

BIRDMAN

(A Comedy)

The Unexpected Virtue of Ignorance

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IN THE DARKNESS

The sound of breathing. In and out. In and out.

RIGGAN (V.O.)

(Whispering.)

Breathing in, I am calm. Breathing out, I ease myself. Breathing in, I am calm. Breathing out, I--

(In a slightly different voice. Louder.)

Don't think.

(Another breath.

Whispering.)

Breathing in, I am calm. Breathing out, I ease my--

(Louder.)

No thinking. Just breathe.

MAN (V.O.)

This place--

RIGGAN (V.O.)

(Whispering.)

Breathing in, I am--

(Louder.)

Stop thinking. Stop thinking.

Another breath.

MAN (V.O.)

What is that--

RIGGAN (V.O.)

(Whispering.)

Breathing out, I ease myself.

Breath--

(Louder.)

Stop thinking. Stop thinking. Stop saying *stop thinking*. Why do you keep saying *stop thinking*?

MAN (V.O.)

This place smells like balls.

RIGGAN (V.O.)

Fuck!

INT. RIGGAN'S DRESSING ROOM - THEATER - DAY

Close on the face of Riggan Thomson (55). His eyes shoot open. He takes a deep breath and then closes his eyes again.

MAN (V.O.)

We don't belong in this shithole.

Eyes open, desperate.

RIGGAN

(To himself.)

Don't. Just don't.

He closes his eyes again and forces himself to focus. Silence. Eventually his eyelids begin to flutter. His breath becomes measured. We slowly move around him and face the dressing table mirror where we see his reflection. He is only wearing white, short underwear. But that's not what grabs our attention. We move closer to discover that his whole body... Is it floating a few inches off the chair? He is levitating!

The silence is broken by the sound of a Skype call. One ring. Two. Three. Riggan slowly opens his eyes. Then he collapses off the edge of the chair and onto the floor. Irritated he marches to the computer and answers the call.

On the screen we see Christina (19). She stands in a Korean Deli among the flowers. She talks to Riggan through her iPhone. The Korean Store owner stands in the background yelling at her the whole time.

RIGGAN (CONT'D)

Christina, I can't talk to you right--

CHRISTINA

Dad? What kind of--

(Turning to Korean.)

SHUT UP!!!

(Back to screen.)

What kind of flowers did you say you wanted?

RIGGAN

Alchemillas. Or something soothing that smells nice. Listen, I'm in the middle of--

CHRISTINA

It all smells like fucking *Kimchi*!

RIGGAN

Then whatever looks nice. Use your head. Anything but roses. No roses.

KOREAN

Flowers don't need you touch! They need you buy!!!

CHRISTINA
I hate this job.

And the Skype call is over. Riggan leans on a table trying to regain his calm. He catches a glimpse of his watch.

RIGGAN
Shit...

He throws on a sweater as he stumbles into his slacks. He leans on the table and slips on his shoes, suddenly catching sight of his reflection once again.

RIGGAN (CONT'D)
Jesus Christ...

He grabs a tube of expensive face cream and urgently massages it into the wrinkles around his eyes. He murmurs something almost imperceptibly. He slams the tube of face cream down and storms out. We follow him...

INT. HALLWAYS - THEATER - CONTINUOUS

...through the narrow corridors. Eventually, we begin to hear voices, becoming more clear as Riggan approaches them.

LESLEY (O.S.)
He beat me up one night. He dragged me around the living room by my ankles, yelling "I love you, I love you, *bitch*." What do you do with a love like that?

*

RALPH (O.S.)
How is that-- That is not love and you know it. Why do you insist on calling it--

LESLEY (O.S.)
You can say what you want but I know what it was.

*

Riggan picks up his pace, until he arrives...

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INT. STAGE - THEATER - CONTINUOUS

*

...to the stage. Suddenly he is in the midst of an Americana style kitchen. Around a table are Lesley (35), Laura (35) and Ralph (40). They drink from highball glasses as they chat...

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RALPH
 Terri's a romantic. Terri is of the
 'kick-me-so-I'll-know-you-love-me'
 school.

Lesley stares wide-eyed at Ralph.

RALPH (CONT'D)
 Hon, don't look at me that way. The
 man threatened to kill me.

LAURA
 How did we even get started on this
 subject?

RALPH
 (to Riggan)
 What about you, Nick? Does that
 sound like love to you?

Riggan casts a curious glance at Ralph.

RIGGAN
 I'm the wrong person to ask. I
 didn't know the man. I've only
 heard his name mentioned in
 passing.
 (pensive)
 I wouldn't know. You'd have to know
 the particulars. But I think what
 you're saying is that love is
 absolute.

RALPH
 The kind of love I'm talking about
 is... The kind of love I'm talking
 about, you don't try and kill
 people.

LESLEY
 Kill people? Mel, have another
 drink, will ya?

Riggan spots Christina in the wings holding a wrapped bouquet
 of flowers. Riggan nods her away. She storms off, irritated.

RALPH
 Ask her what he did after she left.
 Go 'head. Tell them.

LESLEY
 When I left he drank rat poison.
 They took him to the hospital in
 Santa Fe, and saved his life.
 (MORE)

LESLEY (CONT'D)

But his gums-- I don't know how to--
They pulled away from his teeth.

LAURA

Oh, my god. That's-- *Oh, my god.*

RIGGAN

(As the director.)

Laura. Baby. I love you. Right? But
a little less 'valley girl' and a
little more, well, human being.

LAURA

(Totally different, but
the same.)

Oh, my god.

RIGGAN

Yeah. Let's just keep going.

RALPH

Well, it doesn't matter now. He's
dead.

LESLEY

He shot himself in the mouth. But
he screwed that up, too. Poor Ed.

RALPH

Poor Ed, my ass. The guy was
dangerous.

RIGGAN

How'd he screw it up if he killed
himself?

RALPH

(By the numbers.)

You should have seen the way we
lived in those days. Like
fugitives. I even--

RIGGAN

(As the director.)

Okay. Let's just-- Fugitives are on
the run. Fugitives are scared. Can
you give me a little more--

Ralph waves off Riggan as if to say he understands. He takes
a breath and dives in once again...

RALPH

(The same but louder.)
 You should have seen the way we
 lived in those days. Like
 fugitives. I even-- bought a gun.
 Do you believe that? Guy like me?

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Exasperated, Riggan stares out into the auditorium. From his
 POV we see his producer, Jake (60), who sits in the third
 row, his head tilted back, napping through their performance.

*

RALPH (O.S.) (CONT'D)

I kept it in the glove compartment.

Now Riggan turns to the wings where a stage hand reads the
 sports pages. Next to him, at the stage manager's podium,
 Annie (35) turns a page of the script as she flicks M&M's
 into her mouth. Finally, Riggan's attention turns back to
 Ralph.

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*

RALPH (CONT'D)

Sometimes I'd have to go into the
 hospital at two or three in the
 morning.

Riggan watches Ralph act and sees the whole production headed
 down the drain. He's just that bad.

RALPH (CONT'D)

I never knew if he was going to
 come out of the bushes or from
 behind a car and just start
 shooting. The man was crazy. He was
 capable of anything.

Silence. The actors all wait for a cue from Riggan, who is
 just staring up into the lights above the stage. Laura
 finally picks up his line.

LAURA

Christ. Did he ever do anything?

RALPH

He used to call my service at all
 hours and say he needed to talk to
 the doctor. And when I'd return the
 call, he'd say...

(Over the top.)

"Son of a bitch. Your days are
 numbered."

Silence. Ralph looks over to Riggan.

RALPH (CONT'D)

Too much? Little bit? I just wanted
to give you a range, so you could--

And with that a light comes barreling down from it's perch
and, like a boulder, crashes into Ralph's head. Silence.

LAURA

Holy shit.

Annie along with Lesley run over to Ralph who is knocked out
cold. Not knowing what to do, they stare at him. *

LESLEY

Is he breathing?

ANNIE

I don't know.

Jake has just woken up from the noise and walks between the
seats.

JAKE

Someone call 911!

Riggan stands, lost in thought. Annie claps her hands loudly
over Ralph's face. *

LAURA

Is that blood coming out of his
ear? *

JAKE

Damn it!

(To Riggan.)

Why aren't you saying anything? *

RIGGAN

It was an accident.

Riggan looks back up at the lights. The camera moves
following his POV up into the empty space left by the fallen
instrument. *

JAKE (O.S.)

*For the love of God! I could get a
black audience in this theater
faster than a doctor!* *

ANNIE (O.S.)

(Clapping.) *

Wake up! Wake up! *

The lighting changes almost imperceptibly, and the sounds we've been hearing after the incident disappear. As the camera keeps moving, a technician comes into frame, hanging from the roof, holding a new light. He tries to replace the one that fell. *

JAKE (O.S.) *

Riggan. Let me introduce you to-- *

Riggan. Are you listening to me? *

As the technician fastens the light to the grid, we track back down to the stage where we find that the kitchen has disappeared. It's the next day. Riggan paces on the bare stage wearing different clothing. Finally he turns to see Jake standing on the stage with Brice (35). *

JAKE (CONT'D)

Riggan, this is Brice, Ralph's understudy. He's been at rehearsals the last few weeks. *

BRICE

Mr. Thompson. I just wanted to say I am totally ready and I am so excited. This is-- This is an honor for me.

RIGGAN

That's great. Great. *

(To Jake.)

Take a walk with me.

JAKE

Alright, Brice. We'll see you later.

Brice prances away. Riggan heads off the stage. Jake chases after him and we follow them as...

INT. HALLWAY - THEATER - CONTINUOUS

...they walk through the corridor.

RIGGAN

Get him the fuck out of here.

JAKE

What? Our first preview is in three days. We need to-- *

RIGGAN

It was going to be a disaster. You know it, Jake.

(MORE)

RIGGAN (CONT'D)

Ralph was-- Is, the worst actor I've ever seen. And I worked on two Michael Bay films. The blood coming out of the ear was the most honest thing he's done so far.

JAKE

He wasn't *that* bad.

Riggan stops in his tracks and stares at Jake.

JAKE (CONT'D)

Okay, he was *fucking... atrocious*. But the preview...

Riggan begins marching away again.

RIGGAN

We're gonna have to postpone the first preview.

JAKE

What are-- Are you out of your mind? We have the press junket. People are buying tickets. We would have to refund all--

RIGGAN

So do it.

JAKE

Wait. Wait. *Fuck*. Wait.

(Beat.)

Why didn't you say something before? You've been rehearsing with the guy for two weeks. You could have--

RIGGAN

You're the one who said we needed him. TV star. Theatre pedigree. Sells tickets. *TV star*? What was he even in?

JAKE

'Zombie Court'. It started slow but it was really--

They arrive at Riggan's dressing room. Riggan stands in the doorway addressing Jake.

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RIGGAN

Listen to me. This happened for a reason. It wasn't an accident. I-- I made it happen.

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JAKE

Okay.

(Beat.)

Are you drunk?

*

RIGGAN

Look. Just go find me an actor. A good actor. How about Liev Schreiber?

JAKE

He is doing the "X Men pre-prequel."

RIGGAN

Michael Fassbender?

JAKE

Playing the baddie opposite Liev.

RIGGAN

Jeremy Renner?

*

Jake just stares at him.

RIGGAN (CONT'D)

What? They put him in a cape too? Fuck.

Riggan closes the door, but Jake stops it with his foot.

JAKE

He'll sue us. Ralph'll sue us, and he's got a case.

RIGGAN

Then make him go away.

JAKE

How do you suggest I do that?

RIGGAN

This is what you do, buddy. This is where you eat. You're the best. Remember the time that old lady tried to sue me because she said I ran over her foot?

JAKE

You actually did run over her foot.

RIGGAN

Not the point. You made her go away. Look at me. You're my lawyer, my producer and you're my only friend. We are going to make this work. Now get out there and do what you were born to do.

JAKE

What's that?

RIGGAN

I have no idea. But I have faith. Now go away from me.

Riggan slams the door shut. We stay with him in...

INT. RIGGAN'S DRESSING ROOM - THEATER - CONTINUOUS

...his dressing room. On a television, a segment of E! News. A blond woman with a Botox expression plastered on her face, hosts. Behind her we see footage of Robert Downey Jr., dressed in a tight nylon suit attached to cables, doing ridiculous karate against invisible enemies.

BLOND WOMAN

...and when we come back, an exclusive interview with Robert Downey Jr, who tells us about the billion-dollar Iron Man franchise. The super-talented actor invited us onto the set of Iron Man 3...

Riggan turns it off and rests his head against the door, mind racing.

MAN (V.O.)

A billion dollars, now that's leverage, motherfucker.

Riggan closes his eyes and tries to calm himself...

RIGGAN

Breathing in, I embrace my anger.
Breathing out, I smile to it.

As Riggan breathes deeply, he tries to smile, but fails.

RIGGAN (CONT'D)
Breathing in, I embrace my anger.
Breathing out, I--

MAN (V.O.)
That's right. Embrace it. Kiss it.
Turn it around and fuck it in the
ass.

Riggan opens his eyes to see, across the room, the poster of a movie called "Birdman 3". The superhero, Birdman, wings widely spread, stares directly at Riggan. There is a hand written note on the top of the poster that says: "Good Luck from the crew!"

BIRDMAN
There's money out there, buddy. And
you've got us stuck in here like--

A knock on the door behind him.

RIGGAN
Not now!

Laura opens the door and sticks her head in.

LAURA
Can I come in?

RIGGAN
No.

LAURA
Okay. Two words. Shia. La. Beouf.

RIGGAN
That's three words.

LAURA
It's two.

RIGGAN
Get out.

LAURA
Okay. Love you.

He closes the door, and looks at the Birdman poster.

BIRDMAN (V.O.)
What the hell are we doing here?
Reinventing ourselves?
(MORE)

BIRDMAN (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 We're trapped in this cage full of
 shit, when we should be out there,
 flying.

Silence. Something catches Riggan's attention. The camera moves to a vase full of roses on the end of the table. A card in them says, "*They didn't have the whatever you wanted - Christina*". Frustrated, he focuses intensely on the vase for a moment. The flowers seem to quake under the pressure of his gaze. For a moment Riggan seems surprised. Then, with a surge of anger, and his telekinetic powers, he sends it crashing to the floor.

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The camera moves in on the roses scattered across the carpet. It hovers over the carpet around the perimeter of the room, arriving at a small wooden altar of incense and trinkets. The room seems brighter now. Sunlight comes in through a window and warmly lights various idols from different religions. The camera keeps panning to an empty McDonald's carton and a water foot massager and then finally settling on Riggan, now wearing different clothes than before. He is sitting on the sofa, and on a chair in front of him is Gabriel, a geeky theatre journalist. He wears a bow tie and scratches notes as he interviews Riggan. Next to him there is a photographer taking pictures.

GABRIEL
 So while interpreting Raymond
 Carver, your inspiration was
 Chekhov?

We pan to see Riggan sitting confidently. He wears a casual jacket, and has recently taken a shower.

RIGGAN
 That's right. Carver and Chekhov
 are actually very similar. Reading
 the Cherry Orchard forced me to
 think about the extinction of
 civility in certain segments of--

GABRIEL
 Wait a minute. Surely you'd agree,
 the theme of Cherry Orchard is the
 effect social change has on
 society...

Riggan sits like a deer in headlights. Silent.

RIGGAN
 Of course. That's what I was--
 Obviously. Yes. That was-- That was
 the point.

GABRIEL

Okay, but this doesn't answer the previous question... How did you go from the Birdman saga to Chekhov and then Carver?

(Beat. Uncomfortable silence.)

I mean, this is fantastic. You're probably aware, as Barthes said, that the cultural work that was done in the past by gods and epic sagas it's now being done by film stars, third rate comic strip characters and laundry detergent commercials. It's a big leap you've taken, leaving all that behind. What can you say about it?

RIGGAN

(Searching for words.)

Well... I mean...

The camera pans back to the interviewer, only now it is a different person. Josh, a reporter from Entertainment Weekly.

JOSH

Hang on. You're saying the point of the Birdman films was to compare his motives to those of the Epic sagas of Greek Mythology?

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Pan to Riggan and his now petrified expression.

RIGGAN

Absolutely. Like Barthes said, Birdman, like Icarus, wants to conquer everything, even the sun. His search for good is a metaphor--

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JOSH

Alright. Well, but what do you think of the people that say that you're doing this play to combat the impression that you're a washed-up super hero?

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(Beat.)

Some people might say that you're doing this play because of an identity crisis, formed in the vacuum of attention left in the wake of Hollywood stardom. Some people--

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RIGGAN

Alright. You're-- That's a great tie. Seriously.

(Beat.)

My point is that I think we have mined the worthwhile themes of Birdman for all that we could... which is why-- *Which is why* I refused to do Birdman 4.

Back to the interviewer who is now Han, a polite and energetic Japanese journalist. Next to him sits the translator, another Japanese guy.

HAN

(Thick Japanese accent.)

Birdman 4??? You do Birdman 4???

Han takes out a Birdman action figure and thrusts it into Riggan's face along with a pen.

HAN (CONT'D)

(In Japanese.)

Sign for me, please. Sign.

He looks at the translator. They both nod at the same time.

TRANSLATOR

(To Riggan.)

He wants you to sign the doll. Sign the doll. You are the doll.

The camera pans back to Riggan who now sits with his head in his hands. He is alone. Silence. Then he stands up and walks toward the Birdman poster. He begins to take it down, when there's a knock at the door, and one second later Jake enters.

JAKE

That motherfucker!

(Discovers Riggan and the poster.)

What are you doing with that?

RIGGAN

I don't want to look at it anymore.

Riggan takes the Birdman poster down and lays it on the floor, facing the wall.

JAKE

It was a present from the crew.

Don't fuck with these guys; they're union.

RIGGAN

I honestly don't give a shit.

(He turns to Jake.)

So, who's the motherfucker?

JAKE

Ralph! He did it. He threatened to sue. Even had his lawyer call me.

RIGGAN

And...?

JAKE

And what? I do like you say. I do what I was born to do. Right?

RIGGAN

That's right.

JAKE

I tell him. I say: "You motherfucker. You hire a lawyer to threaten me? ME? I swear to god, you fuck, I so much as get a letter from that lawyer, the press gets the pictures we got off your computer."

RIGGAN

What pictures?

Jake takes out some pictures and hands them to Riggan, who looks at them, shocked.

RIGGAN (CONT'D)

How did you get into--

(Looks closer.)

He had underage boys on his computer?

JAKE

No. But, it seemed like they could've been though, right? Those sweaters? Anyway, the phone stopped ringing.

RIGGAN

Where did you get these?

Jake snatches the pictures out of Riggan's hands.

JAKE

Can we just stay on point? I made them go away.

RIGGAN
Right. That's great.

JAKE
Yeah, its fantastic. One problem.

RIGGAN
What's that?

JAKE
We don't have an actor. And every
preview we cancel the press starts
to smell the blood. Every preview
we cancel we lose money, Riggan.
And we can't afford to lose any
more money. At all.

RIGGAN
All for a reason. It's gonna
happen. I'm telling you.

JAKE
Telling me what? *What?* You think
our actor is just gonna walk
through that door and say: "Hey
fellas, when do we start?"

There is a knock at the door. Leslie peeks in.

LESLIE
Can I talk to you for a second?

RIGGAN
Yeah. Come in.

She does.

LESLIE
Did you find another actor?

RIGGAN
No.

LESLIE
Okay. Well... Matt's available.

RIGGAN
He is?

JAKE
Matt who?

RIGGAN
I thought he was doing--

LESLIE
He was. He quit. Or got fired.

JAKE
Matt who?

RIGGAN
Which one? Quit or fired?

LESLIE
With Matt it's usually both.

JAKE
Matt Fucking Who?

LESLIE
Shiner.

JAKE
(Lighting up.)
Yes!

RIGGAN
Jake...

JAKE
Yes! How do you know Matthew
Shiner?

LESLIE
We share a vagina.

JAKE
You're dating Matthew Shiner?

LESLIE
Why do you keep saying his full
name?

RIGGAN
You think he'd want to do it?

LESLIE
Yeah.

JAKE
How do you know?

LESLIE
Because he said he'd want to do it.

JAKE
Yes!

RIGGAN
Jake. Hang on a minute.

JAKE
(to Riggan)
Ask me if he sells tickets.

RIGGAN
Does he sell tickets?

JAKE
A *shitload* of tickets. Now ask me
if the critics like him?

RIGGAN
Do they like him?

JAKE
They want to spooge on him.

RIGGAN
(Indicating Lesley.)
Hey. Language.

JAKE
Leslie...

LESLIE
Yep. Right on his face.

JAKE
Everything for a reason right?

He pats Riggan and charges out of the room, renewed. The camera follows him into the hallway...

INT. HALLWAY - THEATER - CONTINUOUS

...and as Jake makes a left turn, Annie enters from the right carrying a ghost light. We now begin to follow Annie through the theater and onto...

INT. STAGE - THEATER - CONTINUOUS

...the stage where she puts the light down and turns it on.

ANNIE
(Calling out.)
Ghostlight is on. G'night everyone.

The theater lights go to black. We move in on the ghost light, until we eventually pull away and find Riggan in new clothes on the apron of the stage. He scans the empty auditorium.

MATT (O.S.)
Intimidating. Isn't it?

Riggan sees Matt (39), coming down the aisle.

MATT (CONT'D)
Do you have any idea who walked those boards before you?

RIGGAN
Thanks for coming, Matt.

MATT
James Dean, Geraldine Page, Anne Bancroft, Henry Fonda...

RIGGAN
Fonda. Really...

MATT
Yup. And now you. Riggan Thompson.

RIGGAN
And you.

MATT
Actually, I've already performed here. Many times. Beckett, Albee, Chekhov, Miller, Shakespeare...

Riggan feels a little bit intimidated.

MATT (CONT'D)
So, you wrote the adaptation?

RIGGAN
Yeah.

MATT
And you're directing...

RIGGAN
I am.

MATT
Ambitious.

RIGGAN
Thank you.

MATT

That wasn't a compliment.

Silence. Matt hops up onto the stage. *

MATT (CONT'D)

Why don't we do a bit of it, and
you can--

RIGGAN

Hey, I wasn't expecting you to--

MATT

I know. Let's just do some of it.

Riggan tries to hide his excitement. He grabs a script from a nearby table and walks it over to Matt.

RIGGAN

Take a look at page twenty--

MATT

Yeah. I don't need that.

RIGGAN

What?

MATT

The script. I don't need the
script. Just give me a cue.

RIGGAN

What are you talking about?

MATT

Give me a cue.

RIGGAN

You're saying-- What? You know it?

MATT

Give me a cue.

Riggan drops the script and begins the scene. *

RIGGAN

"I'm the wrong person to ask. I
didn't even know the man. I've only
heard his name mentioned in
passing. I wouldn't know. You'd
have to know the particulars. But I
think what you're saying is that
love is an absolute." *

Matt stares at Riggan, hyper-focused. When he finally begins his lines we see him transform before our eyes.

MATT

(Ruminating.)

Am I saying that love is absolute?

(To Riggan.)

"Yeah. The kind of love I'm talking about is. The kind of love I'm talking about you-- "

(An intense pause.)

Well, you don't try to kill people.

Riggan is transfixed, and almost immediately intimidated.

RIGGAN

How do you know the lines?

MATT

I helped Lesley get off book. I don't know, when I see lines on the page I just-- I have a thing, a whatever, a gift. Hey, give me that cue again.

RIGGAN

"I'm the wrong person to ask. I didn't even know the man. I've only heard his name mentioned in passing. You'd have to know the particulars. But I think what your saying is--"

MATT

(Interrupting.)

Okay, can I-- Do you mind if I--

RIGGAN

No, go ahead.

Matt goes into his analysis head first as Riggan tries to stay with him.

MATT

Follow me. He says, "I'm the wrong person to ask." What's his action? Is he fed up with the topic? Deflecting? Guilt about his wife maybe? Something. In a novel you don't need the action, and this isn't even a novel, it's a short story. But on the stage you do, see? Then three sentences all say the same thing... "

(MORE)

MATT (CONT'D)

I didn't even know the man." "I've only heard his name mentioned in passing." Yeah, you just said you didn't know him, we get it. And finally, "You'd have to know the particulars." First of all, particulars? What are you, my grandmother? And also, YOU DON'T KNOW THE GUY, WE FUCKING GET IT. Get rid of it. Make it one line. "I didn't even know the guy." Right? See what I'm doing here?

RIGGAN

You pretty much know my lines too, huh?

MATT

Can we-- Are we doing something here? Come on let's go. Cut it down, give it to me again.

RIGGAN

"I'm the wrong person to ask--"

MATT

By the way. "I'm the wrong person to ask?" That's a fuck you. You're saying fuck you to me. "Don't put me on the spot. Don't make me self conscious about my marriage when my wife is sitting right here..." See? Give it to me. Give me a good fuck you. Come on...

RIGGAN

Okay, let me--

MATT

Come on. Give it to me right now. Fuck me. Right now. Right here. Let's do it.

RIGGAN

Okay, yeah...

MATT

DO IT!

RIGGAN

(Jumps in w/out thinking.)

"Hey. I'm the wrong person to ask, okay? I didn't even know the guy. So what's your point?"

MATT
(Improvising.)
"What's my point?"

RIGGAN
"Yeah, what's your point? What are you saying. Spit it out, already. You're saying, what? That love is an absolute?"

MATT
(Exploding.)
"Yeah! *Alright?* The kind of love I'm talking about *is* absolute. The kind of love I'm talking about you--
(He seems to live through a painful memory.)
Well, you don't try to kill people.

Riggan's heart is pounding as if he just had great sex.

RIGGAN
Wow, that was--

MATT
So what do you think, boss? Do I have a job?

Christina enters from backstage.

CHRISTINA
Larry wants to see him for a fitting.

MATT
I'm gonna take that as a yes.
(Walking to Christina.)
And you are...?

RIGGAN
That's my daughter, Christina.

MATT
(Examining her.)
Right. Yeah. I can see it in the...
You know, around the... No. She doesn't look anything like you.
(To Christina.)
And your job here is...?

RIGGAN
She's my assistant.

MATT
Your assistant...
(To Christina.)
And can you speak?

CHRISTINA
Yup. I can even 'sit', 'stay' or
'roll over' if you have any treats.
(To Riggan.)
Can I take him?

RIGGAN
Welcome aboard, Matt.

MATT
(Mock saluting.)
Thank you, Captain.

Matt follows Christina off, his eyes on her ass. We follow them as they...

INT. HALLWAY - THEATER - CONTINUOUS

...advance through the hallways.

MATT
I'm Matt Shiner, by the way.

CHRISTINA
I know who you are.

MATT
You do...

CHRISTINA
Of course I do.
(Reluctantly honest.)
I saw you in 'Hothouse' at the
Geffen. It was really... moving. I
like your work.

MATT
I like your ass.

She turns her head toward him with a disgusted expression.

MATT (CONT'D)
What'd I say? I was just--

CHRISTINA
Yeah. We're here.

They arrive at a dressing room. They go in and we follow them to find...

INT. MATT'S DRESSING ROOM - THEATER - CONTINUOUS

...Larry (60), the costume designer, working on a costume.

CHRISTINA

Here he is, Larry.

Larry turns to see Matt standing there. Christina stands against the wall, focused on her cell phone.

LARRY

Oh, thank the Lord and pass the biscuits! I finally have an actor to dress. Hello, Mr. Shiner.

MATT

How're you doing, Larry?

LARRY

Better, now that you're here. Take off your clothes.

Matt takes off his shirt and hands it to Christina. But she doesn't show the slightest intention of grabbing it.

MATT

(Leaving the shirt on the floor.)

You gonna stand there?

CHRISTINA

Maybe. I don't know.

We follow Larry to his table where he searches for a few costume pieces.

LARRY

I'm gonna have to start from scratch. They had Ralph Pinkus doing this part. Do you know Ralph? *Tiny*. Makes Mark Ruffalo look like Vin Diesel.

*

He returns to see a completely naked Matt.

LARRY (CONT'D)

Oh, my. Where are your underpants?

MATT

At home.

Christina glances back at Matt for a second, then returns to her phone, expressionless. Larry begins to help Matt into some pants which, given the situation, is very awkward. They don't fit.

LARRY

Okay, well, everything is too small.

Christina glances at Matt.

CHRISTINA

Yeah, you're not kiddin'.

Matt jumps out of the pants.

MATT

(To Christina.)

Are you texting the world about my supple tits?

(Beat.)

Pessoa used to say that literature was the most agreeable way to ignore life. You think he would've felt the same way about your iPhone?

CHRISTINA

(Holding it up.)

Well, if he knew I was reading Jane Austin on it, I guess he would have, yeah. Don't you have one?

MATT

I never bring it. Theater does not belong in the Digital Age.

CHRISTINA

Tell me about it.

Lesley enters the room and goes to kiss Matt. She notices his nudity in front of Christina. Matt smiles. Lesley doesn't.

LESLEY

Oh, that's nice...

LARRY

I can take out the suit but we're going to need some new pants and shirts.

(Looking back.)

And probably some underwear.

Larry exits with the clothes. Matt begins to dress.

MATT
I need some smokes.

LESLEY
They're no good for you. They did a study.

MATT
(To Christina.)
Bring me a pack of Camels.

CHRISTINA
Umm... no?

MATT
I thought you were an assistant.

CHRISTINA
Not yours.

They stare each other down.

LESLEY
Oh, Jesus. Give me the money.

MATT
Thanks, babe.

Christina looks at Matt and Lesley for a second and leaves the room. We follow her...

INT. HALLWAY - THEATER - CONTINUOUS

...through the hallway. Christina walks by Jake and Riggan who are mid conversation. We stay with them.

RIGGAN
I don't care. Give him what he wants.

JAKE
He wants four times what we were paying--

RIGGAN
Then give it to him.

JAKE
We can't give it to him, because we don't have it.

RIGGAN

Then go-- Why are we even-- Just go into the reserve.

JAKE

We've lost three previews, the reserve is gone.

RIGGAN

Listen to me, you didn't see what I just saw. But you will, at the preview tomorrow. Look, get the contract done. I'll get the money.

JAKE

I handle your money. You don't have any. Neither do I.

RIGGAN

I'll get it.
(Intense.)
I'll get it.

JAKE

Fine. But we're gonna have to tighten our belts.

Annie walks up and interrupts them.

ANNIE

The sun bed is here.

JAKE

What does that mean?

ANNIE

It means there's a sun bed out there being delivered to *in here*.

Lesley appears from Matt's dressing room with the money for cigarettes.

JAKE

(Losing it.)
Who ordered a sun bed? Why is there a sun bed? What did we, hire Snooki? What sun bed? *Why sun bed?*

Riggan marches down the hallway and out the theater door and Lesley and Annie follow him.

LESLEY

Matt said it was for-- He said the Carver characters are always in the sun. Red necks. People of the land. I thought he was kidding. We were pretty high.

They go out to...

EXT. AN ALLEY WAY - OUTSIDE THE THEATER - CONTINUOUS

...the alley, where two workers (40) unload a huge sun bed from a truck.

ANNIE

I told them to wait.
(Screaming.)
I told you to wait!

RIGGAN

It's fine.

*

WORKER

Where do you want it?

RIGGAN

She's gonna show you the way.

*

ANNIE

I told them to--

*

*

RIGGAN

(To Annie.)
I know. But just take them to Matt's dressing room.

*

*

ANNIE

(Like a sergeant.)
ALRIGHT! LET'S BRING IT IN!

*

Laura walks up to Riggan.

LAURA

What's going on?

RIGGAN

You-- Seriously, you don't want to know.

*

LESLEY

Okay. I'm going for cigarettes. You guys want anything?

*

RIGGAN
We're fine.

LAURA
(To Lesley.)
That top is ridiculous on you! Your
tits are like... fucking anjou
pears in that thing...

LESLEY
Okay, well I'm gonna-- Thank you by
the way. I'm gonna go get Matt some
cigarettes.

She walks away.

LAURA
(Watching her go.)
And that ass... Like two eggs in a
hanky...

RIGGAN
(Heading into the
theatre.)
Laura...?

LAURA
I'm coming...
(To herself.)
Seriously.

She chases Riggan into the theater entrance and we follow
them...

INT. HALLWAY - THEATER - CONTINUOUS

...as they advance along the hallway.

LAURA
Hey. You know what tomorrow is?

RIGGAN
What?

LAURA
First preview!
(She claps.)
Are you excited?

RIGGAN
(Starting to smile.)
Yes.

LAURA

Me too.

She kisses him intensely on the lips and briefly pulls his hand between her legs. Then pulls away.

LAURA (CONT'D)

(Teasing.)

I'll see you later.

Riggan smiles and smacks her ass as she walks off. As he continues down the corridor, the camera becomes his POV and we advance a bit further until...

INT. BACKSTAGE - THEATER - CONTINUOUS

...we go through the stage door. We scan the backstage area to see the stagehands ready to do their jobs. We can feel the electricity of a first audience.

On stage part of the kitchen set from before is visible. Annie stands at her podium with her headset on, calling the cues for the show.

ANNIE

(Into her headset.)

Cue 34 and 35. Go.

She turns and looks directly into the camera, which is to say, at Riggan.

ANNIE (CONT'D)

Places.

RIGGAN (O.S.)

Okay.

Riggan walks on screen wearing his costume. He carries a bucket of ice and a bottle of gin. He goes to the opposite side of the stage and we follow him as he takes his place in the wings. He peeks out at the audience who seem to be watching with interest.

Then we pan to the stage to find Matt, Lesley and Laura performing the scene we saw at the beginning, around the table. Matt looks comfortable, sipping at his drink. A half empty bottle of gin on the table.

MATT

I never knew if he was going to come out of the bushes or from behind a car and just start shooting. The man was crazy. He was capable of anything.

LAURA

Christ. Did he ever do anything?

MATT

He used to call my service at all hours and say he needed to talk to the doctor. And when I'd return the call, he'd say... *"Son of a bitch. Your days are numbered."*

He sits silently in a long dramatic pause. A hint of worry on Laura's face as it's Matt's line.

LESLEY

(Covering.)

You can tell her what happened.

Matt looks over and smiles at Lesley. Then to Laura...

MATT

He shot himself in the mouth.

LESLEY

I still feel sorry for him.

LAURA

It sounds like a nightmare. What happened to him?

MATT

(Pouring another drink.)

He lived for three more days. His head swelled up--

(Suddenly he starts to laugh.)

His head--

(More laughter.)

The women can't help but start to laugh with him. Lesley smacks him.

LESLEY

It's not funny...

MATT

(More laughter.)

It swelled up to like twice the
size of a normal head.

The girls doing their best not to laugh.

MATT (CONT'D)

(Hysterical.)

He was so skinny, and his head--

(Squealing.)

He looked like a stop sign!

Riggan is furious. He checks the audience. But to his
surprise they are laughing and loving it. Matt instantly
switches gears.

MATT (CONT'D)

(Suddenly in tears.)

I'd never seen anything like it.

(Dramatic pause.)

And I swear to God, I hope I never
do again.

Riggan goes near Annie and whispers...

RIGGAN

What the hell is he doing?

ANNIE

He is good... Umm... I think he's
drinking *real* gin.

Riggan looks out at Matt, who is pouring more gin into his
glass. He turns back to Annie but...

ANNIE (CONT'D)

Break a leg. Go.

She gently pushes Riggan and we follow him on stage...

INT. STAGE - THEATER - CONTINUOUS

...where he places the bottle and the bucket down on the
table. He subtly tries to take Matt's glass from him. Matt
snatches it back.

MATT

After that, we had a fight.

(He kisses Lesley's head.)

Didn't we, honey?

An agitated Leslie pulls away. She and Riggan exchange a look. Riggan washes his hands at the sink, and then walks over to the refrigerator.

MATT (CONT'D)

I didn't think she should see him like that. But she--

(He stares at Lesley with an intense look.)

She--

LAURA

(Helping.)

Who won the fight?

LESLEY

I was in the room with him when he died. He didn't have anyone else.

LAURA

At least he wasn't alone...

MATT

The man was *dangerous*. You wanna call that love? You can have it.

Silence. Another hanging cue. Riggan has his head in the refrigerator staring at a bucket of fried chicken.

LAURA

Honey...?

Riggan closes the fridge, walks over and takes Matt's glass out of his hand. He downs the rest of the gin and...

RIGGAN

I'll tell you what real love is. This happened a few months ago but it's still going on right now. And it ought to make us ashamed when we talk like we know what we're talking about when we talk about love.

LAURA

Nick, for God's sake. Are you getting drunk?

RIGGAN

(Pointed at Matt.)

I don't have to be drunk to say what I think. I mean... we're all just talking, right?

LAURA

Come on, now. Don't talk like
you're drunk if--

RIGGAN

(Exploding.)

Shut up. For once in your life.
Will you do me a favor and shut up
for a minute?

(Beat.)

Like I was saying... There's this
old couple, had a car wreck out on
the interstate. Some kid was
driving. This-- A teenager. Drunk.
Plowed his old man's pick up into
this camper with the old couple in
it. And they were all torn to shit,
and nobody was giving them a chance
to pull through. Multiple
fractures. Internal injuries.
Hemorrhaging. And of course their
age made it--

We begin to hear the underscoring of violins.

RIGGAN (CONT'D)

By the time I got down there the
kid was-- Fucking teenager. The kid
was dead. He was off in a corner
laid out on a gurney. We took the
old couple up to the O.R. And
worked like hell on them for most
of the night...

Over the speech, Matt reaches for the new bottle that Riggan
placed onstage. He refills his glass.

RIGGAN (CONT'D)

When we were done we wrapped them
in full body casts and moved them
into the ICU. For two weeks they
both kept plugging away at it.
Defying all-- Just hitting it
better and better on all the
scopes. So we transfer them out to
their own room. The husband was
depressed for the longest time. I
mean, even when I told him his wife
was gonna pull through, he was
still depressed. So, I got up to
his mouth hole and I asked him,
and... He said it was because he
couldn't turn his head and look at
his wife. Imagine that...

(MORE)

RIGGAN (CONT'D)
The man's heart was breaking
because he couldn't turn his head
and see his goddamn wife.

Riggan is doing a good job. Lesley and Laura are genuinely moved. Matt notices. He sips his drink.

RIGGAN (CONT'D)
I mean... It was killing him.
Killing him that he--

MATT
I'm tired of this shit.

They all look at Matt. In silence.

MATT (CONT'D)
What the fuck is this? Water?

He hurls the glass against the wall. Some laughter from the audience. Matt stands up and crosses to the refrigerator.

RIGGAN
It was killing the old bastard.

LAURA
(Whispering to Lesley.)
Where's he going?

LESLEY
(To Matt.)
Honey...?

Matt is bent over rummaging through the fridge.

RIGGAN
Killing him because...

Matt tosses a milk carton onto the stage.

MATT
This is empty.

RIGGAN
...Cause he couldn't look...

Matt tosses a yogurt container onto the stage.

MATT
This is empty.

Riggan finally turns to Matt.

RIGGAN

What the hell are you doing?

Matt takes out a stick of butter.

MATT

(Examining it.)

This is plastic.

(Tosses it.)

That can't be good for you.

Riggan doesn't know what to do. The audience starts to chuckle at Matt.

RIGGAN

Cut it out.

MATT

Hey! There's chicken. Real chicken.

The audience laughs harder. Matt holds the bucket of chicken while he gnaws on a leg.

MATT (CONT'D)

Hey, this is good bird, man!

He laughs at his stupid joke. Riggan slaps the chicken leg out of Matt's hand. Laughs and gasps from the audience.

LAURA

I don't understand what's happening.

Matt crosses to the table and takes out another piece of chicken, offering it to Lesley.

MATT

You want?

LESLEY

You're an ass.

LAURA

Why don't we finish the scene?

RIGGAN

(Staying cool.)

Come on, Matt.

MATT

Come on what?

RIGGAN

You're drunk.

Matt explodes.

MATT

Of course I'm drunk! I'm supposed to be drunk! Why aren't you? This is Carver, man! The guy lost a piece of liver every time he wrote a page! If I'm drinking gin then bring me fuckin gin. This is all bullshit. Everything is fake. The milk is fake. The butter is fake. Your performance is fake. The only thing real up here is the chicken! So I'm gonna stick with the chicken.

RIGGAN

(Calling out.)

Annie! Get us out of here!

The audience is now hysterical. Suddenly the stage begins to revolve, the crunching of wood against wood. Now we see half of the kitchen and half of a motel room.

RIGGAN (CONT'D)

WHAT THE FUCK IS GOING ON?

An explosion. Two cables come loose and sparks begin to fly. The curtains on the kitchen window catch fire.

Annie and two stage hands run on stage with fire extinguishers. An alarm goes off. Cameras and cell phones flash away as the audience is evacuated.

Riggan storms off the stage and...

INT. HALLWAY - THEATER - CONTINUOUS

...charges through the chaos backstage running into a panicked Jake.

RIGGAN

I want him gone.

Jake chases Riggan through the hallways.

JAKE

No.

RIGGAN

What?

JAKE

We can't do that.

RIGGAN

What are you-- Of course we can do that. It's our show.

JAKE

Riggan, listen to me--

Riggan comes to a halt and faces Jake.

RIGGAN

No. You listen to me. Get him the fuck out of my play. Did you see him out there?

JAKE

It was a preview! Nobody gives a shit about previews. Nothing matters until that old bat from the New York Times is sitting in that audience on opening night.

RIGGAN

I don't care. We're getting rid of him.

JAKE

We just signed his contract.

RIGGAN

Then tear it up. He is not going to stand up there and make me look like a--

JAKE

Shut up! Just shut up for once and listen to me. As soon as we announced he was taking over, the advance doubled. And that took all of a day and a half. We're over budget and we're out of money. Out. Even with the increase in advance, if you don't find us some more capital, and I mean now, we won't make it long enough to cash in on a good Times review. We can't afford to lose another preview. We can't afford to lose any more money. We can't afford to lose Matt.

(MORE)

JAKE (CONT'D)

This isn't the studio plane where you can throw people out the emergency door when they don't tell you how great you are. Those days are over. This is the theatre. This is about being respected, validated, remember? That's what you told me. That's how you got me into this shit. Now, you're the director. Get him under control.

Jake turns and heads back down the hall. Riggan turns and heads toward his dressing room. Out of nowhere, Matt barrels into him, pinning him against a wall.

RIGGAN

(Startled.)

Holy Fuck!

Matt, even more drunk than before, presses up against Riggan breathing down his neck. After a painful silence...

MATT

(Almost confused.)

You were good.

He slaps Riggan gently on the face and disappears into his dressing room. Riggan begins walking again. We follow him into...

INT. RIGGAN'S DRESSING ROOM - THEATER - CONTINUOUS

...his dressing room where he collapses into a chair.

SYLVIA (O.C.)

Well, that was fun, huh?

We pan over to see his ex-wife Sylvia (50), sitting on a chair in the corner.

RIGGAN

I didn't know you were here tonight.

SYLVIA

What the hell was going on up there?

RIGGAN

Oh, we're still working out some of the kinks.

She rises, smiling and kisses him on the head.

SYLVIA
Hello, Riggan.

RIGGAN
Hello, Sylvia.

SYLVIA
So, can I just say--

RIGGAN
Please, don't.

SYLVIA
No. *It was good.* You know, before
the whatever, the *brawl*. It was
really good.

RIGGAN
Really?

SYLVIA
Uh-huh. These old ladies sitting
behind me were all saying it, too.

RIGGAN
It was insane.

SYLVIA
That guy's an asshole.

RIGGAN
He's an asshole, yeah. But a really
talented one.

SYLVIA
Aw. Don't sell yourself short. You
could be a talented asshole, too.

They share a smile.

RIGGAN
Maybe not as talented.

She looks at him with gentle eyes.

SYLVIA
Maybe. But you could be adorable.
(Teasing him.)
An adorable mediocrity.

RIGGAN
(With irony.)
Thank you. That's just what I
needed to hear.

SYLVIA

I always meant it as a compliment.

Silence.

RIGGAN

What are you doing here?

SYLVIA

Christina and I are going to grab a bite after she's finished with--

RIGGAN

That's nice. But I mean *here*. Now.

SYLVIA

I don't know. I thought you might be upset. What, with the stage blowing up and a thousand people laughing at you.

RIGGAN

Thanks a lot.

SYLVIA

I know how much this means to you.

RIGGAN

I appreciate that.

A beat.

SYLVIA

So, how's it going?

RIGGAN

The play?

SYLVIA

No. You and Christina. How's it going?

RIGGAN

It's good. Complicated as usual. She's--

SYLVIA

Do you talk to her?

RIGGAN

We talk. We-- I don't know, it's been crazy around here. I'm trying.

SYLVIA

You understand where her head is
right now?

RIGGAN

Of course.

SYLVIA

She's doing her best to stay away
from everything and everyone that
got her into rehab in the first
place, but--

RIGGAN

I know.

SYLVIA

But that's all she had. So she's--

RIGGAN

I really do get it.

SYLVIA

I know you're caught up with the
play and all this stuff, but--

RIGGAN

Stuff...

SYLVIA

You know what I mean.

(Beat.)

Riggan... You don't have to be a
great father right now, you just
have to be one.

RIGGAN

Yeah.

He goes to a small fridge, takes out a beer and closes it.

RIGGAN (CONT'D)

(Carelessly.)

You want?

SYLVIA

I'm fine.

He sits and sips in silence for a moment.

RIGGAN

So, what's going on with you?

SYLVIA

Me? Nothing. Everything's the same
I guess. I'm going back to
teaching.

RIGGAN

Really?

SYLVIA

Yeah. I've just been, I don't know,
bored, and feeling sort of empty,
so I thought maybe--

RIGGAN

How do you feel about the Mailbu
house?

SYLVIA

Right. Are we talking about the
architecture, or...?

RIGGAN

No, I was just--

A beat.

SYLVIA

Spit it out.

RIGGAN

I'm thinking of refinancing it.

SYLVIA

That's gonna be Christina's house.
Why would-- What? For this play?

RIGGAN

(Honest and vulnerable.)
I need the money.

SYLVIA

Do you have any idea how crazy that
sounds?

RIGGAN

Yes.

Silence. Riggan seems pensive and lost.

SYLVIA

What's going on?
(Beat.)
Look at me.

Riggan gently looks up to Sylvia.

SYLVIA (CONT'D)

A few days ago I was trying to
remember why we broke up.

Silence. They look at each other.

RIGGAN

The last time I flew here from LA,
George Clooney was sitting two
seats in front of me. With those
cuff links, and that... *chin*. We
ended up flying through this
horrible storm. And the plane
started shaking like-- I mean
really shaking, and everyone on
board started crying and screaming
and praying. And I just sat there--
Sat there thinking that when
Christina opened the paper it was
going to be Clooney's face on the
front page. Not mine. I was just
gonna be another forgotten-- Did
you know that Farrah Fawcett died
on the same day as Michael Jackson?

Sylvia looks up frustrated of a lost case.

SYLVIA

Now I remember why we broke up.

She kisses him on the head and goes to the door.

RIGGAN

Why did we break up?

SYLVIA

(Looks him in the eye.)

You threw a kitchen knife at me...

Riggan is smacked by that memory. His eyes on the floor.

SYLVIA (CONT'D)

...and one hour later you were
telling me how much you loved me.

(Beat.)

Just because I didn't like that
ridiculous comedy you did with Meg
Ryan didn't mean I did not love
you. But that's what you always do.
You confuse love with admiration.

She smiles sadly. He looks at her. As Sylvia opens the door, she turns back to Riggan...

SYLVIA (CONT'D)

It's your house, so do what you want with it. Just make sure you're there for Christina.

RIGGAN

I will.

SYLVIA

You're not Farrah Fawcett, Riggan.

She looks at him for a moment and then exits.

Riggan sits staring disgusted at his reflection in the mirror. After a moment, he gets the sensation that he's being watched. He turns his head and is surprised to see the Birdman poster still leaning against the wall in the corner, only now it is facing him once again. A pause.

BIRDMAN (V.O.)

We should do a TV show. People care about TV. Pacino is doing it. Or maybe we could do a reality show. "The Thompsons." Crazy, druggy, wise ass daughter. Milfy ex-wife with the big tits. People would watch that.

RIGGAN

(To the poster.)

Shut up.

Gradually, we close in on Birdman's eyes.

BIRDMAN (V.O.)

Brando fucked Jessica Tandy in this very room.

RIGGAN (O.S.)

Stop it.

BIRDMAN (V.O.)

Sylvia could use some lipo, don't you think?

We move closer and closer until the eyes seem to be looking through us, and then...

INT. SARDI'S RESTAURANT - DAY

...as we slowly pull away, we begin to hear Matt speaking above the sounds of a restaurant. The eyes of the Superhero are now Riggan's eyes. He is half listening to Matt but is distracted by an older woman who occasionally scowls at him. She sits at the bar and sips a martini as she scribbles in a notebook.

MATT

...I don't want to hear that. I don't want to hear that you have a lot riding on this play. I have a lot riding on this play.

RIGGAN

Fine. Then we both have a--

MATT

Not true.

RIGGAN

I know I'm a popular actor, but I'm trying to--

MATT

What the fuck is a "popular" actor? Popularity is the... the slutty cousin of prestige. My reputation is riding on this play. And that's... That's...

RIGGAN

A lot?

MATT

A lot. Exactly. Fuck you. Yes. This doesn't work out for you, you head back out to Lala, do Birdman 4, 5, 6, and all you have to do is re-join the cultural genocide. You put on the feathers and people around the world will jump on you like flies on horse shit. But when you are an artist who makes a living baring his soul on a stage every night, dealing with real emotions, complex emotions, you get sucked in by the darkness and then you have to live there. In hell. With people asking me why I did your bullshit play in the first place.

RIGGAN

If your reputation is riding on this play, then what the hell was last night about?

MATT

Last night was about making it alive. About making it *bleed*. Last night was about the theatre. This isn't the Warner Brothers lot, Riggan. This is the city. And this is how we do things.

RIGGAN

Is that right? This is how you do things... Like setting the stage on fire during our first preview--

MATT

I had nothing to do with--

RIGGAN

Is that how things are done here in the big city? Is that you being professional?

MATT

That's me being smart.

RIGGAN

Smart??? People were laughing in our faces. How is that smart?

MATT

Yeah, last night they were laughing... and today they're talking about us. About *our play*.

RIGGAN

Our play is a drama. It's Raymond Carver. It's not a stupid-cynical-look-how-sophisticated-I-am-acting-like-a-forty year old-nihilistic-retard comedy.

MATT

The man who dons the tights and a beak, talks about integrity. This is Broadway, buddy. You wanna tell me what your advertising budget is? Huh? They're talking about us. And that's the only way to fight this monarchy.

RIGGAN

Monarchy? What are you--?

Matt points to the Older Woman.

MATT

See that woman you keep looking at over there? The one that looks like she just licked a manatee's ass? Nothing matters until she writes five hundred words about us in the New York Times.

RIGGAN

That's...

MATT

Tabitha Dickinson. Yes. And the only thing that matters is whether she likes us or not. She does, we run. She doesn't, we're fucked.

RIGGAN

(Preoccupied.)

She does look like she licked a manatee's ass.

Matt points to some caricatures hanging behind Riggan.

MATT

You see those guys, up there? You know who they are?

RIGGAN

No...

MATT

That's James Berger, and that's Brad Fryman. Berger won two Tonys. Hot as hell until Tabitha skull fucked his Julius Caesar, he's down in Houston now doing community theater, selling Amway products. Fryman did Long Days Journey, she wrote that he had a head like a watermelon, but wasn't as interesting as one. I don't know what happened to him. Swallowed his tongue or some shit, keeled over. So do me a favor, don't get your panties in a twist over a preview, alright? And don't tell me how to do my job. Just say thank you and shut the fuck up.

(MORE)

MATT (CONT'D)

Cause, this is my town. And nobody gives a shit about you around here.

Two fat tourists in "Mamma Mia" t-shirts, with a seven year old kid, approach the table.

LADY

You're Riggan Thompson, right?

MAN

(Timidly.)

We're sorry to interrupt...

LADY

Would you mind terribly if we got a picture?

MAN

We're really sorry to interrupt...

RIGGAN

Of course. It's no trouble at all.

LADY

(To her son.)

Tommy, he's Riggan Thomson. He used to be like Batman.

The kid is in a bad mood, tired of touring around with his parents. The Lady shoves her camera into Matt's hands.

LADY (CONT'D)

(To Matt.)

Would you mind?

Matt gets up with a blank expression and takes the camera. The Lady pushes the kid into the booth next to Riggan.

KID

I don't want to.

MAN

(To Riggan.)

We're sorry to--

LADY

(Violently.)

Shut up, Henry!

(To Matt, sweetly.)

The button right on top there.

(To his son.)

Come on, Tommy. Come on.

She grabs his hand, but the kid gets loose.

KID
I said I don't want to.

LADY
Okay. Your loss.

She poses, hugging Riggan. The kid is embarrassed. He looks at Riggan as if he was the most uninteresting man in the planet. Matt takes the photo and immediately hands the camera to the lady.

LADY (CONT'D)
Thank you, darlin'.
(To Riggan.)
God bless you. You're very sweet.
And handsome!

She kisses Riggan hard on the mouth. Then gets up, giddy, and takes his son by the hand. As the couple leaves...

KID
(To his father.)
Is that Batman's grandad?

LADY
Shut up. Shut up, Tommy.

An agitated Matt remains standing. He takes a sip of beer and sits down. Silence. Riggan looks ashamed.

MATT
Are we good here? Can I go?

RIGGAN
Yes.

Matt stands up, but before leaving he turns to Riggan one last time.

MATT
Why Raymond Carver? You never told me.

RIGGAN
You wouldn't understand.

MATT
Try me.

Riggan reaches for his wallet and produces an old cocktail napkin with some writing on it. Matt reads it.

MATT (CONT'D)
"Thank you for an honest
performance. Ray Carver." What is
this?

RIGGAN
I did a play when I was in high
school, back in Des Moines... He--
I don't know, he sent me this
backstage. And that's when I knew I
was going to be an actor.

Riggan looks vulnerable. He is trying to make Matt understand
the importance of the napkin, to build a bridge between them.

RIGGAN (CONT'D)
I don't know why, and can't even
remember when, I took the wrong
turn... But this is why I'm trying
now to--

Matt can't stop himself from smiling, then chuckling.

RIGGAN (CONT'D)
What's so funny?

MATT
That's why you're doing this?

RIGGAN
It's one reason.

Matt laughs out loud.

MATT
Well, that explains it.

RIGGAN
What?

MATT
He's a short story writer, Riggan.
You just put his story into script
form with some stage directions.
There's no character arcs or scene
construction. We're basically
acting out a book up there.

He downs the rest of his beer and examines the napkin.

MATT (CONT'D)
(A sinister laugh.)
He wrote it on a cocktail napkin.

RIGGAN

So...

Matt tosses the napkin at Riggan.

MATT

He was drunk.

Matt walks away and we follow him. He passes by the bar next to Tabitha Dickinson, the Critic.

TABITHA

You headed to Hollywood, Matthew?

Matt stops.

MATT

Hollywood's headed here, Tabby. I'm doing his play.

TABITHA

(A devilish smile.)

I know. Good luck with that.

Matt looks directly into her eyes.

MATT

"A man becomes a critic when he can not be an artist, in the same way that a man becomes an informer when he cannot be a soldier." Who said that? Flaubert, right?

He flashes his own devilish smile. She stares back. If she weren't so much older than him, you'd swear there was sexual electricity between them.

TABITHA

He's a Hollywood clown in a Lycra bird suit.

MATT

Yeah. And at 8 o'clock tonight, he's gonna get on stage and risk everything. What're you gonna be doing?

TABITHA

Don't you ever worry that I'll give you a bad review?

MATT

Oh, I'm sure you will. If I ever give a bad performance.

(MORE)

MATT (CONT'D)

(Beat.)

Ms. Dickinson.

TABITHA

Mr. Shiner.

Matt smiles and waves over to an obviously nervous Riggan. We follow him as he goes down the stairs toward the exit. We focus on his feet. And then on a wall behind his feet, an old blueish wall that fills the screen. The lighting becomes darker. When the camera pans to the left, we discover...

INT. HALLWAY - THEATER - LATER

...Riggan walking along the narrow corridor. The place is bustling, everyone preparing for the next preview. Riggan arrives at the green room where he sees...

INT. GREEN ROOM - THEATER - CONTINUOUS

...Christina, listlessly drawing some lines across a roll of toilet paper.

RIGGAN

What're you doing there?

CHRISTINA

(Continues scribbling.)

Nothing. It's-- Nothing. Your costumes are hanging in your room.

RIGGAN

Great...

CHRISTINA

I got the coconut water you wanted.
If you want me to get--

RIGGAN

Hey.

CHRISTINA

What?

RIGGAN

I'm not sure if I said thank you.

CHRISTINA

For what?

RIGGAN

All of it. You've been doing a good job. And I've been...

CHRISTINA

Yeah.

RIGGAN

So, I just wanted to say that--
(He stops abruptly.)
What is that?

CHRISTINA

What...?

RIGGAN

That smell.

CHRISTINA

I don't--

RIGGAN

Look at me.

CHRISTINA

What are you--

RIGGAN

Look at me.

She does. He examines her eyes, then immediately rises, scouring the room.

CHRISTINA

Dad...

RIGGAN

(Continuing to search.)
You have to be shitting me... Where is it?

CHRISTINA

Could we not do this?

Riggan pulls a jar of peanut butter from the trash.

RIGGAN

What is this?

CHRISTINA

That is chunky peanut butter that happens, by the way, to have Omega--

Riggan pulls a stubbed joint out of the jar.

RIGGAN

This.

CHRISTINA

Oh. That's pot.

RIGGAN

Christina.

CHRISTINA

Alright, just relax.

RIGGAN

Relax? What the hell are you doing?

CHRISTINA

Protecting myself from cataracts?

RIGGAN

You can't do this to me!

CHRISTINA

To you?

RIGGAN

SHUT UP! You know what I'm--

Just then Riggan sees Annie who has stopped in the doorway.

ANNIE

(Uncomfortable.)

Calling twenty minutes!

(Beat.)

Okay, bye.

Annie moves on.

RIGGAN

You know what I'm talking about.

CHRISTINA

Yeah. You're talking about you.

What else is new?

RIGGAN

Don't try to--

CHRISTINA

What? Make it about me? I wouldn't dream of it.

RIGGAN

Listen to me. I'm trying to do something that's important...

CHRISTINA

This is not important.

RIGGAN

It's important to me! Alright?
Maybe not to you or your cynical,
self-obsessed, tragically ironic
playmates. But to me. This is my--
God. This is my career, my chance
to do some work that actually means
something.

CHRISTINA

*Means something to who? You had a
career before the third comic book
movie, before people began to
forget who was inside the bird
costume. You're doing a play based
on a book that was written 60 years
ago, for a thousand rich, old white
people whose only real concern is
gonna be where they go to have
their cake and coffee when it's
over. Nobody gives a shit but you.
And let's face it, Dad, it's not
for the sake of art. It's because
you just want to feel relevant
again. Well, there's a whole world
out there where people fight to be
relevant every day. And you act
like it doesn't even exist! Things
are happening in a place that you
willfully ignore, a place that has
already forgotten you. I mean who
are you? You don't have a Facebook
page. You don't have a twitter
account. You're the one who doesn't
exist. I have a friend on a lame tv
show, whose only talent is
describing in haiku what he ate for
fucking breakfast, and he has about
a half million followers! Do you
think there are a half a million
people in the universe who actually
give a shit what the guy who played
Birdman is doing? You're doing it
because you're scared to death,
like the rest of us, that you don't
matter. And you know what? You're
right. You don't. It's not
important. You're not important.
Get used to it.*

Riggan just stands there. Devastated. Long silence.

ANNIE (O.S.)
Fifteen minutes!

A pause. Christina knows she has gone too far.

CHRISTINA
Dad...

RIGGAN
Go make sure my props are ready,
will you?

A pause. A guilt ridden Christina heads for the door, but suddenly stops.

CHRISTINA
Do you know what was yesterday's
trending topic?

RIGGAN
I don't know what a trending topic
is.

Christina searches for something on her iPhone. Then she goes to her father and shows him the screen. We move closer to see a youtube video of the last preview. The chaos on stage. But there is something else. A precarious cartoon of Riggan dressed as Birdman dances over the footage, holding a tiny skull, as Hamlet.

Riggan remains still, speechless.

CHRISTINA
Believe it or not, this is power.

She looks at him with sad, tender eyes and exits.

Riggan sits for a moment, then rises and heads for the trash can. He digs out the roach, grabs some matches and lights it. He inhales deeply and holds the smoke for a few seconds and finally blows out the smoke. He waits for the calmness to arrive. He smokes the invisible remains of the joint and burns himself. He coughs, throws away the joint and heads out of the kitchen. We follow him...

INT. HALLWAY - THEATRE - CONTINUOUS

...as he slowly walks until he disappears into the darkness of the corridor. We keep moving forward until we come out to the middle of the second preview.

Laura is by herself on stage performing the end of a scene. She stands alone in the middle of an extravagant garden.

On the floor, tall green grass. The thick trunk of a huge tree disappears in the shadows above the stage. Artificial wind.

We keep moving through the wings. We pass by Riggan who is being dressed for the next scene. A dresser helps him with a fake mustache.

We listen to Laura's last words and then the applause of the audience. The lights become darker. We continue backstage where we see Matt and Lesley wearing pajamas. A stage hand helps them into a double bed. They adopt their initial positions under the covers. Some technicians run from one place to the other getting ready for the imminent mechanical needs. The camera slips under the covers with Matt and Lesley.

MATT

(Whispering.)

Hey, Les...

LESLEY

(Whispering.)

What?

MATT

I think I'm hard.

LESLEY

No, you're not. It's just that sometimes you don't consider other people's feelings.

MATT

No. I'm hard. Feel.

LESLEY

Oh, you gotta be kidding.

The stage begins to revolve, turning the 'motel room'...

INT. STAGE - THEATER - CONTINUOUS

...onto the stage. Music through the transition. It remains dark.

MATT

Let's really do this. Let's fuck.

LESLEY

Are you crazy? No.

Matt rolls on top of Lesley. The lights come up on the scene.

LESLEY (CONT'D)
Cut it out...

We see Matt's hips moving under the covers.

LESLEY (CONT'D)
I'm serious, Matt. Stop!

MATT
I'm Mel. Call me Mel...

A knock on the door.

RIGGAN (O.S.)
Terri! Terri!

He continues to thrust under the covers. An irritated Lesley tries to reposition herself under Matt.

RIGGAN (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Terri! I know you're in there!

KNOCK. KNOCK. KNOCK.

RIGGAN (CONT'D)
Terri???

Matt is lost in his libido.

The door flies open and Riggan stumbles in, wearing a wig and a mustache, a fake gun in his right hand.

Lesley uses Riggan's entrance to escape from Matt.

LESLEY
Ed!

Matt hops out of bed, unaware of the very noticeable erection protruding underneath his pajama bottoms.

Some laughter from the audience.

LESLEY (CONT'D)
What are you doing here?

Lesley doesn't understand the audience response, until she notices the erection herself.

RIGGAN
(To Lesley.)
Why? I need you to tell me why. I
lived for you. I worshipped you...

MATT

Listen Ed, I know this is hard but--

More laughter. Riggan is disturbed, but he continues...

RIGGAN

(to Matt)

Fuck you. Shut up. *Fuck you.*

He shoves Matt violently to the floor.

LESLEY

Eddie! Please!

Riggan points the gun at Matt's head.

RIGGAN

What's wrong with me? Why does it always feel like this? It fucking hurts! I don't under-- Jesus! Why do I end up having to beg people to love me?

LESLEY

Ed. Eddie. Please... Just give me the gun.

She begins to cry. Her performance is beautiful.

LESLEY (CONT'D)

It was me. I felt like I was drowning. I'm just not capable of that kind of-- Look at me. You deserve to be loved. You do.

RIGGAN

I just wanted to be what you wanted. I just wanted to matter to you.

(Beat.)

Now I spend every fucking minute turning myself inside out. Praying to be someone else. Someone I'm not. Anyone...

MATT

Put down the gun, Ed. She just doesn't love you anymore.

The audience is dead silent.

RIGGAN

(A sad smile.)

You don't, do you?

LESLEY
(With sympathy.)
No...

RIGGAN
And you never will...

LESLEY
I'm sorry.

RIGGAN
(A revelation.)
I don't exist. I'm not even here. I
don't exist. None of this matters.

Riggan points the gun to Lesley. Then to Matt. Then he puts the gun to his head. He pulls the trigger. PUM! And with the explosion, a fake blood mechanism splatters brains onto the stage. Riggan drops to the floor.

A blackout on stage. The audience applauds politely. The curtain falls.

We follow Riggan off stage and into...

INT. HALLWAY - THEATER - CONTINUOUS

...the hallway where Annie immediately helps him remove the bloody wig with the propeller mechanism.

ANNIE
(Picking at the fake
brains.)
You know what? This is weird. But I
think I want pasta tonight.

Lesley comes darting from the stage.

LESLEY
(Genuinely, to Riggan.)
I'm sorry...

Matt catches up to them.

MATT
What did I do?

Lesley slaps Matt across the face, hard, and then storms off. We follow her down the hall and into her dressing room where...

INT. LESLEY AND LAURA'S DRESSING ROOM - THEATER - CONTINUOUS

...she finds Laura putting on some make-up.

LAURA
How did it go?

Lesley smashes everything on her dressing table.

LESLEY
He's an asshole!

LAURA
Who?

LESLEY
Who else?

LAURA
Darlin', you could be talkin' about
any man I know.

LESLEY
Matt.

LAURA
Oh. Yeah, he is. Talented fucker
though, isn't he?

Lesley looks in the mirror holding a hairbrush.

LESLEY
Am I ugly?

LAURA
Are you-- Noooo. You are not ugly.
A little mascara now and then
wouldn't kill you. But no, you are
not ugly.

LESLEY
Son of a bitch couldn't get it up
once in the six months we've been
together, and now he fucks me in
front of hundreds of strangers
like...

LAURA
That's sorta hot.

LESLEY
...I don't know, like...
(Beat.)
(MORE)

LESLEY (CONT'D)

My mother was the most beautiful woman you ever saw. But to her everyone else was ugly. She used to look at me and say, "You're disgusting, Lesley. Throw those books away and learn to walk like a lady. You hunch over like a dwarf."

LAURA

Okay. Do dwarves hunch over? I mean necessarily?

LESLEY

Why don't I have any self-respect??

LAURA

You're an actress, honey.

Lesley begins to cry. Laura hugs her.

LAURA (CONT'D)

Awww. Hey. Do you know what I thought when I first saw you?

LESLEY

What?

LAURA

I thought, that mannish looking woman is sexy.

LESLEY

(A slight smile.)
Cut it out.

LAURA

I did. I saw you walk by and I thought to myself, If I was Snow White she could definitely be one of my seven little—

LESLEY

(A little laugh.)
Shut. Up.

Riggan steps into the doorway and sees Laura hugging Lesley. His head, still caked with blood.

RIGGAN

(To Laura.)
Is she okay?

LAURA

She's gonna be fine.

Riggan gently enters and walks up to Lesley.

RIGGAN

None of this is your fault.
(Into her eyes.)
You're smart. And beautiful. And
talented. And I'm lucky to have
you. Okay?

LESLEY

Okay.

RIGGAN

Okay.

Riggan leaves the room. Laura lets Lesley go and sits at her table.

LESLEY

That was very sweet.

LAURA

Yeah.

LESLEY

What's wrong?

LAURA

(Smiling.)

Nothing. We've been together almost
a year, and he's never said
anything like that to me.

Matt stands in the doorway, holding the prop gun.

MATT

Can we talk about this like two--

Lesley hurls the hair brush at his head.

LESLEY

FUCK YOU!!!

MATT

Okay, you're not ready.

Matt points the prop gun at her, pretends to fire and exits the room. We follow him...

INT. HALLWAY - THEATER - CONTINUOUS

...down the hall up to Riggan's dressing room where he finds Riggan sitting at his table, picking the brain out of his hair and occasionally sipping at a scotch.

MATT

(Holding the gun.)

Your gun is ridiculous. I'm not threatened by it at all. It looks like a plastic toy. And it has a red plug in the barrel. Look.

(Shows the plug.)

It makes you look like a seven year old.

He tosses the gun onto Riggan's table.

MATT (CONT'D)

Have some self respect and get a new one.

(He takes one step then returns.)

That was a fun crowd, huh?

We follow him to...

INT. STAIRS - THEATER - CONTINUOUS

...the stairs. Matt climbs up to the terrace, lighting a cigarette on the way. He arrives at a metal door that takes him out to...

EXT. TERRACE - THEATER - CONTINUOUS

...a terrace on the side of the theater. The Marquis' of the other theaters glowing with the street lamps, a classic Broadway view.

Matt walks on to the small terrace, only to find Christina straddling the railing a good fifty feet above 45th street. He leans over looking down at the street.

MATT

I don't think it's high enough.

Christina puts her other leg over the railing.

CHRISTINA

Me neither.

MATT

So, what are you doing?

CHRISTINA

Adrenaline. Just came out of rehab.
Closest I get to a drug.

MATT

(Offers a cigarette.)
You were in rehab?

CHRISTINA

Yeah.

MATT

Cool.

CHRISTINA

It wasn't all Dr. Drew or anything,
but that dude from American Pie was
there.

MATT

Alright...

Christina lights her cigarette off of Matt's, then she stands
up on the railing of the balcony, balancing herself.

A VOICE

(From the street below.)
Juuump!

CHRISTINA

(Calling down.)
Eat me!

A VOICE

Jump on my face!

CHRISTINA

(To Matt.)
I love New York.

MATT

Yeah.

Christina sits back down and faces Matt.

CHRISTINA

(Casually.)
Why do you act like a dick all the
time? Do you do it to antagonize
people?

MATT

I don't know. Maybe. No. I don't know.

CHRISTINA

You really don't give a shit if people like you or not, do you?

MATT

Not really.

CHRISTINA

God, that's cool.

They stare at each other for a moment. Matt stands next to her near the railing. He looks down to the street.

MATT

How do you feel about spitting on people?

CHRISTINA

As a sport? Or...

MATT

Try it.

CHRISTINA

Absolutely not.

He gathers some saliva and spits in the most casual way. She looks at him. Amused.

MATT

Try it.

CHRISTINA

No.

MATT

(looking down.)

Oh my God. Bald guy. Smack sound. Bonus. Nail him. Do it. Live.

Christina can't believe she's gonna do this, but she leans over the railing, barely managing a drop or two.

MATT (CONT'D)

What the hell was that? That was like the time I had a urinary tract infection. That was pathetic. You gotta dig down, get up the good stuff.

CHRISTINA

Ew...

Matt shows her how to do it. The guttural gelatinous sound is horrifying.

MATT

(Mouth full.)

Mmmm...?

CHRISTINA

You are like, gruesome.

He waits for someone to walk by on the street and then spits the green viscous gob.

GUY ON THE STREET (O.S.)

Fuck you!

Matt and Christina duck behind the railing and burst into laughter. The laughter vanishes into an awkward silence. They stand up.

CHRISTINA

Turn your head out that way.

MATT

Why?

CHRISTINA

Turn your head that way.

Christina takes his face gently and turns it toward the street. While he is turned away, she begins to exit.

MATT

Why am I doing this?

CHRISTINA

So I don't have to feel you ogling my ass as I walk away.

Matt turns to watch Christina's ass as she walks away.

CHRISTINA (CONT'D)

(Not looking back.)

You're cheating, aren't you?

MATT

Uh-huh.

CHRISTINA

G'night, Matthew.

She exits, never looking back.

Matt turns back and stares out into the night. We move to his POV. The Broadway street. Night turns to day. Pedestrians begin to walk below.

We see a taxi arrive. Riggan comes out of it and enters the theater...

We crawl down the wall until we arrive at Riggan's dressing room window. We push in to find...

INT. RIGGAN'S DRESSING ROOM - THEATER - DAY

...the television set on a news station.

NEWS ANCHOR (V.O.)

(In the background.)

*Mr. May is the third mine worker
who has been indicted in the wake
of the disaster, which was the
worst in decades. Last year charges
were brought--*

The broadcast remains low in the background as Riggan sits at his dressing table and stares at a manila envelope in his hands. In large black magic marker the envelope reads... "R, MALIBU REFINANCE DOCS. SIGN AND SEND ASAP. J." Riggan sighs and props the letter up against the mirror.

With a soft knock, Laura enters. She stands in the doorway with an odd expression on her face.

RIGGAN

What now?

Laura lays the arts section of the New York Times down in front of Riggan.

LAURA

Don't kill the messenger...

Riggan picks up the paper. His expression immediately changes. Laura watches him sympathetically.

LAURA (CONT'D)

He's an asshole.

She exits leaving Riggan reading the paper.

Now we see the cover of the Arts section. There is a picture of Matt lounging on a black sofa, his bare feet on a table as he sips a glass of wine. The Title of the article reads...

"CARVING OUT HIS PLACE IN THEATER HISTORY. *Shiner says Raymond Carver is the reason he became an actor.*"

Riggan involuntarily squeezes the paper as he reads on. In the background the TV report can still be heard.

NEWS ANCHOR (V.O.)

The conspiracy charges against Mr. May were an unusual strategy, lawyers said. Few violations qualify as RIGGAN THOMPSON under existing law, and BIRDMAN has been hampered by weak misdemeanor penalties. A conspiracy...

Closer on Riggan, as he reads, filling with rage.

The news report seems to grow slightly louder. And if we look carefully in the background, we can see that the Anchor Man is now Birdman.

NEWS ANCHOR (V.O.)

A conspiracy charge allows MEDIOCRE ACTORS to be more flexible in their SHITTY PLAY, and if it goes on, it could give them a MASSIVE FAILURE to reach senior mine officials who have traditionally been HUMILIATED from criminal charges because they are UNLOVED BY EX-WIVES, DAUGHTERS AND FANS ALIKE...

RIGGAN

Shut up.

Riggan shoves the paper into his back pocket and charges out of the room. We follow him as he...

INT. HALLWAY - THEATER - CONTINUOUS

...advances along the corridor and up to Matt's dressing room. He finds the door half opened. He enters and...

INT. MATT'S DRESSING ROOM - THEATER - CONTINUOUS

...discovers Matt lying in his sun bed. His arm is sticking out of the side, barely holding on to a copy of Jane Austin's 'EMMA'.

Riggan yanks open the sun bed. Matt is asleep, wearing his tiny sun goggles. Riggan slams the lid down on him.

MATT

What the fuck is going on!

RIGGAN

Get up!

MATT

Back away.

RIGGAN

Get up.

Riggan slaps Matt on the arm.

MATT

Ow, fuck that hurts!

RIGGAN

Yeah, you fell asleep in your sun-bed, you moron.

MATT

Fucking Jane Austin!

RIGGAN

So, Carver is the reason you became an actor?

MATT

What?

RIGGAN

This is my play. MY PLAY! I did the work. I put in the money. I arrange the press.

Matt understands now.

MATT

They called me for an interview. I said-- I don't know, I said the first thing that came to mind. Jesus, we got the cover of the Arts section!

RIGGAN

You said the first-- *Fuck the Arts section.* The first thing that came to mind. Right. Cause that's you. Mr. Natural. Mr. Fuck the scene, just stare at my massive hard-on. Because that's the truth of the moment.

MATT

You really think it looked massive?

RIGGAN

Shut up. *Shut the fuck up.* You don't get hard on my stage unless I tell you to.

MATT

Your stage? This stage belonged to a lot of great actor's, pal. But you are not one of them.

Matt storms out of the room. Riggan follows him into...

INT. HALLWAY - THEATER - CONTINUOUS

...the hallway.

RIGGAN

So, you wrote your own lines?

He slaps matt on his sun burned back.

MATT

Ow. Fuck. Yes I did.

RIGGAN

You changed a few words, and mumbled a little, you self absorbed prick.

MATT

Look who's talking...

RIGGAN

Everybody says: "Matt is so natural".

(Smacks him.)

"So truthful".

(Smacks him again.)

MATT

(Jumping up and down in pain, like a child.)

Ouch. Fuuuuuck. Cut the shit!

RIGGAN

Let me tell you something, you spiteful anonymous piece of shit. There is nothing natural about you. It's all a lie. Even you pretending to tell the truth is a lie.

Riggan corners Matt against the wall.

RIGGAN (CONT'D)
You said in the interview that your father was a drunk, like Carver. Is that true Matt? Is it really true?

Riggan stares intensely into Matt's eyes. Matt looks away.

RIGGAN (CONT'D)
Because my father was. My father was a *mean* fucking drunk. Beat the shit out of us. But we were okay with the beatings. You know why? Because at least when he was beating us, he wasn't thinking about taking us out to his tool shed...

Matt's expression changes.

RIGGAN (CONT'D)
That's right. When we got to the shed, he would-- that sonofabitch would smile and say, "Do you want to kneel down there and unbuckle my belt? Or do you want me to take it off and use it?" After a while I learned how to make myself numb. But my sister--
(Trying to hold back tears.)
My little sister...

Riggan can't go on. Matt's eyes are wet with compassion.

MATT
(Horrified.)
Jesus, Riggan. I didn't-- That's fucking horrible...

RIGGAN
(Instantly unemotional.)
Yeah. It's also not true. See? I can pretend too, you little dick!

Riggan shoves Matt violently.

MATT
What the fuck...?

RIGGAN
Don't fuck with me, Matt.

MATT
You're crazy...

RIGGAN
You have no idea what I'm capable
of. You understand me?

Riggan pulls the paper out of his back pocket.

RIGGAN (CONT'D)
Working with Riggan Thompson is
like waltzing with a monkey?

He smacks Matt in the head with the paper and then pulls him
into a headlock. They wrestle in the hallway.

Two technicians pass by carrying something.

TECHNICIAN 1
Five bucks on Birdman.

TECHNICIAN 2
Alright, I'll take the gay guy.

Matt breaks free from the headlock.

MATT
What are you gonna do, Riggan? You
gonna get rid of me? Huh? What
happens then?
(With a smirk.)
What do you think my friend Tabitha
is going to write in the New York
Times after you get rid of me?

Riggan stares at Matt, paralyzed by the truth. Finally, he
turns and marches to his dressing room and we follow him.

INT. RIGGAN'S DRESSING ROOM - THEATER - CONTINUOUS

Riggan slams the door shut and paces in a rage, not knowing
what to do with himself. He glares at a make-up box on the
table and, pointing his fingers at it, with his telekinetic
powers, sends it flying across the room.

BIRDMAN (V.O.)
You are lame, Riggan. Rolling
around with that third rate actor
in an 800 seat shithole like this.

Riggan looks down at the poster on the floor. Then he sits
and closes his eyes. He starts breathing deeply, trying to
soothe himself.

RIGGAN (V.O.)

(Whispering.)

Breathing in, I feel my rage.
Breathing out, I embrace my mental
formations.

BIRDMAN (V.O.)

You're going to let that pushy
little poncey fuck threaten you?...

Riggan continues breathing deeply with his eyes tightly
closed. He smiles a tiny artificial smile.

RIGGAN (V.O.)

(Whispering.)

Breathing in, I am calm. Breathing
out, I ignore my mental formations.

(In a slightly different
voice. Louder.)

This is a mental formation. This is
a mental form--

BIRDMAN (V.O.)

Stop that shit. I am not a mental
formation. I am "you", asshole.

RIGGAN

(Whispering.)

Leave me alone.

BIRDMAN (V.O.)

You were a movie star, remember?
Unambitious, sure, but happy...

Riggan opens his eyes, slowly. A sad expression on his face.

RIGGAN

I was not happy.

BIRDMAN

...Ignorant but charming. Now you
are a tiny bitter pretentious
cocksucker.

RIGGAN

Shut up! And stop whining, you
pathetic Hollywood shit!

Riggan points his fingers at the Birdman poster and, with his
telekinetic power, sends it flying up into the air and
crashing down on the floor.

BIRDMAN (V.O.)

(From the floor.)

Stay here and your days are numbered. This whole naturalistic shit is not big, fast, or loud... Not even a fucking laugh. This is miserable, ambiguous, dark...

RIGGAN

Fuck you!

Riggan points his fingers at a lamp and sends it flying.

BIRDMAN (V.O.)

Fuck you, coward! And fuck critics! We still grossed 290 million worldwide. Fuck them.

RIGGAN

That was 2002! You are a fraud now. You and all that is garbage.

BIRDMAN

That "all that" is you, pretentious piece of shit.. You and me, both. We are just a pair of whores waiting for the trick, to tell us we're pretty.

RIGGAN

What do you mean, 'we'? There is no 'we'. I am not you. You, fucking third rate comic shit!

BIRDMAN

Ha ha. You well know that without me you would only be "you". Just "you". A sad, selfish, mediocre man without a disguise.

Riggan points his fingers at the poster and sends it flying, spearing it on a coat rack, piercing Birdman right through the heart. Finally, silence. Until...

BIRDMAN (V.O.)

What the hell did you do that for?
I liked that poster.

A confused Riggan looks over to the wall, where the lamp on the floor is creating a shadow of his figure. Only in the shadow, it appears as if Riggan is wearing the Birdman costume. Stunned, Riggan slowly lifts one arm and in the shadow we see a wing.

BIRDMAN (V.O.)

It's always 'we' brother. You can
fool the others, but not me. You
and I are inseparable.

The television turns on by itself, playing an episode of the original Birdman cartoon. Riggan points his fingers at the tv and sends it hurling at the shadow. Then he proceeds to destroy everything in his room with his telekinetic powers.

We slowly pan to see that, behind Riggan, Jake stands on the other side of the half-opened door. We push in on Jake, watching in shock. The camera turns and becomes Jake's POV...

INT. HALLWAY - THEATER - CONTINUOUS

...and now, from his view, we see Riggan yelling at the shadow.

RIGGAN

Fuck you! Fuck you!

He picks up a chair and throws it down. He then picks up the newspaper from the floor and tossing it all around. And now we understand that he is not using telepathy. He has been using only his hands. Completely mad. As Riggan turns to pick up something else, he spots Jake on the other side of the door. He immediately calms himself and walks over.

RIGGAN (CONT'D)

(Totally calm.)

What's up?

JAKE

Um... Well. It's half hour to curtain. Just two more previews, buddy. Hang on there.

RIGGAN

Okay.

A beat.

JAKE

How ya doin'?

RIGGAN

Good. Great.

JAKE

Good. That's good.

(A beat.)

(MORE)

JAKE (CONT'D)

The, uh, money came through. I just have to transfer it to the account.

RIGGAN

Oh, that's terrific...

JAKE

Okay... well, I'm gonna do that.

RIGGAN

Do it. Yeah... just do it.

(Fake punching Jake.)

It's exciting, huh?

JAKE

Yeah...

Jake walks a few steps away from the dressing room, but then he stops and returns to Riggan, who still wears a weird smile and throws boxing jabs into the air.

JAKE (CONT'D)

You know I am proud of you, right?
You're brave, and... solid.

RIGGAN

Yeah, well. It's just... You know Jake, this is not who I am. 'Me' is not the one standing here, and not the one who walks on stage, with all those strangers looking at him.

(Beat.)

I'm the only one who can taste myself, in the back of my mouth.

Silence. Jake looks at Riggan with deep, confused eyes.

JAKE

Great... Riggan, one more flop and it's over. You get it, don't you?

Riggan smiles one last time and, with a flourish, slams the door on Jake. Inside the dressing room we can hear things crashing and Riggan screaming once again.

A shell-shocked Jake takes out a pack of cigarettes as he walks back down the corridor. He works his way up the stairwell and out onto...

EXT. TERRACE - THEATER - CONTINUOUS

...the terrace. He stands for a moment looking out over the street.

He lights up a cigarette, trying to digest what he has just seen. He leans over the railing, smoking, looking at the bright Marquis' of the other theaters.

The camera becomes his POV as he watches a plane fly by overhead. We follow the plane. The sky begins to darken. One by one the theater marquis' go out. We see a wisp of smoke enter the frame. We follow the smoke down to discover...

Christina leaning over the balcony railing, smoking a cigarette. She stares out into an uncharacteristically quiet New York night.

MATT

Oh, for god's sake, just jump already.

We see a smile creep over Christina's face.

MATT (CONT'D)

You just missed the best preview until now. A pretty good second act. Well, at least a couple of moments anyway. Your father made a few lines shine, although he's probably not aware of it.

She turns to face Matt.

CHRISTINA

How did you know I was up here?

MATT

I didn't. I was just hoping.

Silence.

CHRISTINA

Where's Lesley?

MATT

No idea.

CHRISTINA

Really...

MATT

We're pretty much done.

CHRISTINA

Is that right?

MATT

Yup. It looks like she left me for someone else.

CHRISTINA

Smart girl.

MATT

Ouch.

Matt goes to light a cigarette. She stares him down.

CHRISTINA

So, you want to fool around, then?

A pause.

MATT

No.

CHRISTINA

(Taken aback.)

No? Really...

MATT

I don't know what to tell you.

CHRISTINA

Tell me the truth. You're pretty good at that.

MATT

I'd be worried I couldn't get an erection.

Smiling at his honesty.

CHRISTINA

Didn't seem to be a problem for you on stage.

MATT

Nothing is a problem for me on stage.

A pause.

CHRISTINA

If you weren't worried about anything... What would you want to do to me?

He considers it, then moves his face close to hers.

MATT

I would want to pull the eyes out
of your head...

CHRISTINA

You're sweet.

MATT

...and stick them in my skull, and
then look out at this street, and
see it the way I saw it when I was
your age.

Christina pulls Matt into her with her legs. She reaches over
and grabs the lit cigarette from Matt's mouth and tosses it
over the balcony. She leans over and kisses Matt softly on
the mouth.

GUY ON THE STREET (O.S.)

Asshole!

Christina and Matt laugh while they kiss. Then she hops off
the railing and walks toward the door.

MATT

Where are you going?

CHRISTINA

(Seductively.)

Come on...

She walks through the door and Matt follows her...

INT. HALLWAYS - THEATRE - CONTINUOUS

...along a darkened hallway. They reach a hidden stairwell.
Christina leads the way down the dark stairs.

MATT

You sure you know where you're
going?

CHRISTINA

Absolutely not.

She continues on until she gets to a metal door. They walk
through and we see that we are...

INT. STAGE - THEATER - CONTINUOUS

...in a corner of the backstage area. Only the red light of an exit sign illuminating their faces. Christina backs Matt against the door and kisses him harder.

MATT

What now...?

She takes him by the hand and walks him toward the front of the stage. Now we can see the empty seats of the auditorium and the motel set. The only light emanates from the Ghost Light.

Christina pushes Matt on to the motel bed and backs away. In silhouette against the ghost light behind her, she slowly pulls her top over her head. She moves in to Matt on the bed and straddles his lap.

CHRISTINA

(Bouncing up and down.)

Wow. This is a real bed. I would've thought it was made out of cardboard or something.

Matt reaches up to kiss her. She stops him.

CHRISTINA (CONT'D)

How do you do it?

MATT

What?

CHRISTINA

How do you come out here and pretend to be someone else in front of all those people?

MATT

I don't pretend. Not up here. Just about every place else, but never up here.

CHRISTINA

That's good to know.

They kiss passionately, while we begin to hear the same sentimental music we heard during the first preview.

We move away from Matt and Christina toward the auditorium to discover that it is now full and hundreds of people are staring at us, the stage, with complete attention.

RIGGAN (O.S.)

Fucking teenager. The kid was dead. He was off in a corner laid out on a gurney. We took the old couple up to the O.R. And worked like hell on them for most of the night... When we were done we wrapped them in full body casts and moved them into the ICU. For two weeks they both kept plugging away at it. Defying all-- Just hitting it better and better on all the scopes.

We pan along the auditorium back to the stage to find Riggan, Matt, Lesley and Laura in the kitchen. Riggan is finishing his monologue about the old couple.

RIGGAN (CONT'D)

So we transfer them out to their own room. The husband was depressed for the longest time. I mean, even when I told him his wife was gonna pull through, he was still depressed. So, I got up to his mouth hole and I asked him, and... He said it was because he couldn't turn his head and look at his wife. Imagine that... The man's heart was breaking because he couldn't turn his head and see his goddamn wife. I mean... It was killing the old fart just because he couldn't look at the fucking woman.

The audience seems rapt.

LESLEY (O.S.)

That's so sad.

We stay with Riggan.

RIGGAN

I'll go get more gin.

We follow him off stage. The audience applauds enthusiastically. The Dresser waits in the wings to help Riggan with his change.

DRESSER

(Emotional.)

That was beautiful.

RIGGAN

You thought so?

The dresser nods. Riggan looks proud and excited. He feels things are going well. He begins to remove his clothes all the while watching the stage which begins to revolve. The kitchen gives way to the extravagant garden set we saw before. Laura and Lesley in place for the scene. A big fan produces an artificial breeze. The scenery looks nice, if not a bit excessive.

Annie on her way to the podium gives Riggan a thumbs up.

ANNIE

Really great.

RIGGAN

(Playing it cool.)

Thanks.

Lesley and Laura continue with the scene. Riggan now in his underwear and a robe, watches them, until something catches his attention.

Matt and Christina are on the other side of the backstage area talking and laughing.

ANNIE

(Into her headset.)

Cue 110 through 114... go.

The lights on stage become warmer, more colorful. They reflect on Riggan's face. He watches Christina lean in and kiss Matt softly. Matt playfully reaches around and grabs her ass.

Riggan's good mood vanishes immediately. Tight with rage, he turns to a stage hand.

RIGGAN

You have a cigarette?

The stage hand holds out a pack, Riggan takes one.

STAGE HAND

You need a light?

Riggan snatches the lighter and storms out of the stage door, through the hallway, and out the back door of the theater to...

EXT. AN ALLEY WAY - OUTSIDE THE THEATER - CONTINUOUS

...the alley. Down at the end, we can see the tourists making their way about the streets.

Riggan lights the cigarette, his mind racing. He leans back against the stage door trying to calm himself.

RIGGAN

Breathing in, I calm myself.
Breathing out, I ease myself.

But this is New York City. A fluorescent light buzzes above his head. Taxis honk their horns. The sound of pedestrians yelling at one another. All fueling his agitation.

Riggan checks his watch. He pulls one last drag from the cigarette before he tosses it, and turns to head back in, only to realize the door has locked. He tries to pull it open to no avail. He begins to knock loudly on the door. There is no response. He knocks louder. Nothing.

He is turning to walk away when he realizes that his robe is caught in the door. He checks his watch again and now is beginning to panic. He tries to tear at the robe but the terry cloth is too strong for him to rip. Frantically, he looks around for an answer. No answer. No time. He pulls the robe off of him and charges down the alley way toward...

EXT. STREET - CONTINUOUS

...the street. Now, rushing down the block in his underwear. A tourist spots him.

TOURIST

Hey, aren't you...?

RIGGAN

I'm sorry. I can't really--

TOURIST

Riggan Thompson! Holy Shit! Let me get an autograph.

Riggan marches on as a few more people begin to notice. The Tourist runs in front of him, forcing him to stop.

TOURIST (CONT'D)

Come on, man. Don't be a dick. Let me have an autograph.

The man produces a pen and a magazine from his pocket. More people begin to gather...

MAN ON STREET

(Calling out.)

Birdman!

Seeing no other way out, Riggan signs the autograph. The man looks at it, pleased.

TOURIST

Dude! You fuckin' rock!

Now directly in front of him stands a lady and her two bratty kids.

LADY

Can we take one picture?

RIGGAN

Are you kidding me?

KID #1

Why is he naked?

LADY

One picture...

KID #2

I can see his weenie...

Riggan tries to get past them, but a crowd has formed.

LADY

(To her kids.)

Get next to him!

RIGGAN

Give me a fucking break, lady...

The kids run up next to him. Even more people crowding around. The Lady runs up in front to get the picture.

Riggan puts up his middle finger to the camera as the Lady gets the shot. Riggan shoves the kids aside and moves on.

WOMAN ON STREET

He looks so old in person.

MAN ON STREET

(Yelling from across the street.)

You suck!

RIGGAN

(Yelling back.)

Fuck you!

Riggan pushes through the crowd to get to the lobby doors. The enormous crowd begin chanting. Dozens of cell phones recording him.

CROWD
Bird-man! Bird-man! Bird-man!

Riggan pushes his way through to the lobby doors...

INT. LOBBY - THEATER - CONTINUOUS

...to be stopped by the vision of Ralph in a wheelchair. His head wrapped in a bandage. A man in a suit next to him.

RIGGAN
Jesus Christ!

RALPH
Well, well, well... The hamster just jumped into the wheel.

RIGGAN
I don't-- What does that mean?

RALPH
It means, you're about to--

RIGGAN
Yeah, I don't care. What're you doing here?

RALPH
Waiting for Jake. This is Mr. Roth, my attorney.

MR. ROTH
We're here pursuing financial remuneration for the severe injuries Mr. Pinkus suffered while rehearsing your play.

Ralph chuckles with glee.

RIGGAN
Okay, this is a joke, right?

MR. ROTH
No one is laughing.

RIGGAN
He is.

Ralph stops laughing.

MR. ROTH
You'll pay him what he deserves or we'll shut your play down.

RIGGAN
It was an accident.

MR. ROTH
We have reason to believe that the light was loosened on purpose in an attempt to--

RIGGAN
That's ridiculous. Why would we do it a week before the opening?

RALPH
Because you were intimidated.

RIGGAN
By what?

RALPH
By my talent. You were afraid I'd steal your spotlight.

RIGGAN
Okay. You know what? I'm glad the light fell on your head. You're about the worst actor I've ever seen. And I worked for CBS for two seasons. You were going to ruin my play, you talentless, overacting fuck. I mean look at you. What's with the wheelchair? You hit your head, you moron!

RALPH
(beginning to cry.)
My equilibrium...

RIGGAN
Shut up. And get the hell out of my way, I have a play to do.

RALPH
(Sobbing.)
I'm going to ruin you. You and your stupid play.

Riggan looks at him for a final second and then storms toward the auditorium. He is stopped by an old usher.

OLD USHER
I'm sorry sir, you're going to have to-- Oh, my goodness, you're--

Riggan shoves the old lady aside and enters...

INT. AUDITORIUM - THEATER - CONTINUOUS

...the theater. Riggan stands in the back among the audience.

Matt and Lesley are onstage, in bed, playing the motel room scene, waiting for Riggan to knock on the door. But there is no door for Riggan to knock. So he yells out his line from the back of the auditorium...

RIGGAN
KNOCK KNOCK KNOCK! Terri! Terri!

The audience turns to see Riggan standing in his underwear. They begin to murmur and laugh and point at him.

Riggan marches down the aisle.

Lesley and Matt, confused, come out of bed. Matt cannot stop smiling.

LESLEY
Ed! What are you doing here?

RIGGAN
Why? I need you to tell me why. I
lived for you-- I worshipped you...

MATT
Listen Ed, I know this is hard but--

RIGGAN
(To Matt.)
Fuck you. Shut up. *Fuck you.*

Giggles from the audience.

Riggan arrives at the bottom of the stage. Annie from one of the wings slides the gun towards him. Riggan grabs it and points it at Matt.

LESLEY
Eddie! Please!

Riggan climbs onto the stage. Exhausted. Dirty. A mess. He goes to Matt and, with a last effort, pushes him lamely.

RIGGAN
*What's wrong with me? Why does it
always feel like this? It fucking
hurts! I don't under-- Jesus! Why
do I end up having to beg people
to love me?*

LESLEY

Ed. Eddie. Please... Just give me
the gun.

We move away from them toward one of the wings. Jake is
staring at the scene in disbelief. His cellphone begins to
vibrate. He answers.

JAKE

Yeah.

(Beat.)

What?... No no no no no no no. Wait
there. I'm coming out in--

He walks toward the hallway and we follow him...

INT. HALLWAY - THEATER - CONTINUOUS

...through the corridor.

JAKE

No. Wait. Wait for me. I'll be
there in a second.

(A concerned expression.)

What is that, a threat?

(Beat.)

What wheelchair?

(Beat.)

Wait. Don't hang up. Mr. Roth, we
can discuss-- Hello?... Hello?...

He goes out one of the exits and we are left with the silence
of the empty hallway. We stay with the hallway for a few
seconds. Then the sound of the gunshot from the scene echoes
through the theater. The audience applauds.

The camera starts to move forward. A few seconds later Riggan
takes over the POV with his bloody head and the fake gun. We
follow him toward his dressing room. He goes in and...

INT. RIGGAN'S DRESSING ROOM - THEATER - LATER

...walks to his refrigerator without acknowledging Christina
who is sitting on the couch, scribbling her dashes on the
toilet paper once again. Riggan takes out a plastic container
of bologna and a jar of mustard. He sits in front of his
dressing table, peels open the bologna and opens the jar of
mustard. Slice by slice, he dips the bologna in the mustard
and shoves it into his mouth.

CHRISTINA

Dad...?

RIGGAN
(Looking up.)
Hey. How ya doin'?

CHRISTINA
Are you okay?

RIGGAN
Why?

CHRISTINA
I don't know. You seem--

RIGGAN
(Eating.)
I'm good. This is good.
(Holding out a piece.)
You want some?

CHRISTINA
I'm good.

RIGGAN
Great. Great.

He continues to eat. She tries to fill the odd silence.

CHRISTINA
So. Opening night, tomorrow.

RIGGAN
Yeah.

CHRISTINA
That's exciting, huh?

RIGGAN
Yeah. Well... I don't know. The
previews have been a train wreck.
We haven't been able to get through
an entire performance without a
raging fire... or a raging hard-on.
I'm not really sleeping, you know,
at all. And I'm pretty much broke.
Oh, and also this play feels like a
miniature, deformed version of
myself that keeps following me
around, hitting me in the balls
with a tiny hammer. So...
(Beat.)
Sorry, what was your question?

CHRISTINA

Never mind... Tonight wasn't bad.
It was weird. But that's sort of
cool. People seemed to like it.

Silence. Riggan notices the toilet paper.

RIGGAN

What are you doing? Some homework?

CHRISTINA

Homework...?

RIGGAN

No?

CHRISTINA

No. I don't-- When I was in rehab,
they made us do this.

RIGGAN

Really...

She unravels the toilet paper as she talks.

CHRISTINA

Yeah. These dashes, represent the
six billion years the planet has
existed. Each dash represents 100
years.

She unravels the roll and we see that there are thousands of
black marks running along the toilet paper, almost the whole
roll filled with dashes. She takes the last two panels and
tears them off.

CHRISTINA (CONT'D)

And this...

(Hands them to him.)

...is supposed to represent the
entire time us humans have been
here. One hundred and fifty
thousand years. That's it.

Riggan stares at the panels as if mesmerized.

CHRISTINA (CONT'D)

I guess they were trying to remind
us that that's what all our egos
and self-obsession are worth. A few
sheets of toilet paper.

He stares at the paper, and then at Christina.

RIGGAN
(Casually.)
I was a shitty father, wasn't I?

CHRISTINA
No. You were a--
(She stops herself.)
You were fine.

He stops chewing and stares out.

RIGGAN
Fine... You're right. I am just
"fine". An adorable mediocrity as
your mother said.

He looks at her with the saddest of expressions. Then he stands up and wipes the mustard from his face with the piece of toilet paper.

CHRISTINA
Dad!

RIGGAN
What?

Christina looks at the ruined toilet paper in his hands. Riggan understands. He examines the paper as if it were a dead animal.

RIGGAN (CONT'D)
Oh... Shit. I'm sorry.

Christina's phone begin to vibrate.

CHRISTINA
(Smiling.)
It's OK. You just destroyed the
entire human race in one blow.

Silence. The phone continues vibrating. She controls the urge to answer it.

RIGGAN
Go ahead.

CHRISTINA
(Can't resist.)
Okay. I just...

She takes out the phone and looks at the screen. Riggan watches her face light up with the sweetest smile.

RIGGAN
Go and see him.

CHRISTINA
What?

RIGGAN
It's okay. Go.

Christina doesn't want to leave her father like this.

RIGGAN (CONT'D)
Go ahead. I'm fine.

Christina hops up, kisses him on the head, and dashes out.

Riggan stares at out absently. Pensive. Until he spots a beautiful bouquet of Alchemillas on his table with a handwritten note. Riggan caresses one of the flowers gently, and then examines the note. "I found them. Love, Christina." A sad smile. He pulls off the wig and the mustache, reaches down and takes out a cigarette. Lighting it, he walks over to the window, pulling it open.

Riggan stares down at the street below. Some laughter from the street gets his attention. He looks over, surprised to see Lesley and Laura hailing a cab. They kiss tenderly before hopping into it.

Riggan watches the cab disappear into the Manhattan streets. Then he puts out the cigarette against the window frame. We follow him as he gets out of the dressing room toward...

INT. HALLWAY - THEATER - CONTINUOUS

...the hallway. Riggan takes out his cell phone and calls Jake. He waits. No answer.

RIGGAN
Jake. It's me. Riggan. I left you a
hundred messages. Where the hell
are you?

He walks by Matt's dressing room and something induces him to stop. He leans against the closed door and listens to... Christina and Matt. They try to be as quiet as possible, but Riggan hears them laugh, and kiss.

He closes his eyes for a second. Then he looks for something in his phone. We zoom in the screen to see a video of himself running in his underwear along the crowded Broadway street. It is a chaotic phone video with almost 2 million views. When we pull away, we see that Riggan is now...

INT. SARDI'S RESTAURANT - LATER

...sitting at the bar at Sardi's, drunk, still looking at the video in his phone. He is one of the few customers. He takes a sip of his martini. Suddenly his phone rings with the title "UNKNOWN". Confused, he answers it...

RIGGAN

Hello?... Who is this? ... Jake?...
I've been calling you all day.
Where the fuck-- ... I can't even
hear you. Speak up. ... Where are
you? ... Newark?

A moment of silence and Riggan's expression begins to change. He instinctively rises from his stool and walks over by a window in the corner.

RIGGAN (CONT'D)

What are you talking about?...
Don't say that. Don't say 'sorry'
to me Jake.

(A new, horrible thought.)
Where's the money, Jake? ... The
money that came through from my
house, where is it? ... I will
fucking kill you. I swear to God, I
will find you and... Jake? Jake...

Riggan looks at his phone. The call is lost. He doesn't know what to do with himself. He wanders back to his place at the bar and sits, finishing what's left in his glass and staring out, confused.

RIGGAN (CONT'D)

(To the bartender.)
Let me have another one.

BARTENDER

You got it.

The bartender pours another whiskey for Riggan. Just then, a waiter steps up to the bar. The bartender points to a martini sitting on the bar next to them.

BARTENDER (CONT'D)

(To the waiter.)
That's going over to Ms. Dickinson.

Riggan's head tilts at the mention of the name. He looks over to see Tabitha sitting at her table, scratching in her notebook as always. The bartender, having filled Riggan's drink moves to the other end to rinse some glasses.

RIGGAN
(Handing the waiter a
twenty.)
I got it. She's a friend of mine.

The waiter pockets the money and gives Riggan the drink. He walks it over to Tabitha and places it down in front of her. Not looking up, she pulls the drink closer and takes a sip.

Riggan sits down across from her. She looks up and immediately recognizes him. She is confused, but doesn't say a word. He takes out the Carver cocktail napkin and pushes it in front of her. She looks at him, and then down to the napkin. She reads it in silence. When she's done, she looks up at him.

RIGGAN (CONT'D)
(Re: The napkin.)
That was twenty years before I put
on that damned costume.

A pause. Then she pushes the napkin back toward him.

TABITHA
I don't care.

RIGGAN
I'm just saying, when you come
tomorrow night, I want you--

TABITHA
I really don't care.

RIGGAN
What are-- You have to write the--

TABITHA
I'm going to destroy your play.

Silence.

RIGGAN
You haven't even seen it. I don't--
Have I done something to offend
you?

TABITHA
As a matter of fact you have. You
took up space in a theater which
otherwise might have been used on
something worthwhile.

RIGGAN
But you don't even know if it's--

TABITHA

I know. I haven't read a word of it, or even seen a preview, but after the opening tomorrow I'm going to turn in the worst review anybody has ever read. And I'm going to close your play. Would you like to know why? Because I hate you and everyone you represent. Entitled. Spoiled. Selfish. Children. Blissfully untrained, unversed and unprepared to even attempt real art. Handing each other awards for cartoons and pornography. Measuring your worth in *weekends*. Well, this is the theater, and you don't get to come in here and pretend you can write, direct and act in your own propaganda piece without going through me first. So, break a leg.

Tabitha goes back to her tablet to continue writing. Riggan looks at her for a moment. Then, trying to be as polite as possible...

RIGGAN

What has to happen to someone, for them to end up becoming a critic?

Tabitha keeps writing fast notes.

RIGGAN (CONT'D)

Keep going. Keep scribbling down your labels. That's what you do. You label things... you label people, and you label art. It's a compulsion, isn't it? You can't help yourself. And your ability to perceive becomes more and more shallow. More and more lifeless.

Riggan takes a flower from a vase at the center of the table.

RIGGAN (CONT'D)

Do you have any idea what this is? You can't even see it if you don't label it. The beauty and depth of this simple thing escapes you. You mistake those sounds in your head for true knowledge.

TABITHA
(With irony.)
Very impressive, Mr. Thomson. A
beautiful interpretation of
meaningless airport-book
philosophy.

Riggan looks devastated. He swallows trying to control his
anger.

RIGGAN
Who are you? You know as much about
playwrighting or acting as I do
about being an uptight cunt. I've
read your reviews, they could have
been written by any other coward
with a blog. You are all mosquitos,
buzzing. All bullshit!

Riggan begins to lose control. Tabitha stops writing and
looks at him with a creepy smile.

RIGGAN (CONT'D)
Yeah, you're just a parasite,
wearing a shit-eating grin while
you destroy the thing that feeds
you. You're an old eunuch, throwing
stones from behind a wall. And all
the while it costs you nothing. You
risk nothing of yourself. Well, I
am an actor, and this play has cost
me everything. *Everything*. So I'll
tell you what. You can take that
cowardly, malicious, shittily
written review, and shove it up
your wrinkly, tight ass. Bitch.

Silence. Tabitha looks at him with a calm expression.

TABITHA
You think you're an actor?
(To the waiter.)
Eddie.

The waiter approaches the table.

WAITER
Yeah, Mrs. Dickinson?

MATT
Give us some Shakespeare.

WAITER

Yeah, sure. You got anything in mind?

Tabitha looks over at Riggan picking the perfect verse.

MATT

The Scottish Play. Act five...

WAITER

Tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow, Creeps in this petty pace from day to day, To the last syllable of recorded time; And all our yesterdays have lighted fools The way to dusty death...

He is brilliant. The monologue is perfectly played and powerful. Riggan being mercilessly reminded of his mediocrity... by Eddie the waiter.

WAITER (CONT'D)

...Out, out, brief candle! Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player, That struts and frets his hour upon the stage, And then is heard no more. It is a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury... Signifying nothing.

The powerful silence rings out for an extra moment. Then...

TABITHA

Thanks, Eddie.

WAITER

You got it.

He leaves. Tabitha rises from her seat and grabs her things.

TABITHA

You're no actor. You're a celebrity. Let's be clear on that. I'm going to kill your play.

She walks away. Riggan sits numb for a moment. Then he reaches over and gulps down Tabitha's entire martini, gin pouring out the sides of his mouth. When he's finished, not aware of his actions, he places the empty martini glass on top of the Carver napkin and gets up. We follow him as he walks toward the exit, unconsciously leaving the napkin behind. He walks down the stairs by the wall filled with caricatures of famous people. The caricatures come to life in their frames and talk to him...

ORSON WELLES

Well said, Mr. Thomson. Critics are
lice in the locks of art.

SAMUEL BECKETT

Go out there and fail again. Fail
better.

LOUIS C.K.

Suck a bag of dicks.

Riggan storms out of Sardi's and we follow him...

EXT. STREET - CONTINUOUS

...as he walks along the theater district at night. He feels
tired. Drunk. Empty. Neon lights all around him.

Riggan keeps walking until he arrives at a bench, with a tree
behind. Everything is quiet. Riggan sits on the bench. His
eyes look lost, empty. We begin to tilt up, slowly, toward
the tall tree. The only sign of nature in a world of cement,
metal and plastic. We move closer to the branches and the
green leaves. A moment of silence. Peace after the storm.
Night slowly turns into day. The sounds of the city at night
disappear and birds begin to sing. The branches are
beautifully caressed by the golden light of morning sun.
Finally, we tilt down slowly and find...

EXT. CENTRAL PARK - DAY

...Riggan sleeping on a bench. He wears the same clothing as
the night before. He looks miserable, like a bum.

BIRDMAN (V.O.)

God. You look like shit, brother.
You get that mongoloid look when
you're hung over, don't you?

Riggan opens an eye. He scratches his hair.

BIRDMAN (V.O.)

Let's go. It's a beautiful day.

Riggan sits down slowly. He is really hangover. We now tilt
up again toward the tree to find Birdman, the comic hero (a
younger Riggan wearing the Birdman outfit), happily sitting
on one of the branches.

BIRDMAN

Stand up! Forget that old bitch.
You're not an actor? Who cares?!!

(MORE)

BIRDMAN (CONT'D)

You're much more than that. Fuck!
You're way above all those theater
douchebags. You're a movie star! A
Global force! Don't you get it?

Birdman jumps gracefully as a bird from the branch and begins to fly and flutter all around Riggan, who stands up and walks in a clumsy way, his eyes still lost and crazy, along Central Park.

BIRDMAN (CONT'D)

The only thing worse than not
having a talent is to have one and
waste it. You spent your whole life
building a reputation and a bank
account, and now they're both
blown. You rejected me, you, us...

Riggan pays no attention, just marches on.

BIRDMAN (CONT'D)

C'mon, buddy. Tell me we're back.
We're doing it, right? Dark Knight
my balls. We're gonna crush with
this thing! A billion world wide.
Swear to God.

Riggan keeps walking toward Central Park lake.

BIRDMAN (CONT'D)

Do you hear me? You are a movie
star, an icon. Someone capable of
spiritualizing the profane.

Birdman flies around Riggan, but Riggan doesn't seem to be affected by his words.

BIRDMAN (CONT'D)

You are bigger than life. You help
people escape their boring,
miserable lives and transport them
to imaginary words... You make them
jump... Laugh... Cry... Shit their
pants... You're a machine of
emotion...

Riggan and Birdman arrive at Central Park's lake. The huge mass of water shines in front of them.

BIRDMAN (CONT'D)

Yes, pal. You transcend the limited
reality of men...

Riggan's eyes, possessed, stare at the water.

BIRDMAN (CONT'D)
...and with a snap of your
fingers...

Riggan calmly snaps his fingers and the water begins to part
in front of him.

BIRDMAN (CONT'D)
Yes!!! See? You're a God! Bigger
than Jesus...

The waters are now gloriously parted.

BIRDMAN (CONT'D)
...And when you snap your fingers
you do it in 3000 screens, 47
countries... Your are ubiquitous.

Riggan snaps his fingers over and over again as he walks
through the parted lake.

BIRDMAN (CONT'D)
Yes!! And when you shout
"whooaa!"...
(Riggan shouts "Whooaa!")
...it explodes in the eardrum of
millions... Your power is
unlimited.

Riggan walks through the walls of water.

BIRDMAN (CONT'D)
Listen to me. We gotta go back. We
have to do this. We have to end it
with a grand gesture.

Riggan stops walking. Suddenly something makes sense in what
Birdman is telling him.

BIRDMAN (CONT'D)
What are we doing? Taking a swim?
Let's go back. One more time. Show
them how much we gave for them.
Show them how much they're going to
miss us. Flames. Icarus.
Sacrifice...

Now we are close to Riggan's face. In his eyes we see that he
is up to something. He has a plan. And he needs to go and do
it, show them what he's capable of.

BIRDMAN (CONT'D)
...Let's show them all what we are
capable of.

(MORE)

BIRDMAN (CONT'D)

The biggest artistic moment in history. You can do it. You're Birdman. Do you hear me? You're Birdman...

A MAN'S VOICE (V.O.)

...you're Birdman!

And as the camera pulls back, we see that Birdman is gone and Riggan is standing up to his chest in the lake.

One of the Central Park rowboats is just in front of him. In it, a couple of tourists are looking at him in amazement. One of them is recording him on her cell phone.

A park ranger has waded in and takes Riggan by the arm.

RANGER

Sir. Come on out of the water, now.

Riggan looks at the Ranger, confused.

RANGER (CONT'D)

Are you okay?

He starts to walk Riggan back to the shore. Behind them we see a camera crew in the rowboat filming them.

RANGER (CONT'D)

Sir...?

RIGGAN

I'm fine. I didn't--
(Pointing back to the
boat.)
We're shooting a scene.

The Ranger looks back to the rowboat. From his point of view we see that inside the rowboat is the couple from before, the lady still filming them.

The Ranger gets Riggan to dry land.

RANGER

Is there somebody I can call?

RIGGAN

One more time...

RANGER

Excuse me?

RIGGAN

I have to go back.

Some underscoring music.

RANGER

You have somewhere to go?

No response. The music begins to swell.

RANGER (CONT'D)

Sir. Do you have somewhere to go?

Riggan stands up straight and proud. And in a voice that sounds like Birdman...

RIGGAN

Yes.

Riggan begins to run... The music is rousing... As he runs, he holds out his arms, spreading them wide, until suddenly...

He takes flight, soaring high over Central Park. The music becomes epic. Something beautiful about this broken man, in his drenched street clothes, flying like a superhero.

We journey with him over the spectacular sight that is Manhattan, until...

EXT. THEATER - CONTINUOUS

...he finally lands on 45th street and jogs through the theater entrance. Calmly. The Usher receives him with a strange look.

USHER

Mr. Thomson. I think you forgot to--

He points at the street, and we pan to see an Egyptian taxi driver coming out of his car and running like a mad man toward us. But when we pan again, we see that Riggan is already going in, completely focused on his plan.

We stay with the Usher and the taxi driver, arguing. The Egyptian complains effusively in an almost incomprehensible English while the Usher tries to understand him. They go inside the lobby, but we stay outside, with the closed doors.

Day turns into evening, bringing the brightness of the marquee that bounces off the glass doors, and the glowing of neon lights from the street. We hear a wild applause coming from inside the auditorium. A few seconds later the doors of the theater open and the audience comes out in a relaxed stampede.

MAN

(Lighting up a cigarette.)
It's really good.

WOMAN

Who would of thought?

We begin to move up, outside the theater. We see the marquee of the play that reads, "What We Talk When We Talk About Love", and bellow it, in smaller print, "Riggan Thomson and Matt Shiner", and also, "Premiere Today".

We keep moving up until we arrive at Riggan's dressing room window. We push in to find...

INT. RIGGAN'S DRESSING ROOM - THEATER - EVENING

...Riggan, laying on the sofa, hugging a cushion. We are at the intermission of the play. The dressing room is filled with roses and cards. He stares at the odd reflection of himself wearing the wig and mustache for the motel scene.

Sylvia appears in the doorway, watching him for a moment.

SYLVIA

Wow, that is just NASCAR hot.

Riggan turns and smiles at her.

SYLVIA (CONT'D)

I just wanted to come say hello.
It's going great out there.

(Surprised by what she
just saw.)

You're so good. I mean it. I mean--
I really mean it. You're--

RIGGAN

Come here. Sit next to me.

ANNIE ON SPEAKERS

(While eating something.)
Places for act two. Places please.

SYLVIA

Don't you need to--?

RIGGAN

I'm fine. Sit.

Sylvia walks over and sits next to Riggan.

SYLVIA

Look at all these roses.

SYLVIA

(Laughing.)

You hate roses...

RIGGAN

I hate roses...

She laughs and he smiles watching her. Sylvia sees something strange in his expression.

SYLVIA (CONT'D)

Are you okay? You look...
different.

RIGGAN

(Calmly.)

I feel different. I feel great.

(Beat.)

I spent most of the day observing
how beautiful this pile of dirty
clothes is lit by the warm
afternoon sun.... Or how perfectly
the towels hang in the bathroom...

(A tiny smile.)

So beautiful.

Sylvia, teasing him, closes her eyes and imitates Riggan's meditation posture.

SILVIA

Oh yes. God is those purplish light
dots I see between my eyes and my
eyelids...

She opens her eyes with a smile, but discovers that Riggan still has his beatified expression, unaware of her joke. Awkward silence. Sylvia thinks of standing up and leaving, but Riggan says...

RIGGAN

You wanna hear something funny?

SYLVIA

Sure.

RIGGAN

Do you remember that night of our
last anniversary party?

SILVIA

Seriously? You're going to ruin a
nice moment with that?

RIGGAN

Do you remember the party?

SILVIA

The party where you fucked Janet in our bedroom? Yeah, it rings a bell.

RIGGAN

Yeah, well. Let's skip over that part for a minute.

SYLVIA

Gladly.

RIGGAN

After you threw the guests out of the house, and the furniture out of the window. You locked yourself in the guest room.

SYLVIA

I remember. Why are we talking--

RIGGAN

I drove down to Malibu beach. I sat on the sand for a while. Just stared out at the ocean.

SYLVIA

Riggan...

RIGGAN

Then I got up. And I walked straight into that water and tried to drown myself.

Silence. Sylvia stares at Riggan, surprised and moved by his unexpected words.

RIGGAN (CONT'D)

It was cold and black and quiet. I was in up to my chest when I felt the first one. On my back, like somebody was holding a frying pan against me. And then my chest, and my legs. The water was full of jellyfish!! They were all over me. Stinging me over and over. I finally made my way out of the water, and I started rolling around the sand like a maniac... crying.

He smiles. Sylvia doesn't know how to react.

SYLVIA

You said it was a sunburn.

RIGGAN
(Smiling.)
And you believed me.

SYLVIA
Actually, I didn't give a shit.

RIGGAN
I love you. And I love Christina.

SYLVIA
I know.

Silence for a moment. They stare at each other.

RIGGAN
I should have never video taped
Christina's birth.

SYLVIA
Okay. Is this how you prepare for a
scene? Because this--

RIGGAN
I was just thinking, I really
regret that now.

SYLVIA
Why?

RIGGAN
Well, first of all because you and
Christina both look like shit in
that video.

Sylvia smacks him.

RIGGAN (CONT'D)
But mostly because I missed the
moment. I have this video of it,
and when I watch it, I feel like
some audience member at my own
daughter's birth.

Silence.

RIGGAN (CONT'D)
You know? Over the years I created
a huge story. And I shared it with
no one. Not even myself.
(MORE)

RIGGAN (CONT'D)

I needed to have a highly successful artistic career, to marry the perfect woman, to earn millions of dollars, always running ahead of everybody. I thought that if I failed, my family and friends would see me as an underachiever.

(Beat.)

How tiring. I was so caught in my story that I missed my life.

SYLVIA

You have Christina.

RIGGAN

No, I don't.

SYLVIA

Listen, she's just--

RIGGAN

No, I understand. She needed a father and she got a guy in a spandex bird suit. Pretty pathetic.

SYLVIA

There are more pathetic things than that. That mustache, for example.

They share a knowing smile.

RIGGAN

You should get back to your seat.
You don't want to miss what's next.

Sylvia goes to the door. She turns to Riggan one last time.

SYLVIA

I'm really proud of you.

RIGGAN

I'm sorry, Sylvia.

Sylvia lingers for a moment and then exits.

Riggan rises and opens a drawer. He takes out a black case. He gently opens it. Inside a revolver. He takes some bullets out of a box and one by one loads them into the chamber as he does his vocal exercises into the mirror.

RIGGAN (CONT'D)

Twenty little leopards laughed at
two lofty lions.

(MORE)

RIGGAN (CONT'D)
Twenty little leopards laughed at
two lofty lions. Twenty little
leopards... *laughed.*

He looks at the bathroom door and with his telekinetic powers
he closes it. He snaps the cylinder into the gun and exits
the room. We follow him...

INT. HALLWAY - THEATER - CONTINUOUS

...as Riggan advances through the corridor with the gun
firmly held in his hand.

A technician passes by in the opposite direction.

TECHNICIAN
Break a leg, Mr. Thomson.

But Riggan ignores him and continues on his way. Annie
hustles over to him with the brain propeller mechanism.

ANNIE
Wait. You forgot to put on the--

RIGGAN
(Brushing her off.)
I don't need it.

Annie doesn't seem to understand. She stays there, holding
the device. Riggan continues on his way...

INT. BACKSTAGE - THEATER - CONTINUOUS

...backstage. Riggan stands in his place outside the motel
door. A moment of silence. We pan toward the audience. The
auditorium is full. The audience in complete silence. There
is a compelling energy coming from stage, as never before.

Riggan knocks firmly on the door. Silence again. Then...

RIGGAN
Terri! Terri!
(Beat.)
I know you're in there!

He barges through the door and onto...

INT. STAGE - THEATER - CONTINUOUS

...the stage. The motel room is exactly as we saw it before.
Matt and Lesley jump out of bed.

LESLEY

Ed!

(Beat.)

What are you doing here?

RIGGAN

(To Lesley. Almost
whispering.)

Why? I need you to tell me why. I
lived for you-- I worshipped you...

MATT

Listen Ed, I know this is hard but--

Riggan raises one hand asking him to stop talking. It is a simple natural gesture. Matt looks at him, confused, and then notices something about the gun. There is no red plug.

The audience is dead silent. An eerie electricity in the theater.

RIGGAN

*What's wrong with me? Why does it
always feel like this? It fucking
hurts! I don't under-- Jesus! Why
do I end up having to beg people
to love me?*

LESLEY

Ed. Eddie. Please... Just give me
the gun.

She begins to cry.

LESLEY (CONT'D)

It was me. I felt like I was
drowning. I'm just not capable of
that kind of-- Look at me. You
deserve to be loved. You do.

RIGGAN

I just wanted to be what you
wanted. I just wanted to matter to
you.

(Beat.)

Now I spend every fucking minute
turning myself inside out. Praying
to be someone else. Someone I'm
not. Anyone...

MATT

Put down the gun, Ed. She just
doesn't love you anymore.

The audience is dead silent.

RIGGAN
(To Lesley.)
You don't, do you?

LESLEY
(With sympathy.)
No...

RIGGAN
And you never will...

LESLEY
I'm sorry.

Riggan turns to face the audience.

RIGGAN
(A solid whisper.)
Always baring my heart. Holding it
out for everyone's approval.

We stay close to Riggan. He smiles the most beautiful insane smile.

RIGGAN (CONT'D)
I don't exist. I'm not even here. I
don't exist. None of this matters.

Then he raises a trembling arm, and with his eyes full of tears, he aims the gun at Matt and fires. A tremendous explosion rocks the theater. Riggan aims and fires again at someone else. PUM! We never see who is he firing at.

Finally, Riggan turns the gun toward his own head. Just as he's about to fire, the camera pans toward a set wall beside him. Blood and skin explode against it. Riggan's body hits the stage with a loud sound. Then, a terrifying silence. The whole world seems to have stopped.

A moment of tension, of uncertainty.

WOMAN (O.S.)
Holly shit.

A man shouts:

MAN (O.S.)
Bravo!

And we begin to pan across the wall toward the auditorium. The audience, one by one, jumps to their feet applauding wildly. The camera continues to pan across the front row.

One person after another, screaming and clapping. Someone in shock. A boy assisting his grandfather who almost fainted.

Eventually, we come to Tabitha Dickinson, who is the only one still seated. She has a confused expression on her face. Slowly, we start to see her white blouse grow red with blood.

The camera continues to pan across the theater, until it circles back to the stage.

We come to rest on Riggan. And now we can see that he has shot his nose off and is bleeding, but still very much alive. He closes his eyes. Thunderous ovation and the most serene smile washes across his face.

We see Matt, harmless, applauding Riggan's beautiful, truthful moment himself.

The camera pans further across the stage and we see Laura holding a crying Lesley in her arms.

Two stage hands and Annie hold Riggan and carry him off stage. The curtain falls.

As the cheers echo through the theater, we move toward the audience, on their feet, still applauding like crazy, and as we pan we discover that the audience is now a group of students, also applauding. When we come around to the stage, we realize that we are now in the middle of taping a new episode of The Charlie Rose show. Charlie Rose on stage, sitting in front of his classic table, and behind him a sign that says "Charlie Rose Show, Special Edition from the Edwin Booth theater". The audience is still applauding.

*
*
*
*
*
*

CHARLIE ROSE

So, it's a good thing you're a terrible shot. You missed every one.

The ovation turns into laughter. Then silence. We pan toward Riggan, who sits across Rose, but we first find his hands, crossed, subtly trembling.

*

RIGGAN

Yes, I know. Thank God nobody was seriously hurt. But the truth is that Jake wasn't just my producing partner, he was my friend. And when I found out he'd embezzled the money from our play I was heart broken.

*

We slowly move up from Riggan's hands to his face. He is five years older, with a lot more belly and a lot less hair, some of it turning white. His most distinguishing feature, however, is his new, surgically repaired nose which makes him look like an aging version of Pinocchio.

RIGGAN (CONT'D)

I'm not going to sit here and speculate about Jake, but the detectives thought that he replaced my prop gun with a real revolver hoping that once I was convicted, he could come back home, the play would close, and nobody would ask about the money.

MAN (O.S.)

(Bitterly.)

That's a fucking lie!

CHARLIE ROSE

And you had no idea that night, that you were holding a real gun?

*

RIGGAN

No chance.

MAN (O.S.)

Liar!

Nobody reacts to the shouting of the unknown man.

RIGGAN

We spent a lot of money and a lot of effort on creating sets and props that would seem as authentic as possible.

(To the audience.)

Those of you who have seen the show know what I'm talking about.

Applause from the audience.

CHARLIE ROSE

In my hands, I have the review that New York Times critic, Tabitha Dickinson, wrote after being released from the hospital. It's probably one of the best reviews ever, and has one of the most meaningful titles I've ever read: "The Unexpected Virtue of Ignorance."

*

RIGGAN

Well, she's a hell of a writer.

MAN (O.S.)

She's a whore!

RIGGAN

And that review is the main reason we've been lucky enough to run so long.

CHARLIE ROSE

Five years on Broadway in this very theater. Three years in London and countless touring companies. A huge revitalization of naturalism in drama, or what they are calling now "supra-realism". You're an inspiration to many young actors and playwrights. Just like Carver was in the eighties to young writers. And all thanks to a woman you shot.

*

Laughter and applause.

RIGGAN

Accidentally shot.

MAN (O.S.)

You should have put a hole in her head, you hear me!!

Now we pan to the audience to see a fat, dirty, ruined Birdman sitting in first row. But people doesn't see or hear him.

BIRDMAN

You are failure, Pinocchio! You couldn't even hold a gun like a man!

We pan back to the stage. Charlie Rose points to the audience.

*

CHARLIE ROSE

Now we will take two questions from the audience.

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A young girl stands up in the audience holding a microphone.

YOUNG GIRL

Hi, Mr. Thompson. My name is Chrissy McCartin and I'm in the acting track. I'm a huge fan of your play. You've spoken before about how you put some of yourself in the characters to make them your own... How much have those characters affected you?

RIGGAN

Well... I think that every character affects you in different ways. But mainly... they change the way you see your own life.

The girl nods, smiles, and gives the microphone to a guy standing three seats away from her.

GUY

Hi. My name is Andrew Pietsch. I would like to know if you have anything to say about Matt Shiner's comments regarding Mrs. Dickinson's review and his experience working with you during that season. He said that "sometimes innocence and ignorance could be more powerful than experience, and that mediocrity is not always reproachable, but it can sometimes be adorable".

Laughter. Riggan feels a cold stab in his stomach, but he remains calm.

RIGGAN

I respect Matt Shiner a lot. He is probably right. But I guess he learned so much from mediocrity, that he is now in Hollywood playing the villain in Birdman 5.

More laughter.

CHARLIE ROSE

(To Riggan.)

Thank you very much.

The audience applauds. Riggan and Rose stand up and shake hands. Riggan subtly bows at the students a few times, and then we follow him out of stage, through the backstage area and into...

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INT. HALLWAY - THEATER - CONTINUOUS

...the now familiar hallways. Riggan walks with a dark expression. Sylvia appears and accompanies him.

RIGGAN
So... How was it?

SYLVIA
Great.
(She notices his serious
expression.)
Wasn't it?

RIGGAN
Yeah. I think so.

They kiss while they continue walking toward Riggan's old dressing room. We follow them into the dressing room to find...

INT. RIGGAN'S DRESSING ROOM - THEATER - CONTINUOUS

...Christina holding a shitty diaper.

CHRISTINA
(To her mother.)
Look at this.

Sylvia goes to assist her. Riggan comes in and he covers his nose, disgusted by the smell.

RIGGAN
Oh, God.

CHRISTINA
He shits like an oil well.

Riggan leans on the dressing room table and picks up the baby.

SYLVIA
(Smiling.)
You were the same.

RIGGAN
No. That's Matt shit. I can smell
it.

CHRISTINA
Shut up.

She throws the dirty diaper into a garbage can.

SYLVIA
You can't leave that there.

RIGGAN
(To Christina.)
Did you talk to your husband?

CHRISTINA
No. It's like calling the president. The father of this child is an answering machine. And the last two times I could reach him he used that stupid villain voice.
(Imitating him.)
"I cannot talk, baby. I'm going to the set. I have to cook a bird today."

Christina leaves with the baby. A moment of silence. Riggan grabs his jacket and looks at Sylvia.

RIGGAN
Did you or Christina talk to Matt?

SYLVIA
About what?

RIGGAN
So I'm an "adorable mediocrity"?

SYLVIA
(Fed up.)
On no. Don't bring that shit back up.

She leaves. Riggan remains still for a second, pondering. He turns to look at the dressing room one last time. We become his POV. We see, reflected in the mirror, that he leaves. We stay with the empty dressing room for a few seconds. Night slowly turns into day. We begin to hear the sounds of technicians walking along the corridors, carrying their stuff.

Annie appears at the door.

ANNIE
Twenty minutes, Johnnie!

She leaves, and we pan toward the toilet. The sound of the toilet being flushed. Then the door is opened and Johnnie Depp comes out, buttoning his pants. He walks to the dressing table, smoking a cigarette. He stares into the mirror and starts doing a ridiculous mouth exercise.

JOHNNIE DEPP
Muwaaah... Muwaaah...

In the mirror, over his shoulder, we see a poster from
Pirates of the Caribbean 3, and Captain Jack Sparrow staring
straight at us.

CAPTAIN JACK SPARROW
(In his English accent.)
What the fuck are we doing here,
mate? This place is a shithole...

Hold on Depp looking in the mirror.

FADE TO BLACK.