

CHAD SCHMIDT  
by  
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INT. THEATER

There's a performer on stage playing to a small theater crowd. The perspective is from behind the actor, but he's costumed pretty obviously in the iconic white suit/white hair combo of Mark Twain. Plus, there's a paddleboat wheel beside him. So the whole thing has a Mark Twain feel.

ACTOR AS MARK TWAIN  
...the father of great fortune,  
ladies and gentleman, isn't hard  
work, it's chance. Thousands of  
geniuses live and die undiscovered  
either by themselves or by others.

EXT. SANTA MONICA BLVD, LA - DAY

*SUPERIMPOSE: 1991*

A guy costumed as Ronald McDonald waits for the bus - CHAD SCHMIDT. He's beside a RED-HAIRED GUY. When the bus comes, Chad and the red-haired guy try to board at the same time.

CHAD  
Watch the shoulder.

RED-HAIRED GUY  
(meaning what are you  
talking about)  
What?

CHAD  
There's a line, guy.

RED-HAIRED GUY  
I didn't know you were in line.

CHAD  
What do you think I'm doing  
standing at a bus stop?

RED-HAIRED GUY  
I thought you were waving people to  
McDonalds.

CHAD  
Just watch the shoulder, Red.  
There's a line.

Chad boards. The red-haired guy follows.

RED-HAIRED GUY  
You have red hair, too.

CHAD  
Not in real life...

INT. CITY BUS, MOVING - LATER

Later, they're riding the bus, sitting across the aisle from one another. They're maintaining eye contact; the red-haired-guy seems amused Chad's dressed as a clown.

CHAD  
Warren Oates worked as a soda jerk.  
Before he became a working actor.  
Just so you know.

RED-HAIRED GUY  
You're a jerk. I'd call McDonalds  
if I knew your name.

CHAD  
Chad Schmidt. Call them. I'll tell  
them you were trying to prevent me  
from getting to the sick kids, and  
spreading joy. Because I'm going to  
the Ronald McDonald house.

RED-HAIRED GUY  
Fuck you....

CHAD  
Fuck you, man.

Chad's gotten up and started heading off the bus.

RED-HAIRED GUY  
Chad Schmidt.

CHAD  
That's right. I'm Ronald number  
six.

RED-HAIRED GUY  
Ronald six.

CHAD  
You got it. I'm six.

EXT. BACK YARD, RONALD MCDONALD HOUSE - LATER

During a charity event in the back yard of this Ronald McDonald charity private home, Chad entertains some youngsters in different phases of cancer treatment by twisting up some balloon seals, AND THOUGH HE'S PROVIDING THEM WITH GOOD CLEAN FUN, HE SEEMS LIKE SOMETHING HEAVY'S ON HIS MIND.

EXT. PUPPET SHOW BOX/BACK YARD - LATER

Later, Chad performs a handpuppet play in a large back yard puppet theater; it features characters from the McDonald's animated spokesperson team. Here, the KEYSTONE COP DOUBLE CHEESEBURGER Law Enforcement Character arrests the little masked hamburger thief HAMBURGLAR. THE PLAY'S BEING PERFORMED WITHOUT A WHOLEHEARTED EFFORT, IS MOSTLY A PHONED-IN-PUPPET-SHOW PERFORMED IN A HALF-ASS MANNER BY CHAD.

KEYSTONE COP CHEESBURGER  
 (grasping the hamburglar)  
 You're going to have to take a  
 little ride with me, my friend.

HAMBURGLAR  
 What are the charges?

KEYSTONE COP CHEESBURGER  
 Stealing burgers.

HAMBURGLAR  
 But they're so delicious.

KEYSTONE COP CHEESBURGER  
 No doubt. But you can't take the  
 people's stuff. Let's go downtown.

HAMBURGLAR  
 I'm a two timer, bro. This is  
 strike three, maybe you can cut me  
 some---

KEYSTONE COP CHEESBURGER  
 You do the crime, you do the time.  
 Let's go.

HAMBURGLAR  
 Aw, man... that's lame.

KEYSTONE COP CHEESBURGER  
 You're lame. For stealing.

HAMBURGLAR

Okay. You're right. I'll do the time.

The sick youngsters, many of whom are bald, don't seem to find the puppet play entertaining as much as weirdly interesting.

KEYSTONE COP CHEESBURGER

Kids. Come on. Let's use those heads. There's never a good reason to steal. Even deliciousness. Let's keep the moral values coming on up to the top. Thank you.

Then Hamburglar and The Keystone execute a simultaneous stage bow to signal that the shows over. As he looks on from the wings, the House Director seems displeased. Then Chad, as Ronald, comes out from under the back yard puppet hut. SOMETHING'S WEIGHING ON HIM AND HE SEEMS DISAPPOINTED HIS SHOW SUCKED.

EXT. SIDE OF RONALD MCDONALD HOUSE - LATER

In costume, Chad's found some privacy in the small space between the side of the McDonald house and its neighbor's. He's standing there when, out of some bottled-up frustration, he punches a plastic trash can right there.

HOUSE DIRECTOR

Hey, man. No way.

The House Director has happened on him.

HOUSE DIRECTOR (CONT'D)

No way is that acceptable.

CHAD

I'm sorry. I thought I was concealed.

HOUSE DIRECTOR

You're not. These kids have cancer, they don't need to see you losing your shit. In your clown kit. What gives?

CHAD

I just have something going on in my life that...

HOUSE DIRECTOR  
Do you have cancer?

CHAD  
No.

HOUSE DIRECTOR  
Then come on.

CHAD  
You're right, Perry. Sorry for the  
in-costume outburst.

HOUSE DIRECTOR  
What's going on? Do you want to  
talk about it?

Chad doesn't say anything.

HOUSE DIRECTOR (CONT'D)  
You can tell me, Six.

CHAD  
It's just some career-oriented  
stuff. Some stuff that's happened  
that's related to my goals. Like  
keeping me from reaching them. I'm  
pissed it's starting to affect my  
whole life. Even the puppet fun I  
usually have with the sick kids.

Chad walks past the House Director.

CHAD (CONT'D)  
I'm going to go take my gear off...

HOUSE DIRECTOR  
Okay. Hey, get with it.

CHAD  
Okay...

HOUSE DIRECTOR  
You're usually our best Ronald. I  
don't get it. You blow three and  
five away. If we ranked by talent  
you'd totally be number one.

CHAD  
Thanks, Perry...

CREDITS begin.

HOUSE DIRECTOR

Hey, we got a complaint about you, though. Something about you on a bus. This afternoon? What was--

CHAD

(making it up)

Some guy was making derogatory comments about the burgers. I wasn't going to let him get away with that.

HOUSE DIRECTOR

He said you used profanity.

CHAD

Privately. To him, I did. Not in the bus setting.

HOUSE DIRECTOR

Good.

They face one another for a while.

HOUSE DIRECTOR (CONT'D)

What did he say about the burgers?

CHAD

(making something up)

That they weren't up to snuff.

HOUSE DIRECTOR

*Our burgers aren't up to snuff?*

CHAD

That's what he said. I said they were. He said they weren't again. So I said he could go fuck himself.

HOUSE DIRECTOR

Okay. Good. Get with it. All right? No matter what's going on career-wise. You're an actor, right?

CHAD

Yeah...

HOUSE DIRECTOR

So what's the problem?

CHAD

This other's guy's kind of got in front of me, a little bit. I don't know. This other guy.

INT. BATHROOM, RONALD MCDONALD HOUSE - LATER

CREDITS PLAY over Chad in the bathroom mirror, taking off his makeup. The face underneath it is familiar, and as more greasepaint gets removed, you'd expect to see Brad Pitt underneath because the face looks so familiar at first. But as more of the paint gets cleared, the face begins to resemble Brad Pitt's but not quite, weirdly reminiscent but rougher and less attractive. Soon all the greasepaint's off. Chad stares at himself for a while; it's a strange image - a guy who looks unusually like the familiar, handsome Brad Pitt, but only in so far as one might mock him for sport. THIS IS THE WEIRD IMPEDIMENT TO HIS CAREER CHAD'S JUST DISCUSSED; it's over this image the title *Chad Schmidt* appears.

EXT. CONRAD YOGAN'S PRE-OWNED AUTO MART, EAST LA - DAY

*SUPERIMPOSE: Los Angeles 1989*

A picnic bench and one umbrella rest outside the office of Conrad Yogan's Pre-owned Auto Mart - a massive used car clearing house. It's meant to provide shade for the sales staff. Chad sits there with NELSON DECHILA, 34; Nelson's dressed in a suit.

NELSON

(whispered)

That's why I came by. To say nothing changes, from the ordinary high quality of my agenting.

CHAD

What's actually wrong?

NELSON

(whispered)

I have a degenerative condition of my thorax. So my ability to deliver the air pounds necessary to speak will diminish until ultimately I'll be unable to make a sound. So...

Chad looks across the picnic table at Nelson; he's getting his head around the notion his agent will soon be unable to speak.

NELSON (CONT'D)  
 (whispered)  
 But I'll still be able to represent  
 you with excellence.

EXT. YOGAN CARS, WILSHIRE BLVD - LATER

Chad has accompanied Nelson out to the street to see him off; they're standing beside Nelson's car; Nelson's handing Chad a script. CREDITS CONTINUE.

NELSON  
 (whispered)  
 Here's that call back. They want  
 you to know the whole script this  
 time. It's just you and one other  
 guy.

CHAD  
 Who?

NELSON  
 (whispered)  
 Joe Actor. I don't know.

Nelson begins to get behind the wheel.

NELSON (CONT'D)  
 (whispered)  
 The best is yet to come.

CHAD  
 (couldn't hear that)  
 What?

NELSON  
 (whispered)  
 The best is yet to come.

CHAD  
 Oh. Okay.

Nelson's got his car door closed now.

EXT. BUS BENCH, WILSHIRE BLVD, LOS ANGELES - DAY

Chad's waiting for the bus; he's reading the script Nelson handed him; the title page of it reads *Thelma and Louise*.

THEN CHAD MAKES A GESTURE THAT SHOWS WHAT IMPORTANCE THIS ROLE HOLDS FOR HIM - A LITTLE PRIVATE CLAP MEANT TO ENCOURAGE HIMSELF TO ENDEAVOR TO TAKE HIS BEST SHOT AT *THELMA AND LOUISE*.

INT. CASTING OFFICE, COLUMBIA LOT - LATER

In a casting office, Chad has taken an open seat beside another young actor, BRAD PITT circa 1989. They bear a peculiar resemblance, though Chad heavier and rougher around the edges; all in all, their likeness diminishes Chad because he resembles Brad Pitt in a way that doesn't favor him. Brad has a *Thelma and Louise* script, too.

BRAD PITT  
(looking at Chad's script)  
What's that writing?

CHAD  
On the sides?

BRAD PITT  
Yeah.

CHAD  
Performance notes. Stuff I want to keep in mind. To try maybe.

BRAD PITT  
(reading Chad's script)  
*Shirt off?*

CHAD  
Yeah...

BRAD PITT  
What does that mean *shirt off*?

CHAD  
(like it's kind of obvious)  
It means I might try it with my shirt off. To make it edgier maybe. I'm thinking about it.

BRAD PITT  
You haven't made a decision? On that?

CHAD  
I'm thinking. Trying to get a feel.

Brad nods. Chad goes back to work on his script.

CASTING ASSISTANT  
Bradley Pitt.

Brad has walked into the audition room. A little while goes by. Chad goes back to reading his script, working it out. Time passes. After a while, Chad looks up. The audition room door's cracked a little. So, soon, Chad notices through the crack that Brad Pitt's auditioning shirtless.

EXT. BUS STOP, EAST LA - DAY

*SUPERIMPOSE: two years later*

Chad sits on a bus bench off Wilshire on his way into work.

EXT. CONRAD YOGAN'S PRE-OWNED AUTO MART - LATER

Later, Chad's standing in an aisle, waiting for customers with car salesman colleague NEIL GLEASON, 34.

NEIL GLEASON  
What do you think a good name for a magician would be?

CHAD  
I don't know.

NEIL GLEASON  
Seriously.

CHAD  
Mysterio?

NEIL GLEASON  
How about Phillip?

CHAD  
(like it's a shitty magic name)  
That doesn't sound magic.

NEIL GLEASON  
Yeah. On purpose. There's so many guys with flash names, a common name would be more interesting. I think I'm going to be Phillip Meese. That's a pretty sure ticket to the top of the magic and illusion arts industry.

CHAD  
 (like it's ridiculous)  
*If you're Phillip Meese?*

NEIL GLEASON  
 What?

CHAD  
 That's the ticket to the top of the  
 magic whatever arts industry? Being  
 called Phillip Meese?

NEIL GLEASON  
 Yeah. That and some kick ass magic.  
 Like some major escapes? Man, wait  
 till I get my McHiggins water tank.  
 Can you imagine being Phillip Meese  
*and* having a frigging Mc--  
 (in great pain suddenly)  
 Ah!

As he was speaking, a YOUNG HISPANIC MAN walked up behind  
 Neil Gleason and pressed a tazer on his neck.

CHAD  
 Holy shit...

Neil's dropped to the ground.

CHAD (CONT'D)  
 Holy shit, man...  
 (to the crumpled up Neil)  
 ...are you okay?

The guy's run off. Chad's trying to tend to Neil. But Neil's  
 not responding.

EXT. CONRAD YOGAN'S PREOWNED AUTO MART - LATER

Later, Neil's more or less recovered. He sits with Chad on  
 the lowered tail-gate of a pre-owned pickup truck, explaining  
 the event to him.

NEIL  
 It's that thing with Roman and  
 Murpho.

CHAD  
 (surprised)  
 You're doing that now?

NEIL

For my McHiggins. It's *the* premium, full-size, water-escape tank. The most expensive.

CHAD

Why don't you get the next most expensive--

NEIL

You shouldn't skimp on shit like that. That's how magicians die.

CHAD

There's *Conrad's* cars... Conrad's a cool guy--

NEIL

We put them all back. You should come on in. The cash is stacking up.

CHAD

(sarcastically, because Neil was just assaulted)  
Yeah, I'll come in. It seems like a good idea. Can you feel your neck now?

NEIL

A little bit. Like right here I can feel. This little area.  
(explaining why he was attacked)  
We're supposed to turn over fifteen cars a week. With switched titles. Some weeks we're short.

A customer's one car-aisle away, calling out to Chad while waiting for attention.

CUSTOMER

(pissed)  
Hey, can I get a test drive? Today? Brad Pitt?

Chad looks over. He withstands being called *Brad Pitt* like it's happened before and like he doesn't much care for it.

INT. USED CAR, TEST DRIVE - LATER

Chad's out escorting this customer on a test drive through east LA.

CUSTOMER

There's a smell in here. A not good one.

CHAD

It has some flood damage. The vehicle's history is disclosed on the window. The whole thing. That's how we do things at Conrad Yogan. That's why it's six hundred dollars.

CUSTOMER

You know who you look like?

Chad looks over.

CUSTOMER (CONT'D)

Brad Pitt. You look like that Brad Pitt.

CHAD

Yeah, I heard you back there on the lot.

CUSTOMER

I thought you were him, then I thought, no, he's probably not selling cars at a place like your place.

CHAD

He's probably not selling cars anywhere, guy.

CUSTOMER

Yeah, he's in major motion pictures.

CHAD

Not that major...

CUSTOMER

(didn't really hear him)  
What?

CHAD  
Nothing...  
(about the car)  
So what do you think?

CUSTOMER  
I think it stinks.

INT. EMPLOYEE LOUNGE/BREAKROOM, CONRAD YOGAN - LATER

Later, Neil Gleason's nursing his sore neck at the break table with fellow salesmen ROMAN DELORSAS and mechanic ROB MURPHO, 36. Chad's over at the coffee machine.

CHAD  
(to Neil)  
How's the neck, magic asshole?

NEIL  
Why am I an asshole?

CHAD  
For messing with Conrad. All you guys.

NEIL  
What's your problem with magic?

CHAD  
I'm not into it. It's a trick.

NEIL GLEASON  
(sarcastically)  
Oh, acting's a lot better.

CHAD  
It is. Because you share things about human nature. It's an art.

NEIL GLEASON  
Name one actor who's like added to the world?

CHAD  
Shakespeare. Name one magician.

Neil tries to think of one.

NEIL GLEASON  
...Merlin.

CHAD  
Merlin wasn't real.

A KIND--LOOKING MAN -- LOT OWNER CONRAD YOGAN, 64, ENTERS THE LOUNGE; HE SPEAKS WITH A HUNGARIAN ACCENT.

CONRAD YOGAN  
Chad...

CHAD  
Hey, Conrad.

CONRAD YOGAN  
(smiling)  
Audition. My office phone.

CHAD  
For real?

CONRAD YOGAN  
(excited for Chad)  
They're on the phone.

Conrad has left. Chad follows him out. It's left Neil Gleason alone at the table with Roman and Murpho.

NEIL GLEASON  
(a little more quietly)  
Merlin wasn't real?

INT. CONRAD YOGAN'S PRIVATE OFFICE -- LATER

Chad's just hung up the phone on Conrad's desk. Conrad's waiting nearby, waiting for word from Chad about this prospect.

CHAD  
(to Conrad, pleased)  
Someone saw my reel, they want to see me. Today.

CONRAD YOGAN  
(pleased)  
What kind of movie?

CHAD  
I don't know. They said they'd fill me in there. I have to be there in an hour. Can I--

CONRAD YOGAN  
Go.

CHAD

Thanks, Mr. Yogan. Things have been pretty slow, like no auditions. Six months. It's cool to have someone call me.

CONRAD YOGAN

(smiling)

Go...

Chad heads out the door.

EXT. CONRAD YOGAN'S PREOWNED AUTO MART - LATER

Chad's running off between the long rows of used cars.

INT. CASTING ROOM, OFFICES - LATER

Chad awaits this audition among other actors, five or so. He doesn't have a script. He's just sitting there. Then an OFFICE GIRL comes out from the inner-offices with a clipboard. She looks at the group.

OFFICE GIRL

Tom Cruise.

There's a poor-man's, overweight Tom Cruise sitting across the room. He rises and walks into the office. Chad has looked up. He wasn't ready for this. So he's trying to make sense out of what just happened. The office girl's still checking off names.

OFFICE GIRL (CONT'D)

David Letterman.

There's a shortish David Letterman-style guy a few seats from Chad. He stands up and heads in.

OFFICE GIRL (CONT'D)

Brad Pitt.

Chad doesn't say anything. The office girl faces him squarely. She means Chad.

OFFICE GIRL (CONT'D)

Are you ready?

CHAD

For what?

OFFICE GIRL  
 Are you ready to come in and look  
 like Brad Pitt?

Chad just stares back at her. He's realizing that it's some  
 sort of lower-rent look-alike deal.

CHAD  
 What are you talking about?

OFFICE GIRL  
 If you get selected as our Brad  
 Pitt, then you get to go to like  
 block parties and/or elementary  
 school fund raisers.  
 Professionally. With our look-alike  
 Tom Cruise and David Letterman.

CHAD  
 (like that's stupid)  
 I get to do that.

OFFICE GIRL  
 What do you say?

CHAD  
 Say to *that*?

OFFICE GIRL  
 Yeah.

CHAD  
 I say fuck that. With all due  
 respect.  
 (standing up to leave)  
 Come on, man...

EXT. BUS BENCH, WILSHIRE BLVD, LOS ANGELES - LATER

Chad's sitting there, waiting for the bus. He's been thrown  
 for a loop. Like anyone else, he doesn't see himself as  
 anyone's poor man version of someone else. Then a car pulls  
 up in front of him. AFTER A WHILE, CHAD TURNS AND STARES AT  
 HIS REFLECTION IN THIS CAR'S TINTED PASSENGER WINDOW. THERE'S  
 A BILLBOARD FOR KALIFORNIA BEHIND HIM, SO BRAD PITT'S FACE  
 FROM THE POSTER IS IN THE WINDOW, TOO. THEY'RE SIDE BY SIDE.  
 THERE'S NO DENYING THEIR SIMILARITIES. CHAD IS PERCEIVING  
 THIS DEEPLY FOR THE FIRST TIME, it's thrown him.

INT. WINDOW SILL, HOME - DAY

The glass eye (blue) still rests on it's glass-eye stand on the bedroom window sill. Then someone unseen walks up to the stand and takes the eye out.

INT. TALENT AGENCY - DAY

Chad's sitting across the desk from his newly-muted agent Nelson Dechila in Nelson's small office; the room is decorated with posters exclusively from poorly-executed and minor motion pictures.

CHAD

I'm starting to hear it a lot. Like at casting. Seven Eleven. My car insurance lady. I'm getting compared to him, Nelson, in not a good way.

Nelson can no longer talk so he's taken to making Charlie Chaplin-style exaggerated facial expressions. This one's meant to say *"It's not going to be a problem."*

CHAD (CONT'D)

You don't think he's for real?

THIS EXPRESSION SAYS *"He's not going to last."*

CHAD (CONT'D)

You know, I'm almost done with Red Dust. It's good. That's going to help me, too, which is good, because I'd like to phase into the next stage of my career. I have some stuff with my family I'm trying to take care of.

Nelson's written something on paper and hands it over. Chad reads it silently.

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

I thought we could come up with a hand gesture for The Best is Yet to Come catch phrase. Because I really believe in it for you. And I'd like to be able to encourage you with it now and then.

Chad nods it's okay. After a moment of consideration, NELSON INVENTS A NEW HAND GESTURE WITH AN UPLIFTING QUALITY.

CHAD (CONT'D)

Hey, Nelson I have to change for work. We're not allowed to do that on the premises.

Nelson nods out toward the hall, meaning go ahead. Before Chad goes, Nelson catches him and hands him something else he's scribbled: *Brad Pitt's Pure Tiger Beat*. Chad reads it and starts walking away but Nelson makes the BIYTC hand sign again. Then Nelson gestures for Chad to return it. Chad seems a little reluctant and possibly doesn't believe the "best is yet to come" anymore, but he repeats the cheery hand signal for Nelson's behalf. Then he removes a pair of size nineteen red shoes from his back pack.

INT. CITY BUS, LA, MOVING - LATER

Chad's riding the bus as Ronald McDonald. There's a lady in a nursing uniform, MARGARET SCHMIDT, 35, across the aisle. She's reading a paperback. CHAD'S BEEN STARING AT HER. SOME TIME PASSES.

CHAD

Margaret?

Margaret looks over. What she sees is a guy costumed as RONALD MCDONALD LOOKING BACK. She stares at the guy like she's trying to make sense of the whole thing.

MARGARET

Chad?

CHAD

Hey...I didn't mean to surprise you. I'm sorry. I have to arrive in-gear, for this job. I'm one of eight rotating Ronald McDonalds. For the charity houses. I do a little slapstick. Balloon animals. Some puppet stuff. It's rewarding. And it pays pretty well. So...

Margaret looks at Chad for a while. SOMETHING'S HAPPENED IN THEIR PAST THAT'S GIVEN HER HARD FEELINGS.

CHAD (CONT'D)

(regretful over some matter)

I'm trying to save. So I can make it all square.

MARGARET

(like she has no faith in  
him)

Square eighteen thousand dollars?  
You better make a lot of balloon  
animals. Or do a shitload of  
slapstick, Chad.

CHAD

I have some other things going on.  
Some major stuff.

CHAD'S MENTIONING "MAJOR STUFF" WHILE COSTUMED AS A CLOWN.

MARGARET

It's hard for me to take that  
seriously. Even if you weren't  
dressed as a clown. Because of what  
you did.

CHAD

This is a means to an end. You're  
going to like the end, too. Because  
it's about you. And I think there's  
going to be full satisfaction  
there. I own part of this movie I'm  
the lead in. Steve Zaillian.

MARGARET

*Who?*

CHAD

He's a great writer. He has a  
Spielberg movie coming out  
Schindler's List. I bought his  
first script. We started making it.

MARGARET

With my wedding money?

This is true. Chad doesn't have a great way to defend it.

CHAD

Maggie, you had one date in like  
six years. I didn't know you were  
going to meet big Mark all of a  
sudden. I was going to put it back.  
And more. But I haven't had a lot  
of work, and... But this movie, I'm  
almost finished with it. We just  
ran out of money. Temporarily.

(MORE)

CHAD (CONT'D)

I just have to get this sound gear situation figured out and finish it.

Chad looks at Margaret.

CHAD (CONT'D)

Full satisfaction. That's coming your way. Not today, I mean. But real soon.

Chad has stood up because the bus is at his stop

CHAD (CONT'D)

I had a dream about Mom the other day. Before she got sick. We went on a magic carpet ride.

MARGARET

(not interested)

Yeah, okay...

Then Chad walks down the bus aisle to leave; he looks deeply regretful over the personal matter his sister addressed. But he's also dressed as a clown, so it's weird.

EXT. SEVEN-ELEVEN CONVENIENCE STORE - LATER

Chad, still as Ronald, is at the payphone outside Seven-Eleven.

CHAD

(upset, into the phone)

Bullshit, Rory. That's *total* bullshit.

Some people have gathered at a street corner nearby, waiting to cross - a few look on because right there there's a guy costumed as the spokesperson for a landmark American company colorfully reaming someone out.

CHAD (CONT'D)

I've been trying to finish this movie for nine months. Get with the program.

(listening for a moment)

The program of doing what you said you were going to do, the program of renting me your sound equipment at a cool price to me so I can finish my fucking movie, dude.

(listening again)

(MORE)

CHAD (CONT'D)

All right, rent it to this other guy, take your five hundred dollars extra. Fuck me over. I'll get a sound deck somewhere else.

(listening)

I don't have an extra five hundred. I haven't had any acting work, douche, that's what I'm trying to tell you.

(listening)

Oh. Okay. That's weird because that's what your mom said to me last night.

The pedestrians continue to look on. Chad hangs up the phone. He seems frustrated and uncertain about how to make progress because of this development.

PUPPET SHOW BOX/RONALD MCDONALD CHARITY HOUSE YARD - LATER

In the puppet box, the KEYSTONE COP DOUBLE CHEESEBURGER Law Enforcement Character arrests the little masked hamburger thief HAMBURGLAR.

KEYSTONE COP CHEESBURGER

You're going to have to take a little ride with me, my friend.

HAMBURGLAR

Let me ask you a question. You always do everything right? You never made a bad decision?

KEYSTONE COP CHEESBURGER

Certainly I have... we all have regrets.

HAMBURGLAR

No doubt. Like maybe you steal a tasty sack of burgers, say, or snag a frosty shake, or maybe you take nine thousand dollars your sister was saving for her wedding because she wasn't really dating anybody, and she's kind of overweight, and you thought you could put it back with acting work, but that slowed down because you have this temporary roadblock of this pretty boy

(making Hamburglar finger quotes around actor)

"actor" who's...

(MORE)

HAMBURGLAR (CONT'D)  
 well, then she actually *gets* a  
 boyfriend from some lunch speed-  
 dating thing who comes at you about  
 the wedding money, you fist fight,  
 throw a wild haymaker, next thing  
 you know he has to get a frigging  
 glass eye, and they have to spend  
 everything they saved for the  
 wedding, car and a house on his new  
 glass eye which costs eighteen  
 thousand dollars for some reason...

The puppet show cruises to a slow stop then because Chad's  
 beginning to realize he's drifted off course; it's taking  
 place in the large back yard of the Charity home for sick  
 youngsters in different stages of cancer treatment - they  
 look a little confused.

HAMBURGLAR (CONT'D)  
 (trying to get back on  
 track)  
 Or like I was saying, maybe you  
 snag a shake, pocket some fries.  
 Anyway, of course I'm sorry. I'm a  
 human being. I wish I could turn  
 back the hands of time...

KEYSTONE COP CHEESBURGER  
 The hands of time are heavy  
 mothers. A mere man can't turn them  
 back.

HAMBURGLAR  
 I'm just saying I wish.

KEYSTONE COP CHEESBURGER  
 (with puppet compassion)  
 All right. I'm going to cut you  
 some slack. Get out of here.

HAMBURGLAR  
 You won't regret it.

KEYSTONE COP CHEESBURGER  
 I have a good feeling about you.

HAMBURGLAR  
 No doubt.

Hamburglar takes off to freedom. Then the Keystone  
 Cheeseburger faces the audience.

## KEYSTONE COP CHEESBURGER

Kids. Come on. Keep those moral values climbing on up. Don't live with regret. It's a heavy load, guys. Like the hands of time.

The house director looks on from the wings, pissed.

EXT. PINKS HOT DOGS, LA - DAY

Chad and agent Nelson Dechila wait in line for hot dogs. Chad's been talking to Nelson for a while.

CHAD

One good part... then I can finish my Zaillian movie up. Which will be an awesome launching pad kind of thing for my future. Do you think we can get hold of one good part?

Chad looks at Nelson for a while. Nelson doesn't say anything. Then he responds with the *The Best is Yet to Come* hand gesture.

INT. BATHROOM, WARNER BROS LOT - DAY

On another day, Chad's in a large bathroom on the Warners lot, rehearsing for a new audition last minute. He wraps up, seems to feel good about it, then he turns and stares at his reflection. After a moment of taking personal stock, Chad offers himself Nelson's innovative, uplifting hand gesture.

INT. PRODUCTION OFFICES, LA - LATER

Chad has just read for a PRODUCER and CASTING DIRECTOR. They're parting company in the reception area, shaking hands goodbye.

CASTING DIRECTOR

(to Chad)

That was really good... We'll give Nelson a call.

PRODUCER

He's really pushed for you on this. Overtime.

CASTING DIRECTOR

And he wasn't kidding. You're really talented.

(MORE)

CASTING DIRECTOR (CONT'D)

You know, I saw you in Steam Engine. At the Writers Theater.

CHAD

Yeah, that was a nice play.

CASTING DIRECTOR

Very impressive. I put you on my leading man list. Right then. Short list.

CHAD

Cool, man. Thanks...

INT. BATHROOM, WARNER BROS LOT - LATER

Chad has returned to the Warners bathroom; he's washing his hands when he overhears the men he just met having a conversation from separate bathroom stalls. He can see only their lowered trousers.

CASTING DIRECTOR (O.S.)

He was really good...

PRODUCER (O.S)

(sarcastic)

Yeah, he's a really good poor man's Brad Pitt. That's what he's good at.

CASTING DIRECTOR (O.S.)

Yeah, you're right. He's kind of like Brad Pitt but minus the sexy. Which is pretty simple math. Brad Pitt minus the sexy equals pass.

PRODUCER (O.S.)

Change your name, man. If you're him. Do yourself a favor.

CASTING DIRECTOR (O.S.)

No doubt.

CHAD

My dad died in Vietnam when I was two. Charley Schmidt. Then *Beth* Schmidt raised me and my sister through six years of breast cancer, dickjob. Then my sister, Maggie, her name's *Maggie* Schmidt, took over at sixteen. So I'm not changing shit. What are your names, anyway?

The time that passes is filled with awkward silence.

PRODUCER (O.S.)  
Timothy Kimmner.

CHAD  
That sounds like an elf.  
(to the other stall)  
What about you?

CASTING DIRECTOR  
Toby Kron.

CHAD  
That's a fucking robot name. Change  
your names, elf. And robot.

Chad leaves the bathroom. Some time passes.

PRODUCER (O.S.)  
Shit...

CASTING DIRECTOR (O.S.)  
...yeah.

INT. FILM EQUIPMENT RENTAL HOUSE - DAY

On another day, Chad and car salesman colleague Neil Gleason wait for customer service in a film production equipment store.

CHAD  
Schindler's List.

NEIL GLEASON  
Never heard of it.

CHAD  
Because it hasn't come out yet. But  
you will. I have the guy's first  
one.

NEIL GLEASON  
How did you get it?

CHAD  
I sold him a Corolla. Before he was  
anyone. I read this script. I  
bought it with some...

(MORE)

CHAD (CONT'D)  
 (thinking about how to  
 characterize stealing his  
 sister's wedding fund)  
 ...family money.

NEIL GLEASON  
 Are you almost done?

CHAD  
 We have eleven days left. If we can  
 raise up some new money.

Chad speaks to a clerk coming back with some numbers.

CLERK  
 If you take the grip electric,  
 we'll do the sound deck all in.  
 Twenty-six thousand.

CHAD  
 Okay. I'm going to try to get that  
 together.

CLERK  
 How much do you have?

CHAD  
 None of it.

CLERK  
 Well, let me know.

Meanwhile, NEIL GLEASON'S BEEN DOING SOME STRETCH  
 CALISTHENICS. The clerk walks off.

CHAD  
 (noticing Neil)  
 What are you doing?

NEIL GLEASON  
 I'm going in the tank tonight, man.  
 Into the McHiggins. My wrists'll be  
 manacled to my own ankles. You have  
 to limber up for that, man.

EXT. MAGIC CASTLE, NIGHTCLUB/PERFORMANCE THEATER . NIGHT

The Magic Castle is the world's most famous club for  
 magicians and magic enthusiasts. Chad stands among a pretty  
 long single-file line for the night's performance. The  
 BOUNCER seems to take notice of Chad midway down the line. He  
 waves him forward. Chad realizes the guy's talking to him.

So he walks up to cut the line. But when he gets to the Magic Castle bouncer, the guy realizes he's not Brad Pitt.

BOUNCER  
Sorry. Go back.

CHAD  
Go back?

BOUNCER  
I thought you were someone else. Go back.

Chad walks back a distance. He tries to reassume his place in line. The people previously ahead and behind him won't make room, though.

CHAD  
I was here a minute ago. I just got out of line for a second.

GUY IN LINE  
Whatever, man. I'm not responsible for your actions.

CHAD  
Okay, bro.  
(a little louder as he begins to walk away)  
Your mom was responsible for my actions last night.

This provokes a shoving match.

GUY IN LINE  
Fuck you.

CHAD  
Fuck you, man.

As they scuffle, others break them up.

SECOND GUY  
Hey, chill out. We're all just here to enjoy some magic.

Then audio from the succeeding scene plays.

ANNOUNCER (O.S.)  
Ladies and Gentlemen, Phillip Meese!

INT. MAGIC CASTLE CLUB, LA - LATER

Used car salesman Neil Gleason's up on the stage submerged in a water tank. He's trying to get some handcuffs off. He does. Then he bursts up victoriously through the top of the tank to applause. Chad's in the audience, watching.

INT. NEIL GLEASON'S EL CAMINO, MOVING - LATER

Chad and Neil cruise through Hollywood in Neil's El Camino. It seems like Chad's out of sorts a little. HE KEEPS LOOKING AT HIS REFLECTION in the sideview mirror, thinking about his Brad Pitt resemblance issue.

NEIL GLEASON

Any room for say an illusion in that movie you're doing.

CHAD

It's a drag racing movie. I doubt it. It's really tight, too.

NEIL GLEASON

So how's it going?

CHAD

Almost done. I just need the twenty-six thousand. Then it's done.

NEIL GLEASON

My tank, man. That was *eighteen* grand. I made that in four weeks, with Murpho and Roman. Switching cars.

CHAD

By fucking Conrad over.

NEIL GLEASON

Don't say that. We make it all good.

CHAD HAS CONTINUED STARING RIGHT AT HIS REFLECTION. MATTER'S ARE BECOMING MORE SERIOUS IN HIS LIFE.

CHAD

I'm not messing with Mr. Yogan. I'm going to do something else..

NEIL GLEASON  
 (meaning what are you  
 going to do)  
 What?

CHAD  
 Just something else. Don't worry  
 about it... fuck.

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD STREET, LA - DAY

Chad's waiting on a corner for someone. Then a car pulls up.  
 Chad gets in the back; HE'S NOT HAPPY ABOUT IT.

INT. CAR, MOVING - LATER

Chad's in the back seat of a car THE LOOK-A-LIKE TOM CRUISE  
 is driving. The look-a-like Dave Letterman rides in the  
 passenger seat. The three of them are headed somewhere.

TOM CRUISE LOOK-A-LIKE  
 Did you bring a towel?

CHAD  
 Are you talking to me?

TOM CRUISE LOOK-A-LIKE  
 Yeah.

CHAD  
 "Did I bring a towel?"

TOM CRUISE LOOK-A-LIKE  
 Yeah.

CHAD  
 No. Why should I bring a towel?

DAVID LETTERMAN  
 For the dunk tank.

Chad sits there for a while.

CHAD  
 Well, I'm not going in a dunk tank.  
 So...

Some more time passes.

CHAD (CONT'D)  
 I don't need a towel...

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL FUNDRAISER, HIGH SCHOOL CAMPUS - LATER

The look-a-like Tom Cruise sits on a dunk tank plank of a high-school-fundraiser-fair-level dunk tank. A freshman's throwing at the bullseye.

TOM CRUISE LOOK-A-LIKE  
Let's go, my man. Gun it in here.  
Give me some Top Gun action.

The ball hits the plank-dropping mechanism. So the Tom Cruise look-a-like drops into the tank water.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL FUNDRAISER - LATER

The David Letterman look-a-like does a little show at the east side of the fair for eight people. He's going through some index cards, reading off them.

DAVID LETTERMAN  
The top ten reasons you should  
contribute to St. Helen's  
Preparatory Academy are...

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL FUNDRAISER - SAME

Meanwhile, Chad's working the cotton candy machine. There's a small line. TWO MIDDLE-AGE SISTERS APPROACH HIM.

FIRST MIDDLE-AGED SISTER  
You're the Brad Pitt, right?

CHAD  
(with no enthusiasm)  
Yeah...

FIRST MIDDLE-AGED SISTER  
Can we snag a picture?

CHAD  
(reluctantly)  
Yeah... okay.

SECOND MIDDLE-AGED SISTER  
(to a passerby)  
Can you take a picture of us? With  
the Brad Pitt.

PASSERBY  
Sure...

Chad gets nestled between the two sisters. They begin to pose. They're smiling. Chad's unhappy. He doesn't even try to smile. THE FRAME FREEZES; the image is that of excited pair of ungainly women and a desperately unhappy celebrity look-a-like. The head off. Chad goes back to the cotton candy. The FUND-RAISING ORGANIZER HAS APPROACHED HIM.

FUNDRAISING ORGANIZER  
Can we get you over to the dunk tank?

CHAD  
No way...

FUNDRAISING ORGANIZER  
I'm sorry?

CHAD  
I didn't bring a towel. Let Letterman go in.

FUNDRAISING ORGANIZER  
It's part of your agreement. Plus, you're not really doing anything...

CHAD  
What am I supposed to be doing?

FUNDRAISING ORGANIZER  
Doing the cotton candy. Being sexy.

CHAD  
I'm *doing* the cotton candy.

FUNDRAISING ORGANIZER  
You're not being sexy.

CHAD  
(losing patience)  
How should I be sexy making cand---

FUNDRAISING ORGANIZER  
You're supposed to be portraying Brad Pitt. We're trying to raise money. Let's get with it. Make and sell your cotton candy in a sexy way.

CHAD  
Are you for real, dude?

FUNDRAISING ORGANIZER  
For the ladies.

The organizer leaves. THEN FOR JUST A MOMENT, CHAD ENTERTAINS THE IDEA OF -- THEN ACTUALLY TRIES TO -- MAKE AND SELL COTTON CANDY IN A SEXY WAY. But he quits after a brief period because his heart's simply not in it.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL FUNDRAISER -- LATER

Later, Chad's taking a break with the David Letterman; they're in the football bleachers looking across the fairground. Then Letterman takes a joint from his shirt pocket.

DAVID LETTERMAN LOOK-A-LIKE  
You want to get high?

Chad nods. Letterman lights it up. He enjoys some. Then he hands it to Chad. Tom Cruise has come up the steps to join them. Some time passes after he sits.

DAVID LETTERMAN LOOK-A-LIKE (CONT'D)  
Are you guys watching the Olympics?

CHAD  
A little bit.

TOM CRUISE LOOK-A-LIKE  
Some. Track and field.

DAVID LETTERMAN LOOK-A-LIKE  
I've been getting pretty interested in the races. Sprints. The short swimming.

They pass the joint around in threes because Tom Cruise is up for it.

DAVID LETTERMAN LOOK-A-LIKE (CONT'D)  
Sometimes, when I'm watching some medium sprints, or the swimming, I don't know why, I just start watching the guy who's coming in second. I don't know why...

The others look on.

DAVID LETTERMAN LOOK-A-LIKE (CONT'D)  
I just kind of drift into the guy who's going to come up a little short. All that dedication, doing the drills, then this guy comes down the pike from Gambia or some shit, you're eating his dust.  
(MORE)

DAVID LETTERMAN LOOK-A-LIKE (CONT'D)  
Some other guy's dust. When you  
thought you'd be on Wheaties.

CHAD  
Run harder, man. That's what I say.

TOM CRUISE LOOK-A-LIKE  
Yeah, well, if someone's faster,  
they're faster. We control less  
than we like to think, Chad. It's  
unpleasant to consider but--

CHAD  
(not interested anymore)  
What are you a philosopher?

TOM CRUISE LOOK-A-LIKE  
My thinking's worth two cents. Just  
like yours. No better no wor--

CHAD  
All right, Maverick.

TOM CRUISE LOOK-A-LIKE  
I'm just talking.

DAVID LETTERMAN LOOK-A-LIKE  
(to Chad)  
We *all* can't break the tape, buddy.

CHAD  
You know who I dig? In the races?  
That dude you think is going to  
lose, then he like leans forward  
and wins.

DAVID LETTERMAN LOOK-A-LIKE  
Yeah, but if you lean forward from  
too far back, you look stupid.

CHAD  
Well, I'm saying you have to lean  
forward from close enough back that  
you don't look like an asshole.

TOM CRUISE LOOK-A-LIKE  
Yeah, that's kind of the trick. How  
do you know when you're too far  
back? To lean?

CHAD THINKS HARD ABOUT THIS QUESTION. IT APPLIES TO HIS LIFE.

CHAD  
 Don't worry about it.  
 (standing up, starting to  
 leave)  
 Why don't you guys go ahead get  
 dunked. Because I'm not doing this  
 anymore.

DAVID LETTERMAN LOOK-A-LIKE  
 Where are you going?

CHAD  
 Home.

TOM CRUISE LOOK-A-LIKE  
 I drove you.

CHAD  
 I'll walk.

TOM CRUISE LOOK-A-LIKE  
 It's eleven miles.

CHAD  
 I don't care.

EXT. LA CIENEGA BLVD, - LATER

Later, Chad's walking the eleven miles back to his place. It's a down moment, and it goes deeper down as Chad walks past a newspaper stand shelf where many covers of a Brad Pitt feature in an entertainment magazine rest.

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING DOORWAY, LOS ANGELES - LATER

Chad's standing at the door of a courtyard apartment; he's rung the bell. He's waiting for someone. THEN A GUY MARK, 40, OPENS THE DOOR- HE'S HUGE; HE LOOKS LIKE THE BRAWNY LUMBERJACK PAPER TOWEL GUY. He looks at Chad with A PECULIARLY DISENGAGED AND SLIGHTER-LIGHTER-BLUE-THAN-HIS OTHER-ONE GLASS EYE.

CHAD  
 Hey, Mark.

The guy doesn't say anything; he looks a little pissed.

CHAD (CONT'D)  
 I wanted to give to you a report on  
 where that money I owe you and my  
 sister is.

MARK  
 (pissed at Chad)  
 Okay...

CHAD  
 Basically the report is, it's on  
 its way. It's coming up.

MARK  
 (like he has no faith in  
 Chad)  
 Okay...

CHAD  
 I'm almost at the finish line on  
 that. I just need some acting  
 work, a couple jobs, to reach the  
 finish line. Of full satisfaction.  
 For you.

They face one another for a while.

CHAD (CONT'D)  
 Nice color on that eye. It's like a  
 Robin's Egg.

MARK  
 (with no enthusiasm)  
 Yeah...

CHAD  
 It's cool.

MARK  
 (pissed)  
 Oh, you think my glass eye's cool.

CHAD  
 I think it's cool you can see. Out  
 of that eye again. That's cool.

MARK  
 I can't see.

CHAD  
 But it's made of glass.

MARK  
 Yeah...

CHAD  
 So you can see through it.

MARK

My glass eye doesn't enable me to see. Retard. I don't have an actual eye behind it to see through the glass one with. I wear it to keep people basically from being repulsed by the hole in my face.

CHAD

Why do they cost eighteen thousand dollars then? That's a rip job.

MARK

They're rare because there're very few prosthetic-eye artisans because most people get through their lifetimes with both their eyeballs still in their heads. People who haven't met you.

CHAD

I'm going to make it good, Mark. That's what I wanted to say.

MARK

All right. You said it. You've been saying it for a year. Thanks for the update, updating me that nothing's changed.

CHAD

Okay. Whatever. Brawny.

MARK

*Brawny?*

CHAD

What? Did she make a wish for the paper towel guy to come to life? And move in? Who are you, anyway?

MARK

I'm real, man. I'm not a paper towel. You're about to find out. Go do your thing.

CHAD

I have this great piece of work, Mark. We've made a movie out of it. Almost. We just ran out of cash. But I'm going to get it finished. It'll be big in the money.

(MORE)

CHAD (CONT'D)  
I can cover your total eye costs,  
Mark, and all the---

MARK  
You're a piece of work.

CHAD  
You're a piece of work, Towels.

MARGARET COMES TO THE DOOR.

MARGARET  
Towels?

MARK  
(to Margaret)  
He asked if you made a wish the  
Brawny Towel Guy would come protect  
you.

Margaret faces Chad after a moment. She smiles at him calmly.

MARGARET  
I almost did. That's how alone I  
felt. After you stole. From me.

This really impacts Chad. He waits there for a while with  
nothing to say for himself.

CHAD  
I didn't know you were going to  
join a lunch dating service and  
meet Towels---

MARK  
I have to go, Chad. I have to go  
soft scrub my face-hole with anti-  
bacterial cream. Every two hours.  
My whole life.

Mark leaves the doorway. Chad looks back at Margaret.

MARGARET  
You know what I always thought  
family was like.

CHAD  
Like what?

MARGARET  
Like when family comes over... you  
have to let them in.

Chad's still left standing outside the door.

MARGARET (CONT'D)

But I don't feel like letting you  
in. So maybe go see if you can find  
somewhere else to go.

Soon, Margaret closes the door. Chad remains outside.

INT. DINER, HOLLYWOOD - LATER

Later, Chad's eating by himself. He seems pretty isolated. It's apparent he's got no other place to go. In the distance a table of vacationing midwesterners look at him in an interested way. They think he's Brad Pitt. But after further scrutiny, they realize that he's not. So they share a laugh at Chad's expense then return to their tuna melts. Chad has noticed this going on. He takes on another demeanor then, it's a resolve to do something he's been considering.

EXT. WILSHIRE BLVD, LOS ANGELES, CA - LATER

Chad's waiting for the bus. There's a large Brad Pitt *Kalifornia* billboard looming beyond him in the background.

EXT. CONRAD YOGAN'S PRE-OWNED AUTO MART, LA - DAY

Salesmen Roman DeLorsas, Neil Gleason and mechanic Murpho chat in a used car aisle. After a while, Chad walks up to them.

CHAD

(to Roman)

What do I have to do?

ROMAN

(meaning what are you  
talking about)

What?

CHAD

Your thing.

ROMAN

You have to go along. Take some  
shit then put it back.

CHAD

All right.

ROMAN  
 (pleased)  
 All right. Let's do it.

Neil holds his hand up for a high-five.

CHAD  
 I'm not high-fiving, man. For stealing from *Conrad*. But I'll do it. As long as we square it up. What do we do?

ROMAN  
 We give Mexican guys cars that can't be traced.

CHAD  
 What do the Mexican guys do with them?

ROMAN  
 Bring guys over. From Mexico.

CHAD  
 How do we make money?

Roman leans in and speaks more quietly. His voice can't be heard now. Chad can hear, though, and from the expression on his face it seems like Roman's answer broke his heart.

CHAD (CONT'D)  
 Aw, man, the loaner program?

ROMAN  
 Yeah...

CHAD  
 He does loaners 'cause he's fucking cool, Roman. You're going to fuck him over on that?

ROMAN  
 We make it good.

This has made Chad less happy than he was before.

INT. GARAGE, CONRAD YOGAN'S AUTOS - LATER

In the garage, Chad holds a conversation with garage mechanic and co-conspirator Rob Murpho; Murpho's working on the trunk of a car; he's showing the work to Chad.

MURPHO

We don't sign the loaners back in.  
We leave them listed out. I lay in  
covers here. Like a concealer. They  
can get like nine little fuckers in  
this trunk. Some Mexican dudes take  
them out. Use them. Bring them  
back. We rotate more. You just sell  
cars I fuck up. So we can keep the  
loaners going out. Switch titles.  
Get out there and sell some bad  
cars.

EXT. CONRAD YOGAN'S PRE-OWNED AUTO MART - DAY

On another day, Chad's selling a YOUNG HISPANIC GUY IN A  
WHITE COWBOY HAT a station wagon.

CHAD

What kind of band?

YOUNG HISPANIC GUY IN COWBOY HAT

Tejano, bro.

CHAD

Cool.

YOUNG HISPANIC GUY IN COWBOY HAT

The Jaguars.

CHAD

Cool, man. Get behind the wheel.  
Get a feel.

The guy sits behind into the driver's seat.

INT. GARAGE, CONRAD YOGAN'S PRE-OWNED AUTO MART - DAY

Chad's talking to mechanic Rob Murpho in the garage.

MURPHO

You sold that station wagon?

CHAD

To the Tejano guy.

MURPHO

What's Tejano?

CHAD

Mexican rock.

MURPHO

He should be in for his loaner soon.

CHAD

What did you do to the wagon?

MURPHO

Warped out the break pads.

CHAD

He carries musical equipment in there. And a bunch of other Tejano guys. Is that safe?

MURPHO

I don't know. How much weight?

CHAD

A lot, man. I don't know.

MURPHO

Like how many in a band? In a Tejano band?

CHAD

It's like ten guys.

MURPHO

(like that's a lot)  
Fuck...

EXT. SANTA MONICA BLVD, LA - DAY

On another day, the YOUNG HISPANIC GUY IN A WHITE COWBOY HAT'S DRIVING NINE HISPANIC GUYS in white cowboy hats up Santa Monica when the brakes slide.

YOUNG HISPANIC GUY IN COWBOY HAT

Jesus, papi!

The car begins a hydroplane sideways up a block's distance of Santa Monica. The Jaguars brace for an impact as the car skids into a U.S. Postal Service mail drop.

EXT. CONRAD YOGAN'S PRE-OWNED AUTO MART - DAY

Chad's out among the used cars talking with the young Tejano guy in a cowboy hat he sold the Station Wagon to.

CHAD  
We'll get you a loaner. We'll have  
it turned around in a day.

YOUNG HISPANIC GUY IN COWBOY HAT  
That's cool. I'm not allowed to  
take my squad car home. So that's  
cool.

Chad looks at the guy for a while.

CHAD  
Squad car?

YOUNG TEJANO GUY IN COWBOY HAT  
Yeah.

CHAD  
You're a *cop*?

YOUNG TEJANO GUY IN COWBOY HAT  
Yeah. Tejano's my hobby. But yeah  
I'm a cop.

CHAD  
Fuck...

The guy looks at Chad like *fuck* was a strange reaction. Chad  
tries to work out of it.

CHAD (CONT'D)  
Tejano's my hobby, too. Man. As a  
fan I'm saying. So... Fuck. Small  
world.

YOUNG HISPANIC GUY IN COWBOY HAT  
Yeah...

Some time passes.

CHAD  
Let's get you that loaner.

EXT. GARAGE, CONRAD YOGAN'S PREOWNED AUTO MART - LATER

Chad and the Tejano cop sit in folding chairs outside the  
garage waiting for the loaner to pull around.

YOUNG HISPANIC GUY IN COWBOY HAT  
So who are your top tejano bands?

Chad doesn't know any so he sits there for a while.

CHAD

Top ones?

YOUNG HISPANIC GUY IN COWBOY HAT

Your top ones, bro.

CHAD

My top ones would be...

(making something up)

Manuel De Ortega...

(still trying)

And the Lonesome Winds. Probably.

YOUNG HISPANIC GUY IN COWBOY HAT

I don't know them.

CHAD

So great.

YOUNG HISPANIC GUY IN COWBOY HAT

Then who?

CHAD

Who after that?

YOUNG HISPANIC GUY IN COWBOY HAT

Yeah.

CHAD

(trying to create another  
name)

...Los Bartholomews.

Time passes.

CHAD (CONT'D)

That's pure tejano.

The car pulls up.

CHAD (CONT'D)

There's your loaner.

INT. GARAGE, CONRAD YOGAN'S PRE-OWNED AUTO MART - DAY

Chad's with Murpho in the garage office, counting cash Murpho's handed him. In the foreground, one of the four Mexican guy's from the car scheme's driving a used car out of the garage.

EXT. CONRAD YOGAN'S PREOWNED AUTO MART, LA -- DAY

On another day, Chad and aspiring magician Neil Gleason await customers among the used car rows.

CHAD

How did you get out of there? Out of that water thing?

NEIL GLEASON

Oh, now you like magic?

CHAD

Just tell me how you got out.

GLEASON

.. I'd rather not say. I'm a magician.

CHAD

I know you're not actually magic, Neil. I work with you on a used car lot.

GLEASON

Wrist bridge. It's a rudimentary cuff escape.

Conrad Yogan's visible behind Chad, running toward him, which isn't effortless because he's an older guy.

CONRAD

Chad...

Chad turns.

CONRAD (CONT'D)

Chad, come on. To the office.

CHAD

(meaning why)  
What?

CONRAD

You have a big audition.

CHAD

How do you know?

CONRAD

Your man's here.

Chad has started back to the office with Conrad.

INT. CONRAD'S OFFICE - LATER

Conrad stands by looking on with joy as Nelson DeChila hands Chad a slip of paper. It's reads "It's a lead. They want to see you Wednesday." He hands Chad a script. Nelson's really jacked.

EXT. CONRAD YOGAN'S PREOWNED AUTO MART - LATER

Chad's out among used cars reading a script for *A River Runs Through It*. Conrad has come over.

CONRAD  
Is is good?

CHAD  
It's really good.

CONRAD  
Which role is it?

CHAD  
His brother.

CONRAD  
You're going to get it.

CHAD  
(excited)  
I'm reading with him Thursday. It's the older brother. The whole movie's about the two of them. And some fly fishing stuff.

CONRAD  
(smiling)  
You'll get it.

Chad's enthusiastic for the first time in a while. Conrad smiles, then he seems to drift into a different headspace.

CONRAD (CONT'D)  
Hey. What about Roman?

CHAD  
What about him?

CONRAD  
 (like he's a little  
 suspicious of Roman)  
 Is he okay?

CHAD  
 Okay how?

CONRAD  
 I don't know. I was wondering, is  
 he true blue?

CHAD  
 True blue?

CONRAD  
 Yeah, all the way? Is he a straight  
 shooter to me? Like you. Is he a  
 true blue guy?

Chad looks at Conrad for a long time; he can't bring himself to lie right in Conrad's face, so he says something he probably believes is not a lie and means maybe he's as bad as Roman.

CHAD  
 He's like me. Yeah.

Conrad takes this to mean Roman's okay. So he smiles and leaves. He offers Chad a high five before he goes though. Chad gives it to him. THEN CHAD LOOKS BACK AT THE RIVER RUNS THROUGH IT SCRIPT. IT'S LIKE HE'S SAYING A PRAYER TO IT TO PLEASE MAKE HIS CIRCUMSTANCES CHANGE.

INT. BATHROOM, PRODUCTION OFFICE - DAY

Chad's in a production office bathroom, washing his hands. Someone's trying to come in; they keep banging the door, trying to pull it open but it's a push-open door.

CHAD  
 (like whoever that is is  
 an idiot)  
 Push.

The bathroom door opens. A guy's coming in removing a motorcycle helmet. Chad notices it's Brad Pitt. He walks to the sink beside Chad.

CHAD (CONT'D)  
 Hey...

BRAD PITT

Hey, man...

CHAD

I'm reading with you. In a minute.  
Chad.

BRAD PITT

Hey...

They shake hands.

CHAD

This thing's good.

BRAD PITT

Yeah. Good.

CHAD

I wanted to tell you... in the  
read, I'm going to play the guy  
kind of like a father figure. All  
right? I thought he ought to be  
calmer and maybe like a little bit  
wiser. What do you think?

An unusually long period of time passes.

BRAD PITT

I didn't really hear what you just  
said. I'm a little high.

CHAD

I was saying... I'm going to do a  
father figure thing.

BRAD PITT

When?

CHAD

In there. For the audition.

BRAD PITT

Oh.

Time passes.

BRAD PITT (CONT'D)

You're playing my father?

Chad just looks back at him.

CHAD  
 (starting to go)  
 I'll see you in there.

BRAD PITT  
 Okay, Mr. Skerritt.

INT. RECEPTION ROOM, PRODUCTION OFFICE - LATER

Chad and Brad Pitt sit beside one another in the reception area. BRAD, THOUGH, IS NOW WEARING THE MOTORCYCLE HELMET WITH TINTED VISOR. One of the film's producers enters the waiting area.

PRODUCER  
 (to Chad)  
 Hey.

CHAD  
 (standing)  
 Hey. Chad.

PRODUCER  
 Yeah. I've seen your reel. You're great.

CHAD  
 Thanks.

Then the producer faces the helmeted Brad and addresses him like he knows it's Brad and that he wears this helmet deal all the time and that it's normal.

PRODUCER  
 Hey, Brad.

BRAD PITT  
 (through the helmet)  
 Hi, Greg.

PRODUCER  
 (to both of them)  
 I thought we could do this outside.  
 Since so much of the story takes  
 place outside.

EXT. PARAMOUNT PICTURES LOT - LATER

Later, Chad, the Producer and Brad are arranged around the little outside veranda on the Paramount lot. Passersby are coming and going. BRAD HAS REMAINED IN THE HELMET.

PRODUCER

Anytime you guys are ready.

Chad looks over at Brad Pitt. He's waiting for Brad to remove the helmet. But he doesn't.

CHAD

Are you ready?

BRAD PITT

Yeah...

Chad still waits for Brad Pitt to take his helmet off. He doesn't. So Chad finds the right place in his script and begins.

BRAD PITT (CONT'D)

(as the character)

How many did you catch?

CHAD

(through the helmet)

I caught a barrel full. Some big'uns. What part of the river were you fishin'--

(breaking character because the helmet's throwing him off)

You know, I need to see your face. Could you take the--

BRAD PITT

People come up. That's going to throw us off. Let's leave it on.

CHAD

It's throwing me off you're wearing a helmet.

BRAD PITT

Yeah, let's leave it.

The producer gets a call on his cell.

PRODUCER

Just a sec, guys. It's my daughter.

He walks off a short distance. Chad is left there with the helmeted Brad Pitt. A period of time goes by.

CHAD

So where are you from?

BRAD PITT  
Missouri.

Brad doesn't follow up by asking where Chad's from as would be natural. He just sits there in his motorcycle helmet. So soon, Chad volunteers where he's from.

CHAD  
Los Angeles. Born and raised.  
(changing the subject)  
We had an acting class once. I  
workshopped that Mark Twain--

BRAD PITT  
Viet Nam has some great  
architecture. No one knows that.

CHAD  
You were in Viet Nam?

BRAD PITT  
Not the war. The country. I have a  
crystal ball. Did you know that?

CHAD  
No.

BRAD PITT  
It doesn't work. I can't see shit  
in there. It just looks like milk.

CHAD  
So it doesn't work?

BRAD PITT  
No.

CHAD  
Why do you keep it?

BRAD PITT  
I don't know. It might *start*  
working. That would be cool then.  
To tell the future?

Chad doesn't say anything.

BRAD PITT (CONT'D)  
You don't have a response to that?

CHAD  
To what?

BRAD PITT

To if it would be cool to tell the future?

CHAD

Yeah, that would be cool. It would be really cool, it's just not going to happen. It's just going to stay milk probably.

Some awkward moments pass. They just face each other as Brad Pitt remains in his tinted motorcycle helmet.

CHAD (CONT'D)

So what kind of motorcycle do you have?

Some time passes.

BRAD PITT

(like he's doesn't own a motorcycle and why would somebody ask)

*Motorcycle?*

EXT. HOT DOG STAND, LA - DAY

On another day, Chad and his agent Nelson Dechila share lunch at the outdoor tables of the hot dog stand. Chad's reading paper Nelson's handing him. It's bad news.

CHAD (V.O.)

It's going to be Sheffer. For the brother role in River. You were next. I'm sorry.

Chad loses some spirit. Nelson gestures to Chad keep reading, there's more.

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

They previewed that Zaillian movie Schindlers List. Standing ovation. I got a few calls about Red Dust. There're offers to buy up the option. Fifty thousand, but I couldn't get anyone to bite on the movie with you as lead. It's only to get the material.

CHAD (CONT'D)

It's with me. That's what Red Dust is.

Chad looks at Nelson and finds him offering *the best is yet to come* hand gesture as a way to lift his spirits. Chad doesn't even return it now; he just leaves the table.

EXT. BUS BENCH, LA - LATER

Chad's waiting for the bus beside a Mexican guy; he's handing the guy his card.

CHAD  
Come on by, man. I'll get you in  
your own vehicle.

The guy takes the card. Then he presses a tazer he's taken from his coat on Chad's neck.

CHAD (CONT'D)  
(great pain)  
Fuck!

The guy jogs off. After a while, the bus pulls up. Chad's the only one at the stop. The driver looks over waiting for Chad to stand up.

BUS DRIVER  
Are you getting on?

Chad can't move or speak.

BUS DRIVER (CONT'D)  
Brad Pitt? Are you getting on?

Then the driver finally shifts the door puller, closes the bus door then goes.

CHAD  
(without being able to  
move his lips)  
Fuck...

EXT. CONRAD YOGAN'S PREOWNED AUTO MART, LA - DAY

Neil Gleason's selling a car to a 40-year-old-woman and her elderly father.

NEIL GLEASON  
Some folks prefer a manual trans---  
Jesus!

Neil's been tazed by a Mexican who's walked up behind him and jabbed him in the small of the back. He crumples to the ground.

EXT. GARAGE, CONRAD YOGAN'S PREOWNED AUTO MART - LATER

Later Chad and Neil have both come out behind the garage to regroup after their assaults. They're each bent over at the waist trying to catch their breath.

NEIL GLEASON  
We're six short this week.

CHAD  
God, man. Ow...

NEIL GLEASON  
No shit. Where's Roman been? He hasn't sold his. He's been gone four days.

EXT. PICNIC TABLE, YOGAN'S PREOWNED AUTOS - LATER

A conference takes place at the Yogan lot picnic table - Chad, Murpho and Neil Gleason.

MURPHO  
His dad died. In Italy. He's gone. You're going to have to sell Roman's cars.

CHAD  
(upset)  
I'm not switching out any more titles than I said. I don't care.

MURPHO  
We made a pledge. Together.

NEIL GLEASON  
We're a group, man. Like the Beatles.

CHAD  
(like that's stupid)  
Yeah, we're like the Beatles, Neil. Except for that we don't do any classic shit at all.

MURPHO  
You get Roman's cut.

CHAD

(standing up, walking off)  
I'll have enough with my cut. I got  
a sound deal. Fuck that. I'm  
messing with a cop. He might figure  
this out.

GLEASON

We have all the angles covered.

CHAD

You don't know any angles.  
(to Murpho)  
And you're a stand-up comedian,  
who's not even funny, what do you--

MURPHO

I'm not a comedian. I'm a  
ventriloquist, dick. And I'm not  
supposed to be funny. Mr. Hiccups  
is. I'm the straight ma--

CHAD

I'm not doing more cars.

MURPHO

Tell the Mexicans. Because they're  
coming around. They don't care  
about Roman's dad.

CHAD

You tell them.

MURPHO

You tell them, Brad Pitt.

Chad walks back into the frame. He's pissed. He shoves  
Murpho's head. Neil has to keep them apart.

NEIL

Hey, come on, now.... not cool.

EXT. ENTRANCE, CONRAD YOGAN'S PREOWNED AUTOMART - LATER

As Chad leaves the premises, he encounters lot owner Conrad  
Yogan coming in.

CONRAD YOGAN

Heading home?

CHAD

(turning the beer down)  
I have to go to work Mr. Yogan. My other thing. I'm P.A.ing at a production company. For equipment.

CONRAD

How many jobs do you have, sport?

CHAD

Yours. Two other shitty ones.

CONRAD

No job's a bad job. If you do good work.

Chad smiles, waves and starts to walk away. Conrad watches him go. Chad looks pretty worn out.

CONRAD (CONT'D)

Hey...

Chad turns back.

CONRAD (CONT'D)

Hey. Maybe one job's better than three, no matter what the job is. Your good at selling cars, man... maybe just sell cars with me. I'm going to do a Preowned in Pasadena in March... you could run my Pasadena Preowned. One job. Hey, selling cars to people who need them, they're worse things.

CHAD

(like it's not exactly his dream, but doesn't want to hurt Conrad's feeling)  
Yeah, that would be really cool... running Pasadena Preowned, but... I'm an actor. So...  
(giving a wave goodbye)  
I have to run.

CONRAD

What kind of production company?

CHAD

It's um... I don't really want to say. Is that okay? It's a little salty.

CONRAD

*Salty?*

CHAD

Like um, like not family friendly.

EXT. BACK YARD, PRIVATE HOME, LA - SAME

The Tejano band The Jaguars plays in the backyard of a Quince Party (a Latin culture event akin to a girl's Sweet Sixteen but with vague religious and over the top qualities). They've just taken a break and head for the refreshments.

YOUNG HISPANIC GUY IN COWBOY HAT  
(to the other Tejano band  
members)

They fixed my brake pads, man. They gave me a loaner. At Conrad Yogan.

SECOND TEJANO MEMBER  
(surprised)  
They still give loaners?

YOUNG HISPANIC GUY IN COWBOY HAT  
At Conrad Yogan. Yeah.

THIRD TEJANO MEMBER  
I might go in there, man. I need a new car big time.

FOURTH TEJANO MEMBER  
(to the third member)  
Hey, bring me with you. To Conrad Yogan. I want to trade my Tercel in.

INT. CAR, INTERSECTION, NORTHRIDGE - LATER

This is a view out the windshield of a car waiting at an intersection light. A HUSBAND and WIFE sit inside and watch calmly as CHAD WALKS BY IN FRONT OF THEIR CAR WHILE CARRYING A DILDO.

HUSBAND  
(to his wife)  
Look at this guy. Walking with a dildo.

Chad leaves the frame.

HUSBAND (CONT'D)  
 Just going for a little stroll.  
 With his dildo.

EXT. WAREHOUSE DOORWAY, INDUSTRIAL PARK, NORTHRIDGE - LATER

Chad's got the dildo and punches a key code into a warehouse door. RIGHT NEAR HIM, A RIPPED GUY IN A SEXUALLY-CHARGED ARMY SERGEANT'S OUTFIT, SERGEANT TIM, IS APPARENTLY REHEARSING A FIGHT SCENE WITH A SEXY MALE ARMY PRIVATE CHARACTER FOR SOME REASON.

SERGEANT TIM  
 (to the sexy private)  
 I'm going to give you like a right  
 cross, then I'll probably follow  
 that up with a headlock.

SEXY ARMY PRIVATE  
 What should I do?

SERGEANT TIM  
 Fight back. But not too much.

SEXY ARMY PRIVATE  
 Okay.

SERGEANT TIM  
 Then I'll maybe tackle you. Let's  
 roughhouse a little. We'll get all  
 horny from the roughhousing, start  
 fucking.

SEXY ARMY PRIVATE  
 Okay...

Chad has opened the door and gone in.

INT. WAREHOUSE MOVIE SET - LATER

Among movie equipment and costume racks, Chad places the unwrapped dildo on a table full of other dildos. A sign on the wall there reads *Props*.

EXT. PARKING LOT, WAREHOUSE - LATER

Later, Chad's talking with production company boss and 80's gay-video-phenomenon JEFF STRYKER, 35 outside the warehouse/set.

CHAD  
I got everything squared away.

JEFF STRYKER  
Thanks, Chad.

CHAD  
So you don't mind if I borrow that  
sound deck, over the weekend? If I  
take good care of it?

JEFF STRYKER  
Go for it. Hey, you did a real good  
job on that budget, cleaning that  
up. I appreciate you organizing  
things.

CHAD  
Thanks. I saw some shortcuts in  
there. I've had to do my picture so  
many times.

JEFF STRYKER  
What's your picture?

CHAD  
I have this Steve--

SERGEANT TIM (O.S.)  
(to Chad, livid)  
Did you get a receipt for this?

Sergeant Tim's back. He's got Chad's dildo with him.

CHAD  
What?

SERGEANT TIM  
Receipt?

CHAD  
(he didn't get a receipt)  
Fuck...

SERGEANT TIM  
It's Tantrus. Our deal's with Doc  
Johnson. Come on. Concentrate.

CHAD  
Okay.

Chad takes the dildo back.

SERGEANT TIM  
Let's keep our thinking caps on  
around here. Okay?

CHAD  
Okay.

SERGEANT TIM  
Okay, Brad Pitt?

CHAD  
You can use my name, man...

SERGEANT TIM  
Okay...

Sergeant Tim walks away.

SERGEANT TIM (CONT'D)  
Okay, Brad Pitt, I will. It's Brad  
Pitt.

CHAD  
Hey.

Tim turns back. THE DILDO STRIKES THE SIDE OF HIS FACE  
BECAUSE CHAD'S TOSSED IT AT HIM.

SERGEANT TIM  
Hey. Smarten up, fucker. That's  
across the borderline.  
(pointed at the dildo now  
at his feet.)  
Return this. Or no equipment. Pick  
it up, return it.

He wants Chad to walk all the way over and pick it up. Chad  
doesn't want to because of pride. But he needs the equipment,  
so he steps over to the thing.

EXT. BUS BENCH - LATER

Chad's sitting on the bus bench; he's got another dildo  
package. There's a guy who looks like the object is putting  
him off beside Chad. Chad notices; he turns the box around so  
the guy doesn't have to see a dildo, but, turning the box  
around proves to be of no use to Chad, because on the back  
there's an illustration of a dildo.

CHAD  
Fuck...

INT. BUS, MOVING - LATER

Chad's walking down the aisle toward the last seat of the bus. He's getting dirty looks from fellow passengers.

CHAD  
(to the general crowd)  
I'm sorry...

He passes another disapproving passenger.

CHAD (CONT'D)  
Look away...

Finally, Chad reaches his seat. He sits down with his box. Chad's noticed HIS SISTER MARGARET'S SITTING DOWN THE AISLE.

CHAD (CONT'D)  
Fuck...

Chad's tried to shift the package to his other side, but Margaret's made eye contact with him. Then she directly registers what he's holding. Then she looks at her brother again.

MARGARET  
Hi...

CHAD  
Hi...

MARGARET  
(meaning the dildo)  
If you're planning on using that in your clown show, let me give you some advice...

CHAD  
This is for something else.

Chad looks at his sister for a while.

CHAD (CONT'D)  
Where are you going? On a Saturday?

MARGARET  
Library.

Time passes.

MARGARET (CONT'D)

I can't buy books anymore and own them permanently. Because of our glass eye expenses. So... that's why I'm on the bus, too. Everyday. Mark had to sell his car, too.

They fall quiet. Chad keeps looking at his sister riding the bus with a book on her lap.

CHAD

Maggie--

MARGARET

Look, you have no family. You left college. Then you cross the one person who looks after you. Then make a mess instead of fixing it, drift off into bullshit.

CHAD

I have some major stuff going on.

MARGARET

I can see that. You're involved somehow with dildos.

CHAD

I had a chance to option this script and make a great movie. I did it. And I have to do it now because of this fucking guy.

MARGARET

Which fucking guy?

CHAD

This pretty douche. From *Thelma and Louise*... I can like lean forward with this movie and get back in front.

Margaret look at Chad with his package.

MARGARET

I don't even want to know where you're going with that.

Margaret starts to go. Chad watches her.

CHAD

I'm going to give you everything you saved. Plus.

MARGARET

You know what? I think maybe you're the kind of guy who has no idea he's messing up until he's just all messed up.

After a moment, Margaret turns and goes. Chad's left behind with his dildo. After a while, he begins to look like he's wondering whether she's right.

EXT. CONRAD YOGAN'S PRE-OWNED AUTO MART - DAY

The same young Mexican guys from the tazings have Neil Gleason cornered at the edge of the lot. They have his hand held over the open trunk space of a Mazda 626.

NEIL GLEASON

(desperate)

I need my hand, man. I'm a magician.

They swing the trunk door down on it.

NEIL GLEASON (CONT'D)

Ahh!

The door's swung back up off Gleason's hand. He slides to the ground.

NEIL GLEASON (CONT'D)

(to himself, with leftover desperation)

I perform magic, you fucking assholes.

EXT. STREET CORNER, LA NEIGHBORHOOD - SAME

In his Ronald outfit, Chad waits at a quiet neighborhood corner to cross the street to the Ronald McDonald House. Then AN HISPANIC GUY walks up behind Chad and touches his upper shoulder with a tazer.

CHAD

(great pain)

Ahh!

Chad buckles. He hits the ground. The guy runs off. Chad's immobilized on the sidewalk. Some time passes. Then a bald-headed, eight-year-old, cancer-patient walks up beside him.

CHAD (CONT'D)  
Hey, little man. I think you probably ought to go back over to the house. Ronald's not feeling so good.

The kid doesn't go anywhere, though.

CHAD (CONT'D)  
Is that a bottle cap, there, stabbing the rim of my ear? Can you see?

BOY  
I can't see.

CHAD  
Okay, here we go...

Soon, Chad is able to stand. Then he instantly bends over and pukes. Then he rises up then makes awkward eye contact with the kid. Then they start walking across the street together to the charity house.

CHAD (CONT'D)  
Sorry you had to see that. Let's get over there. I'll make you a balloon pup.

BOY  
I get sick, too. From taking my medicine.

CHAD  
That's sad, bro.

BOY  
Why did you get sick?

Chad thinks about it for a while.

CHAD  
From taking mine. So we're kind of similar. But not all the way. Because you're just a cool little guy who's never done anything. I'm a fucking jerk.

They head toward the house together.

CHAD (CONT'D)  
Don't tell anyone Ronald cursed.

BOY  
Why did you?

CHAD  
I don't know. 'Cause everything's  
just fucked up.

The kid takes Ronald's hand. They head up to the house.

INT. KITCHEN, RONALD MCDONALD HOUSE - LATER

Chad's in a tucked away corner of the kitchen trying to change out of the Ronald costume; he's just started to unbutton his clown blouse when the HOUSE DIRECTOR notices him from the hallway.

HOUSE DIRECTOR  
(a little upset)  
Hey. Not on the premises.

CHAD  
You said I had to *come* in costume.

HOUSE DIRECTOR  
So?

You never said *leave*--

HOUSE DIRECTOR  
Come and go. In costume. I don't  
want to risk the kids seeing a guy  
underneath. Now button up.

The house director leaves. Though he's not happy about it, Chad starts to button his clown blouse back up.

EXT. STREET CORNER, LA - LATER

Still dressed as Ronald, Chad's at a crosswalk among other pedestrians. HE'S LOOKING FOR A PLACE TO CHANGE, THEN LOOKS ACROSS THE STREET AND SEES A BURGER KING. There's nothing else around. So he starts walking over there.

INT. BURGER KING - LATER

Chad has walked into Burger King as Ronald McDonald. After just a couple steps in, he's confronted by THE BURGER KING MANAGER working nearby.

BURGER KING MANAGER  
 (staring at Chad)  
 Hey. What are you doing?

CHAD  
 ... I was just doing some entertai---

BURGER KING MANAGER  
 You can't be in here like that. Go.

CHAD  
 For the sick--

BURGER KING MANAGER  
 (louder)  
 Go.

CHAD  
 Okay. You don't have to be a dick.

BURGER KING MANAGER  
 Oh, I'm a dick?

CHAD  
 I just need to change. Out of these  
 joker clothes. So...  
 (starting to leave)  
 whatever. Whatever, Fries.

BURGER KING MANAGER  
 Oh, I'm Fries now. Okay.

CHAD  
 You are Fries.

Chad heads out the door. Then he faces the guy again and speaks muffled through the plate glass.

CHAD (CONT'D)  
 I'm not actually Ronald McDonald,  
 guy. I'm an actor. Get with it.

BURGER KING MANAGER  
 (sarcastic)  
 Are you Dustin Hoffman?

They face each other through the glass door. Then Chad leaves again.

EXT. GAS STATION, LA - LATER

Forced to remain in costume, Chad walks across the pump islands of a shitty gas station on his way to it's restroom. Reaching the men's room door, Chad finds it's out of service. The same is true of the ladie's room beside it. THIS IS A DEEPLY BAD MOMENT FOR CHAD. He can't bear it anymore, and he simply loses his shit it a very pronounced and attention-grabbing way by violently going to town in costume on the bathroom door.

CHAD  
(punching the door)  
There you go, closed door.

It's a spectacle.

CHAD (CONT'D)  
You like that, closed door?

Chad's worn himself out. Then he remains there, catching his breath and trying his best to collect himself after his low moment.

INT. CITY BUS, LA, MOVING - LATER

Chad's riding home after his Ronald fit still as Ronald. Then the bus ride takes him past the red-carpeted World Premiere of the movie *Kalifornia* which Chad watches through the bus window. Soon, he takes sight of Brad Pitt out there. Then Brad faces the bus. He looks at Chad from the distance, seems to notice the clown on the bus then laughs at Chad. Chad looks on all the while from behind the bus window.

EXT. INDUSTRIAL PARK, TORRANCE - LATER

During down time on the Jeff Stryker video production lot, Chad walks past where Sergeant Tim's playing pick up basketball with a few other gay video performers on break, a sexy sailor and a some kind of sheriff black guy.

SERGEANT TIM  
(to Chad)  
What's up?

CHAD  
Hey...

SERGEANT TIM  
Two on two?

Sergeant Tim passes the ball to Chad.

CHAD

I'm working.

SERGEANT TIM

Take a break. Let's school these faggots.

\*what follows is a stylistic montage during which Sergeant Tim and Chad team up in a basketball game against the sailor and sheriff. Throughout, Tim plays like a ball hog with few skills, spicing up his missed shots and assorted fouls by referring to Chad as "Brad Pitt," as in "dish me the ball, Brad Pitt," or when frustrated they're losing "fucking play some 'D,' Brad Pitt." Throughout, Chad becomes more pissed until he whips the basketball into Tim's shirtless back.

CHAD

Fuck you, man.

SERGEANT TIM

(going at him)  
What's your problem.

CHAD

Stop calling me that.

It's gotten physical, so Chad's found himself in a full-out scrap with a sizeable guy in a gay drill sergeant's outfit.

SHERIFF BLACK GUY

Get him, Tim.

They go at it for a while; this fight is an unglamorous strength contest which Tim's winning. Chad clips him in the neck with a wild right.

SERGEANT TIM

Ow, my neck, you fucking jerk.

CHAD

Fuck you.

SERGEANT TIM

You're fired. Get lost.

CHAD

Good.

Chad starts walking away.

SERGEANT TIM  
Keep walking, Makeshift.

CHAD  
*Makeshift?*

SERGEANT TIM  
You're makeshift, man. Keep walking  
it, Makeshift.

Chad, who's simply fated to resemble Brad Pitt in an unfortunate way, keeps walking off farther from the warehouse wall of Jeff Stryker XXX video posters.

EXT. WILSHIRE BLVD, LOS ANGELES, CA - DAY

Chad's walk back to work takes him by a theater. He has to walk past a Brad Pitt Kalifornia standee - a life-size, cardboard, cut-out Brad Pitt. Chad takes it.

EXT. WILSHIRE BLVD - LATER

Chad walks across an intersection; he's carrying the Brad Pitt standee under his arm like a surfboard.

INT. EMPLOYEE LOUNGE/BREAKROOM, CONRAD YOGAN AUTOS - DAY

Chad's taking a coffee break at the lounge break table with Conrad Yogan; the TVs on. Brad Pitt's being interviewed by Barbara Walters in a motorcycle bar of his choosing (an actual interview).

BARBARA WALTERS  
You have two movies coming out this  
Winter. You must be excited, kid.

BRAD PITT  
All the work's paying off. So *that*  
gives me a lot of gratisfaction.  
Yeah.

CHAD  
(quietly)  
That's not a word...

CONRAD  
(to Chad)  
How's your movie going?

CHAD

We need a little infusion. But it's good.

CONRAD

What's it about?

CHAD

It's a father son drag racing story. We're almost finished.

THEN OUT THE WINDOW, WE CAN SEE A WHITE, TEJANO STYLE COWBOY HAT PASS BY; someone in that hat's been walking by on the lot outside and is just lower than the window, but the hat was high enough to be seen. Then another one goes by. Chad hasn't seen it.

INT. GARAGE, CONRAD YOGAN'S PREOWNED AUTO MART - LATER

Chad's smoking near the garage; beyond him, in the work area, Chad's put up the Brad Pitt cut-out, and someone's placed an industrial equipment sign around Brad's neck reading "GREASE UP BEFORE YOU USE ME." Chad's noticed something across a few car aisles.

CHAD'S POV

What Chad's looking at is Murpho removing the lot's price sticker from a vehicle NEWLY PURCHASED BY A HISPANIC TEJANO BAND MEMBER IN A WHITE COWBOY HAT.

Chad looks over for a while. Then he notices something else a couple aisles over.

CHAD'S POV

What Chad sees here is Neil Gleason, with his hand bandaged, hustling a car to another Hispanic guy in a white cowboy hat. There are recognizably Jaguars from the Hispanic police officer's Tejano band. Chad's grown concerned over this.

EXT. GARAGE, CONRAD YOGAN'S LATER

Chad has gathered Neil Gleason and Murpho out back of the garage. Chad's upset.

CHAD

Don't sell these guys bad cars, man.

MURPHO

Tell me my choice. We're short.

CHAD

Their friend's a cop. He's a bandmate, man. They're going to talk.

NEIL GLEASON

(skeptical)

Where?

CHAD

At fucking band practice. Asshole. I don't know. They're going to talk.

MURPHO

(like it's a done deal)

They're sold, bro.

THEN GAY VIDEO PHENOMENON JEFF STRYKER WALKS UP.

JEFF STRYKER

Hey...

CHAD

(surprised)

Hey, Jeff.

JEFF STRYKER

I wanted to look at some family sedans. What do you think?

CHAD

(smiling)

We have some.

(to Neil)

This is Jeff. I worked at his production company.

JEFF STRYKER

(to the others)

Hey... Jeff Stryker.

NEIL

Neil Gleason.

(looking at Jeff for a while)

I know you from somewhere. I don't know. Have we met?

JEFF STRYKER  
I don't know, man...

Some time passes.

CHAD  
Well, let's get you behind the  
wheel.

INT. SEDAN, TEST DRIVE - LATER

Jeff drives on a test drive through east LA. Chad's in the  
passenger seat.

CHAD  
Why do you want a family sedan?

JEFF STRYKER  
For my family?

CHAD  
(a little surprised)  
You have a family?

JEFF STRYKER  
Yeah... Can you come back to the  
company, Chad? That's what I really  
wanted to ask you. I'll give you  
the full camera package. For a  
month. No one works as hard as you.  
I'm still using the production  
schedules you made. You can have  
the gear and the picture van. After  
hours. Whenever.

CHAD  
I have some stuff going on. I have  
to do it...

JEFF STRYKER  
What are you doing?

CHAD  
Just... some stupid shit.

JEFF STRYKER  
(smiling)  
Well, stop doing that shit. Come on  
back.

Chad smiles.

CHAD

You know, if I can that get that gear, over a couple weekends, I can wrap it up. The movie.

JEFF STRYKER

Do it.

EXT. CONRAD YOGAN'S PREOWNED AUTO MART - LATER

Chad's in a good mood over the news he can finish his picture. He's watching Jeff drive off in the family sedan. Chad's waving and smiling, but an Hispanic Guy has come up behind him and hits him in the small of the back with a golf club.

INT. EMPLOYEE LOUNGE/BREAKROOM - LATER

This is a whispered breakroom conversation between the conspirators Chad, Neil Gleason and Murpho.

CHAD

It was spanish, man, but I think he said he was going to eye smash me or some shit, break my eyes.

NEIL GLEASON

(like that's the most horrible thing)  
*Break your eyes?*

CHAD

He cracked that thing all over me. I can't move my arms.

NEIL GLEASON

Holy shit.

CHAD

He said he's coming back tomorrow if we don't have the cars.

NEIL GLEASON

How many are we short?

MURPHO

Two.

CHAD

We close in an hour. How the fuck do we sell two of your messed up cars?

NELSON

Let's just take them off the lot.

CHAD

Conrad inventories every day.

NEIL GLEASON

We're going to have to grab some, man. Like from the airport or something. Fuck.

MURPHO

I have that Toyota master key set. You can grab any Toyota.

Chad's trying to decide while Neil sits there with his bandaged hands.

EXT. PARKING GARAGE LAX - LATER (NIGHT)

Neil Gleason and Chad are walking past parked cars in long term parking at LAX. Gleason's got keys with him.

NEIL GLEASON

Find a Toyota.

CHAD

There.

They stop at a car. Gleason opens it. Then he reaches up beside the wheel and starts it.

NEIL GLEASON

Okay. Go. I'll get another one.

CHAD

There's no ticket.

NEIL GLEASON

Pay the max.

CHAD

What if you don't have one?

NEIL GLEASON

I'll pay, too.

CHAD

Wait a while. We can't both go and pay the maximum thing, man. It'll look fucked up.

NEIL GLEASON

All right. I'll wait a while.

Chad pulls out. Gleason's getting into a Toyota nearby

NEIL GLEASON (CONT'D)

There's a ticket in here, man. I'm good.

CHAD

Okay.

Chad heads toward the long term pay booths.

EXT. MAIN AISLE, LONG TERM PARKING -- CONTINUOUS

Chad's pulling up to pay. He looks in his rear view mirror. He sees Neil Gleason pulling up in a Toyota right behind him.

BOOTH ATTENDANT

Hi.

CHAD

Hi.  
(looking for his ticket)  
I'm afraid I lost my ticket.

BOOTH ATTENDANT

You'll have to pay a full week.

CHAD

Damn...

BOOTH ATTENDANT

It's forty-three.

Chad hands her some bills. He waits while she makes change.

BOOTH ATTENDANT (CONT'D)

Seven dollars.

CHAD

Thanks.

Chad pulls out. The attendant watches Neil Gleason pull up.

GLEASON

Hi.

BOOTH ATTENDANT

Hi.

Gleason hands the attendant his ticket. She looks at it.

BOOTH ATTENDANT (CONT'D)

That's not a lot ticket. That's like a laundry ticket or some shit.

GLEASON

(thrown by that)

I'm afraid I lost my ticket then.

BOOTH ATTENDANT

(a little suspicious)

You'll have to pay full week.

GLEASON

(bad acting)

Damn. Okay.

The booth attendant looks at Gleason for a while. She's suspicious. She makes his change. But when he pulls out, she picks up a radio mic from her stand and calls something in.

INT. CHAD'S TOYOTA, MOVING -- LATER

Chad's driving through Inglewood. It's dark out. Soon, though, he sees police lights in his rear view mirror.

CHAD

Fuck...

Then Gleason pulls up alongside him in his Toyota.

NEIL GLEASON

(shouting over to Chad)

It wasn't for the lot.

CHAD

What?

NEIL GLEASON

It was for laundry. Sorry. Fuck.

CHAD

Split up!

Gleason gets it and peels off down another street.

CHAD (CONT'D)  
 (to himself)  
 Fucking idiot...

Chad watches the cop go after Gleason's car. He looks relieved. Chad makes a turn. He cruises past a couple streets and looks further relieved. Time passes. He approaches another intersection. Then he notices something that surprises him.

CHAD (CONT'D)  
 Fuck!

CHAD'S POV

Gleason's driving his Toyota through a red light on a street intersecting Chad's. He T-smashes Chad.

EXT. STREET, INGLEWOOD - SAME

The Toyotas have come to rest in the middle of the intersection. A police officer's running up to them with his hand on the gun in his holster.

INT. AMBULANCE - LATER

Neil Gleason and Chad are cuffed in the back of an on-scene ambulance. Through the window glass, a cop is visible outside the driver's side dealing with the paramedics in the ambulance cab. Gleason's face is covered in blood.

COP  
 I have to clear this traffic. Hold  
 out five minutes.

They're finishing paperwork. Chad and Neil Gleason are cuffed in the back

NEIL GLEASON  
 (whispered, to Chad)  
 I whipped a wrist bridge.

CHAD  
 What?

NEIL GLEASON  
 I bridged. When they cuffed me.

CHAD  
 What are you talking about?

NEIL GLEASON

I can escape. I can get out of this  
shit.

Chad's looking out the window up front.

CHAD

Hurry, man.

Neil's manipulating his arms behind his back. After a  
struggle, his arms come free.

CHAD (CONT'D)

Get me out.

NEIL GLEASON

I can't get you out. You have to  
stabilize your wrists a specific  
way when you're being cuffed. But  
I have a bunch of keys and shit at  
home. In my kit.

Gleason's able to open the ambulance door. Chad's already  
moving out of the thing behind him.

EXT. CENTURY BLVD - LATER

Later at night, Neil Gleason and Chad stand at a gas station  
pay phone off Century. Chad's still cuffed. Gleason's got  
blood all over his face; he's holding the phone for Chad.

CHAD

(into the phone)

You live close, right?

(listening)

I was hoping you could help me out.  
I'm in a little situation. I'm off  
Airport and Century.

SECURITY GUARD

(meaning why's Chad  
cuffed)

Hey, what the fuck?

A gas station security guard's coming over.

NEIL GLEASON

(looking at the guy)

Hey, bro. I'm a magician. I'm a  
shitty magician. This guy  
volunteers for a trick, man...

(MORE)

NEIL GLEASON (CONT'D)  
 (like he's laughing at  
 himself)

I can't get him out. Here.

Neil's handed the guy a card.

NEIL GLEASON (CONT'D)  
 That's my union card. I have a show  
 at the airport Hyatt. I have to get  
 this guy to the manufacturer of  
 these handcuffs. That aren't real.  
 (laughing again)  
 This guy volunteered. He's being  
 cool about it, but...

CHAD  
 (playing along)  
 It's time to get these off. I've  
 been a good sport, but come on,  
 man. That's enough. Get the fucking  
 manufacturer.

EXT. GAS STATION - LATER

Neil and Chad are sitting way back in the rear of the station  
 on a curb of a parking space next to the security guard.

SECURITY GUARD  
 (meaning Gleason's face)  
 Why's there blood?

NEIL GLEASON  
 For effect. I have an amped up  
 show.

Then THE DAVID LETTERMAN LOOK-ALIKE drives up. Chad nods to  
 show Neil this is the guy coming to get them.

NEIL GLEASON (CONT'D)  
 There he is. That's the  
 manufacturer. I'm going to give him  
 my two cents.

Chad and Neil start walking toward David Letterman's car; as  
 the security guard does nothing to stop them.

INT. NEIL GLEASON'S KITCHEN - LATER (DAY)

It's light out now. Chad's sitting at Neil's kitchen table;  
 he's still in cuffs. Gleason's got a box he's still trying  
 keys from. The DAVE LETTERMAN'S LOOKING ON FROM THE  
 BACKGROUND.

CHAD  
Come on, Neil.

NEIL GLEASON  
That's not helping.

Gleason works a key into the cuffs.

NEIL GLEASON (CONT'D)  
It's driving me crazy where I know  
that guy from. That guy whose  
production company you worked for.  
I *totally* know him. The family  
sedan guy?

CHAD  
He's a gay porn star.

Neil's made a trap for himself there. Awkward moments pass.

NEIL GLEASON  
Um...

Neil frees the lock.

NEIL GLEASON (CONT'D)  
There.

He's able to snap Chad out.

DAVID LETTERMAN LOOK-A-LIKE  
You guys want to get some  
breakfast. I'm meeting some  
friends.

INT. DINER, HOLLYWOOD - LATER

Later, at breakfast, Chad's at a table with Neil and some of  
Dave Letterman's friends: a Billy Crystal, a Tom Hanks and an  
Eddie Veder; all poor man's versions.

EDDIE VEDER  
I say fuck the Raiders. Even if  
they come back they lost *my*  
support.

DAVID LETTERMAN  
Totally.

CHAD  
(rising)  
I have to go.  
(MORE)

CHAD (CONT'D)  
 I have to meet my agent.  
 (to the others)  
 Good meeting you guys.

BILLY CRYSTAL  
 You too, man.

EXT. BUS BENCH, WILSHIRE BLVD - LATER

Chad's waiting for a bus on the bench between a VAGRANT and AN HISPANIC GUY. Chad look pretty wiped out from the night. The vagrant's been staring at him.

VAGRANT  
 Thelma and Louise. Right here.

Chad ignores him.

VAGRANT (CONT'D)  
 It's nice to make your  
 acquaintance, Thelma and Louise.

CHAD  
 That's not me.

VAGRANT  
 Thelma and Louise. Right here.  
 Taking the 21. Sign some shit for  
 me.

CHAD  
 Jesus Christ...

VAGRANT  
 Sign my hat.

The guy hands Chad his shitty hat. Chad begins to sign it with a pen he has.

VAGRANT (CONT'D)  
 Man, thanks, Thelma and Louise.

CHAD  
 Sure...

Chad has written something on the hat.

CHAD (CONT'D)  
 "To my good buddy who I ride the  
 bus with even though I perform in  
 major motion pictures. Brad Pitt."

VAGRANT  
 (pleased)  
 Okay, man. See. That didn't kill  
 you.

The guy takes that hat and puts it on.

VAGRANT (CONT'D)  
 My Brad Pitt hat. Right here.

The vagrant leaves. Chad seems relieved to be free of his company. THEN THE HISPANIC GUY TOUCHES CHAD'S THIGH WITH A TAZER.

CHAD  
 (screaming)  
 Fuck!

Then, once Chad's incapacitated, the guy just starts wailing on him.

EXT. NELSON DECHILA'S HOUSE - LATER

Nelson has answered his front door and made an exaggerated facial expression that shows he's horrified and concerned.

He's done this because Chad is at his door after his beating. Chad looks pretty close to having been seriously hurt.

EXT. PATIO - LATER

Chad's out on Nelson's patio. They've been talking for a while. Nelson's handed Chad some paper he's been reading.

CHAD (V.O.)  
 I still have offers to buy the  
 option from you. Fifty thousand.  
 That's for Zaillian's material  
 back.

CHAD (CONT'D)  
 Nelson. It's mine.

Nelson makes a gesture for Chad to keep reading there's more.

CHAD (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
 But there's a guy Tim Breakers who  
 saw the first four reels of what  
 you've done. He loved it. He's got  
 a limited operation, but he might  
 offer you nineteen thousand.  
 (MORE)

CHAD (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
Do a distributing partnership with  
you. He just wants to see the  
finished thing.

CHAD (CONT'D)  
(pleased, looking up)  
Man, Nelson...

Then Nelson gestures to Chad as if to say explain why you  
look so messed up.

CHAD (CONT'D)  
I started doing this stupid shit  
with the cars. For the movie. And  
my sister.

Nelson says "say more."

CHAD (CONT'D)  
I didn't think she was going to get  
married. I don't think she ever  
even frenched anyone. Then I jack  
her guy up? Crack him in the eye?  
Her husband?

Nelson hands him new writing.

CHAD (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
(reading)  
Can I show you something?

INT. LIVING ROOM, NELSON'S HOUSE - LATER

Chad and Nelson sit together in Nelson's living room. Nelson  
has a remote he's using on the TV. On screen, in front of  
them, there's home video of Nelson in his kitchen. He's  
gesturing for someone to come over closer to him. Nelson's  
wife's operating the camera. Her voice comes from off screen.

NELSON'S WIFE (O.S.)  
Dennis, go over to Daddy.

Nelson's calling his six-year-old over. Nelson's at the  
kitchen table.

NELSON'S WIFE (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
Dennis, go to Daddy. He wants to  
tell you something.

The boy walks up to him. Nelson's smiling at the child.

NELSON'S WIFE (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
Are you ready, honey?

Nelson nods.

NELSON'S WIFE (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
Should I come a little closer?

Nelson nods.

NELSON'S WIFE (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
Dennis, daddy's got to tell you something. Then he's not going to be able to say anything really with his words, ever again. So listen, okay?

DENNIS  
Yeah...

NELSON'S WIFE (O.S.)  
(to Dennis)  
Are you ready?

DENNIS  
Yeah...

NELSON'S WIFE (O.S.)  
Okay. Listen to Daddy.

She zooms in some. In the frame, Nelson Dechila's smiling warmly at his son.

NELSON  
(like he's saying hi, in a barely audible whisper)  
Hey...

DENNIS  
(smiling back)  
Hey...

NELSON  
(in a barely audible whisper)  
Hey. I love you.

After a moment, Nelson hugs his son. Then he rises and signals to Linda with a hand across his throat area that "that's it. I'm out of words." DeChila's crying a little because of the emotional enormity of the whole thing.

In the living room, Nelson shuts the video off. He looks over at Chad. He can't say anything, but he points Chad out the door in a gesture saying go talk to you sister in this manner.

INT. CITY BUS, LA, MOVING -- DAY

Chad's riding through east LA on the bus.

INT. CEDAR SINAI HOSPITAL, LA - DAY

Margaret Schmidt's eating lunch alone in the Sinai cafeteria. Staffers and patients fill some other tables. Margaret's reading her book. After some time, Chad sits down across the table from her.

CHAD

Hey...

Margaret looks up.

MARGARET

Hey.

CHAD

Hi...

Some time passes.

CHAD (CONT'D)

I'm going to have all the money, I think. All the money for you. And Mark. For real. I thought we could go to lunch or something Wednesday. I don't know.

(smiling)

Some place else. Not a cafeteria. Some place.

Margaret looks at Chad for long time like she's thinking about giving him this chance. He looks back at her.

CHAD (CONT'D)

Can you bring Mark, too, because... Just bring him.

Some time passes.

MARGARET

(reluctant)

Okay....

Chad looks at Margaret for a while. He smiles at her.

INT. EL RIO THEATER, LA - DAY

On screen, a scene from Red Dust plays. It's Chad performing as some kind of drag racer, arguing in a garage with his chief mechanic (also father).

CHAD IN RED DUST

Listen to me. For once in your  
life. We don't have to be friends.  
We don't have to be father and son.  
But we have to win this drag race.  
To make it to finals.

MECHANIC/FATHER

We only have six hours. I don't  
know if I can fix it.

CHAD IN RED DUST

So you're just going to quit?

MECHANIC/FATHER

(fighting back)  
Maybe I am. Goddamnit. Maybe I am.

They're under the mechanics hanging hood light to lend intensity to the scene.

Chad's there with his agent Nelson DeChila, There's a guy in a suit TIM BREAKERS a row ahead of them. Chad watching for his reaction.

EXT. EL RIO THEATER, LA - LATER

Nelson has come out with Tim Breakers to see if there's business to discuss. They two hold a conversation for a time.

INT. EL RIO THEATER - LATER

Chad's waiting for Nelson inside the empty theater. Soon, Nelson joins him. He's wearing a neutral expression.

CHAD

What did he say?

Then, in a moment, NELSON MAKES AN EXPRESSION OF LANDMARK GLEE MEANT TO SHOW CHAD THE GUY WANTS TO DO SERIOUS BUSINESS OVER RED DUST.

EXT. SIDEWALK, LA -- LATER

Nelson and Chad stand at Nelson's car, saying goodbye. Chad's excited.

CHAD  
So we can go over those final  
numbers tomorrow?

Nelson nods.

CHAD (CONT'D)  
(pleased)  
Nineteen thousand, man, that's more  
than I need, and we get to put the  
movie out. Hey...Nelson...

Chad's looking over to say thanks. Then Nelson offers THE BEST IS YET TO COME HAND GESTURE. CHAD RETURNS IT AND REALLY SEEMS TO MEAN IT NOW. Then Nelson invites Chad into the car for a ride home.

CHAD (CONT'D)  
I'm going to see my sister, and her  
husband... for lunch. I'm going to  
tell them.

Chad's real pleased. He starts walking on his way there.

EXT. INTERSECTION, SANTA MONICA BLVD -- LATER

Chad still excited, standing at the corner waiting to cross and see his sister. The Hispanic pedestrian behind him presses a tazer on the back of Chad's shoulder.

CHAD  
(great pain)  
Fuck!

Chad hits the ground.

EXT. SIDEWALK CAFE -- LATER

At the same time, Chad's sister Margaret and her husband Mark sit waiting for Chad at a sidewalk cafe off 3rd Street; she checks her watch like she's been there a while.

EXT. INTERSECTION - SAME

Chad's gone slack halfway into the nearest lane of Santa Monica Blvd. He's laying in front of a curve so cars approach his immobilized and prone body with just seconds to swerve. Chad just has to lay there during the alarming near misses.

EXT. SIDEWALK CAFE - LATER

Margaret and Mark continue to wait for Chad. Mark checks his watch now.

MARK  
Fucking asshole... what's new?

EXT. SANTA MONICA BLVD - SAME

On the pavement of Santa Monica, Chad's calling up all his strength so he can stand. It seems to hurt but he does it. He moves slowly because of the effect the thing has had on him. He checks his watch in that manner and sees he's late.

CHAD  
Fuck...

Chad starts to run, but because his electrical system's been debilitated it has elements of the bizarre.

EXT. SIDEWALK CAFE - LATER

At her table, Margaret and Mark order without Chad.

EXT. WILSHIRE BLVD, LOS ANGELES - LATER

Chad's running in the same slowed-down way up the sidewalk to meet Margaret, giving it his compromised all; because of the weirdness of his body movement, it's a spectacle.

EXT. SIDEWALK CAFE - LATER

The couple has since left. So when Chad finally reaches the place, he's faced with a bunch of empty tables. He's noticed them and shows no hope Margaret's still there. After a disappointed moment, Chad looks down the street and sees Margaret and Mark walking toward the car.

CHAD  
 (calling down the  
 sidewalk)  
 Maggie...

She turns. They look at one another. Chad smiles at her.

INT. COFFEE SHOP - LATER

Mark's looking across the table with his distracted glass eye. Chad's there with them, in the middle of saying what he wants to say.

MARGARET  
 I never heard of it.

CHAD  
 It's called Schindler's List. It  
 hasn't come out yet. But this guy's  
 so good. The movie's so good.

Chad smiles at his sister.

CHAD (CONT'D)  
 ...I sold it. With me as lead. And  
 I have your eighteen thousand. All  
 your total glass eye costs. And  
 listen, I don't want you on the  
 bus. You either, Mark. You're my  
 family. The last car I ever sell  
 I'm selling to you. Come in. Pick  
 anything. I'll get you behind the  
 wheel of something dependable.

Margaret looks at Chad. Then she looks at Mark; she wants to believe this.

MARGARET  
 (to Chad)  
 Are you for real?

CHAD  
 For real. All the way...

CHAD SMILES AGAIN. AFTER SOME TIME, MARGARET GIVES CHAD A LIGHTER LOOK THAN SHE'S SHONE BEFORE, LIKE THERE MAY BE SPACE FOR FORGIVENESS BETWEEN THEM.

EXT. CONRAD YOGAN'S PRE-OWNED AUTO MART - DAY

Chad's standing around the used car lot waiting for customers. A little while goes by. Then, in the distance, Chad takes notice of a white cowboy hat just visible over the tops of some van displayed in the west lot. There's a guy in it walking closer to Chad.

Chad keeps his eye on this guy. Soon, he comes out from the end of the van aisle. He stops there. He stares at Chad. IT'S THE HISPANIC COP CHAD SOLD A CAR TO.

Chad stares back at him. The guy keeps looking at Chad from twenty yards away.

YOUNG HISPANIC GUY IN COWBOY HAT  
(calling over to Chad)  
I want to go for a test drive.

CHAD  
(calling back)  
Didn't I sell you a car? Recently?

YOUNG HISPANIC GUY IN COWBOY HAT  
I want to go for a test drive with  
you.

Chad looks back like he knows he's got some trouble coming.

INT. DODGE DORAL, TEST DRIVE, MOVING - LATER

The guy's driving. Chad sits in the passenger side.

YOUNG HISPANIC GUY IN COWBOY HAT  
You've got some cars going out,  
don't you?

CHAD  
What are you talking about?

YOUNG HISPANIC GUY IN COWBOY HAT  
All kinds going out right?

CHAD  
Out where?

YOUNG HISPANIC GUY IN COWBOY HAT  
These two other officers I know, in  
my band, they got some cars here.  
They had some problems right away.

(MORE)

YOUNG HISPANIC GUY IN COWBOY HAT  
They got some loaners. You're  
switching cars around. At Yogan.

Chad doesn't know what to say.

YOUNG HISPANIC GUY IN COWBOY HAT  
(CONT'D)  
I want to see your garage.

INT. GARAGE, CONRAD YOGAN'S - LATER

It's lunch break. The mechanics are out. But Chad's standing behind some cars the young Hispanic guy's examining the trunks of. Soon, he lifts up the floor concealer of one. He knows what the cars are used for. He stares at Chad.

YOUNG HISPANIC GUY IN COWBOY HAT  
Come outside.

EXT. CONRAD YOGAN'S PRE-OWNED AUTO MART - LATER

The two are sitting across from one another at the umbrella covered picnic table.

YOUNG HISPANIC GUY IN COWBOY HAT  
It's conspiring to transport  
illegal aliens, transporting  
illegals. Participating in a  
criminal enterprise. That's what  
you did. That's what you did to the  
citizens of this state. You abet  
job displacement. A drain on public  
finances.

Chad just sits there.

YOUNG HISPANIC GUY IN COWBOY HAT  
(CONT'D)  
Now what are you going to do for  
me?

CHAD  
For you?

YOUNG HISPANIC GUY IN COWBOY HAT  
(more quietly)  
Yeah, bro. What are you going to do  
for me?

CHAD  
What can I do for you?

YOUNG HISPANIC GUY IN COWBOY HAT  
I'm off hours. So you can give me  
some money. 'Cause I'm off hours. I  
don't need to say I came. And you  
can give me the names of the other  
fuckers.

CHAD  
What other fuckers?

YOUNG HISPANIC GUY IN COWBOY HAT  
You got four trunks rigged in  
there. That's just today. There's  
other guys. Plus Yogan.

CHAD  
Yogan doesn't know about anything.

YOUNG HISPANIC GUY IN COWBOY HAT  
Give me those names, man.

Chad sits there for a while.

CHAD  
I can give you some names, some  
money, but not Yogan. I don't care.

YOUNG HISPANIC GUY IN COWBOY HAT  
How much can you give me?

CHAD  
...Three thousand bucks...

YOUNG HISPANIC GUY IN COWBOY HAT  
That's not enough... I'm trying to  
get a recording done.

CHAD  
I have nineteen I got for a movie.

YOUNG HISPANIC GUY IN COWBOY HAT  
That'll do it.

CHAD  
I'm giving most to my sister. I  
don't care.

YOUNG HISPANIC GUY IN COWBOY HAT  
Fuck that.

Chad's getting overwhelmed by the spot he's in. He looks like  
he's beginning to lose it. THEN HE JUST STARTS TO RUN FULL  
SPEED AWAY FROM THE TABLE LIKE THAT'S THE SOLUTION.

YOUNG HISPANIC GUY IN COWBOY HAT  
(CONT'D)

I know your name, dickhead.

This stops Chad because it's obviously true.

YOUNG HISPANIC GUY IN COWBOY HAT  
(CONT'D)

Just come back here, talk to me.  
Come on. Give me the other names.

After a moment, Chad walks back to the table.

EXT. MAGIC SHOP, LA - DAY

Car salesman Neil Gleason exits the back door, rear-parking entrance of his favorite magic shop with a new shopping bag of magic.

FIRST HISPANIC GUY IN COWBOY HAT  
Neil Gleason?

Neil sees two Hispanic guys in white cowboy hats down the sidewalk showing him badges. Neil starts to run.

EXT. INTERSECTION - CONTINUOUS

Neil's made it to an intersection nearby. The cops are still right behind him. But Neil reaches into his magic sack and drops some small item that creates a pretty amazing shield of magic act smoke. When it clears, Neil's gone.

FIRST HISPANIC GUY IN COWBOY HAT  
(looking on)  
Holy shit...

2ND HISPANIC GUY IN COWBOY HAT  
(like he hasn't  
disappeared really or  
done anything cool)  
He's just right over there. Like  
ten feet away.

Neil really was only able to hustle ten feet or so from the smoke, so the trick didn't work and the men simply start chasing him again.

EXT. ALLEYWAY, APARTMENT COMPLEX REAR AREA - LATER

They've cornered Neil in an alleyway; he's up against a brick wall dead-end, watching the Hispanic guys approach him.

FIRST HISPANIC GUY IN COWBOY HAT  
Just stand right there.

They're showing their badges again.

FIRST HISPANIC GUY IN COWBOY HAT  
(CONT'D)  
Don't move.

NEIL GLEASON  
I won't. There's nothing else in my  
bag of tricks...

EXT. CONRAD YOGAN'S PREOWNED AUTO MART, LA -- DAY

Chad's in the middle of a follow-up conversation with the Hispanic cowboy cop among the used cars.

HISPANIC GUY IN WHITE COWBOY HAT  
The magician sold all his magic  
bullshit. Some super tank. A knife  
wheel. You have any shit like that?

Chad looks across the lot. Neil Gleason's back out there selling cars, free from this jam because he came around with the money.

HISPANIC GUY IN WHITE COWBOY HAT  
(CONT'D)  
And I'm going to Yogan because you  
guys haven't come up with enough  
money. That guy Murpho doesn't have  
shit.

Chad's troubled by the Conrad Yogan news.

CHAD  
I'm not giving you my sister's  
money. I'll give you my three  
thousand.

HISPANIC GUY IN WHITE COWBOY HAT  
Then you're clear, but I'm going to  
Yogan. Because it's his lot. I  
could make a case on him.  
(MORE)

HISPANIC GUY IN WHITE COWBOY HAT  
 Let's see what he's got. He's  
 probably got twenty. That'll get  
 him clear.

Chad sits there for a while.

HISPANIC GUY IN WHITE COWBOY HAT  
 (CONT'D)  
 So I'm going.

The guy has walked up the few steps. Chad remains at the picnic table. He knows Conrad's going to find out now.

CHAD  
 Hey...

The guy turns and faces Chad.

CHAD (CONT'D)  
 I want to tell him.

YOUNG HISPANIC GUY IN COWBOY HAT  
 (meaning why does he want  
 to tell Conrad)  
 You're not involved. You give me  
 three thousand bucks you're not  
 involved.

CHAD  
 I want to tell him.

YOUNG HISPANIC GUY IN COWBOY HAT  
 All right.

Chad sits there for a while.

INT. CONRAD YOGAN'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Conrad's at his desk, doing paper work.

CHAD  
 Mr. Yogan.

Chad's in the doorway.

CONRAD  
 Hey, my man.

Chad steps in. Conrad rises up from his chair to offer Chad a high five. Chad does one but with any enthusiasm.

CONRAD (CONT'D)  
 What's up?

CHAD

Nothing.

Chad stands there for a long time. He's gearing up to tell Conrad. He's looking at Conrad, thinking about him. THEN SOMETHING COMES OVER HIM. Then he just leaves.

CHAD (CONT'D)

See you later.

Conrad watches him go; he seems to think that exchange was peculiar.

EXT. OFFICE, CONRAD YOGAN'S PREOWNED AUTO MART - SAME

The cop's waiting outside the office. Chad walks back out. He stands there with the guy for a while.

CHAD

I can get you like thirty thousand dollars, man. A little more. After my sister's money. If you don't tell Conrad.

HISPANIC GUY IN COWBOY HAT

How?

A little while goes by; it's hard for Chad to say what he has in mind.

CHAD

You know Steve Zaillian...

The guy's looking back at Chad. Chad looks off then he looks back at the guy to say the rest.

INT. BUS, MOVING - LATER

Chad's riding the bus through east LA. He looks like he knows something wonderful slipped through his fingers. He looks pretty wiped out.

INT. CAA TALENT AGENCY - DAY

Chad's standing at the reception desk, talking to a young lady there.

CHAD  
I'm signing some property sale  
papers. On Red Dust. With Phil  
Moners and Nelson DeChila.

RECEPTIONIST  
You're meeting with Phil?

CHAD  
He's the lawyer here, right?

RECEPTIONIST  
Yes.

CHAD  
I'm selling an option, yeah. He's  
arranging it.

RECEPTIONIST  
Have a seat. Thanks.

Chad heads away from the desk. He's gone over to some seats. It's a heavy moment letting go of something he's chased for years. He looks a little messed up. Then after a while, he SEES A GUY SITTING NEARBY IN A TINTED MOTORCYCLE HELMET. Chad looks at him for a while. He thinks maybe it's Brad Pitt and Pitt's presence here is stirring up bad feelings in Chad. Chad decides to talk to the guy.

CHAD  
Hey...

The guy faces Chad.

CHAD (CONT'D)  
Are you Brad Pitt?

Some times passes.

BRAD PITT  
(through the helmet  
Yeah.

CHAD  
We used to read together a lot.  
Chad. From like '86 to... We read  
for the same stuff for like four  
years.

BRAD PITT  
Yeah, man.

CHAD  
Hey. I just wanted to tell you something.

BRAD PITT  
Yeah.

CHAD  
Good for you...

Chad has come to terms with some of the issues he's about to raise; they concern him, too.

CHAD (CONT'D)  
You're going to be able to have some control over the way things go. Who does? You know? That's great.

RECEPTIONIST  
Chad Schmidt.

Chad stands. He starts walking back to sell Red Dust.

BRAD PITT  
Hey, I remember you. You're really good, man. You're a pro. We did that one class together. That lady what's her name. That lady.

CHAD  
Yeah.

BRAD PITT  
You're a pro.

CHAD  
Thanks...

BRAD PITT  
So what's up? I remember you. You did that Mark Twain shit.

CHAD  
Yeah.

BRAD REACHES UP AND TAKES HIS HELMET OFF NOW. HE LOOKS AT CHAD FOR A WHILE.

BRAD PITT  
So what's up? What do you have going on?

CHAD  
Nothing.

It's kind of a heavy moment, because Chad totally means that.

BRAD PITT  
Well, don't quit, bro.

CHAD  
What's up with you? How did River  
turn out?

BRAD PITT  
It's sweet. I got some other cool  
stuff coming out. I've been working  
like non stop. I have like five  
movies coming.

CHAD  
Okay. Cool. Just... you know. Keep  
doing what you're doing.

BRAD PITT  
(smiling)  
I don't know what I'm doing.

CHAD  
(laughing)  
Okay.

They face one another a while.

CHAD (CONT'D)  
(pointing back to the  
office)  
Well, I have to go do something.

BRAD PITT  
All right...

Brad Pitt puts the helmet back on. Chad heads off.

INT. CORRIDOR, TALENT AGENCY - CONTINUOUS

Chad follows the receptionist down the long corridor on his way to sell off Red Dust to someone else. He's pretty down. Up ahead, two male assistants are talking near someone's desk.

MALE ASSISTANT  
Brad Pitt's here.

SECOND MALE ASSISTANT

For real?

MALE ASSISTANT

Yeah.

At that point, they look up and see Chad pass. The second male assistant laughs, thinking the first guy was making a mocking joke concerning Chad poor man's resemblance.

SECOND MALE ASSISTANT

(laughing)

That's hilarious.

MALE ASSISTANT

(laughing, too)

Not that guy. He's out there in the lobby in a helmet. The real guy.

On his long walk to sell Red Dust, Chad has overheard this. Down the hall, Nelson and a lawyer await him.

EXT. WOODED AREA BEHIND THE INDUSTRIAL PARK -- DAY

Chad's out near the riverbed behind Jeff Stryker Productions, chilling out there on a snack break with Jeff.

JEFF STRYKER

Well, I'm sorry to see you go.

CHAD

Yeah...

JEFF STRYKER

So you're done with your movie? Red Duster?

CHAD

Dust. Yeah. I sold it.

JEFF STRYKER

That's great.

CHAD

Not the movie. Not the movie with me. The rights to it. So mine won't ever be released. But I did all right. On the rights.

JEFF STRYKER

Why?

CHAD

Why what?

JEFF STRYKER

Why'd you sell them?

CHAD

I needed the money. For something else. I'm not going to be acting much anyway. That's the way it's going.

JEFF STRYKER

You're quitting it?

CHAD

It's just kind of going that way. So I'll just be selling cars. I'm shooting for a co-ownership deal with Conrad. Ultimately, I guess. After I log some management years at Pasadena Preowned apparently.

JEFF STRYKER

Well, there's all kinds of ways to have a good life. Even if it's not a dream one. I make gay porno, and I can still get lost when I throw the ball with my dog or whatever. Isn't selling a good car an all right feeling?

CHAD

Selling a *good* car is. Yeah. Sometimes you sell one to someone cool... someone who needs one, like someone who's been on the bus. All day. In LA. There's worse ways to make a living. Than getting that person in a car.

Chad looks out at the river.

EXT. CONRAD YOGAN'S PREOWNED AUTO MART, LA - DAY

Chad's just wrapped up selling a car to his sister Margaret and his brother-in-law Mark. They're getting ready to take off in it from the lot. It's a station wagon.

MARGARET

(to Chad)

Do you want to come out for  
dinner..?

CHAD

Nelson's coming by. I'm doing a one  
man show. In West Hollywood. We're  
going over.

MARGARET

That's the guy who can't talk...

CHAD

Yeah... Conrad's coming to. Neil  
is. Some other friends.

(opening the driver's side  
door)

Who's driving home?

MARGARET

Me. Can we come see you in this  
play maybe?

CHAD

(relieved)

Yeah... Come. It's a good one. I'm  
breaking my Mark Twain back out.  
From my One Man. I kind of like  
doing characters, costume stuff. I  
don't know. Maybe that's my niche.

MAGGIE LOOKS AT CHAD FOR A WHILE. THEN SHE SMILES. IT  
COMMUNICATES SISTERLY LOVE AND HEALING. CHAD SMILES BACK.

MARGARET

(to Chad)

Bye...

CHAD

Bye, Maggie.

MARK

I'll see you, Chad.

CHAD

See you, Mark.

MARK

Thanks for playing ball with us on  
the price.

Mark has tapped the hood of wagon, meaning he's referring to it.

CHAD

Okay...

They enter the car, start it up and begin to head out. Chad's watching them. Conrad Yogan walks up.

CONRAD

Hey...

CHAD

Hey, Conrad.

CONRAD

(checking his watch)  
Shouldn't we leave now?

CHAD

Nelson's coming. He'll be here soon. Neil has to wrap up.

They stand there in the lot, watching Margaret and her husband drive off.

CONRAD

That's a good car.

CHAD

Yeah.

CONRAD

That was the best one on the lot.

CHAD

No doubt.

CONRAD

Hey. Let's take the bus. Right?  
Sell some cars. Because the bus is  
a great place to sell cars.

CHAD

Let's do it...

CHAD (CONT'D)

Nelson's coming. Okay? A couple  
other friends?

CONRAD

Good times.

EXT. BUS STOP BENCH, LA - LATER

Later, Neil, Conrad, Nelson and Chad wait for the bus to Chad's play. Neil's talking to Nelson.

NEIL GLEASON  
 (to Nelson)  
 Do you represent magicians?

Nelson shakes his head.

NEIL GLEASON (CONT'D)  
 You should, man. I have a new act... it's more streamlined than my old one, like no bells and whistles, no escape tanks, but...

Then THE LOOK ALIKE DAVID LETTERMAN, TOM CRUISE AND EDDIE VEDER walk up. They're coming along.

EDDIE VEDER  
 Hey, Chad.

CHAD  
 (to Eddie Veder)  
 Hey, Peter. What's up? This is Neil.

Chad introduces everyone around.

CHAD (CONT'D)  
 (introducing Tom Cruise to Nelson)  
 Scott Markers. This is Nelson, my agent.

TOM CRUISE LOOK-A-LIKE  
 Oh, hey, man. We should talk. I'm an actor.

Nelson nods.

CHAD  
 (introducing Eddie Veder to Nelson)  
 Peter Walley. Nelson.

EDDIE VEDER LOOK-A-LIKE  
 (putting Nelson at ease about not hitting him up)  
 Don't worry man, I'm not an actor.

The others laugh.

EDDIE VEDER LOOK-A-LIKE (CONT'D)  
I'm in a band...

While the others make introductions Chad notices something beside him. He's taken out a marker from his coat. He's begun drawing something on the bus stop advertising poster that's beside their bench. Once he's finished and steps back to resume waiting for the bus, it's clear what he's done. HE'S DRAWN A HANDLEBAR MUSTACHE ON BRAD PITT'S IMAGE ON THE POSTER FROM THE FORTHCOMING LEGENDS OF THE FALL.

INT. THE VINE THEATER, WEST HOLLYWOOD - LATER

Chad's on stage performing alone as Mark Twain - a river boat steamship wheel's spinning around behind him.

CHAD AS MARK TWAIN  
Old Man River was calling my name.  
The Old Mississippi. So I got back  
on that steamship and said goodbye.  
Like I'm doing now. But remember...

Chad backs off and fakes boarding his cardboard paddleboat.

CHAD AS MARK TWAIN (CONT'D)  
A man may plan as much as he wants  
to, but nothing of consequence is  
likely to come until the magician  
circumstance steps in and takes the  
matter off his hands. We control  
less that we think. But as we pass  
through these years, bear some  
things in mind anyway. Be good...  
and you'll be lonesome.

The crowd laughs.

CHAD AS MARK TWAIN (CONT'D)  
Always do the right thing. This  
will graify some people... and  
astonish the rest.

There is more laughter.

CHAD AS MARK TWAIN (CONT'D)  
And don't go around saying the  
world owes you a living. The world  
owes you nothing. It was here  
first.

(MORE)

## CHAD AS MARK TWAIN (CONT'D)

So swig that honeysuckle whiskey,  
smoke those portobellos and keep  
bad company. Remember, when we  
realize we're all mad, the  
mysteries disappear and life stands  
there explained. Hope you enjoyed  
the show! I'm Chad Schmidt. I'll be  
here all week.

The show's over. Chad is greeted by immense applause. The theater is pretty full, everyone seems jacked up about the quality of the performance. But there's a section going nuts. It's the three or so rows of Chad's close friends: Conrad, Neil Gleason, Nelson - also Jeff Stryker and Sergeant Tim - and the group of look-a-likes who have become Chad's friends as well: the Billy Crystal, Cruise, Veder, David Letterman and some new ones Chad must have met along the way: A Sylvester Stallone and a De Niro; they've all taken great pleasure from the show.

Up under the lights, in his Mark Twain stuff, Chad looks pleased, from pride in his performance, the company of his friends and relief he's gotten back to zero. He's smiling.  
CREDITS BEGIN.