANDERA

We could...

BIRDMAN

... go on all night... Yeah...

ANDERA

I'll see ya --

BIRDMAN

See ya --

He watches her walk... Her tall figure disappearing into the frigid night air... He smiles to himself...

BIRDMAN (CONT.)

Good Night, Sweet Girl --

He sighs and puts the truck into gear, driving off down the silent street...

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...

WILLIE

Catcher --

KEV

When Tenace was on first? Ray Fosse...

WILLIE
Starting rotation --

KEV
James "Catfish" Hunter; Vida Blue;
Kenny Holtzman; John "Blue Moon" Odom;
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. MILLS PARK - DAY

Snow blankets this playground not far from the high school.

Kristen, 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
..... it's just that I gotta think of
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...

Kristen trundles over to them. Climbs onto one of the swings

KRISTEN
Push me, Mommy --

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

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...

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

BIRDMAN
Maybe that's cos I don't show up bombed at your birthday parties...

KRISTEN
Push me -- !

Darian begins to push Kristen on the swing... Through the following exchange, they only speak when Kristen is on the upswing...

DARIAN
Sharon knew way before then --

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

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

Kristen's soaring now... She's squealing in delight...

BIRDMAN
I never, you know, ask you anything... Any questions... Never. But lemme ask you something, Darian: are you full of shit -- ?

DARIAN
What do you mean -- ?

The swing is a fuellly pendulum now, whip-fast...

BIRDMAN
Just generally. Me. Us. You're back in The Ridge. You're bored. That's what this is all about...

DARIAN
Don't flatter yourself. You're not that exciting. Unfortunately, I'm really into you...

Darian is oblivious to her daughter's aeronautics... She's focused on Birdman...

DARIAN (CONT.)
I was wrong. What I did. Saturday night. It was bad. I hurt Sharon. I never meant to hurt Sharon. I was alone. You were with your friends. It was your special night. I wanted to be there. I'm sorry...

Are those tears in her eyes... ? Birdman studies her...
Completely confused now...

BIRDMAN
Yeah, well... I dunno if I believe you...

DARIAN
Your problem, Birdman, is that the only time you believe a woman is telling the truth is when she's telling you what a shit you are...

Birdman frowns - Darian is really pushing Kristen hard now...
Hard and high...

DARIAN (CONT.)
This is your "I Feel Guilt About Sharon" phase... We've seen it before, we'll see it again...

Birdman's P.O.V.: the swingset's main strut - Kristen's becoming treacherously parallel to it... And maybe she's becoming a little afraid...

DARIAN (CONT.)
I convinced Steven that the reunion would be a total bore for him... I assume Sharon won't be accompanying you --

And, at last, Darian notices her daughter's plight...

DARIAN (CONT.)
Jesus -- !

And she slows down the swing... Kristen is a little spooked but she's okay...

DARIAN (CONT.)
We'll both be there alone. We can cruise through together. Just like the old days... And we'll see if you've just broken up with me or not...
(to Kristen)
Let's go, baby --

Darian and Kristen walk off... Birdman watches them go...

Kristen turns back and gives him a huge gap-toothed grin...

INT. CONWAY HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

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

Willie is on the cordless phone...

WILLIE

(into phone)

... it's really up to you... It could be fun... as fun as a 10th year reunion can be...

He walks to the window... Outside, he can see Marty, chatting it up with her GIRLFRIENDS... She looks toward his house - sees him. Gives a barely-perceptible nod...

WILLIE (CONT.)

(into phone)

... No, of course I want you to come... You can meet some of the guys, explore exciting downtown Knight's Ridge... It's your call... Okay, it's our call... Yeah, sure... Think about it... I have thought about it... Right... Talk to you soon...

He hangs up... Both Pete and Dougie howl about a buzzer-beater on the TV. But it doesn't go in and they curse.

PETE CONWAY

Sonuvabitch!

DOUGIE

Motherfuck!

Willie sighs and heads out the door.

INT. THE JOHNSON INN - DAY

Stinky is behind the bar, lecturing a group of DRINKERS...

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...

DRINKER

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 just as easy as seeing one you liked 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 not meat, no fire, no wooly-mammoth blankets, cos Trog'll be out banging that Cro-Magnon bitch, Oogla --

INT. LAW OFFICES - DAY

Sharon is at her work station, phone HEADSET on... It rings.

SHARON

Mike Syatt's office...

BIRDMAN (O.S.)

I need to talk to you --

SHARON

No...

BIRDMAN (O.S.)

Go to the window... Just go to the window...

SHARON

Why?

BIRDMAN (O.S.)

Please -- ?

Beat... She considers...

SHARON
 (to another
 SECRETARY)
 Cover my phones, Sally --

And Sharon disengages her headset... Her phone is one of those portable jobbies... So she can walk down the bright hallway to the 2nd story windows, offering a full-view of the

EXT. PARKING LOT

below... where Birdman sits in his truck, on his cell-phone... He's parked near her Volkswagen convertible... It's snowing...

He sees her at the window. CROSS-CUT CONVERSATION AS NECESSARY...

BIRDMAN
 I, uh, I came by to... I wrote a note and I put it on your windshield... I just wanted to make sure you saw it... But then... It started snowing...

ANGLE: the Volkswagen windshield... A napkin note is under one wiper... The snow is making the ink run...

BIRDMAN
 ... and the ink's getting all... mooshy... I mean, it was sort of a mooshy note to begin with... Now, it's really mooshy...

SHARON
 Tommy --

BIRDMAN
 I'm just--

Two MEN in suits walk past her. She's instantly embarrassed.

MAN
 Hi, Sharon --

SHARON
 Hi --

They walk past... One of the men (yes, he's handsome) turns to look back at her... He smiles... And goes on his way...

BIRDMAN
 Who's that -- ?

SHARON
 Wait a sec --

EXT. OFFICE PARK

Birdman is outside his truck now... Sharon approaches...

SHARON

What -- ?

BIRDMAN

I, uh... I want to talk...

SHARON

What is there to talk about... ? Do you
feel like telling the truth... ?

BIRDMAN

Truth? What truth?

SHARON

What truth?

BIRDMAN

Sharon --

SHARON

Darian Smalls truth. For starters...

BIRDMAN

Darian Smalls truth. Darian Smalls
truth... Sharon... You're you...

He gestures to her...

BIRDMAN

And Darian is... Darian is... is... like
a...

He gestures to the empty air... Trying to conjure an image of
Darian...

SHARON

Fantasy -- ?

BIRDMAN

Yes. A fantasy --

SHARON

Oh, so this is all just a big fantasy
for you --

BIRDMAN

You said it... Why did you feed me the
word if wasn't going to work for you...?

SHARON

A fantasy --

BIRDMAN
Not a fantasy like that...

SHARON
You know what, Tommy: you don't need to do this... At all... Don't feel guilty... Just... Release me, okay? I was having a good day. Can't I have a good day... ? Can't I just be released?

BIRDMAN
Don't you wanna hear the note -- ?

SHARON
Not really.

BIRDMAN
(reading; rapid)
"If they told me the world was going to end in three minutes, I'd spend the first minute apologizing to my family and the next two with you..."

Sharon is momentarily taken aback...

SHARON
You think that up?

BIRDMAN
Yeah...

Beat. Then:

SHARON
I've got to get back...

BIRDMAN
Okay...

She starts for the office...

BIRDMAN
Shar -- ?

She turns...

BIRDMAN (CONT.)
Any of this do anything for me here?

She looks at him... Beat... She heads back for her office.
To himself:

BIRDMAN (CONT.)
I didn't think so --

Birdman leans back on his truck... Tilts his head to the sky and the falling snow...

ANGLE: the napkin note. Now an indecipherable smudge of ink and melted snow...

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

Paul is putting away his clean laundry... Willie sits on the bed...

PAUL

I spoke to Jan... And it was obvious to both of us, that she no longer cares... She stormed out of the bar on some knee-jerk level. Once she thought about it, she didn't give a shit... This was a revelation to me...

WILLIE

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

PAUL

No shit? Cool. I gotta get a date now

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

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. Hey, if she can cut her own food, she's fair game...

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 Jack and Coke all morning. She can make you feel high, full of the single greatest commodity known to man: promise. The--

Birdman is at the door...

BIRDMAN

What's 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...

BIRDMAN

(to Willie)

He speak to Jan, again -- ?

WILLIE

I'm afraid so --

PAUL

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...

BIRDMAN

This from a man who once said: "tits are like Beatles songs - there aren't any bad ones..."

PAUL

The supermodels - Cindy, Christy, Helena, Claudia, and the rest - that's all they are. Bottled promise. Scenes from a brand new day. Hope, dancing in stiletto heels...

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

PAUL
A beautiful girl is all-powerful. And
that's as good as love...

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... Really, really nice...

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' exact 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. 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

Right.

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 inevitably, 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...

WILLIE

I like fireworks and drumbeats...

ANDERA

Everyone does. But that gets replaced. By love. And understanding. And a sense of commitment and sharing...

Beat... Willie looks at her...

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

Hemorrhoid surgery. Pancreatic cancer. World War III...

WILLIE

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

Beat.

WILLIE (CONT.)

We don't make-out in restaurants anymore

ANDERA

What?

WILLIE

Me and Tracy. 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

I hate to be the bearer of bad news, Willie. But (now brace yourself) there is more to life than making out in restaurants...

Willie shrugs. Nods. Sighs...

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...

Beat. He sips from the bottle...

WILLIE (CONT.)
I look at you... And I think it's amazing that there's a guy out there who gets to do all kinds of shit with you... Gets to make you happy and see you in the morning and make you martinis and smell your skin after a day at the beach and pepper your belly with baby kisses and read the papers with you on rainy sundays... And then I think there's probably some guy out there who thinks the same thing... But about Tracy... And he's jealous of me and my getting to do all that with her... And it's like there's this endless chain of other guys dreaming about other women in some other world... And, I dunno about you, Andera, but the whole thing kinda makes me crazy

INT. GINA'S HAIR - DAY

As Gina rants, she's working on a SERIES OF WOMEN, getting them ready for the reunion...

GINA
Are you excited? I'm fairly pumped. The cool thing about reunions is that they are the ultimate equalizers...

Another CUSTOMER is in the chair...

GINA (CONT.)
Everyone is transformed. No one left untouched. The studs become tired mopes. The nerds become large sword rattlers. The head cheerleader lives in a trailer park.

Another...

GINA (CONT.)

The ugly duckling wears smart suits and sexually harasses her handsome assistant. The class slut becomes a man. It's totally terrific.

Yet another...

GINA (CONT.)

Did you hear? Stinky Womack's cousin, Andera? Beautiful girl. Face belongs on the side of a coin, I swear. Willie Conway got her out to the Mac's Pond Ice shack...

And one more...

GINA (CONT.)

... And he got no play whatsoever... No kidding... Typical Willie Conway behavior... Get a girl to a lonely spot... And then talk her ear off... It's like I always say: "Talk is for gameshow hosts. Let's get naked..."

INT. GINA'S HAIR

Gina sits in her chair, exhausted, enjoying a cigarette...

The door jangles. Darian Smalls has entered the salon...

GINA (CONT.)

Hello, Darian --

DARIAN

Hi, Gina... Marlene got food poisoning. Could you fit me in... ?

GINA

You want me to do your hair -- ?

DARIAN

Desperate times call for desperate measures...

GINA

I used to do your hair. Remember? Before you became an enormous snot...

DARIAN

I've always been an enormous snot, Gina.

Darian sits down in the chair... Gina covers her with a smock and selects a nasty pair of shears... They exchange a look in the mirror. Two imperious faces.

Gina licks her chops... Approaches Darian's head... Makes a SNIP... A huge clot of hair falls to the floor...

The two stare at the mass of hair. Gina looks shocked...

GINA

Omigod! I actually did it. Oh, boy...
If you wanna call the cops, I
understand... Jesus... I, uh... I can
fix it...

DARIAN

It's going to take some serious sorcery
to compensate for that clump of hair...

GINA

I can do it... I can do it, I swear...

Gina eyeballs Darian's squash. And sets to cutting like a lady.

EXT. CONWAY HOUSE - DAY

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

TRACY STEWART, 29

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

TRACY

Hey, there --

WILLIE

Hey, baby --

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...

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-bash. 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.)

365 nights a year I do shit. The one
night. The one lousy night. Tape it
for me?

BIRDMAN

Nope.

PAUL

Birdie --

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 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 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. THE JOHNSON INN - NIGHT

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

... For, at a SIDE TABLE, Steven 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. MO'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Mo is really sucking them down. Lisa looks concerned...

LISA
You're drinking too much --

MO
I know.

LISA
What's the matter?

MO
I'm worried. I worry. I'm a worrier.

LISA
What are you worried about?

MO
The guys. They're all miserable --

LISA
Are you miserable?

MO
No. But when you're friends are
miserable you get that much closer to
miserable.

LISA
I think that's sweet --

MO
I think it's miserable --

ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE ROOM - Paul grabs Willie --

PAUL
C'mere --

Paul drags him over to one corner of the room...

PAUL (CONT.)
Did you hear? Andera went back to
Chicago. She was supposed to stay
through the reunion, but she just up and
left...

WILLIE
Really?

PAUL
What did you do to her in that shack?

WILLIE
I told you. We just talked...

PAUL
You told her things, didn't you?

WILLIE
What things?

PAUL
You let her behind the curtain, didn't you?

WILLIE
Maybe she missed her boyfriend...

PAUL
You let her behind the curtain. You did. I know you did. You never let 'em behind the curtain. You never let 'em see the little old man behind the curtain working the levers of the Great And Powerful Oz... They're all sisters... And they aren't allowed back there... They mustn't see...

WILLIE
Tell me the truth: do you stay up nights thinking about this shit?

PAUL
You say it like it's a bad thing --

INT. THE JOHNSON INN

Birdman finishes his beer. A HAND is on his shoulder. He turns around. Steven 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?

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 -- ? I think it'll just make you
look like a fuckin' mutt --

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

STEVEN
I'll be outside --

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

BIRDMAN
Shit.

EXT. THE JOHNSON INN

Steve panthers the parking lot. Birdman comes out --

BIRDMAN
Steve, we don't gotta--

The frat boys are there. Fists bunched. Ready...

And the frat boys are in his face.

BIRDMAN (CONT.)
Arrright... Come on then - I'm rootin'
for you guys. I swear to God, I'm
rootin' for ya --

And Birdman whirls on them...A flurry of punches... His rage
is corporeal...

BIRDMAN (CONT.)
You like this... ? You like it... ?
Welcome to the Machine. Woo-hoo! Are
we having fun yet? Do ya love me -- ?

Steve Rossmore runs back into The Inn...

BIRDMAN (CONT.)
Stevie, where you going? It's a party.
Big fun. Big fun. Big fun...

Frat boy blood is spilled... The Birdman can fight... He's frenzied, furious... He continues to pummel them... When --
-- WHUMP! Birdman is hit from behind.

By Steve Rossmore. Holding a large BEER MUG.

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

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

INT. MO'S HOUSE

Stinky hangs up the telephone... Everyone is huddled around him...

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

LISA
Michael -- !

Mo groans like a walloped walrus... Willie comes into the room from the bathroom....

WILLIE (CONT.)
What's going on -- ?

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

PAUL
C'mon, man -- !

Stinky, Paul, Gina 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 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 --

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

GIRL #2

The Rossmore guy. You know, with the hot wife? Him and his buddies. 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

Arright. Wait, 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 --

INT. SHERATON HOTEL - FUNCTION ROOM - BOSTON - CLASS REUNION

Some 200 PEOPLE, all nearing 30, are gathered here... Several BARS, a DJ set-up, tables and chairs...

Darian Smalls walks through. Her haircut is slightly ridiculous. Gina tried her best, but...

Darian looks for Birdman... Looks for any of the others...

But they are not here... Darian is alone... The queen is without a court... And she looks none too happy of the fact.

She goes to a chair against a rear wall. She sits down next to a fat MAN, also alone against the wall...

FAT MAN

You used to be Darian Smalls...

DARIAN
That's right...

FAT MAN
I'm Peter Gropeman. You remember me?

DARIAN
No...

FAT MAN
I had a weight problem. You used to call me "Peter The Eater." You made me cry in 7th grade...

DARIAN
I did?

FAT MAN
You told an entire classroom that you could hear me coming a mile away by the sound my thighs rubbing together made when I walked...

DARIAN
I said that?

FAT MAN
Yep.

DARIAN
I'm sorry --

Peter The Eater shrugs... beat...

FAT MAN
You here alone?

DARIAN
I... I guess...

FAT MAN
That's kinda weird. Darian Smalls. Here alone... God, you was somethin' in them days... Beautiful... You was beautiful... But, you don't mind me sayin', mean as a snake... You was mean as a snake...

Darian nods... Beat... Peter The Eater nods, too... They sit and watch their classmates dance and eat and drink...

And soon they're lost to us amidst the swell of bodies inebriated with nostalgia...

EXT. KNIGHT'S RIDGE ROADS / INT. PAULS' 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 the
bastard --

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
(MORE)

STEVEN (cont'd)
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!

PAUL
Easy, Mo --

HEADLIGHTS coming up the long drive... A BMW, loaded with
lineman... Steve having called them 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 look at 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 sings 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... Mo giggles... Steve is horrified...

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

PAUL
You rock, Johnny...

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 --

KRISTEN (O.S.)
Daddy -- ?

She is at the door... In her nightie... Looking for 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.

KRISTEN

Daddy? What -- ?

Kristen 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 back 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 Kristen...

STEVEN

Go inside, honey. Everything's okay --

Willie and Paul climb into the truck. The frat-guys scream on 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. TRENDY BISTRO - NIGHT

An upscale joint. Yuppies and endive. Sharon sits at a two-top with a DATE - (perhaps the man from her office who smiled at her). Late-30s, with an attractive, why-is-he-still-single? look about him...

Gina enters the restaurant, a little breathless. Scours. She sees Sharon and her date...

GINA

Hey --

SHARON

What are you doing here, Gina -- ?

GINA

We have a little--
(to the date)
Gina Barrisano --

DATE

Brian Donnelly...

They shake hands... Gina studies BRIAN... She likes what she sees...

SHARON

Gina -- ?

GINA

God, this is killing me... Brian, you're an inch from perfect. Sharon's the best. Do not let what will soon occur, in any way prevent you from allowing this relationship to evolve. Okay?

SHARON

Gina -- !

GINA

Shit. Okay. Birdman got himself all beat-up. Steve Rossmore. He's at Grover...

Without a moment's hesitation, Sharon is out of her chair...

SHARON

I'm sorry, Brian... I've got to go...

GINA

(to Brian)

Told ya --

BRIAN

Can I give you guys a lift?

SHARON

We're fine... Let's go, Gina...

Sharon heads for the door... Gina lags behind...

GINA

Think of this as a glitch. A momentary lapse of reason, if you will...

Sharon calls to her from the exit...

SHARON
Gina -- !

GINA
Gotta run --

INT. GROVER HOSPITAL - WAITING ROOM - LATER - NIGHT

Kev, Tracy and Lisa wait...

Willie, Paul and Mo come in...

PAUL
How is he?

KEV
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.

KEV

Here we go --

They look up. Stinky is coming down the corridor.

Everyone gets up and encircles him --

STINKY

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 -- ?

STINKY

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 --

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 disc in the deck. A sad song. John Cougar's "Ain't Even Done With The Night." Paul begins to cry to the tune, which will play throughout the remaining scenes of this evening...

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 that sales job...

TRACY
I don't think you should...

WILLIE
You don't... ?

TRACY
Piano players are sexy. Salesmen are...
uncles...

WILLIE
Uncles aren't sexy...

TRACY
Not usually...

Beat. She pulls him to her... Into a long kiss... They begin
to make love... Willie stops it for:

WILLIE
This is too weird. This is my boyhood
bedroom --

TRACY
You never had sex in here?

WILLIE
Not with another person --

She laughs. They kiss. Still the Cougar song plays: "Well,
it's time to go home/And I ain't even done with the night..."

INT. BIRDMAN'S ROOM - NIGHT

Sharon sits by Birdman's bed... He's awake but sluggish...

BIRDMAN
So?

SHARON
Are you in a lot of pain -- ?

BIRDMAN
I'm arrright. You look nice...

SHARON
I came from a date --

BIRDMAN
Yeah?

SHARON
Yeah.

BIRDMAN
A good guy?

SHARON
He's okay...

BIRDMAN
Where'd you go?

SHARON
Carlotti's...

BIRDMAN
I haven't been there in years... You eat?

SHARON
A salad.

BIRDMAN
A salad.

Beat.

BIRDMAN (CONT.)
It's weird...

SHARON
What is?

BIRDMAN (CONT.)
I'm laying here... And I'm wondering how I got to here... I don't mean this thing with Rossmore; this hospital... I mean, in general... How I got to here... How I'm really not anything like what I hoped I'd be... I'm not even close to the guy I thought I'd be... It kinda blows...

SHARON
Tommy --

BIRDMAN
But I gotta tell you - when I think
about it... When I imagine it... That
guy... Close to that guy... There's,
uh... This girl next to him... With
him... And she... I dunno... She looks
sorta like you...

SHARON
"Sorta?"

BIRDMAN
Exactly. Exactly sorta.

Tears stand in Birdman's eyes...

BIRDMAN (CONT.)
Wow. Must be the medication...

SHARON
Then let's get more of it...

They smile...

BIRDMAN
Look everybody - my baby's beside me...

She kisses his forehead... Fixes his blankets.

SHARON (CONT.)
How's that?

BIRDMAN
All good... That's all good...

EXT. JAN'S DUPLEX - NIGHT

CONTINUE MUSIC. Paul is really weeping now. 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...

EXT. HOSPITAL - DAY

Early the next morning. Willie walks from the parking lot to the entrance... He sees Gina, waiting out front, sitting in a wheelchair, something of a stupor...

WILLIE
What are you doing?

GINA
I figured out the fourth biggest lie --

WILLIE
What do you mean?

GINA
You know - there's "The Check Is In The Mail." "I Love You." "I Won't Come In Your--

WILLIE
Yeah, yeah, I know. So what's number four?

GINA
"No, no, really... I love cats... "
Willie frowns... Gina shrugs...

WILLIE
I'll... see ya 'round, Gina --
He walks into the hospital... Gina doesn't even notice he's gone...

INT. HOSPITAL

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
I ran into Gina downstairs. I think she's having some kind of rage-withdrawal... You look excellent --

BIRDMAN
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. Willie gestures to Sharon --

WILLIE
How's she doing -- ?

BIRDMAN
She's okay --

WILLIE
She rocks, bro. You gonna fuck it up?

BIRDMAN
I'm sure. She's one of the good ones.
Don't we always manage to fuck up the
good ones... ?

WILLIE
Well, I know I've been fairly successful
at it... Take care, Birdman...

BIRDMAN
Come back and visit more often --

Sharon stirs. Wakes. Sees Willie --

SHARON
Hi --
(to Birdman)
You okay?

Birdman nods. Then: 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, tell 'em I said
goodbye...

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 Jan and Victor are engaged --

WILLIE

Jeez... How do you feel?

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...

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, Pooh --

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
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...

TRACY
You okay?

Willie looks at her. Considers. Then:

WILLIE
Yeah. I think I am...

TRACY
Good. 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
Stay cool, Willie C.! Stay forever
cool!

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

Kev watches them go... He cracks a beer... Pours it into a
"KRISTEN" mug... He notices something on his windshield... He
sticks his hand out the window...

It's starting to snow...

KEV (CONT.)
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