

THE DEATH AND LIFE OF JOHN F. DONOVAN

THE DEATH AND LIFE OF JOHN F. DONOVAN

A star is dead.

Written by
Xavier Dolan & Jacob Tierney

September 11th 2014

A man in his sixties, and dressed with a silk robe, is in his library, sifting through his impressive book collection, his fingers delicately brushing thick volumes and dictionaries of all kind. He suddenly turns towards us and notices us, acting surprised. He is, undoubtedly, Sir Ian McKellen, our NARRATOR.

NARRATOR

Good lad! I hadn't seen you. The story...
(clears his throat)

The story we are about to tell could be described as half true, and half fictional, but for the sake of sheer entertainment, shall we pretend it all happened?

(winking)

Please, let's do.

The CAMERA is now offering a different angle. Our narrator turns to us again, as if he was adapting himself to the shot. We SLOWLY DOLLY BACK as he now walks towards us as he talks.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

History has shown that, as fashions work in cycles, so do men.

(lights his pipe with a match)

The more things change, the more they stay the same, my mother used to say - bless her soul! Hence, prior to engaging in our main story, I'm afraid CONTEXT will be necessary.

A Philip Glass inspired score sets the tone as the CAMERA moves through a storm of clouds.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

For there is, admittedly, an older, similar intrigue to ours. Proof of history's inexplicable ability to repeat itself.

We ZOOM IN on a small town in pre-war Austria, which is dominated by an old, large military academy.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

The story of two men, one at the dawn of his life, the other at the apex of his career, who shared a mutual passion for poetry. This passion would unite them and, despite the fact that they would never meet in person, help each to grow in their art, until the time came where their destinies would split and splinter.

As we continue our journey through the foggy streets, we can start making out shapes standing by the school's gate. They are a PHOTOGRAPHER and a young cadet. As the photographer raises the light bulb and covers himself with the black curtain, we FLASH TO :

A PHOTOGRAPH of young, morose FRANZ-XAVER KAPPUS adopting a severe expression. A SUPERIMPOSE appears:

Austria, 1902

3 **EXT. DAY - COURTYARD - WIENER NEUSTADT MILITARY ACADEMY**

3

DOLLY IN on the austere-looking institution. In SLOW MOTION, TEACHERS in robes and STUDENTS in uniform walk the grounds.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

*But... during the autumn of 1902, Franz
Xaver Cappus was a 19 year old resident
of the Wiener Neustadt Military
Institute.*

4 **EXT. DAY - FOREST CLEARING - WIENER NEUSTADT MILITARY ACADEMY**

4

YOUNG KAPPUS is reading under a chestnut tree. HORACEK, the school's chaplain, approaches him. As they engage in an inaudible conversation, Horacek takes the book Kappus is reading, looks at the cover, and lifts his eyes, intrigued.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

*One day, the academy's chaplain brought
to his attention that the famous poet
Rainer Maria Rilke was once one of his
students back at the Sankt Pölten
military Academy.*

5 **EXT. DAY - BANKS OF LEITHA RIVER - ENNS**

5

KAPPUS and HORACEK continue their conversation while enjoying a pastoral stroll.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

*When he recounted the memory of an
adolescent similar to Kappus himself...*

6 **INT. DUSK - PRIVATE ROOM - WIENER NEUSTADT MILITARY ACADEMY**

6

KAPPUS storms into his room. A ROOMMATE is lying by the bed, reading.

Kappus' now dipping his quill into the ink ; he's in the middle of a long LETTER, inspired. His ROOMMATE does push-ups in the background.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

*...the young man was inspired to write to
the famous poet that very day, sharing
his verses, and soliciting criticism and
guidance.*

Kappus' going through various POEMS and WRITINGS, preparing a selection of his own work. KAPPUS is wrapping a parcel, tying it up with string.

While his ROOMMATE's typing the final draft on a shiny new BLICKENSBERGER TYPEWRITER, KAPPUS is reading out the handwritten version. HANDS delicately slide an ENVELOPE under the parcel's string.

7 **INT. SALON - PARIS - DAY**

7

DOLLY IN on a BUSTLING BELLE ÉPOQUE PARLOR peopled by the who's-who of the chirping Paris bourgeoisie. Women are fanning themselves, men are drinking brandy. Needless to say, RAINER MARIA RILKE is sitting at the back of the room on a Rococo divan, armed with a cigarette-holder.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

*Rilke, living in Paris at the time, was
already a writer of international renown.*

A gloved FOOTMAN walks towards him, holding the PARCEL on a silver platter. He hands the package to Rilke, who offers it a casual glance.

8

EXT/INT. DUSK - PRIVATE ROOM - WIENER NEUSTADT ACADEMY

8

KAPPUS is standing by the window, gazing at the snow storm... and a POSTMAN walking towards the school.

A LETTER postmarked PARIS is slid under the door. KAPPUS turns around, hoping.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

*Early the next year, he responded to
Kappus, beginning an exchange that would
last until 1908.*

KAPPUS' ROOMMATE enters the room, and finds KAPPUS lying on his bed, savoring every moment of his read, thrilled.

A SERIES of LETTERS being written and exchanged. FINGERS tapping away at TYPEWRITERS, STAMPS marking ENVELOPES, WAX SEALS and other ANTIQUITIES. The correspondence carries on.

9

EXT. ZOO STATION - BERLIN

9

DOLLY IN on a YOUNG PAPERBOY holding up the newspapers, yelling the prices of his wares. We TILT DOWN on the HEADLINE : King Tut Öffentlichkeit zugänglich (KING TUT opened to public). We tilt down further to a more humble headline : RAINER MARIA RILKE : 1875-1926.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

*On the eve of the year 1927, Rainer Maria
Rilke died. Franz Xaver Kappus had then
settled in Berlin, after having served the
Austro-Hungarian Empire as an officer. He
had already written several books and
essays, and was a frequent collaborator to
the Berliner Zeitung paper.*

10

INT. KAPPUS' APPARTEMENT - BERLIN

10

KAPPUS is standing in the middle of his messy apartment. He's standing still, staring intensely at something on his desk. The newspaper is opened to the page of Rilke's obituary. A photograph of the man illustrates the article. Further on the desk, the LETTERS.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

*Three years later, he decided to publish
a selection of the letters excerpted from
their entire correspondence.*

Kappus whisks away the pile of letters : they scatter accross the room.

11

INT. INSEL PUBLISHING - DAY

11

KAPPUS is sitting at the reception, nervously tapping his fingers on a FOLIO. A door opens at the end of the corridor. He turns his head.

12 **INT. EDITOR'S OFFICE - INSEL PUBLISHING - LEIPZIG - DAY**

12

A MUSTACHIOED PUBLISHER is looking at KAPPUS' folio. KAPPUS looks through the window. It is snowing. The publisher turns one last page of the document and lifts his eyes towards Kappus, smiling lustily.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

The document would later become one of poetry's most compelling mentorships, which would meet with universal praise and acclaim, before settling into the great canon of classic literature...

MONTAGE : the book is being printed on old-fashioned printing press. We see the title come through in German, Russian, French and eventually, English: *Letters to a Young Poet*.

13 **MONTAGE**

13

On different DESKS, HANDS are writing LETTERS. One signs as *John F. Donovan...* and the other... as *Rupert Turner...*

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Almost a 100 years later, John F. Donovan and Rupert Turner exchanged - this has been approximated - about two hundred letters, between July of 2008 and August of 2013.

ADDRESSES are written down on ENVELOPES.

14 **EXT. STREET - DAY**

14

In SLOW-MOTION, a MAN gets out of an apartment building, framed only from the waist up to the neck. In a secretive manner, he takes the letter he his holding and slips it inside his coat as he walks down the street, amongst people.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

To this day, the missives that forged their bond remain nowhere to be found. Nevertheless, here is a recreation of the events that preceded and followed the writing of these letters to a young actor.

CUT TO:

15 **INT. LIBRARY - LUXURIOUS MANSION - DAY**

15

Our NARRATOR is looking us in the eye as we slowly DOLLY IN on him.

NARRATOR

Now, it will be left to various schools of thought to determine what here is real, and what isn't. Inasmuch as public information allows a priori conclusions and harmful preconceptions, questions will be asked, and answers, suggested. Can one see the soul of a man through the look he's thrown above his shoulder, lost in the pounding crowd, or the fleeting glint of a red carpet smile?

(MORE)

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

Can one claim to understand another through the comas of a phrase distorted by the mouths of men? Can a child find a mentor in a figure that remains a mystery made of lies, cheated personas and hidden malady? Well, let's find out.

And with that, the narrator smugly blows his smoke on us as we :

DISSOLVE TO:

16

EXT. SKY - HUDSON RIVER - DAY

16

Another storm of clouds. As we briskly DIVE into water, the score WRAPS UP in a dramatic yet exhilarating paroxysm as we TILT UP in an abrupt manner and REVEAL New York City. A SUPERIMPOSE mightily "SMASHES" the screen :

New York City, 2014

SMASH CUT TO :

17

INT. TIMES SQUARE CAFÉ - NEW YORK - DAY

17

In the deafening scream of PERCOLATING MACHINERY, WORKING HANDS are disposing of coffee grinds and returning CHANGE. LATTES are scrupulously prepared. BODIES collide in the waiting.

Amongst SPOONS, NAPKINS and the usual odds and ends, a cute unlit CANDLE in the shape of an angel lies in the middle of a coffee table. Its wings have melted. We TILT UP to FIND a boy looking us right in the eye. It's RUPERT TURNER, 11 years old. Although his features belie his age, his dark eyes are old and perceptive. He is staring at us with an increasingly aggressive mistrust.

RUPERT TURNER

What did the letter say?

A feminine, subtly anxious, mid-thirty-ish voice answers.

SAM TURNER (O.S.)

Honey, I don't know...

RUPERT TURNER

What do you mean, you don't know? You said you took it back to the hotel and that-

SAM TURNER (O.S.)

I didn't say I didn't know-

RUPERT TURNER

Yes you did!

SAM TURNER (O.S.)

Rupert, the letter wasn't for you. It was the front desk's mistake. The envelope was for you, but not the letter.

RUPERT TURNER

And you had to rush to the hotel and get rid of it?

Irked, the woman slams their table with a dry, discreet bang.

SAM TURNER (O.S.)

That's enough! I've had it, Rupert.

Rupert looks down. His interlocutor is finally revealed ; a woman in her late thirties is staring at him with both a compassionate and admonitory look. She's SAM TURNER, Rupert's mother. In order of appearance, we could say that she's got her son's eyes.

RUPERT TURNER

Well, I'm sorry mom but... It's my only chance to meet him and... I just want to be sure.

Sam sighs.

RUPERT TURNER (CONT'D)

You opened the letter?

SAM TURNER

Yes. I've already apologized.

RUPERT TURNER

Then you realized it wasn't for me?

SAM TURNER

Yes.

RUPERT TURNER

Went back to the hotel to return the letter to whom it was actually addressed?

SAM TURNER

More of the same. Yes.

RUPERT TURNER

Well... If the front desk wrongly addressed this man's letter to me, then they probably wrongly addressed my letter to this man. So there's a letter waiting for me at the hotel?

Silence. Sam opens her mouth but nothing will come out.

SAM TURNER

Yes. Yes, probably. So... just, eat something please, whatever you'd like, alright...

Rupert looks at his mother intensely, but she's avoiding his eyes and looking whether down or out the window. She grabs her purse and gets some AMERICAN CASH out of an envelope and holds out the money to her son. Rupert won't move.

SAM TURNER (CONT'D)

We will go back to the hotel. I'm sure there'll be a letter waiting for you, and that you two will meet later today... If I have to delay our flight I'll do it.

Sam stretches her arm further, waiting for her son to take the money. He stands, gets some BILLS out of his own pocket, and gives Sam a long, painful, reproachful stare before he turns his back independently. He turns to her.

RUPERT TURNER

Was it written in green ink?

SAM TURNER

What-

RUPERT TURNER

Was it written in green ink?

Sam doesn't know what to answer, caught off guard.

SAM TURNER

I... I don't remember.

The last sentence confirmed something in Rupert's mind. He leaves for good. As her son walks away, Sam discreetly breathes out. She looks at her watch, then looks outside. Something is preying on her mind.

18

INT. MAXWELL'S - DAY

18

A dark diner. Sunshine filters through the blinds. A man opens the door and walks in with élan, whistling. His silhouette stands out crisply in the blinding light. He disarms the alarm system and raises the curtains. Light pours in, reveals MAXWELL. He's a fifty-something man dressed with cheap pants and a tucked-in polo.

As he grabs a bucket lying on the floor and fills it with water from the sink, an NYPD CAR rushes through the street behind him. But Maxwell's focus is on his diner, and ours is on him.

19

INT. MOVIE SET - DAY

19

BARBARA FISHER, in her 60s, physically intimidating, a forceful character, walks with her back to us. She is navigating a movie set where CAST & CREW are about to start the day. In her hands are two COFFEE TRAYS.

Behind the opened door of a huge garage, TRUCKS are being unloaded by GRIPS and TECHS. She approaches a group of powerful-looking MEN, standing around a MONITOR. A PA is removing the back of a chair that reads JOHN F. DONOVAN and replacing it with one that reads WILL JOHNSON JR. Barbara hands out coffees.

BARBARA FISHER

Here you go, doll. No foam, right?

DIRECTOR

Thanks, Barbara.

BARBARA FISHER

Here, honey - the Americano there's for you. From me and Will.

PRODUCER

Thanks, Barb.

BARBARA FISHER

Ya gotta start the day right.

20

INT. MMK'S OFFICE - THE GOSSIP

20

A luxurious office fit out with uninviting PHILIP STARK DIVANS, MODERN COFFEE TABLES and an unfriendly BLACK MIRROR DESK. A POLAR BEAR SKIN is hung to one wall while a PLASMA SCREEN is embedded in another one.

The enormous WINDOWS run end-to-end, and floor to ceiling, offering a Batmanesque view of the city, which faces MOIRA McCAULEY-KING, relishing the spectacle. She's a thirty-something year old woman elegantly dressed with a silk blouse and a skin-tight skirt. KNOCK, KNOCK. Moira doesn't flinch. The door opens, still.

JEANETTE (O.S.)

I'm sorry Moira. Where should I put the flowers?

Half-interested, Moira turns around and walks to JEANETTE, her good-looking, good-hearted assistant holding a BOUQUET OF WHITE AMARYLLIS.

M. M. KING

Jesus. Next to the body?

JEANETTE

Well can I keep them?

M. M. KING

*(grabs the bouquet, indolently
pushes her out of the office)*

No.

21 **INT. DONOVANS HOUSE - DAY**

21

The empty corridor of a slightly above-average house. Tons of FRAMES are hung to the very painted walls. PORCELAIN ANGELS, ONE-DOLLAR FAKE BIRDIES and other CURIOS adorn most surfaces.

We are now in the kitchen, bathed with the morning sun. The predominance of the color yellow in PLATES, CHAIRS and WALLPAPER is warming up the space to an exaggerated extent.

A woman is facing her stove. She's just finished a cigarette. She turns to the garden ; her features are soft and loving. She is GRACE DONOVAN. Her hair is short and dyed in shades of auburn with rust highlights. She's wearing a colorful purple, fluffy wool sweater and skinny leopard leather pants. She's waiting for the food to be ready.

22 **INT. COUTURE WORKSHOP - DAY**

22

A 75-year-old NEEDLEWOMAN is taking measurements off an extravagant and DRESS CANVAS that a young blonde is wearing. She's SARAH GADON, texting fast on her Blackberry, whispering the words as she types.

NEEDLEWOMAN

Not too tight?

SARAH GADON

Never.

23 **INT. BASEMENT - HOUSE - DAY**

23

JAMES DONOVAN, in his twenties, is asleep on the basement couch, wearing only a TANK TOP, XL BOXERS and some WOOL SOCKS. DANCING SHADOWS on his face let us assume the TV's playing.

24 **INT. STUDIO - MOVIE SET - DAY**

24

BARBARA FISHER is still at the monitors, drinking coffee with the director and producer. An A.D. (TRISH) runs over to them.

TRISH

Sorry guys, but Will's really not ready to come out of his trailer.

DIRECTOR

Jesus-

BARBARA FISHER

Excuse me? I'll go talk to him-

TRISH

I don't think that's going to help, Ms Fisher. He's really, really upset about it...

BARBARA FISHER

About it? About- What does that mean?

Trish looks back and forth between Barbara, the Director and the Producer. She looks like she could burst into tears.

TRISH

Well, I... What do you... I mean, don't you guys know?

BARBARA FISHER

Ugh! Know what?!

25

INT. COUTURE WORKSHOP - DAY

25

SARAH GADON is still being fitted. The NEEDLEWOMAN is pinning needles to the corset at the back of the dress canvas. Sarah's got both her hands on her hips. Her phone buzzes.

SARAH GADON

Excuse me.

Sarah takes her cellphone and reads the message she's just received. Her face drops in a heartbeat, shocked.

26

INT. MAXWELL'S - DAY

26

MAXWELL's mopping the floor. He freezes, looking out the window. Something's caught his eye. He walks to the door.

Outside, in a CAR stuck in traffic, TEENAGE GIRLS are crying dramatically. Their MOTHER, who's driving, is trying to reason with them, also shocked but trying to keep her cool - they're firmly inconsolable. They're all staring at the radio now.

Maxwell is puzzled.

27

INT. STUDIO - MOVIE SET - DAY

27

BARBARA FISHER is comforting TRISH, who is crying now.

BARBARA FISHER

Honey use your words. What's wrong?

GRIP (O.S.)

Oh fuck! Dude!

Barbara turns around, worried.

28 **INT. MMK'S OFFICE - THE GOSSIP**

28

A SMALL CARD, written in green and cursive letters, reads: *You were right. Thank you.* FINGERS cover the signature. MOIRA McCAULEY-KING puts the card back in its envelope and dryly, barely smiles. As her attention is drawn to something, she walks to the BLINDS covering the windows of her door wall and tilts the slats: Young TRENDY JOURNALISTS have gathered around one specific office, watching the same television. People dash by cubical units, carrying files, or talking on their phones. Moira's about to head out of the office to investigate, when her phone puts itself on conference mode.

JEANETTE (V.O.)

Moira, have you heard?

Moira turns her head and looks at the PHONE on her desk table.

JEANETTE (V.O.)

What are we supposed to do?

29 **INT. KITCHEN - DONOVANS HOUSE - DAY**

29

GRACE DONOVAN is taking her COOKIE PAN out of the oven. The DOORBELL rings.

30 **INT. BASEMENT - DONOVANS HOUSE - DAY**

30

JAMES DONOVAN wakes up, looks to the ceiling.

JAMES DONOVAN

Grace?!

31 **INT. KITCHEN - DONOVANS HOUSE - DAY**

31

GRACE DONOVAN takes off her OVEN GLOVES and drops them on the kitchen counter, walking towards the entrance door.

GRACE DONOVAN

I've got it, hon!

32 **INT. STUDIO - MOVIE SET - DAY**

32

BARBARA FISHER is looking around the set. Every crew member is either looking at their phone or someone else.

BARBARA FISHER

What the hell is going on everybody?

(back to Trish)

I do not like being the last to know,
Trish.

TRISH

(choking on her own words)

I can't... I can't be the one to break the
news, FUUU--UCCK...

33 **INT. CORRIDOR - DONOVAN'S HOUSE - DAY**

33

As GRACE DONOVAN walks down the corridor to the front door, her joyful face appears and disappears in the on-again, off-again broad daylight that each open door along the way emits.

34

INT. STUDIO - MOVIE SET - DAY

34

BARBARA's still staring at TRISH who won't talk. Barbara looks around, helpless. TECHS group together, showing each other their PHONES. Barbara stares at them, and back at Trish.

TECH GUY 1 (O.S.)

Holy shit, it's Johnny Donovan!

Barbara's looking at the crew again. They're looking at her too.

TRISH

I'm so sorry, Mrs Fisher.

BARBARA FISHER

(nervous)

Sorry?... Ha ha, I- What about Johnny?

The PRODUCER next to BARBARA receives phone text ; reads it.

PRODUCER 1

Oh no, son of a bitch.

35

EXT. TIMES SQUARE - NEW YORK - DAY

35

A completely SOFT image. In the background, CARS have stopped, HORNS are honking... a PUBLIC MURMUR grows... TIMES SQUARE's notorious chaos resonates in the wind that whistles through the streets. A small, blurry silhouette slowly moves towards us and into focus as BARBARA's voice keeps asking :

BARBARA FISHER (V.O.)

What about him, Trish?

TRISH (V.O.)

You'll hate me, Ms Fisher...

BARBARA FISHER (V.O.)

What? Why? I don't understand!

RUPERT TURNER comes into focus. His face is red, his eyes are welling up with tears as he moves towards us.

BARBARA FISHER (V.O.)

Oh come on, now! Bill? Trish? Anyone?

And finally stops, staring at something big, something high. Something that kills him inside.

BARBARA FISHER (V.O.)

Will someone tell me what happened to John fucking Donovan!

SMASH CUT TO :

THE DEATH AND LIFE OF JOHN F. DONOVAN

36

BLACK

36

Times Square's tumult fades to silence. Then, slowly, sound again. Chairs being moved. An urban drone in the background. Microphones pop.

SOUNDMAN (V.O.)

You're all set, ma'am. You can sit in the chair, they'll be with you in a minute.

GRACE DONOVAN (V.O.)

Can you hear this... I... I don't know how this works, ha ha...

SOUND MAN (V.O.)

Just give me one second.

37

INT. ROOM - UNKNOWN OFFICE - DAY

37

A BLURRY PAINTING, the details of which we cannot make out, fills the background of an empty room. A body walks into focus, obstructing half of the frame. The person seems to be tucking a microphone's wire into her back pocket. SUPERIMPOSE:

Two years later

ASSISTANT CAMERA HANDS hold up a WHITE BALANCE in front of MARTIN SCORCESE, who clears his throat, thoughtful.

GRACE DONOVAN's roughing up her hair, sharpening the ends with her fingers coquettishly.

A STUDIO EXECUTIVE, looking slick and smart.

STUDIO EXECUTIVE

I was supposed to have brunch with Joel Goldberg from Zeta Productions. He cancelled and I think he was just using it as an excuse. But that's how I found out, anyway.

CUT TO:

GUS VAN SANT

I was in Portland, in post-production. Tristan came in the editing room. I dedicated *Crush With Eyeliner* to Johnny.

*****For the sake of fluidity, transitions won't be mentioned between each interviewee from this point on. Each CHARACTER speaks alone and in the same chair. Hence, time cuts are implied.**

A UK TABLOID REPORTER. A confident man in his fifties.

UK TABLOID REPORTER

Now, when I answer... Am I looking at you, or am I looking at the camera?

DIRECTOR (O.S.)

You can look at me.

UK TABLOID REPORTER

Cause I have no problem incorporating your questions into my answers, and looking directly into the camera.

ZOE SALDANA

I was shooting in Paris, where no one speaks intelligible English and... everybody kept saying it and at first, I couldn't understand, and then...

ANTHONY JESELNİK

And he was 27. Bet he planned that. The 27 club. Hendrix, Joplin, Morrison, Whinehouse, Cobain... Blake Lively.

38

EXT. SUBURBAN HOUSE - DAY

38

In front of a TWO-CAR GARAGE, TWO YOUNG SKATEBOARDERS are looking at the camera, interviewed.

INTERVIEWER (O.S.)

And what was your reaction?

YOUNG SKATEBOARDER 2

I dunno.

YOUNG SKATEBOARDER 1

You went fucking nuts.

YOUNG SKATEBOARDER 2

Yeah, okay, I liked the guy. I had posters and shit. Now it's just, I dunno, I'm older so...

39

EXT. TRAILER PARK - DAY

39

A YOUNG BOY (7) is eating an ICE-CREAM SANDWICH on the porch of a trailer. An opened window reveals his DUBIOUS UNCLE smoking inside - uncomfortable with the interview.

YOUNG BOY

My sister was crying.

INTERVIEWER (O.S.)

Were you?

YOUNG BOY

(motioning "no")

I thought she was dumb cause Jack Harvest don't die, but mom told me that...

(suddenly emotional)

That... that...

40

EXT. STOOP - DAY

40

THREE OLD, LARGE LADIES dressed in HOUSECOATS and MUUMUUS. One is looking at the camera, the two others are fighting.

INTERVIEWER (O.S.)

Do YOU ladies remember? John F. Donovan?

OLD ARAB LADY

Ah! Beautiful, bravo! Haram.

41

INT. UNKNOWN OFFICE - DAY

41

DAVID ROBINSON, film historian, seems thoughtful.

DAVID ROBINSON

It seems rather audacious to be making a documentary on an actor who is most famous... for being famously... private.

ZOOM-IN on a B&W PICTURE of a man's silhouette before a blinding spotlight. He seems to be wearing some sort of crown, and is smoking a cigarette at the same time.

42

INT. GARAGE - DONOVAN HOUSE - DAY

42

GRACE DONOVAN is walking us through her GARAGE MESS, searching for something in boxes. She finally hands MASSIVE, LEATHER-COVER SCRAPBOOKS to the camera.

GRACE DONOVAN (V.O.)

My garage is literally overflowing with BOXES AND BOXES of scrapbooks filled with um... his interviews and... decoupages that I made -decoupage?- of press clips, reviews, photo shoots.

PHOTO : Another PICTURE, in COLOR, on which we ZOOM-OUT: a man offering his HAND to the CAMERA. Through the thumb and index, blurred in the smoothness of the focus, we can make out an annoyed smile.

43

INT. UNKNOWN OFFICE - DAY

43

The continuing interviews.

GRACE DONOVAN

At one point, I had to subscribe to Goggle- GOOgle, sorry! -he hated when I said it wrong!- to actually find out uh... WHO my son was becoming.

An AMERICAN FILM CRITIC faces us, wearing a bow tie.

AMERICAN FILM CRITIC

John F. Donovan had such a diverse, bizarre AND short career...

HD FOOTAGE : ANG LEE is going through the next scene with a man who is offering us his back, a MASK pulled back on his forehead. Next to him, ZOE SALDANA is nodding her head.

AMERICAN FILM CRITIC (V.O.)

We didn't... have the time to hazard any guesses as to WHO the man behind the... camera could have been.

MOVIE 1 FOOTAGE : an aggressive CRANE FORWARD in the deserted street of a town where havoc has obviously wreaked: upside-down cars, explosions, smoke, police cars, etc.

The camera keeps dollying on a MAN STANDING STILL, back to us, head down, both HANDS armed with MACHINE GUNS. He turns to us, his FACE covered with a weird, creepy MASK à la Anonymous.

DAVID ROBINSON (V.O.)

He had many faces, none of which can be confidently identified as his own.

MOVIE 2 FOOTAGE: a MAN, bare-footed, wearing only jeans, wrecks the decor of a room, throwing everything on the floor: flower pots, frames, furniture, pulling his hair, still back to us, in a rather advanced state of anger.

44

INT. KITCHEN - SUBURBAN HOUSE - DAY

44

A 15 year-old TEEN wearing a BASEBALL CAP is eating CEREAL.

DIRECTOR (O.S.)

Did you follow the whole scandal?

The young man shrugs and "chugs" the rest of his milk.

BASEBALL CAP TEEN

Ain't Nobody Binna, like Rihanna said.

DIRECTOR (O.S.)

Ha ha. Ever heard the Holliday version?

BASEBALL CAP TEEN

Wha?

45

INT. SUBURBAN HOUSE - MIDWEST - DAY

45

A THIRTY-SOMETHING BLACK MAN, shirtless, is standing in the middle of his living room, his left hand on his forehead, making a painful mental effort.

MIDWEST MAN

(drunk)

I don't know, man. Superman's still Superman even though... you know? I don't ask the plumber his life when he come and fix my drain, do I? So I'm not gonna ask nothing more from Johnny Donovan than be worth my Sprite, if you feel me.

46

INT. UNKNOWN OFFICE - DAY

46

RUSHKA BERGMAN, polyglot, giant-sunglasses-wearing Fashion editor, her long black hair straightened to the greatest extent, is sitting in front of us, drinking a smoothie with a straw.

RUSHKA BERGMAN

Michael Jackson told me "Rushka darling, you are bird in cage and you open cage and then BOOM!!! You fly with wings and grace when you know who you are. You become air, and that is truthfullness of art. People stay in cage and they forget the FACKing cage is all around the body. And people watch, and they see the beauty, I mean it's forever. The not-artists die in cage, they're blindness. John was rocketship.

A young brunette, a COSTUME DESIGNER, is talking.

CUSTOME DESIGNER

I was assistant costume designer and he had a very strong input on his wardrobe, which is quite unusual.

(MORE)

CUSTOME DESIGNER (CONT'D)

I mean, sorry, it isn't. What WAS unusual is that his ideas actually made sense.

HD FOOTAGE : a cheap, grainy clip in SLOW-MO. Inside the COSTUME TRAILER, a man, back to us, of course, is dancing in a red robe, THE red robe, entertaining the COSTUME DESIGNERS, laughing their asses off, slapping their thighs. He opens the robe at the end. They all scream, covering their mouths with their hands, blushing.

CUSTOME DESIGNER (V.O.) (CONT'D)

I had that old, old cinnamon... no burgundy, BURGUNDY velvet robe he ended up wearing it ALL the time. I gave it to him when we wrapped. And um...

IPHONE FOOTAGE : a medical stretcher carries a MAN out of a VILLAGE building. PEOPLE have gathered around. MANY OTHER HANDS are capturing footage as well.

CUSTOME DESIGNER (V.O.) (CONT'D)

He was wearing it the day he... I could make it out among the ogglers and cops and reporters and... It looked like a cape.

CUT TO:

The CUSTOME DESIGNER looks away for a second.

MAXWELL, the greasy spoon owner, is sitting in the hot seat.

MAXWELL

When John and Amy moved in New York, mine was the first diner they came to eat.

47

INT. MAXWELL'S - DAY

47

MEN are sitting in the tidy, handsome space, looking at the camera, some playing CARDS, some eating.

MAXWELL (V.O.)

At first he would sit at the bar and talk with Wilson...

At the BAR, an OLD BLACK MAN dressed in a pristene suit, eating his salad. He's chatting with another MAN. He suddenly looks at us.

MAXWELL (V.O.)

And when it became crazy he started to eat in the kitchen. Not a problem. I love him like my son, you know. Tuna on rye, mac 'n' cheese when he wasn't shooting. And paper. To write.

The SWING DOORS of the KITCHEN open, REVEALING an empty gate-leg table... INSERT of a TUNA ON RYE... SHEETS OF PAPER...

DIRECTOR (O.S.)

What did he write in there?

The KITCHEN DOORS close, swaying.

48

INT. UNKNOWN OFFICE - DAY

48

MAXWELL lifts his hands, as if bound by the secret.

DAVID ROBINSON

You don't have the letters, do you?

BARBARA FISHER

I had never heard a WORD about them.

GRACE DONOVAN

Which letters? Sorry, um... Oh.

A UK TABLOID REPORTER is commenting.

UK TABLOID REPORTER

The police report legitimized the whole thing, really... Because who would have actually believed this story!

DAVID ROBINSON

No one ever saw them. The child said he got rid of them. Folly!

IPHONE FOOTAGE : Someone's filming from the top of a circular staircase. A man is pacing several floors down, talking on the phone. We can only see the top of his head. Until he looks at us. The camera then "takes off" - like the person filming in secret.

CUT TO:

PAUL W. ANDERSON

I'm shooting *Fangs of Youth 2* with Rupert now and... He never talked about them. And... we never asked.

JEANETTE

We ran with the story, we just had to. I mean, it was John F. Donovan.

AMERICAN FILM CRITIC

The reason these letters are still of interest to us, more than ever, is because he's dead. And we may know how, but we don't know why. At least, not FOR SURE. But maybe this kid does. Maybe... it was in the letters. Find the letters, and you'll find the answer.

MARTIN SCORCESE

Letters this, letters that. They make them sound like they're postcards some individual sent from a Club Med in Playa Del Carmen. It's a CORRESPONDENCE. That's what it unofficially is. Like Musset and Sand, Truffaut-Hitchcock! RILKE!

ZOOM-IN ON A B&W PICTURE. A SET, GRIPS RUNNING WITH MATERIAL, CLAPPER-LOADERS unloading FILM. A COSTUME DESIGNER runs across the space, carrying a transparent GARMENT BAG filled with SHINY CLOTHES. Amidst the frenzy, a man, far away, in the background, is sitting on a small chair, his head buried in his hands, elbows on his knees, a dart peeking from his fingers.

DIRECTOR (O.S.)

Back to Johnny. I think it's time we... meet him. What was he like?

DAVID ROBINSON

As handsome as Paul Newman, as rakishly charming as Cary Grant! And he felt like a MAN.

RUSHKA BERGMAN

Is important you listen to me cause I know better him than you, understand, darling?

DIRECTOR (O.S.)

I'm listening.

RUSHKA BERGMAN

Three B's. Letter B. Okay. Beautiful. Bewildering. Brilliant. Bestial. All you need. The four B's, I always say.

49 **INT. KITCHEN - SUBURBAN HOUSE - DAY** 49

Our YOUNG RED CAP TEENAGER is doing the dishes.

YOUNG RED CAP TEENAGER

He was a cool dude.

50 **INT. TEENAGE GIRL ROOM - HOUSE** 50

We are in an INSANELY OVER-PRODUCTION-DESIGNED GRAFFITI ROOM WE CAN'T AFFORD that looks like the 2013 Independent Spirit Awards set. YOUNG TEENAGE GIRLS are doing their homework, two lying on the floor, one on the bed.

TEENAGE GIRL 1

I lost my virginity to-

TEENAGE GIRL 2

Mark!

The girls giggle.

TEENAGE GIRL 1

I lost my virginity to ADAM... THINKING about JOHN F. DONOVAN!

The young girl buries her face in her pillow, laughing. They all laugh.

51 **INT. UNKNOWN OFFICE - DAY** 51

[...]

DAVID ROBINSON

Everybody has an approximate idea of how it all began, and how it all ended. The question that remains is... how did we GET there?

BARBARA FISHER

When I came on board, he was clearly about to be nominated - well he had already won at Venice at the Mostra, which is very romantic but, anyway! We walked out of that award season with an Oscar, smelling like a fucking rose, on top of the world.

PETER BECKER

At Criterion, we focus on directors. But when John died, it only seemed natural to release the *Arrivederci Amore Ciao!* boxset, which was his mantra, right...

BARBARA FISHER

I had NEVER, EVER seen someone do his job better. The performance was... restless.

JEANNETTE

Yes. It all came down to : "crazy, lost it, insane", "what a nightmare" et cetera et cetera. But... what about the rest?

MARTIN SCORCESE

In the story of modern cinema, which I happen to know quite well, there is no such thing as a greater star than John F. Donovan.

AMERICAN FILM CRITIC

He was a classic American movie star. And we hadn't had one of those in years.

CUSTOME DESIGNER

He was the one we were waiting for.

STUDIO EXECUTIVE

He knew what he was doing. Knew this business. And loved it. Loved it madly.

ZOE SALDANA

A TRUE star.

GRACE DONOVAN

MY star.

BARBARA FISHER

When we met, everybody in Hollywood was calling him the next BIG MOTHERFUCKING deal. And he was. He truly was.

[Music : *Crazy In Love* by Beyoncé]

CUT TO :

52 **EXT. OCEAN - DAY**

52

The CAMERA once again bursts through the clouds to finally PUSH-IN on a Miami beach, skimming the top of the ocean. An elaborate PHOTOSHOOT seems to be going on.

53 **EXT. BEACH - CONTINUOUS**

53

The CAMERA is slowly PULLING BACK from a tight frame. A 30-year-old handsome man is looking down. We've yet to see his eyes. He's got a square jaw contrasting an almost feminine mouth. His high cheekbones catch the light. He is JOHN F. DONOVAN.

In SLOW MOTION, BLURRY, COLORFUL SHAPES dart across the frame, obstructing our view.

A lock of John's hair falls across his face. He lifts his eyes - feline and green - and casually brushes the hair back into place. A HAND enters the frame, spraying hair spray.

John F. Donovan stares down the barrel of our lens. And :

FLASH :

A larger shot reveals the photo shoot, peopled by CREW (20); MAKE-UP ARTISTS, CREATIVES, ASSISTANTS, etc.

MASSIVE FANS blow on the set, which resembles a weird mixture of Cirque du Soleil and Versailles built on the beach - needless to say, it is a Vanity Fair editorial. Men are dressed as VALETS and women as COURTISANES and DUCHESSES. John is sitting on a GOLDEN THRONE: it's a King's court concept. TWO STRIPPER POLES frame the set, with acrobats spinning on them.

A hand carefully adjusts a VINTAGE HASSELBLAD. The PHOTOGRAPHER is French, we can tell by his scarf and his bad taste in music - we can vaguely hear an eastern European electronic ballad.

PHOTOGRAPHER

All right, I have what I need!

He lights a filterless MENTHOL, walks off the set. JOHN gets off his throne, walks towards RUSHKA BERGMAN, Fashion editor. She is a long and thin 40-year-old Italo-Isreali-Hungarian-Russian New Yorker. She wears enormous dragonfly SUNGLASSES. Her hair is stick straight and black as night.

RUSHKA BERGMAN

Darling, with this we kill, I tell you, is forever. So genius! Fuck the world, fuck them hard with a pussy. Us, we fly!

JOHN F. DONOVAN

Thank you, Rushka.

JOHN heads for the craft table. Two clotheswhores in their early twenties appear. They're wearing the latest PRADA, their ears pierced with diamonds, both Bluetoothed, holding their iPhones, texting on their Blackberries, sporadically consulting their iPads. They're the APPELBAUMS. IRA APPELBAUM is staring at John while talking on his Bluetooth. NOA APPELBAUM is pacing while yelling a bit further away.

IRA APPELBAUM

No... No!

JOHN F. DONOVAN

What?

IRA APPELBAUM

(still looking at John)

No, absolutely not!

JOHN F. DONOVAN

What? Who are you talking to?

Ira mouths "not you" to John.

JOHN F. DONOVAN (CONT'D)

Stop doing that, Ira!

Ira puts his hands on his mouth and turns around.

IRA APPELBAUM

Meredith, did you just talk to me like I'm an ugly person?

Noa walks towards John, who's stirring a coffee.

NOA APPELBAUM

The clothes have been delivered, the doorman signed for the tuxedos and uh... the shoes should be there by now. Everything good?

JOHN F. DONOVAN

The Dries Van Noten suit for the party?

NOA APPELBAUM

Check. Dries says "Merde" for tonight.

IRA APPELBAUM

No you won't see me at Sundance.

(hangs up, to John)

We gotta hit the road, Johnny. Chopper's waiting.

54

INT/EXT. BUILDING - MIAMI - LATER

54

(SLOW MOTION) JOHN and the APPELBAUMS head for the limouse. We are following them. They walk towards a big wall of blinding light. They pass the doors.

RACK IRIS as they walk outside to reveal a SEA OF HYSTERICAL FANS and the accompanying PAPARAZZI. FLASHES, SCREAMS, the usual frenzy. SECURITY GUARDS help John and his assistants through the crowd.

NOA APPELBAUM

Clear, bitches, clear!

PEOPLE are peeking out of their windows in nearby buildings. John is good to his fans, signs a few autographs, takes a few Instagrams, kisses a couple of babies, gets inside the LIMO. An ASSISTANT from the PHOTOSHOOT runs after them. The WINDOW rolls down, NOA looking at her.

MAGAZINE ASSISTANT

Guys, I'm so sorry, we gotta grab a 10 second behind-the-scenes with John for the website-

Noa closes the window, giggling.

55

EXT. NEW YORK CITY - DAY

55

The CAMERA is pushing-in on NYC from a helicopter's "POV". We swiftly pass the Statue of Liberty. The chopper comes closer to a high-rise's heliport, descending.

56

EXT. HIGH-RISE - ROOF - FINANCIAL DISTRICT - CONTINUOUS

56

A GROUP OF PEOPLE - PUBLICISTS, ETC. - are looking at the chopper coming down. As it lands, the APPELBAUMS get off, carrying GARNMENT BAGS and SUITCASES. They are followed by two other TEMP ASSISTANTS. An ASIAN PUBLICIST walks towards them, panicked.

ASIAN PUBLICIST*(yelling)*

Where is Mister Donovan? Everybody's waiting! We'll be late for the premiere!

IRA APPELBAUM

Pop a pill, Ping! He's on his way!

ASIAN PUBLICIST

You boys keep playing with fire!

IRA APPELBAUM

Oh my God Noa, is she pretending she has the faintest importance?

NOA APPELBAUM

Did you hear that Ira, someone is pretending they have the faintest importance!

Both brothers make themselves laugh. Ping rolls her eyes.

NOA APPELBAUM (CONT'D)

Mister Donovan always travels alone, Ping-Pong.

Noa turns to the ocean. Another CHOPPER is approaching, coming down. An IMPRESSIVE LOW-ANGLE SHOT reveals the engine from another angle as it lands, blowing everybody's hair and clothes as they watch.

57 **EXT. NEW YORK CITY - HARLEM DRIVE - LATER** 57

THE LIMO is going down the FDR Drive.

58 **EXT. NEW YOR CITY - 6TH AVENUE - LATER** 58

The LIMOUSINE drives through the city, now on 6th Avenue.

59 **INT. JOHN'S PENTHOUSE - LATER** 59

JOHN enters the apartment, a.k.a a rather massive replica of the interior of the Titanic. Columns everywhere, marble on every surface, oak floors, etc. Gorgeous craziness.

JOHN F. DONOVAN

Ames?

DOLLY IN on AMY BOSWORTH, staring out the window, her back to the camera and to John. She neither responds nor turns. Just takes a sip of the SCOTCH she's holding.

JOHN F. DONOVAN (CONT'D)

I'm getting changed. Are you ready?

Amy sighs, motions to the elaborate dress she's in already. John goes to his room. Amy subtly turns towards him.

60 **INT. WALK-IN - BEDROOM - JOHN'S PENTHOUSE - MOMENTS LATER** 60

JOHN walks in Alicia Silverstone's *Clueless* closet. Designer clothes are everywhere, BOXES OF SHOES, TIES, SHIRTS, it's endless. Hanging next to a STEAMER, his PREMIERE SUIT.

The camera follows John in a three-quarter back shot. He takes his shirt off on the way.

61 INT. HALLWAY - JOHN'S BUILDING - LATER 61

JOHN and AMY walk to the elevator. She's wearing a long black cape and looks like a hot witch. John's equally dapper in his suit, a long pea coat and suede gloves. They press the elevator button. The waiting is awkward. John glances at Amy, who won't look back.

62 INT. LIMO - LATER 62

JOHN and AMY are sitting at the back of the limo. John is playing TETRIS on his phone. Amy's looking out the window, obviously upset. IRA APPELBAUM is sitting against the divider, facing them, texting.

JOHN F. DONOVAN

Would it be obtuse of me to ask if you had a nice day?

AMY BOSWORTH

As obtuse as not showing up to my premiere while I'm currently going with you to yours?

Ira Appelbaum keeps texting, embarrassed.

JOHN F. DONOVAN

You KNOW my tinitus was completely crazy last Friday, Ames. It's never been so bad, AGAIN.

AMY BOSWORTH

I'm sure it's some sort of new, rare, extremely aggressive cancer.

JOHN F. DONOVAN

Ugh! D'you think that for real?

AMY BOSWORTH

Fingers crossed.

John gives Amy a nasty look and talks to the driver using the Intercom.

JOHN F. DONOVAN

Baxter, we gotta stop by Maxwell's.

63 INT. MAXWELL'S - LATER 63

The diner we've been in before. One client's sitting at the bar, two old man are playing cards at a table at the back. MAXWELL'S making a new pot of coffee. JOHN walks in. Maxwell notices and immediately walks towards the end of the bar, bends over to open the fridge.

MAXWELL

Johnny!

JOHN F. DONOVAN

Hey, Max!

Maxwell throws a Saran-wrapped SANDWICH to Johnny, who grabs it.

JOHN F. DONOVAN (CONT'D)

Saving my life. Once again.

MAXWELL

(in Arabic)
Sahettein!

John's already gone, the door swinging behind him.

MAXWELL (CONT'D)

Barabant.

64 **INT. LIMO - LATER**

64

The LIMO is now approaching the premiere. Crowds have gathered, SECURITY holds them back.

JOHN F. DONOVAN

*(looking out the window, trying
to act indifferent, finishing
his Tuna wrap)*

You know, Amy, your show's running for six weeks. My premiere lasts one night, so... What do you want me to do?

AMY BOSWORTH

You're trapped, Johnny, it's awful.

John rolls his eyes.

65 **EXT. THEATER - PREMIERE - CONTINUOUS**

65

BODYGUARDS IN TUXEDOS motion the limousine to engage in the RED CARPET drive surrounded by FANS.

66 **INT. LIMO - THEATER - CONTINUOUS**

66

The limo stops. Ira's phone buzzes.

IRA APPELBAUM

Alright, guys... Smiles out, tummies in! No peaces, no dancing, no teeth. Ready?

AMY BOSWORTH

Always.

From outside, NOA opens the door.

67 **EXT. RED CARPET - THEATER - EVENING**

67

JOHN and AMY emerge from the car, all blinding smiles. Amy waves like she's the Queen of England. John looks at her lovingly, puts his hand on the small of her back. She takes his arm without looking. They've done this before.

The APPELBAUMS guide the couple through photos, then press. VARIOUS SHOTS of JOHN being interviewed.

JOHN F. DONOVAN

Look at this beautiful creature that I convinced to accompany me.

Amy laughs lightly.

"JOURNALIST 1"

Amy, you are glowing tonight with *fuego*! Who are you wearing?

AMY BOSWORTH

Alexander McQueen.

"JOURNALIST 1"

Is it vintage?

AMY BOSWORTH

It is now.

CUT TO:

"JOURNALIST 2"

Johnny, another huge HUGE night for you! You didn't get a nomination for *Harvest*, but now, the sequel, *HARVEST MOON*, o.m.g. the buzz is deafening! Does it make you crazy to be talking about the Oscars in Julyyyyyy?

JOHN F. DONOVAN

Well, I don't know about crazy, Mia, but I'm so proud of *Harvest Moon*, come what may... I mean, I told Paul as long as he wants to keep making these movies, I'll be there! I love *Jack Harvest*. It's a dream character, both heroic AND witty!

AMY BOSWORTH

Especially when he blows up Iowa-

JOHN F. DONOVAN

Well if the movie can help blockbusters à la MARVEL & DC to... bridge the gap all the way to the Academy Awards, I'll humbly attend.

AMY BOSWORTH (O.S.)

But humbly.

CUT TO:

JOURNALIST 3

Now, Johnny, tonight isn't only a big night for *Jack Harvest*, it ALSO is quite a big night for YOU as you're headed, after this, for one of the most exciting events to be hosted this year-

JOHN F. DONOVAN

VANITY FAIR'S RED PARTY-

JOURNALIST 3

The Red Bal, everybody has been tweeting, posting, texting ; VANITY FAIR has decided to THROW an "all-red" party FOR you, tonight, to celebrate your recent contribution as GUEST EDITOR of the September Issue, congrats!

JOHN F. DONOVAN

Thank you, Tanya, fashion people sure know how to party, so I know I'm in safe hands, but TONIGHT, I think it's crucial to point out, is preeminently a major fund-raiser for the U.N's *Schools in Africa* program, which I'm the official spokesperson for, so... let's say, a festive and unique opportunity to combine business with pleasure.

JOURNALIST 3

Well, Johnny, that's very noble, very beautiful, enjoy the premiere, enjoy the party, and as you'd say : *Arrivederci...*

JOHN F. DONOVAN

Amore ciao!

A CRANE SHOT zooms away from this chaos as JOHN and AMY walk further down the red carpet. The next IMAGE seems more textured and HD, as we :

68

INT. LIVING ROOM - RUPERT'S HOUSE - EVENING

68

PULL BACK from a TV broadcasting the same image, revealing RUPERT TURNER sitting on the floor in front of the television.

Pulling back further still, we reveal SAM TURNER, standing, aiming a REMOTE CONTROL at the screen. She turns off the TV. Gets her son's attention. PUSH-IN on her.

SAM TURNER

Dinner's ready.

HARD CUT TO :

69

INT. KITCHEN - RUPERT'S HOUSE - EVENING

69

INSERT of a HEALTHY BORING MEAL. SUPERIMPOSE :

Harrow, England

RUPERT and SAM are sitting side by side at the kitchen counter, eating their supper. Rupert's looking over his SIDES for an audition.

SAM TURNER

How was school?

No response from Rupert, who's mumbling his lines. Sam sighs and takes the sides, throws them further away on the round table behind her.

SAM TURNER (CONT'D)

How was school?

RUPERT TURNER

Have you forgotten that my audition's tomorrow?

SAM TURNER

Have you forgotten that you have a test in the morning?

RUPERT TURNER

That's hard to forget.

SAM TURNER

Harder to study for. After supper, I want to see you spending an hour with your science book.

RUPERT TURNER

But I don't know my lines yet.

SAM TURNER

I'm not worried about your lines, I'm worried about your test. Your first career-

RUPERT TURNER

Career is to be a student.

70

INT. RUPERT'S ROOM - RUPERT'S HOUSE - LATER

70

RUPERT sits at his desk. His mom makes a phone call in the kitchen.

SAM TURNER (O.S.)

How's Alfie?

(...)

Oh God, everything's always wrong in Britain. Give him a kiss for me. Uh, listen Julie-

(...)

Yes. About next week, um, I'm off on Tuesday night to London, I'm coaching this small, young SME and, uh...

Rupert cocks his head, listening to his mother's conversation. He carefully gets out of his chair, sneaks to the doorway and gingerly pokes his head out, double-checking SAM's position. Her back to him, she continues her conversation.

SAM TURNER (CONT'D)

Well that's the thing, see, I'm back Friday morning, and Roopie may or may not have an audition in the city on Thursday, so...

(...)

Oh thank you, thank you darling! But then he's also got a bunch of tests and I always tell him his first career is to be a stud- Exactly. Is to be a student.

Rupert sighs, picks up his SCIENCE BOOK and starts pacing while mouthing the periodic table. He almost slips on a PILE OF LETTERS. He stops and looks down at them. He quickly picks the letters up and, smiling, opens a CHEST covered in laundry, and puts the letters inside carefully.

He sits on his bed and looks at the ceiling dreamily : it is plastered with JOHN F. DONOVAN memorabilia, as are the walls of his room ; POSTERS, CALENDARS, ARTICLES, etc. Rupert IS a fan.

[Music : *Sulk* by Trust]

71

EXT. NEW YOR CITY

71

Night has fallen. The CITY lightens up from a BIRD'S EYE VIEW.

NOA APPELBAUM (O.S.)

Alright, Johnny, 15 minutes tops, as promised.

72

EXT. STREET - NEW YORK

72

We CRANE DOWN as a LIMOUSINE stops. A BUTLER opens the door. A RED-GLOVED HAND slowly emerges from the vehicle.

AMY BOSWORTH (O.S.)
15 minutes? I want to stay longer-

73

INT. HALLWAY - BUILDING

73

The APPELBAUMS are walking backwards, briefing off-frame John and Amy through our POV.

IRA APPELBAUM
You can do as you please, Miss Hannigan!

AMY BOSWORTH (O.S.)
Fuck off, Appelbottoms!

NOA APPELBAUM
Couple of hand shakes, we'll take you through names and officials.

The Appelbaums are getting closer and closer to the "doors" that evidently guard the ballroom.

IRA APPELBAUM
Then red carpet, you pop a Jagger and you're outta this whorefest! They're announcing your name, by the way.

NOA APPELBAUM
Alright! Here. We. Go.

The Appelbaums disappear from both sides of the camera as JOHN and AMY's backlit bodies walk into FOCUS. As the music's BEATBOX starts triumphantly, the GIANT DOORS open magically, REVEALING a blinding light where MULTIPLE SILHOUETTES forebode the highly populated soirée that's been announced. The crowd offers a generous round of applause.

ANNOUNCER (O.S.)
(adding, asked to)
Ladies and gentleman, our guest of honor,
John F. Donovan...

John swallows, nervous, before walking into the light, where he suddenly is wearing a calm, confident expression.

ANNOUNCER (O.S.) (CONT'D)
AND the unforgettable Amy Bosworth!

Amy smiles broadly. She's dressed in a gazillion-dollar red gown made of thick, torn locks of angora wool and all the died feathers in the world. JOHN, on her arm, is dressed in an impeccably tailored burgundy suit, and is all-smiles too.

Followed by the Appelbaums, they walk down a giant STAIRCASE covered with a carmine carpet framed with PHOTOGRAPHERS yelling John and Amy's names.

Their POV reveals an insanely exorbitant mise en scène - one improvident Couture aficionados only could conceive: from the dress-code to the CHANDELIERS and the CANAPÉS to the FLOORS AND CEILINGS, it's an ALL-RED SCENERY.

As John and Amy reach the ground, DRESSED TO THE NINES GUESTS greet them, and especially John, looking into the lens invasively. John "dives" in the pool as Amy discreetly bails out, disappearing into the sea of people. The Appelbaums guide him through the crowd, keeping it short and sweet as John is shaking hands, many hands.

INDIAN INVESTOR

It shall be a big hit again, Johnny!

JOHN F. DONOVAN

Thank you so much, Mister Safaya, thank you for being here tonight, it means a lot to the program. Appreciate it.

PARTYGOER 1

(to John)

Oh my gosh!

PARTYGOER 2

IT'S SOOOO GOOD! SO MUCH BETTER THAN HARVEST! AND I ADOOOOOOOOOORED HARVEST!

PARTYGOER 3

Congrats, Johnny! Another big hit!

As John keeps meeting with people, thanking them for their kind words, handling the attention like an ace under the Appelbaums' bossy look, we RAMP to SLOW-MOTION. The sound slowly fades to an almost inaudible undertone.

A Chris-Zylka-good-looking young man comes to John. They apparently know each other, start chatting, catching up in a shameless display of familiarity - especially on the young man's end. He is WILL JOHNSON JR.

BARBARA FISHER (V.O.)

People wanted things, of course. They all had different designs, different requests.

John introduces Will to important people - you can tell by their large ties and the cigars they are smoking indoors.

BARBARA FISHER (V.O.)

People who mocked him before they'd met him, and lauded him as a great artist when they realized he could... be useful. And lauded him as an even greater artist when he died, and they had the impression they could contribute to the legend.

Will, in turn, proudly introduces John to his OWN ACQUAINTANCES, theater students - you can tell by the Williamsburg eyewear and the shoulder pads. Will's hand slowly, discreetly fondles John's back. John looks at Will expectantly. But Will is looking at his friends.

BARBARA FISHER (V.O.)

Gave him their cards, their phone numbers, their kids' resumé's.

A YOUNG ACTRESS hands John a CD and a LETTER folded in three. John smiles, nods and puts the letter in his jacket politely.

The Appelbaums put their hands on the small of John's back and kindly lead him to the SPONSORS PHOTO WALL. John obediently stays still, going through his 10-faces fallow.

BARBARA FISHER (V.O.)

He kept telling me "This is hell for me, this is hell, this is hell". And people just CAN'T understand why it's hell to be thanked, and congratulated, and loved.

(MORE)

BARBARA FISHER (V.O.) (CONT'D)

*It's hell because it doesn't MEAN
anything at a certain point. It's just
more noise.*

We're getting CLOSER AND CLOSER to John as it seems particularly tiring to smile, and wave, alone in that jungle, posing with ACTRESSES, INVESTORS, FASHION PEOPLE, EXECs, etc.

74

INT. UNKNOWN OFFICE - DAY

74

BARBARA FISHER slowly smiles.

BARBARA FISHER

But after all the fucking thank yous and
your welcomes and I love your work
bullshit, - I mean no one, no one who's
ever been through that would tell you
that John was wrong.

MINKA KELLY is adjusting the small microphone on her shirt. She looks ravishing.

MINKA KELLY

We met on *The Student Council*-

SOUNDMAN (O.S.)

Speak up a little-

MINKA KELLY

Yes. We met on *The Student Council*?

SOUNDMAN (O.S.)

Perfect, thank you.

MINKA KELLY

Sure. Um... And he was already talking
about all those Festivals he admired
because he saw their logos in opening
credits, and ceremonies, and the people
he wanted to work with, actors,
directors, and... I remember, people said
"Stop dreaming, kiddo" or we called him
"Big Head" and then "Big H" ha ha... But he
did it. And even BH, during season 4.

75

INT. BALLROOM - BUILDING

75

A SERIES OF SHOTS of JOHN at the party, more or less coinciding with the V.O. A CASCADE OF FACES in SLOW-MOTION.

MINKA KELLY (V.O.)

*And I think that... seeing us all - and
I've always loved him, and, still do -
was a tough act for him to put on because
everybody was suddenly so nice, and
fawning and...*

Some GIRL HUGS John ostentatiously. Takes photos. Her father is taking them - a rich man.

MINKA KELLY (V.O.)

*He just... remembered. And, somehow, was
never resentful.*

John runs into MINKA KELLY, who is adorable. They kiss each other. John JUMPS CHILDISHLY, cheered up by this unexpected reunion.

John is now alone among the people, looking for someone, biting his nails, smiling here and there to people afar.

75A

INT. BALLROOM - BUILDING - LATER

75A

DONORS have taken their SELFIES with their careless DAUGHTERS, MODELS have posed awkwardly in front of the MOET & CHANDON and SAMSUNG backdrops, and the party's well alive.

JOHN, free from obligations, eager to leave, is making his way through the dance floor when a HAND ALL COVERED IN LEATHER, GLOVED IN RED, taps his shoulder. John turns around. A tantalizing, diabolically-sounding song starts playing. The whole dance floor awakes - and as the suits and dresses billow in an orgy of fire-like reds, Gays in the audience explode out of love for fashion.

[Music : *Love Runs Out* by OneRepublic]

For now, all we see is the woman's back. John smiles at her, unsure if he knows her from reputation, or having worked with her - how could he tell, after all.

The woman grabs him by the waist, gets him closer to her body, and engage in a tight, sensual dance. Her hands slowly escalate John's back until they're on his shoulder blades.

M. M. KING (O.S.)

Congratulations on the movie-

JOHN F. DONOVAN

*(his imagination failing him
on renewing flattered candor)*

Oh, thank you, glad you liked it-

M. M. KING (O.S.)

Hahahaha! I'll spare ya the trouble! I haven't seen this new masterpiece!

John's interlocutor is finally revealed : smooth, sexy, scary DOLLY IN on MOIRA McCAULEY KING. All dressed in red... although it's burgundy, to be precise. Just like John. She is looking him right in the eyes with a big, closed-lips smile.

M. M. KING (CONT'D)

*(looking around, as though she
was comparing to others)*

I work. In life.

JOHN F. DONOVAN

(polite, caught off-guard)

Um...

M. M. KING

But you haven't seen it either, John. Not all of it, at least. I'll see it, don't worry. On a plane. If I go to Australia. I'm throwing this party with VANITY FAIR, for your information, but my logo looked cheap on the fancy backdrop.

(MORE)

M. M. KING (CONT'D)

Or maybe we just don't look like the kind
o guys who'd be into the whole "building-
schools in-the-third-world-feeling-less-
guilty about-my-Prada-sponsoring" kinda
bull.

John is puzzled. Moira sees it ; loves it.

M. M. KING (CONT'D)

I'm chief editor of the Gossip, Moira
McCauley-King.

JOHN F. DONOVAN

I'm gonna have to get you to write that
one down.

M. M. KING

It's just as equally long and idiotic as
yours.

Moira swiftly forces John to spin around.

M. M. KING (CONT'D)

(looking at John's suit)

And we're the rebels of the night, it
seems!

JOHN F. DONOVAN

How's-

M. M. KING

They said RED! And here we are, pig-
headed bastards, struttin' our burgundy
suits, dying to get some attention-

JOHN F. DONOVAN

Well... there are different shades of red.
There's a place for all tastes and
perceptions-

M. M. KING

YA DI YA DI YA DA! Tell me something I've
haven't already read in Kalil Gibran
before I got my first periods!

JOHN F. DONOVAN

Is there a software in your mouth that
automatically makes you cut people when-

M. M. KING

Yes! You wanna know when someone's
bullshitting ya? Look at their lips. If
they're moving, they're bullshitting ya.
Where's Wify?

JOHN F. DONOVAN

Who?

Moira turns around and rubs her back against John's torso. She gets
lower and lower, sliding against his chest, soon stroking his crotch
with her back, making him uncomfortable.

M. M. KING

You're married, remember? Where's our
lucky gal?

(MORE)

M. M. KING (CONT'D)

Making contacts, trying to shoot up her
IMDB at the wine bar with some of the
AMFAR bastards?

John nervously smiles, looks around, looks for help... Moira turns
around, grabs his chin and turns his head back to her.

M. M. KING (CONT'D)

Eyes, Mister D. Don't be rude to an
elder.

JOHN F. DONOVAN

*(clenching his jaw, changing
the topic)*

She's in a very interesting show off-
Broadway right now. You should look it
up. *The Three trials of Melita Escondito.*

M. M. KING

Ooh. Quick. Tickets before they all go.
You could come with me. Whenever you find
the smallest fuck to give.

John violently makes her twist. She screams - having fun. He pulls her
back to him, holding her tight, sticking his fingers in the small of
her back ; an attempt to regain a form of superiority. She smiles.

M. M. KING (CONT'D)

(she freezes, stops him too)

Alright, all good things have an end,
don't they. I need to catch up on my
gossip. Litterally. We'll meet again.

JOHN F. DONOVAN

I... cannot... wait.

M. M. KING

I'm not worried about the opportunities,
Mister D. When the time comes, I know
we'll do great things together.

John lets out a nervous laugh. He feels like throwing a jab at Moira.

JOHN F. DONOVAN

Who are you, again? Sorry...

Moira withdraws, moonwalking away... still facing John...

M. M. KING

(pointing at him)

No. Who are YOU?

Moira opens her arms, dances to the rhythm of the song, smiling at
John. JEANETTE awaits her at the edge of the dance floor. Moira finally
turns her back on John as Jeanette systematically drops her coat on her
shoulders. They leave.

John stays behind, immobile in the very alive dance floor, marked by
this strange encounter. A tinnitus soon makes John tilt down his head,
in pain. He covers both his ears and opens his mouth as the music fades
into some strange purr.

76

INT. BALLROOM - BUILDING - LATER

76

JOHN spots AMY at the other end of the room, walks towards her. She's in the middle of a conversation with PRODUCERS, all very entertained. Amy, drunk, is putting on a show. We can't make out the exact content of their exchange.

BARBARA FISHER (V.O.)

Amy and John had the... liberties, lets call it the liberties... of forever friends whom had become partners because that's what made most sense but also because they were profoundly similar, and everyone took for granted that they were together from the minute they showed up at a premiere. But in the end, John would always leave without her.

John discreetly puts his hand on the small of her back and talks to the producers she's with. They congratulate him.

BARBARA FISHER (V.O.)

He avoided those parties like plague, the « black-tie-fake-fair » like he would say, and Amy could just linger in there for hours. I think one of the last things Amy told me when they divorced, I bumped into her at LAX and she just went :

John soon takes Amy aside for a private chat. Based on the look on his face, he's asking for a favor. Amy rolls her eyes and takes an ambitious gulp of WHITE WINE. She seems in a hurry to get back to the party, granting him whatever predictable thing he has asked.

BARBARA FISHER (V.O.)

"It must have been so embarrassing for you guys to see two people so deeply unaware of their mutual unhappiness."

He grabs her arm softly and kisses her. She won't move her lips. Amy leaves, passes a WAITER carrying a TRAY OF WINE. She snatches a glass and sashays away. John watches.

77

INT. UNKNOWN OFFICE - DAY

77

BARBARA FISHER...

BARBARA FISHER

(cynical)

But we didn't see anything, really. We watch people in this business, we don't see them.

ASSISTANT HANDS give ZOE SALDANA an ESPRESSO.

ZOE SALDANA

A man who goes from - thank you - the Harvest saga, then to Congo to shoot a documentary on warlords, then comes back just in time for the new Spielberg and right after, Bruce Labruce's Dead Meat while guest starring on HBO's Caths & Dolls -and it may seem like James Franco's average Tuesday, but I'm not talking about multitasking aesthetes - I mean this man...

78 **I/E. TAXI - NEW YORK - NIGHT**

78

On his way "home", JOHN is looking outside the window, looking pensive.

ZOE SALDANA (V.O.)

*...must have been in deep, DEEP need of...
intimacy.*

79 **EXT. TIMES SQUARE - NEW YORK - LATER**

79

JOHN has stopped for a brief walk on TS. He's buying a HOT-DOG off some street vendor.

The man recognizes him and motions him to wait. John smiles and looks away while the man looks for something in the drawers of his kitchenette. Hands back two CHEF HATS, and asks John to sign them, which he does.

BARBARA FISHER (V.O.)

*I remember John telling me : "Out of all
the people around me" - and that's a huge
fucking load of people, right - "the new
people, the old people, the ones I trust
to be there without any interests or
dishonest motives come down to 3.*

A SERIES OF SHOTS of the New York streets and boutiques as John sinks into his own mind, walking down Bowery, then Mulberry, than Mercer street.

BARBARA FISHER (V.O.)

Amy, my mom and Jimmy.

80 **INT. UNKNOWN OFFICE - DAY**

80

BARBARA FISHER smiles, emotional. She shrugs.

AMY BOSWORTH shakes her head, both disapproving and nostalgic.

AMY BOSWORTH

*He had more than 85 aliases that he used
to check in and out of hotels which he
did about 700 hundred times in the course
of the last five years of his life. And
that was ALL in New York City. When I
left John I thought : "I'll get to see
him, now".*

81 **INT. FRONT DESK - THE MERCER - LATER**

81

JOHN walks to the front desk of a Romanesque revival hotel. A young RECEPTIONIST is checking him in, intimidated, yet professional.

FRONT DESK GIRL

*So what's your name? I mean, I know YOUR
name, I'm not dumb, haha...*

JOHN F. DONOVAN

(smiles)

Um... Make it... Mike Modano, this time.

FRONT DESK GIRL

Wow. How do you make those up?!

John smiles.

INT. KITCHEN - FAITH'S DONOVAN HOUSE - NIGHT

A beautiful, brunette in her fifties is sitting in her kitchen, at the table, peeling CARROTS, wearing a TEAM JERSEY. It's FAITH DONOVAN. Her short hair with blond highlights remind those of Grace Donovan (her sister).

AUNT FAITH

Grace told me about the hotel nights. She would always make fun of John about it, so one day, I asked him: "What's the hotel thing all about". And he just said:

82 **INT. ELEVATOR - THE MERCER - LATER**

82

JOHN's face is almost entirely unlit in the moody ambiance.

AUNT FAITH

"I feel less lonely there", he said. And I said "Alone in a room!" Who knew! And he just said "No, I mean, with all the other people like me in the other rooms."

83 **INT. PENTHOUSE - THE MERCER - LATER**

83

A DROP OF WATER falls on a BEIGE SURFACE. JOHN's damp hair is dripping out on a sheet marked with the hotel's contact information. A GREEN PMOP FELT-TIP PEN lies on the MARBLE table.

John stares in silence, starts writing : *Dear Rupert...*

We PULL BACK SLOWLY as John scribbles hastily, inspired.

84 **I/E. EXPENSIVE OTHER APARTMENT FOR NO REASON - CONTINUOUS**

84

FAÇADE of the hotel. WINDOWS align in a symmetrical poetry. We can make out JOHN writing in his room from an UNKNOWN POINT OF VIEW. John's window is now the only source of light in the growing night.

85 **INT. PENTHOUSE - THE MERCER - MOMENTS LATER**

85

JOHN puts down the green pen, looks out the window. It's almost as though he sees US. He gets up, then shuts all the ORGANZA CURTAINS and BLACK-OUTS.

FADE TO BLACK.

86 **I/E. HIGHWAY - ENGLAND - DAY**

86

SAM is driving, holding a copy of Rupert's audition SIDES against the wheel. RUPERT's sitting in the passenger seat.

RUPERT TURNER

(invested)

"With all due respect, Father, that is unfair!"

Sam isn't listening to her son. She's about to exit when she changes her mind. She's honked at.

SAM TURNER

(talking to herself)

I just can't remember the bloody exit number- Sorry love, I'm trying to get you to this audition alive-

RUPERT TURNER

"With all due respect, Father, that is unfair!"

SAM TURNER

Uh... yes, um...

(looks at her sides)

"Mind your own beeswax, son!"

(comments)

Oh God, that's bad.

RUPERT TURNER

What?

SAM TURNER

Beeswax? When does this scene take place, exactly, during the Irish famine?

RUPERT TURNER

Mom...

SAM TURNER

Sorry, um... so *"mind your own beeswax"* uh... *"A bright new day shines upon Belfast"*, uh, there you go.

Rupert sighs.

87

INT. WAITING ROOM - CASTING AGENCY - DAY

87

SAM is waiting, arms crossed. She sighs, looks at her watch. A woman in her early fifties is sitting in front of her. Her son is rehearsing his lines further away.

YOUNG ACTOR'S MOTHER

(whispers)

Are you Rupert's mother?

SAM TURNER

Yes.

Sam spoke loudly. The mother motions to lower her voice, smiling. Sam doesn't like that woman.

YOUNG ACTOR'S MOTHER

We've been watching him closely.

SAM TURNER

Who?

YOUNG ACTOR'S MOTHER

Well your son! He's been in callbacks with Daniel for over a year, now!

SAM TURNER

Oh... well... I guess we're all proud of our boys, aren't we.

Sam looks to young Daniel rehearsing his lines at the other end of the room, in front of the receptionist's desk.

YOUNG ACTOR'S MOTHER

Daniel's very popular, this will be-
well, this WOULD be, ha ha, his fifth TV
appearance this year.

Daniel picks a CANDY in a big jar and eats it absentmindedly while
going over the scene.

YOUNG ACTOR'S MOTHER (CONT'D)

But his father and I are starting to think
about something more serious.

Sam picks up a GOSSIP magazine from the pile besides her.

YOUNG ACTOR'S MOTHER (CONT'D)

(it's a burning secret)

CINEMA... Yes. We're actually thinking of
moving to London next year. To be closer
to the heart of the action!

SAM TURNER

Well good luck with that, really.

YOUNG ACTOR'S MOTHER

You too. I've heard your son is quite
talented.

SAM TURNER

Did you? Ha ha... Well, he... He sure likes
it a lot.

Young Daniel takes a handful of candies in the jar.

CASTING AGENCY RECEPTIONIST

That's enough sweets for you. Leave some
for the others.

YOUNG ACTOR'S MOTHER

For Daniel, it's destiny.

YOUNG DANIEL

(to the receptionist)

Do you know who I am?

Sam couldn't help hearing. She smiles politely.

SAM TURNER

I'm sure it is.

Sam looks at her magazine - on the cover: a picture of JOHN F. DONOVAN
surfacing from a swim in the ocean. ALL ABOUT JOHNNY! America's Most
Wanted Man // C'mere girl! Tons of sexy pics // Inside Johnny's
mysterious world, etc.

Sam sighs and picks up another magazine : still John, getting out of a
hotel at dawn, wearing sunglasses and a Hoodie: ONE-NIGHT STAND'S SECRETS
UNVEILED: "The sex was clearly audible".

Sam rolls her eyes and puts the magazine back on the table. She looks
at the room in which Rupert's auditioning.

SMASH CUT TO :

88 **EXT. CORRIDOR - THE MERCER - NIGHT**

88

A HAND is insistentlly knocking on the door of the Penthouse. No response. What we do hear, however, is a loud, fluctuating, ORGASMIC-SOUNDING SCREAM coming from inside the room. Then, reveal: a PORTER. She turns her head towards an irritated GUEST further down the hall.

PORTER

Excuse me, sir? Senor Modano?

89 **INT. PENTHOUSE - THE MERCER - SAME**

89

John lets out a shout of pain. He loses his balance, falls on the floor. Knocks his face on the bed table.

JOHN F. DONOVAN

Ah, fuck!!!! AaaaAAAAAargh!

John covers his ears with his hands, screaming. He gropes around for his hearing aid. His hand sweeps the bed table, hits a GLASS OF WATER, which falls and breaks. John finally turns on the light. He's yelling weirdly in order to "talk over" this insane tinnitus.

PORTER (O.S.)

Sir? Is everything all right, sir?

JOHN F. DONOVAN

YES, SORRY! I'M ALRIGHT, OK, I'M FINE
THANK YOU!

(to himself)

Tired of this fucking shit! NANANA
LALALALA BLABLABLA ONE TWO THREE, ONE TWO
THREE! ETCETERA ETCETERA!

John grabs his HEARING AID, lying on the floor in spilled water and shattered glass. John shakes it, and blows on it and puts it in his ear while opening his mouth wide. The tinnitus fades away. John sighs loudly, relieved. He's got a minor, but still visible contusion under his right eye from his earlier fall. He laughs and looks at his watch. It's 4 in the morning. John sighs, and leans against the wall.

JOHN F. DONOVAN (CONT'D)

Good morning to you too.

[Music : JESUS OF SUBURBIA by Greenday]

90 **EXT. GW BRIDGE - NEW YORK - NIGHT**

90

A high view of the George Washington Bridge.

JOHN F. DONOVAN (V.O.)

(singing loud)

*I'm the son of rage and love
The Jesus of Suburbia*

91 **EXT. NEW JERSEY - NIGHT**

91

A high view of the Palisades, still clear, with scarce traffic and only few STORES and RESTAURANTS with their lights dotting the dark night.

JOHN F. DONOVAN (V.O.)

*From the Bible of none of the above
On a steady diet of
Soda pop and ritalin*

92

EXT. NEW YORK INTERSTATE HIGHWAY - NIGHT

92

From a bird's eye view, we can make out FEW CARS driving along the Interstate highway. All is quiet still ; a moment of peace before breaking dawn.

JOHN F. DONOVAN (V.O.)

*No one ever died for my sins in hell
As far as I can tell
At least the ones I got away with*

An old, beige P1800 VOLVO rides across the road, isolated.

93

I/E. JOHN'S CAR - NEW YORK INTERSTATE HIGHWAY - CONTINUOUS

93

JOHN is driving. He's singing along as loud as he can. He gestures words from the lyrics with his hands and body language whenever possible. Funny and endearing.

John stops himself as his cellphone rings and interrupts whatever technology's playing the song in his old car, sending out the ringtone in the car's speakers.

John picks up his cellphone and sighs. He pushes a button.

JOHN F. DONOVAN

To what do I owe the pleasure of this
audaciously early call, mom?

GRACE DONOVAN (V.O.)

Hello?

John sighs. It's already too much.

JOHN F. DONOVAN

Yes, mom? I'm here. How are you?

GRACE DONOVAN (V.O.)

I... Johnny? Can you hear me?

JOHN F. DONOVAN

YES, I can hear you perfectly. Crystal-clear. I'm sorry you can't.

GRACE DONOVAN (V.O.)

Honey, I can't hear you well, I think
your cellphone's got a problem-

JOHN F. DONOVAN

WELL I DUNNO WHAT TO DO ABOUT IT MA
YOU'RE THE ONE CALLING ME! I'VE GOT FULL
BARS HERE!

John checks his cellphone - he's got a very poor signal.

GRACE DONOVAN (V.O.)

Wow! Now I can hear ya, ha ha! Hold your
horses, honey! It's only 4h30!

JOHN F. DONOVAN

I know! It's phone call o'clock!

GRACE DONOVAN (V.O.)

Oh I know, did I wake you up?

JOHN F. DONOVAN

Almost. So ma... you up early... or up late?

GRACE DONOVAN (V.O.)

Oh early.

94

EXT. GAS STATION - NEW YORK STATE - NIGHT

94

JOHN is putting gas in the tank. He's got his Hoodie under his premiere pea coat.

GRACE DONOVAN (V.O.)

How's the shooting going? Tell me everythiiiiiiiiing! How's Al?

JOHN F. DONOVAN

(knowingly)

Aaaaal?

GRACE DONOVAN (V.O.)

Well, dah! Al Pacino! How many Als are there on set!?

JOHN F. DONOVAN

I know ma but we've talked about this, you keep asking me about people on a first name basis like they're your friends-

GRACE DONOVAN (V.O.)

No, I'm just curious! Have you started to shoot with Bruce already? Willis? He doesn't seem like the palsy-walsy type, uh? I've heard his daughters are pyromaniacs, is that true?

JOHN F. DONOVAN

What?

The tank is full. John walks to the store.

95

INT. GAS STATION - NEW YORK STATE - CONTINUOUS

95

The bell rings as JOHN walks in. He heads to the cash to pay and notices the MAGAZINES and NEWSPAPERS that make up the bulk of the impulse-buy items. Two are the same MAGAZINES Sam was looking at in England.

GRACE DONOVAN (V.O.)

Well... Aunt Faith would love to hear from you, ANYWAY so, yes, Aunt Faith will be here next week-end with the whole family, and I AM making my Beef Bourguignon, BY POPULAR REQUEST - I know it's your favorite-

JOHN F. DONOVAN

What? It's not! I mean, I don't hate it but-

GRACE DONOVAN (V.O.)

What? Since when? Since when is Beef Bourguignon NOT your favorite meal, John Markus Ford Donovan-

JOHN F. DONOVAN

Since you've stopped listening to other people, mom.

GRACE DONOVAN (V.O.)

Fine! I'll make something else just for you-

John goes straight for the NEW YORK TIMES, quickly folds back the paper, until he gets to the Arts section. The first headline he reads: *Bad 'Moon' Rising*. He puts the paper back, as if stung. On the phone, his mother continues. John hands his credit card to the cashier.

JOHN F. DONOVAN

Mom, I can eat... It's fine. I'm happy to have the beef.

The cashier picks up the bill, handing John his credit card back. He notices the name. Surprised, he looks John in the eye. He points at him (is it you). John nods, smiles and flees.

JOHN F. DONOVAN (CONT'D)

You're not gonna make something different for me and make me feel bad about it-

96

I/E. JOHN'S CAR - SUBURBS - PENNSYLVANIA - DAWN

96

JOHN parks his car on a sleepy street of a suburban town. The streets are lined with post-war bungalows. The STREET LIGHTS are still on. He looks out the window at the house he's parked in front of. No lights are on. He takes his cellphone and texts someone. Then looks back at the house. Beat. John looks at the time on his car radio.

Moments later, he sends another text. He bites his nails, nervous, looks at the house again... Nothing.

John gets out of the car. He stands in the middle of the street, pacing. And then comes back to the car, opens the glove compartment and takes out a bottle of ORANGE pills, quickly pops one and gets out of the car again.

He heads towards the house. Comes back, opens the car and glove compartment again, takes out a bottle of RED pills, and pops one, and leaves again.

97

EXT. STREET - SUBURBS - PENNSYLVANIA - CONTINUOUS

97

JOHN walks towards the house. The STREET LIGHTS go off. Morning is here. John disappears around the side of the house.

98

EXT. BACKYARD - JAMES DONOVAN'S HOUSE - DAWN

98

As JOHN approaches the kitchen door at the back of the house, a LIGHT POPS ON inside. A beat later, JAMES DONOVAN (slightly older than John, looks like he used to play football, or strip), a sleeping new-born baby in his arms, opens the door. He instantly holds his finger to his mouth, and says :

JAMES DONOVAN

Shhhh...

JOHN F. DONOVAN

(whispers)

Hi.

JAMES DONOVAN

Have you been sitting in your car for twenty minutes popping pills?

John nods yes and says:

JOHN F. DONOVAN

No.

James rolls his eyes and walks back in. John walks up the astro-turfed stairs into the kitchen.

99

INT. GARAGE - JAMES DONOVAN'S HOUSE - LATER

99

JAMES and JOHN are sitting on a cooler in James' garage. They pass a BEER back and forth. James is looking at an image on a Blackberry - he wears a bemused smile. They are still whispering.

JAMES DONOVAN

Cute.

John laughs nervously.

JAMES DONOVAN (CONT'D)

What? Should I say hot?

JOHN F. DONOVAN

Shut the fuck up!

John's getting too loud - and too serious.

JAMES DONOVAN

Shh! YOU shut the fuck up. Baby!

JOHN F. DONOVAN

Sorry.

James takes a swig of his beer. A beat.

JAMES DONOVAN

So what's the deal with-

JOHN F. DONOVAN

There's no deal.

JAMES DONOVAN

Ok, so is this like-

JOHN F. DONOVAN

It's nothing, it's nothing, I shouldn't even have showed it to you.

James takes another swig and passes the CAN to John.

JAMES DONOVAN

Are you in love?

JOHN F. DONOVAN

What?

JAMES DONOVAN

What?

JOHN F. DONOVAN

What the fuck, Jimmy?!

JAMES DONOVAN

Well I dunno, don't talk to me like I'm not an idiot!

JOHN F. DONOVAN

What?

JAMES DONOVAN

Don't... Shit... Don't talk to me... Talk to me LIKE I'M an idiot.

JOHN F. DONOVAN

Can I talk to you like you're stupid?

JAMES DONOVAN

John. How many times are you gonna drive here to show me pics like that with a dreamy smi--

JOHN F. DONOVAN

I don't have a dreamy smi-

JAMES DONOVAN

What about Amy?

John loses his smile. He looks away, sighing- but caught off guard.

JAMES DONOVAN (CONT'D)

You know man, you got a lot of people around you who love you a lot.

John's head drops hearing these words.

JOHN F. DONOVAN

(barely audible)

Don't get fucking sentimental with me.

JAMES DONOVAN

I mean... is that guy an actor or something... you need a plumber, Johnny... or a dentist from Canada-

JOHN F. DONOVAN

He's not a- what? Canada-

JAMES DONOVAN

Or a janitor from Bali-

JOHN F. DONOVAN

Shut up! He's not an actor... I dunno. He's not an actor yet. He could be. Maybe he wants to.

JAMES DONOVAN

Ain't life fucking grand?

John downs the beer in one gulp. Looks at James - they HOLD each others' eyes for a beat. James puts his hand on John's shoulder. John can't take that - he stands up, opens the COOLER and grabs another BEER. As he cracks it open, it FIZZES UP.

JOHN F. DONOVAN

Fuck.

John and James start giggling. John takes a sip of the foam and gives the can to his cousin.

JAMES DONOVAN

How many times did your mom invite you
for Friday? I'm a thirteen.

JOHN F. DONOVAN

Thirteen time's-

JOHN F. DONOVAN (CONT'D)

The charm.

JAMES DONOVAN

The charm, yeah.

John's PHONE buzzes, James picks it up. We see: over a PICTURE of WILL JOHNSON JR. (whom we've fleetingly met at the Red party), a TEXT reading: *Am free 2 come on set 2day if u want me 2?*

JAMES DONOVAN (CONT'D)

This guy will die at least 4 minutes
after me, look at all the seconds he's
collecting contracting words-

John walks to his cousin and tries to take the phone from James' hands like an excited kid. Sound shifts to a lower level. James keeps the phone away, John almost assaults him. They're having a blast.

JAMES DONOVAN (V.O.)

*John's "garage ritual" had been going on
for... years... I was the only one who knew.*

John finally snatches the phone from James, yelling something like "Victory is mine". James is annoyed by his cousin's volume, motions him to shut up. John covers his mouth with his hands like a grounded kid.

100

INT. UNKNOWN OFFICE - DAY

100

JAMES DONOVAN seems older, already, and has a beard, now.

JAMES DONOVAN

And in the end I would only see him at 4
in the morning, for thirty seconds,
sitting on my cooler, looking at pics of
dudes who all seemed like... douchebags. I...
I told him "You're welcome here at
regular hours, for regular activities,
diner, watching the game", but um...
(emotional)
You know... My dad died when I was four.
His dad left when he was 5.

ZOOM-IN on a PHOTO of AMY, JAMES and JOHN lying on the beach, in the sand, in swimming suits, enjoying the sun.

JAMES DONOVAN (V.O.)

So... basically, we were brothers, and...

HD FOOTAGE : During SUNSET, on a beach, JIMMY's carrying AMY on his shoulders and JOHN runs to the sea, yelling like a crazy. They all end up in the water.

JAMES DONOVAN (V.O.)

*When you've known someone your entire
life, you just... let them be, as long as...
they're happy. As long as... no one hurts
them.*

101 INT. KITCHEN - SUBURBAN HOUSE - PENNSYLVANIA

101

A WOMAN in her SIXTIES is smoking cigarettes in her living room, having whiskey. An OLDER ONE is standing in the back, alone, looking lost.

WOMAN 1

I used to babysit for the Donovans every once in a while. Charming boys. But Johnny was taking lots of pills, already.
(offering)
Cigarettes? Ice cream, maybe?
(turns around to the older lady)
I told you to sit down!

102 INT. VIDEOSTORE - PENNSYLVANIA

102

A 40-something VIDEOSTORE OWNER stands behind her counter.

VIDEOSTORE OWNER

He came to rent films. Stole one every once in a while but I didn't care. His mom sends me signed copies now, sells real well.

103 INT. LIVING ROOM - DONOVAN HOUSE - DAY

103

GRACE DONOVAN is standing in front a small, weird "sanctuary". A cavity, in the wall, behind the PIANO, where she made her son his own private cemetery, à la Dia de los Muertos : LIT CANDLES, FRAMED FAMILY PICTURES, DECORATIONS, AWARDS, COLORFUL GIZMOS...

GRACE DONOVAN

There it is. I call it my J spot. Faith tells me it's vulgar, but it's a joke! John punched a hole right there once. Dug his own grave, hahahahahahaha...

104 INT. CORRIDOR - SECOND FLOOR - DONOVAN HOUSE - DAY

104

GRACE DONOVAN is putting clean TOWELS and SHEETS in a CLOSET, looking at the camera while doing her stuff.

GRACE DONOVAN

Everybody here sends me articles - well, used to - I kept saying, anything you read, you see, send it, I put it in the scrapbook. And, Corey, my hairdresser over at Paris Coiffure Him & Her, sent me this Time piece one day, and it said : *Donovan, the man who invented himself*. I thought that was... good.

105 INT. CORRIDOR - RUN-DOWN BUILDING - DAY

105

A HAND knocks on a DOOR. An EMACIATED, VAGUELY DRESSED WOMAN opens, freezes in front of the CAMERA. She then smiles, surprised. We can hear her say : "John F. Donovan? Really!?"

GRACE DONOVAN (V.O.)

But it took time before he invented himself, though.
(MORE)

GRACE DONOVAN (V.O.) (CONT'D)

When he left - when he was 17 - he moved into a dump and kept writing to me about the crack dealers who lived "upstairs".

106

INT. JOHN'S OLD STUDIO - RUN-DOWN BUILDING - CONTINUOUS

106

The CAMERA unsteadily "walks" down the corridor with cheap wallpaper. A BABY is playing on the kitchen floor. A MAN watching TV suddenly stands, intrigued by the cameras. A conversation follows. He buttons his shirt up. The place isn't much to look at: dirty, tiny, suffocating. The mother takes the child in her arms.

GRACE DONOVAN (V.O.)

It was a very dirty place that um... I went there once, ONCE, and God... Ha ha... I walked in there, had to light a candle to find my way! They boiled water on the stove to take their showers. La vida loca!

CUT TO:

AMY BOSWORTH

We never "met". We were born together. Same hospital, same month, same street. We were best friends all of elementary school, then ignored each other for basically all high school, and then he asked me to prom and... He was King, of course. I was not. Queen. Then we moved to New York, got married and... the rest is on Wikipedia...

ZOOM-IN on a PHOTO of John and Amy in a Hotel suite, somewhere South. Amy's looking at the camera, talking to the photographer - a friend, from the look - and John is peeking through the organza curtains, looking out, as if a crowd had gathered in the street.

HD FOOTAGE : JOHN and AMY are somewhere on the East Coast (Maine, probably), celebrating, outside, on a cliff where a half-fancy set has been installed. Far away, this ocean can be made out in shades of blue. The sky is grey, and it's windy. GRACE and JIMMY surround them. Amy POPS a bottle of champagne. It overflows.

CUT TO:

ZOOM-IN a PHOTO of AMY upside-down, on a couch, screaming her head off as if chased after, or tickled. She looks happy.

ZOOM-IN on another PHOTO of JOHN and AMY in a small bath. They're kissing each other, hugging in scissors.

CUT TO:

GRACE DONOVAN

I think the... idea... was to just get away from... home, get away from... ha ha... me, I dunno. But just, get away.

DIRECTOR (O.S.)

Would you have stopped him? Had you known?

Grace looks at the director, amused.

EXT. STREET - NEW YORK - DAY

JOHN is walking in SLOW-MOTION, his back to us, twisting his CAR KEYS with his finger nonchalantly.

GRACE DONOVAN (V.O.)

*Would have I stopped him? No one could
"STOP" John. Especially not his mother.*

AMY BOSWORTH (V.O.)

Especially not his wife.

JAMES DONOVAN (V.O.)

Especially not NO FUCKING BODY.

107

INT. MAXWELL'S - DAY

107

JOHN enters, heads straight for the bar. MAXWELL turns around. He says hi to the REGULARS.

JOHN F. DONOVAN

Wilson, Barry.

John turns to Max, at the back of the kitchen:

JOHN F. DONOVAN (CONT'D)

Max, I have a big order for you, man.
Espressos to go.

MAXWELL

How many?

JOHN F. DONOVAN

85?

MAXWELL

Allah!

SMASH CUT TO :

[Music : *Silent Machine* by Cat Power]

108

EXT. MOVIE SET - DAY

108

(SLOW MOTION) JOHN walks in heroically, holding two TRAYS OF ESPRESSOS. Next to him, WILL JOHNSON JR. John walks past security with a WINK and a PLEA for SECRECY - needless to say, he CHARMS his way through.

John first runs into a WOMAN, with her back to us - she's on her cell phone. She turns around - it's BARBARA FISHER. She doesn't get off her call, but accepts an ESPRESSO with a knowing SMIRK. John KISSES her cheek. He introduces Will to her. They meet.

CUT TO:

109

INT. CAFETERIA - ST GEORGE ACADEMY - DAY

109

(SLOW MOTION) From BEHIND we follow a young man, pushing through double doors, into the school CAFETERIA. It's RUPERT. He takes a TRAY and waits in line to get his lunch. Head bowed, he is doing everything he can to go UNNOTICED.

CUT TO:

110 **INT. MOVIE SET - SAME**

110

(SLOW MOTION) JOHN is serving ESPRESSOS to the crew. He approaches a group of GRIPS (among them BIG BILLY - we'll meet him again later). The crew is very appreciative of John's gesture, and John could not be happier with their response. He's just happy to show off in front of WILL, who's talking to everybody - he's a natural opportunist.

CUT TO:

111 **INT. CAFETERIA - ST GEORGE ACADEMY - SAME**

111

(SLOW MOTION) RUPERT, his TRAY now full of food, is trying to find a SEAT in the loud, boisterous room. He spots an empty CHAIR. As he approaches, another KID motions that it's TAKEN. Rupert moves away.

CUT TO:

112 **INT. MOVIE SET - SAME**

112

(SLOW MOTION) JOHN has arrived at the SHOOTING SET where, among others, his leading lady in the movie (SARAH GADON) is shooting an emotional scene. John saunters onto the set.

Sarah is annoyed for a moment, but even she can't ignore John's obvious good-will. She KISSES him on the CHEEK as she takes an ESPRESSO. John, again, introduces WILL, who kisses Sarah's hand.

CUT TO:

113 **INT. CAFETERIA - ST GEORGE ACADEMY - SAME**

113

RUPERT sits ALONE at a table. We watch as CEDRIC (a bully) walks past him and casually, aggressively SMACK the BACK OF HIS HEAD. Other kids follow suit. Rupert ignores them all, never looking up from his food.

CUT TO:

114 **EXT. MOVIE SET - LATER**

114

BARBARA FISHER, still on the phone, is riding a SEGWAY, keeping pace with JOHN and his TRAINER, who are jogging around the studio.

BARBARA FISHER

Who's that kid? Another intern from NYU?

JOHN F. DONOVAN

Will. He's very talented.

BARBARA FISHER

No way! Back to me ; Michael Mann wants an answer today-

JOHN F. DONOVAN

Barbara, you gotta take a look at his demo-

TRAINER

Keep pace, Johnny-

John speeds up.

BARBARA FISHER

Today. Michael Mann. Today.
And Lorne called again.

JOHN F. DONOVAN

Barbara, his demo-

BARBARA FISHER

Stop saying my fucking name and stop
talking about that fucking Will Thomson
Hall, you're sure you don't want to host
SNL?

JOHN F. DONOVAN

Will Johnson Jr. I'm 100% positive. I'm
NOT funny.

115

INT. MOVIE SET - LATER

115

JOHN is now seated, getting touches done on a large NECK TATTOO by two
female make-up artists. BARBARA is still next to him.

BARBARA FISHER

Variety loved it.

JOHN F. DONOVAN

The Times hated it.

BARBARA FISHER

But she liked you-

JOHN F. DONOVAN

Did she?

BARBARA FISHER

She always does and god bless Manohla
Dargis, once she makes up her mind she
will not change it. And everyone in the
business reads Variety, Johnny.

JOHN F. DONOVAN

I mean the real world. In the real world
no one likes it.

BARBARA FISHER

And in the real world, the tracking says
you've got a 40 million dollar opening
weekend, so get some perspective, honey.

John looks dubious.

JOHN F. DONOVAN

40 million dollars and there's a famine
in Eritrea. I can't tell if it's ironic
or tragic.

BARBARA FISHER

That's good. Say it Thursday on *Good
Morning America*.

JOHN F. DONOVAN

Can you take a look at Will's demo for
me, Barbs please, he deserves it-

BARBARA FISHER

John, you wanna know what watching a demo makes me wanna do, it makes me wanna vomit on my computer screen and shit on it! I'm not a gold-digger, I can't just represent any fucking kid you pick up on the street-

JOHN F. DONOVAN

No, he's in a movie. An indie. Called *At Night, The City*.

BARBARA FISHER

At Night A City?

JOHN F. DONOVAN

No, *At Night*... pause... *the city*.

BARBARA FISHER

Ugh. Sounds like a hit.

JOHN F. DONOVAN

It's in Farsi.

116

INT. JOHN'S TRAILER - LATER

116

JOHN is doing sit ups, his TRAINER counts reps. BARBARA is sending e-mails on her Blackberry as she starts talking:

BARBARA FISHER

One more thing.

TRAINER

48, 49, keep going-

BARBARA FISHER

Paradigm is gonna drop Amy.

John stops his sit-ups.

JOHN F. DONOVAN

What? How do you know? Why?

Barbara gives him a look - John gets it, he knows why.

JOHN F. DONOVAN (CONT'D)

When are they gonna tell her?

BARBARA FISHER

Yesterday.

JOHN F. DONOVAN

Why didn't she call me?

BARBARA FISHER

That one's for your shrink.

117

INT. CLASSROOM - ST GEORGE ACADEMY - DAY

117

The SCHOOL BELL RINGS. Kids start getting up and rushing out. MRS. MCQUILLEN is yelling after them.

MRS MCQUILLEN

Everybody, I want to remind you that next week your presentations are due-

KIDS start moaning. RUPERT, his eyes never having left the floor, slinks into his chair and quietly puts his books in his schoolbags.

MRS MCQUILLEN (CONT'D)

On Monday! And I would remind you, that the object you bring in must - must! - have emotional significance to you and your family in REAL life! Don't tell me about your weekend at Hogwarts! Cedric!

118

EXT. SCHOOL YARD - ST GEORGE ACADEMY - LATER

118

RUPERT is sitting by himself, under a CHESTNUT tree, running his lines, headphones plugged into his ears. From across the courtyard, CEDRIC and four of his friends approach.

CEDRIC (O.S.)

Allo, little girl.

Rupert lifts up his eyes.

119

EXT. ST GEORGE ACADEMY - LATER

119

RUPERT is sitting under the stoop of his school's entrance. It's raining, and it's clearly late - there are no other children around. Rupert is reading over his SIDES for an audition. Rupert's eyes are red and puffy from crying - his nose is bleeding a little. MRS MCQUILLEN emerges from inside the school, armed with an umbrella.

MRS MCQUILLEN

Rupert! What are you still doing here?

RUPERT TURNER

My mum's late.

MRS MCQUILLEN

Oh. What happened to your face?

RUPERT TURNER

I fell.

Mrs. McQuillen sighs, Adeshly.

120

INT. MRS MCQUILLEN'S CAR - LATER

120

Mrs McQuillen's car pulls up outside RUPERT'S HOUSE. The driveway is EMPTY. MRS MCQUILLEN lets the car IDLE for a moment. It is POURING RAIN. RUPERT is sitting next to his teacher.

RUPERT TURNER

"Begging your pardon, ma'am"

MRS MCQUILLEN

"I abhor children begging, it's why I left India".

RUPERT TURNER

"Pardon, ma'am".

MRS MCQUILLEN

"Stand child! Stand and announce yourself!"

RUPERT TURNER

"I'm, I'm Harry, ma'am and, um..."

MRS MCQUILLEN

"Will this take much longer?"

(breaking character)

Such a nasty woman! I love her.

RUPERT TURNER

(also breaking character)

You're good.

MRS MCQUILLEN

I'm terrible. Come on now-

(back in character)

"Stand child! Stand and announce yourself!"

RUPERT TURNER

"I'm Harry, ma'am and, um..."

MRS MCQUILLEN

"Will this take much longer?"

RUPERT TURNER

"...And I'm looking for my father! Ma'am."

Behind them, SAM'S CAR pulls into the driveway. SAM emerges, frantic. She spots Mrs McQuillen's car and rushes over to it, getting SOAKED by the RAIN. She looks through the passenger window and sees RUPERT. She feigns an exaggerated sigh. Rupert pulls his hoodie down on his face, hiding his injuries. Rupert opens the window.

SAM TURNER

Where have you been? I've been worried sick.

RUPERT TURNER

You were late, so Mrs McQuillen gave me a lift home.

MRS MCQUILLEN

No trouble, I stayed late for some marking myself, so-

Sam eyes Mrs McQuillen suspiciously, but offers an unconvincing smile.

SAM TURNER

(to Rupert)

Go inside, darling.

RUPERT TURNER

Thanks, Mrs McQuillen.

Rupert exits the car, but SAM stays there, staring at Mrs McQuillen for a moment.

MRS MCQUILLEN

It's no trouble dropping him, I don't live very far away.

Sam nods.

MRS MCQUILLEN (CONT'D)

You know, I teach Rupert English in the afternoon's, so-

SAM TURNER

Oh, I know exactly who you are, Mrs McQuillen. Thanks for looking after Rupert.

MRS MCQUILLEN

My pleasure, Mrs Turner.

But Sam has already forcefully closed the door.

121

EXT. RUPERT AND SAM'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

121

RUPERT is standing on his BALCONY, taking the mail out of the mail box. SAM is running across the lawn, through the RAIN. She unlocks the door while Rupert looks through the letters and bills.

SAM TURNER

Why couldn't you just wait for me?

She opens the door and heads inside. But Rupert isn't paying attention. In his hands is a letter, and the return address is the NEW YORK CITY. He folds and hides the letter in his pocket.

BOSAM TURNER (O.S.)

Come in the bathroom, I'll clean your face. And please don't give the "I fell" bollocks.

122

INT. BATHROOM - RUPERT'S HOUSE - LATER

122

Sam is disinfecting the cuts on Rupert's face. She is shaking her head, disappointed.

SAM TURNER

Humility, humility, humility.

Rupert rolls his eyes.

SAM TURNER (CONT'D)

Little less eye rolling would be nice.

RUPERT TURNER

You don't even know what happened. You weren't even there.

SAM TURNER

I can just imagine.

Rupert sighs.

SAM TURNER (CONT'D)

Rupert, if you don't show off, if you don't provoke people, then they will leave you alone. Life's as simple as that.

RUPERT TURNER

Mrs McQuillen says we could call the police-

SAM TURNER

Mrs McQuillen should write a book.

RUPERT TURNER

You're not even going to call Cedric's parents?

Sam gives Rupert a long "as if it was gonna make it any better" stare. Rupert looks down, knowingly.

SAM TURNER

I can't fight your fights for you, Rupert.

RUPERT TURNER

That's so unfair!

SAM TURNER

If someone told you that life was fair, they were lying to you.

Sam puts a bandage on Rupert's face, takes his finger and places it there.

SAM TURNER (CONT'D)

Hold that.

123

INT. JOHN'S PENTHOUSE - NIGHT

123

JOHN gingerly, quietly, opens the door to his apartment. He carries TWO FULL PLASTIC BAGS inside and pauses as he closes the door behind him.

JOHN F. DONOVAN

(calling out)

Amy?

He gets no response, but the lights are on: clearly someone is home. The door clicks shut behind him.

JOHN F. DONOVAN (CONT'D)

Ames? I'm home.

John starts to walk through his house. He passes through the LIVING ROOM, the DINING ROOM and, finally into the:

124

INT. KITCHEN - JOHN'S PENTHOUSE - NIGHT

124

JOHN enters the kitchen - it seems to be empty. He puts the bags of food down on the counter.

JOHN F. DONOVAN

Amy?

Getting no response, John starts to take the CHINESE FOOD BOXES out of the bag, he lays out two sets of chopsticks and spoons. He goes to the fridge and gets himself a beer. As he takes a sip, a LIGHT pops on at the back of the room. AMY is sitting on a chair, with a glass of WHITE WINE.

AMY BOSWORTH

Checking in, Mr. Donovan?

JOHN F. DONOVAN

Jesus, you scared me, Marlon Brando!

Amy downs her wine.

JOHN F. DONOVAN (CONT'D)

So... How are you?

Amy STANDS and approaches the counter. Something in John's voice has hardened her. She refills her wine glass.

AMY BOSWORTH

Where? When? Who? What? How?

John smiles.

JOHN F. DONOVAN

No why?

AMY BOSWORTH

I thought we didn't do "why", John.

JOHN F. DONOVAN

I was at the hotel and then, uh...
I got your mushu pork.

Amy nods.

AMY BOSWORTH

How's your cousin?

JOHN F. DONOVAN

What?

AMY BOSWORTH

How's Jimmy?

Silent beat. Amy sips her wine with superiority.

AMY BOSWORTH (CONT'D)

Your mother says hi. She's so crazy - she still treats me like I'm part of your family.

JOHN F. DONOVAN

Come on, Amy.

Amy looks at the CHINESE TAKE OUT John's scattered on the counter. She takes the box of mushu pork, picks up chopsticks and starts eating while staring at John.

AMY BOSWORTH

So when were you gonna tell me?

JOHN F. DONOVAN

Tell you what?

Amy grabs a piece of pork between her chopsticks and casually flicks it at John, who ducks, surprised, a stupid smile on his face.

JOHN F. DONOVAN (CONT'D)

I just heard today, I'm so sorry Ames.

Amy let out a cruel burst of laughter and flicks another piece of pork at him.

AMY BOSWORTH

Today?

Another piece of pork.

AMY BOSWORTH (CONT'D)

Today?!

And another.

AMY BOSWORTH (CONT'D)

Bullshit!

John moves away, trying to avoid the line of fire.

JOHN F. DONOVAN

It's not bullshit, Ames!

AMY BOSWORTH

Barbara only knew today? Fuck that, John, fuck that hard. Barbara knew last week. Barbara knew before they even decided!

JOHN F. DONOVAN

Amy, I'm not Barbara, I only know things when she tells me, and she told me today. I'm really sorry-

AMY BOSWORTH

You're so sorry you didn't come to my opening because you're EMBARRASSED of me? Because you're embarrassed to have such a shitty actor for a wife? Or maybe you're just embarrassed to have a wife at all?

John walks back towards Amy, trying to calm things down.

JOHN F. DONOVAN

Listen, honey!

AMY BOSWORTH

Don't honey, me, asshole!

JOHN F. DONOVAN

I'm in a good mood, right now, and we should discuss this tomorrow-

Amy throws more mushu pork at John, who lifts his hands to protect himself from it while getting closer to the kitchen counter.

AMY BOSWORTH

No, no, let's discuss this right fucking now-

John quickly grabs a box of Chinese food.

JOHN F. DONOVAN

Amy, I'm warning you-

AMY BOSWORTH

Yes, please warn me, please-

John loses it. He starts shouting like an animal and throws the content of his entire box to Amy, who's scared, suddenly.

JOHN F. DONOVAN

I'M IN A FUCKING GOOD MOOD RIGHT NOW,
OKAY, AND I DON'T WANT YOU TO RUIN IT!
THIS IS A GOOD DAY! THIS IS A GREAT
FUCKING DAY, ALRIGHT!
(MORE)

JOHN F. DONOVAN (CONT'D)

SO WHY DON'T YOU SHUT THE FUCK UP AND EAT
YOUR GOD DAMN FOOD AND WE'LL TALK IN THE
MORNING WHEN YOU'RE NOT SOOO FUCKING
DRUNK!!!!

Amy looks at John, aghast. He is panting heavily.

125 **INT. ROOM - JOHN'S PENTHOUSE - LATER**

125

JOHN is fucking AMY doggie style. They are completely lost in their
wild love-making. They're almost unrecognizable.

126 **INT. ROOM - JOHN'S PENTHOUSE - LATER**

126

AMY is smoking out the window, wrapped in a white sheet. JOHN is still
in the bed.

AMY BOSWORTH

You don't really want me to come.

JOHN F. DONOVAN

Yes, I do.

Amy tosses her cigarette out the window. She pauses a moment, then
looks at John, almost smiling.

AMY BOSWORTH

Your mom invited me anyway. 13 times.

127 **EXT. GRACE DONOVAN'S HOUSE - PENNSYLVANIA - MOMENTS LATER**

127

DING DONG. JOHN is waiting on the porch, a BOTTLE OF CHAMPAGNE behind
his back, AMY by his side. GRACE opens the door. She screams, over the
moon, over the top. On a drunk scale of 1 to 10, she's a well-deserved
6, on her way to a 7. She jumps in John's arms, still screaming.

JOHN F. DONOVAN

Sorry we're late, we couldn't find a
decent liquor store...

GRACE DONOVAN

Oh, honey, I'm so glad you could make it!
Well you sure know how to make your
mother happy!

John wants to withdraw from his mom "claws", but she won't let him go.
She kisses him in the neck and on the ears. Almost on the mouth.

JOHN F. DONOVAN

Mom, lemme go... You know I hate it on the
neck.

GRACE DONOVAN

(kissing his neck)

Mouah, mouah, mmm, you smell good, honey,
is that *Swiss Army*? And Amy look at you -
I haven't seen you in forever!

AMY BOSWORTH

Hi Grace.

GRACE DONOVAN

So sweet, that perf-

JOHN F. DONOVAN

(taking off his coat)

I've stopped Swiss Army, ma, you know that.

GRACE DONOVAN

What? No, what the- No way! When?

JOHN F. DONOVAN

When I left puberty-

GRACE DONOVAN

Shut up and gimme a hug you look so beautiful! Oh you both smell so good I could eat you. FAIIITH! Guess who's here?

John is uncomfortable with such fondness. He withdraws.

JOHN F. DONOVAN

(reproachful)

And what's YOUR perfume tonight, ma? What am I smelling?

GRACE DONOVAN

L'air du temps, of course! Did you buy some for me on Canal Street-

JOHN F. DONOVAN

Mom, I told you, those perfumes on Canal Street all spoiled decades ago-

GRACE DONOVAN

No one can tell!

COUSINS, AUNTS, etc., all happy to see John, arrive. AUNT FAITH comes out of the basement with TWO BOTTLES OF WINE. She's a fifty-something brunette with loving features, her hair similar to her sister's, with bleached highlights. She screams when she sees John and Amy.

AUNT FAITH

Jesus, Mary and Joseph! Look what the cat dragged in!

UNCLE PATRICK

Are those GHOSTS!

UNCLE STEVE

Who are these people!

AMY BOSWORTH

We're tonight's entertainment!

Aunt Faith goes to hug them. John puts his arms around her and lifts her. She screams like a child. Grace is looking at them, noticing the affection. JIMMY, sitting on the stairs with a glass of white wine, mockingly raises his glass to John, who's trapped. Jimmy enjoys the situation. John winks at him.

AUNT DEBORAH

Oh, Lord! What's the occasion! Grace I thought they couldn't make it!

GRACE DONOVAN

Well you know him! I bet he did it on purpose! "Look at me, look at me", haha!
(MORE)

GRACE DONOVAN (CONT'D)

But honestly, has John ever made it
anywhere on time? The story of his life,
haha! And his father's!

UNCLES are sitting in the dining room, they didn't come to welcome
John. They lazily raise their glasses. John and Amy wave hello.

128

INT. DINING ROOM - GRACE DONOVAN'S HOUSE - LATER

128

The whole family is sitting around the dinner table. GRACE walks in
with a casserole of her notorious BEEF BOURGUIGNON.

UNCLE PATRICK

Fee, Fi, Fo, Fum, I smell the blood of a
Beef Bourguignon!

The entire family coos with delight. Grace puts the beef on the table.
Everybody starts serving themselves. Everybody speaks at the same time.

GRACE DONOVAN

By popular request!
(heading back to the kitchen)
John's not having any, though!

John rolls his eyes.

GRACE DONOVAN (CONT'D)

(to John, tossing a Marie
Callender's in the microwave)
I'm heating something up for you, honey!

JOHN F. DONOVAN

Mom, I... ha ha... I told you not to make
anything special-

GRACE DONOVAN

Oh trust me it's nothing special! It's
all I got left. Bolognese with broccoli
and pancetta.

UNCLE PATRICK

Oh oh oh, pancetta!

John mouths Grace's next words to Jimmy as she speaks them :

GRACE DONOVAN

Like when you used to play hockey! Faith,
tell me if there's enough salt, cause I
don't salt a lot!

AUNT FAITH

Sodium is bad for you heart! And heart
disease is the number one killer of
American women!

JAMES DONOVAN

You can do it, Sodium!

John laughs.

AUNT FAITH

Oh, you!

AMY BOSWORTH

You're an asshole, Jimmy.

JAMES DONOVAN

Sit on my face, Amy.

AMY BOSWORTH

And call me demeaning names!

JAMES DONOVAN (CONT'D)

And call me demeaning names!

AUNT FAITH

Forgive 'em, for they don't know...

JAMES DONOVAN

Can you please stop speaking to invisible people?

UNCLE PATRICK

Do you ever think about hockey, John? Any regrets?

JAMES DONOVAN

Yeah, Johnny, do you regret the life that's brought you fortune and fame beyond your wildest dreams?

AMY BOSWORTH

Cause I mean you could have a concussion right now! Think about it.

Uncle Patrick laughs but doesn't seem to know why.

UNCLE PATRICK

So do you regret it?

JAMES DONOVAN

He got hurt, Pat, Jesus Christ.

GRACE DONOVAN

Oh come on, John! You were a very good hockey player! You're naturally athletic! Faith?

AUNT FAITH

Yes, needs salt. Don't worry, I'll get it. Amy?

Amy gets up and heads for the kitchen.

JOHN F. DONOVAN

I didn't give up on hockey, ma.

GRACE DONOVAN

Jeff always had bad knees. Another gift from your father.

Jimmy, Amy and John exchange a glance.

GRACE DONOVAN (CONT'D)

Everyone's good for wine? More wine, I think!

Grace leaves the dining room. Everybody starts eating. John's still waiting for his food.

GRACE DONOVAN (O.S.) (CONT'D)

John, I need to put it back in, it's still too cold! Ugh! You're screwing up the timing for my sauce!

John sighs.

UNCLE STEVE

Tell me, Johnny... I think you're shooting something right now, aren't you?

JOHN F. DONOVAN

Uh, yes, I am.

UNCLE STEVE

Well, what uh... is that going well? What is it about?

JOHN F. DONOVAN

Uh... prison break story.

She drops it in front of him and starts uncorking bottles. John stares at his meal pathetically. James smiles.

JAMES DONOVAN

Bon appétit!

JOHN F. DONOVAN

Prick.

UNCLE STEVE

Ouh... another big hit in store?

JOHN F. DONOVAN

I don't know... I'd like to focus on uh... less commercial films, I think... I might actually do the next Gus Van Sant, nothing's official but uh... it bodes well.

GRACE DONOVAN

Is that the homosexual you met in Portugal?

JOHN F. DONOVAN

We met in Marrakech, mom. And don't... use... epithets, he is a director, that's it. It's like you're just looking for an opportunity to say the word "homosexual"-

JIMMY FALLON

(raising his glass)

Homosexual!

GRACE DONOVAN

And what about the Michael Nan project?

JOHN F. DONOVAN

It's confirmed- Mann, mom. You're mixing up food and human beings again.

GRACE DONOVAN

(goes back to the kitchen)

Yeah, yeah, yeah! Never mind! I'm this, I'm that, I got Alzheimer's, I don't listen, I got it, I'm stupid.

JOHN F. DONOVAN

(to Jimmy)

I'm excited about that one.

JAMES DONOVAN

Michael Mann? *Heat*? *Miami Vice*?

JOHN F. DONOVAN

That's him. Mom will you sit with us instead of uselessly pacing in the kitchen!

JAMES DONOVAN

That's fucking cool, bro, congratulations!

AUNT FAITH

Language.

James and John high five. Everybody carries on with their conversations, eating their food.

AUNT FAITH (CONT'D)

One of my friends saw *Harvest Moon*! Says it's very violent! It's in space, right?

UNCLE PATRICK

How do you shoot that? Space?

JAMES DONOVAN

I think they go there, Pat. That's why it's so expensive.

Family laughs.

129

INT. KITCHEN - GRACE DONOVAN'S HOUSE - SAME

129

The women, GRACE, FAITH and AMY are getting dessert and coffee ready. Grace HUMS to herself - she's drunker. There's a newly opened bottle of wine on the counter.

GRACE DONOVAN

I have to do the basement, I HAVE to.

AUNT FAITH

Well, I don't know about have to-

GRACE DONOVAN

I'm not moving, Faith. There was a time when Johnny-

(calling out, to be overheard)

When JOHNNY used to say he was going to buy me a condo in Florida, but I'm not waiting for that anymore. So I'm gonna renovate!

AMY BOSWORTH

Well he bought you this house, Gracie!

GRACE DONOVAN

Look around you! Are we in Florido? Florida? I don't think so.

AUNT FAITH

Oh, Grace. Well, you're always welcome at our cottage, honey, you know that.

John enters the kitchen with a stack of DVDs and photos he has signed. He keeps signing others as the scene goes on.

JOHN F. DONOVAN

Did I hear someone whisper my name in here? And who's Donna?

GRACE DONOVAN

The girl from the video store. She always asks about you. Oh, and her daughter Danielle, no Dora, no Dorothy, I think it's Dorothy, says hello.

AUNT FAITH

Johnny used to love our cottage. Remember when you used to go fishing with Jimmy?

GRACE DONOVAN

I'm gonna tell Dorothy you say hello too, ok?

JOHN F. DONOVAN

Mom, Faith is talking to me- yes, whatever.

(to Faith)

Of course. I loved fishing. Still do.

GRACE DONOVAN

What is it to you, Johnny? Hmm?

JOHN F. DONOVAN

Ma, you're crazy, I never- yes, say hello for me, I beg you.

GRACE DONOVAN

Thank you.

AMY BOSWORTH

*(seeing Johnny truly exhausted
by Grace, trying to change
the mood)*

Johnny just liked getting on a boat with Jimmy and smoking pot.

JOHN F. DONOVAN

Yes, fishing. Can I help with anything, ma?

GRACE DONOVAN

You can help by returning your Aunt's calls every once in a while.

AUNT FAITH

Oh, Grace, it's fine-

GRACE DONOVAN

No it isn't. It's just not.

JOHN F. DONOVAN

I'm very sorry, Faith, it's been a zoo-

AUNT FAITH

Nothing to apologize for, Johnny-

GRACE DONOVAN

It's rude! It's not how- I... It's not... it's the least of things to...

Grace goes over to the wine bottle, realizes she has no glass, so turns to the cabinet.

Johnny quickly grabs the BOTTLE and puts it in the fridge. Faith notices and nods to him - you're doing the right thing.

GRACE DONOVAN (CONT'D)

You were better raised than that by me.
Much better.

Grace turns around, with a wine glass, but the bottle is gone. She's confused for a moment.

AUNT FAITH

Is that coffee ready, honey?

AMY BOSWORTH

Almost.

JOHN F. DONOVAN

Mmm, coffee sounds good.

GRACE DONOVAN

You better not give Steve-uh JOHNNY any coffee!

Grace bursts out laughing, in on her own private joke. Everyone else in the kitchen gets more and more uncomfortable. John knows where this is going.

AMY BOSWORTH

(to John)

Do you want coffee?

JOHN F. DONOVAN

Sure, yeah.

GRACE DONOVAN

It's not gonna be fancy! No fancy coffee here!

JOHN F. DONOVAN

Will you fucking drop it?

GRACE DONOVAN

Faith, do you know that Steve-uh Johnny once bought a coffee machine in France - no! - in Italy... that cost twenty thousand dollars!

(doing a bad Italian accent)

Twenty thousand dollars?! You could buy the Vatican!

AUNT FAITH

You've told me, Grace.

GRACE DONOVAN

Twenty thousand dollars! That was the down payment on the house on Mulligan street in 1971!

JOHN F. DONOVAN

It wasn't twenty thousand dollars, ma, it was just an espresso machine.

GRACE DONOVAN

Espresso! Is that coffee for famous people?

AUNT FAITH

Grace-

Grace lifts the COFFEE tray but loses her balance. Amy catches it just in time.

AMY BOSWORTH

I got it, Grace!

GRACE DONOVAN

(heading to the living room)

Alright, gang! Who wants some Java!

Grace leaves, teetering. John and Faith exchange a look. Stephanie looks at John with compassion, and follows after Grace.

JOHN F. DONOVAN

(to Faith)

Is it me?

Faith smiles sadly and moves to John. She takes his face in her hands and squeezes. John smiles.

AUNT FAITH

Do the fish.

John makes a FISH FACE.

AUNT FAITH (CONT'D)

Jazz hands, please-

JOHN F. DONOVAN

No-

AUNT FAITH

Jazz hands!

John smiles and does JAZZ HANDS like stardust falling from the sky. His Aunt laughs. From the living room we HEAR: A CRASH and a YELP. John and Faith both look:

THEIR POV reveals : GRACE, who's fallen to the floor in the living room, and in doing so, knocked most of the contents of AMY's TRAY to the ground.

John sighs and heads to the living room.

130

INT. RUPERT'S ROOM - RUPERT'S HOUSE - NIGHT

130

RUPERT is wearing a "MINOR'S LAMP" on his forehead, reading at night. He's going through LETTERS that all starts with Dear Rupert... and are signed John x. We slowly DOLLY IN on him as he seems to be making an important decision.

131

EXT. DINING ROOM - GRACE DONOVAN'S HOUSE - NIGHT

131

Darkness has fallen outside Grace's house, but clearly, inside, the party goes on.

132

INT. LIVING ROOM - GRACE'S HOUSE - LATER

132

Everyone is seated, drinking COFFEES and WHISKEYs. GRACE is sitting on JIMMY's LAP, making everyone uncomfortable - especially FAITH. AMY is seated on the piano bench, JOHN stands next to her, putting CARDS and ACCESSORIES back in the Taboo box. The useless UNCLES and their equally-useless WIVES are chattering away.

AUNT FAITH

Well, I think I need a glass of water.

Grace hears the tone of voice and looks over at her.

JOHN F. DONOVAN

That's a good idea. Ma, why don't we hop off Jimmy and help Auntie Faith get everybody a glass of water?

GRACE DONOVAN

Don't patronize me, John Markus-

JOHN F. DONOVAN

I am absolutely not patronizing you, MOM. I'll help you, Faith.

John swiftly follows Faith.

JOHN F. DONOVAN (CONT'D)

Yo, Faith, what the hell? What's wrong with her, has it ever been so bad?

AUNT FAITH

(emotional)

No, I'm... She's nervous because you're here Johnny, and she just pushes the wrong buttons. Just help her, please.

Jimmy is trying to get out from under his aunt, but Grace won't let go of his face - she is being very inappropriate, giving him kisses on the neck.

JOHN F. DONOVAN

Anyone? Water?

UNCLE PATRICK

Water? What are we? At church?

JOHN F. DONOVAN

(to his uncles wives)

Ladies, do you need anything?

GRACE DONOVAN

We asked for another round of whiskey, are you deaf?!

Grace covers her mouth with her hand, amused - no pun was intended.

JOHN F. DONOVAN

Ma, maybe everyone doesn't want a drink, it's late!

GRACE DONOVAN

Pat, get the whiskey glasses!

AMY BOSWORTH

I think we've all had enough.

UNCLE STEVE

We're all grown-ups here.

AMY BOSWORTH

Are we?

STEVE'S WIFE

I'm good, Grace.

GRACE DONOVAN

Whiskey for everyone but Anne and John -
boo!

(to John, she "whispers")

You shouldn't drink with all your
medication, anyway.

JAMES DONOVAN

Aunt Grace, I think we should probably
call it a night-

Uncle Pat has the glasses ready. Grace is pouring.

GRACE DONOVAN

Why?

UNCLE PATRICK

There's still whiskey to drink, Jimmy.

JAMES DONOVAN

Thanks for having my back, Pat.

UNCLE PATRICK

Fuck you.

JAMES DONOVAN

(to John)

Wow.

John is staring at his MOTHER as she pours the whiskey generously. She
spills whiskey on the carpet. John closes his eyes, trying to tolerate
this.

GRACE DONOVAN

Dorothy, your glass! John why don't you
guys sleep here tonight, I'll fix you
some breakfast tomorrow, I've got some
English muffins in the freezer!

JOHN F. DONOVAN

I think we're good.

GRACE DONOVAN

Oh is... is this a hotel night? You guys
know that Johnny looooves to stay at the
hotel, ha ha... Nothing's too much for
Mister Oscar haha! Arrivederci Amore-

UNCLE PATRICK

Primavera!

Faith is back with a glass of water and her coat on her arm. She stands
aside, withdrawn, irritated.

UNCLE STEVE

Lasagna!

AMY BOSWORTH

Guys, come on, Jesus-

UNCLE PATRICK

I thought you guys lived in a billion
dollar Penthouse on top of the Empire
State Building, ha ha-

GRACE DONOVAN

Well yes, Pattie, but Johnny needs some peace every once in a while! PEACE!

JOHN F. DONOVAN

Enough! Mom! Enough!

Faith is crying, she covers her face with her hands.

AUNT FAITH

Alright, I'm going Gracie-

GRACE DONOVAN

John, you don't tell me my night is over, OK, I'm not a child!

JOHN F. DONOVAN

Can you PAY ATTENTION to people, your sister, Jimmy, me, you are holding EVERYBODY hostages with your drunk-

GRACE DONOVAN

EVERYBODY LIKES WHAT THEY HAVE, OK!
EVERYBODY LIKES MY BEEF BOURGUIGNON,
JOHN, EVERYBODY LIKES MY COFFEE,
EVERYBODY LIKES MY APPLE PIE, SO STOP
BEING SUCH A SNOB AND SIT DOWN, AND PARTY
LIKE THE REST OF US, WILL YOU?

JOHN F. DONOVAN

Mom. That's enough. You're embarrassing yourself.

A beat. Grace takes a moment, then gets up slowly from Jimmy's lap.

GRACE DONOVAN

You're right, I'm so sorry, Johnny. I'm an embarrassment. Let's have another drink! This party is not living up to my illustrious son's expectations!

UNCLE PATRICK

(handing John a glass of whiskey)

Here, here, chill out, Brad Pitt!

JOHN F. DONOVAN

Shut the fuck up, Pat.

Uncle Patrick knocks his glass against the table, stands up.

UNCLE PATRICK

You watch your fucking mouth! Jesus Christ, where did you learn to talk to your elders? You don't get to tell me to shut the fuck up and-

(turning on John)

You don't get to talk to your mother that way! When I think of what she put up with, you and your goddamn hockey and that piece of shit you call a father-

John doesn't think twice and punches the wall right beside him, making a huge hole. The plaster collapses around his fist. Everything comes to a halt. Everyone stares at John, who's panting.

CUT TO:

[Music : *Sulk* (Dave Hamelin's Remix) by Trust]

133 **EXT. NEW YORK INTERSTATE HIGHWAY - NIGHT** 133

We are floating lightly as CARS drive up and down the highway. Afar, city lights announce our return to town. We TILT DOWN gracefully, pushing in on a speeding VOLVO, alone in its lane.

134 **INT. ENTRANCE - NIGHTCLUB - NIGHT** 134

(SLOW MOTION) JOHN walks down a dark alley, heading towards TWO BOUNCERS posted before a velvet-curtained entrance. Loud music throbbing and heavy chattering forebode the intense partying that awaits.

135 **EXT. NEW YORK INTERSTATE HIGHWAY - NIGHT** 135

We keep CRANING DOWN on John's Volvo, getting closer and closer to the vehicle.

136 **INT. NIGHTCLUB - NIGHT** 136

JOHN passes the BOUNCERS, who welcome him with a smile and a friendly pat on the shoulder. John walks in the jungle. LASER LIGHTS flash across the room. The pink, mauve BULBS here and there impart a cheap, cheesy feeling to the atmosphere.

137 **EXT. NEW YORK INTERSTATE HIGHWAY - NIGHT** 137

We are now meters away, only, from John's Volvo. We veer off towards the driver's side of the car.

138 **INT. NIGHTCLUB - NIGHT** 138

At the bar, JOHN is taking SHOTS. The BARMAID, blond straightened bangs, stares at him wolfishly. She pours him new SHOTS, motioning that they're on the house, and John does them enthusiastically.

PEOPLE gather around him, asking to take pictures with him. He acquiesces, smiling artificially. BIMBOS and DOUCHEBAGS offer him drinks and ask for autographs. John is drunk, and getting drunker. Men dressed like thugs put their arms around him with disturbing impudence.

CUT TO:

139 **EXT. NEW YORK INTERSTATE HIGHWAY - NIGHT** 139

We stop craning-down as we come nose to nose with JOHN driving, and get closer still to his wounded, bloody KNUCKLES still covered with plaster dust. He's focused on the road. AMY, sitting next to him, worried, is focused on him.

CUT TO:

140 **INT. NIGHTCLUB - NIGHT** 140

(SLOW MOTION) JOHN heads for the dance floor. PEOPLE lose themselves in various moves with their arms in the air, the hands in their hair, drunk or high.

John is drinking a beer. A CUTE BLONDE is dancing smoothly - let's call her STELLA. She looks at John and then turns around, ignoring him.

People take photos of John and text or tweet. He dances with them as he gets closer to the young blond woman.

Another woman is now pouring VODKA down John's opened mouth. Liquor trickles down his face. John is showing off, and he likes it. He sweats as he enters this awkward trance where bliss and melancholy meet.

John shakes his damp hair, splashing people. He takes off his shirt, spins it around. Women scream, men laugh. Stella watches and coldly smiles. John gets closer to her and starts dancing, his back to her. She turns around. They finally look at each other. John chugs his beer savagely. A handsome man - let's call him STANLEY - chimes in. John backs off to avoid a fight. But STANLEY starts dancing with them. Stella stares at John. And Stanley starts dancing with him, looking him in the eye. John avoids the eye line for a bit, until he cannot.

CUT TO:

141 **EXT. BACKSTREET - NIGHT**

141

DOLLY-IN on a typical NYC backstreet: WAITERS are getting the last garbage bags out before they LOCK the doors of restaurants, bars, ending their night shifts. Thick smoke emanates from SEWER GRATES. We are getting closer to an OLD BLACK STATION WAGON whose windows are coated with FROST.

CUT TO:

142 **EXT. STATION WAGON - BACKSTREET - CONTINUOUS**

142

STEAM has created a wall of CONDENSATION on the window. A HAND soon pressed up in passion destroys the perfect design.

143 **I/E. STATION WAGON - BACKSTREET - CONTINUOUS**

143

The hand belongs to JOHN, his eyes are closed, his shirt off. Coming up into frame, from John's lap is STANLEY, also shirtless. John grabs his face and pulls him in for a passionate kiss.

144 **EXT. BACKSTREET - NIGHT**

144

We DOLLY BACK from the scene as the sex carries on.

FADE TO BLACK.

145 **EXT. MANHATTAN - SUNRISE**

145

From a bird's eye view, dawn breaks upon Manhattan.

146 **EXT. BACKSTREET - SUNRISE**

146

Same backstreet ; CLOTHES hung to CLOTHING LINES billow in the morning breeze. Same STATION WAGON, too. Closed doors of various colors and texture line-up on the wall. One EMPLOYEE walks by and opens one, goes inside the restaurant, sets off the alarm system.

147

I/E. STATION WAGON - BACKSTREET - CONTINUOUS

147

JOHN is asleep, lying in the backseat. He looks like a wreck, hungover. He opens his eyes painfully, rubs his face.

John realizes he is alone. Through the frosted windows, he notices someone approaching the car. John is nervous until, STANLEY enters with TWO COFFEES and hands one to John.

STANLEY

Latte?

JOHN F. DONOVAN

Cool. Thanks.

Long, awkward silence. John breaks the ice.

JOHN F. DONOVAN (CONT'D)

So...

Another beat. They both laugh nervously.

JOHN F. DONOVAN (CONT'D)

As you can imagine, this um... is slightly awkward when you're famous... which I'm sure you get...

STANLEY

Sure, man...

JOHN F. DONOVAN

Um... so... yes... um... well, I don't do this very often, but uh... my lawyers told me that I can pay you now and they'll get in touch with you about signing the release later, or... So who should I make the check out to? My lawyer's name is Fefe Rightman.

Stanley is silenced.

148

EXT. BACKSTREET - LATER

148

The STATION WAGON is still parked. Moments later, after what we can only assume to be awkward goodbyes, John exits. The car leaves. John stays alone in the middle of the street.

149

INT. CLASSROOM - ST GEORGE ACADEMY - DAY

149

RUPERT is looking at us in the eye.

RUPERT TURNER

I started to do research on John F. Donovan, and when I discovered that we had several things in common, like the fact that we both don't know our fathers very well and wanted to start acting at a very young age, I decided to write a letter to him. It was rather foolish of me to think he would answer... but he did.

Silence. Mrs McQuillen looks up from her notebook to Rupert, surprised. So does everyone.

CEDRIC

Because you're both gay boys.

Laugh.

MRS MCQUILLEN

Cedric!

RUPERT TURNER

He did. And that is the object I've chosen to talk about. For almost six years now, John F. Donovan and I have been writing to each other about once or twice a month.

Kids laugh. Mrs McQuillen seems disappointed, but she still listens, curious.

RUPERT TURNER (CONT'D)

John tells me about his movie shoots, and the art of cinema, as well as the complexities of it. He tells me everything about premieres, press junkets - a junket is a press conference with a LOT of journalists -, the way he met his wife Amy, and how hard it's been with his mother and how she's reacted to his career. But that was before he became real famous. He never stopped writing ever since. Now, I'm only 11 years old but, later, I'll be like him, and we'll act in movies together. John, but I like to call him J, often quotes Gore Vidal, a great author, critic and essayist, to me: "*Style is knowing who you are.*"

Rupert is getting emotional. He seems so proud and full of hope. Mrs. McQuillen can't help but notice it.

RUPERT TURNER (CONT'D)

Well, John F. Donovan knows exactly who he is, and I know who I am: I'm an actor, and I'm John F. Donovan's friend. I am... his confidant.

Rupert has quieted everyone. Then:

CEDRIC

(coughing, under his breath)
Bullshit!

All the kids laugh. Mrs McQuillen turns to him again.

MRS MCQUILLEN

That's it - you, out!

CEDRIC

Miss, you must admit, it's total bullshit.

RUPERT TURNER

It isn't bullshit!

MRS MCQUILLEN

Stop with the fowl language!

CEDRIC

(to Rupert)

You lying little girl!

MRS MCQUILLEN

Cedric! Out right now!

Cedric, smirking, heads for the door. But the SCHOOL BELL RINGS out, and all the kids get up and start packing their kits to go home.

MRS MCQUILLEN (CONT'D)

Rupert, stay a moment please. And Cedric! You'll be punished tomorrow, I won't have rudeness in my classroom!

Children storm out of the class as fast as they possibly can, while Rupert, still in front of the teacher's desk, stays still. The last students leave. Mrs McQuillen gets up from Rupert's desk.

MRS MCQUILLEN (CONT'D)

You're not taking the bus, are you?

RUPERT TURNER

No, I take the ferry or my mum picks me up.

Silence.

MRS MCQUILLEN

Rupert, you are aware of the fact that I'm going to have to fail you?

RUPERT TURNER

(devastated)

Why? Wasn't it good?

MRS MCQUILLEN

It was excellent. And it would have been great for your story exercise back in September... You have great writing skills, Rupert, and a great imagination... But I couldn't have been more specific about the criteria of the assignment; it had to be REAL.

RUPERT TURNER

John F. Donovan is real!

MRS MCQUILLEN

Yes he is, but you made up that story, Rupert.

RUPERT TURNER

I didn't!

MRS MCQUILLEN

I must admit your mother's right on this one, Rupert; there will be no special treatment this time-

RUPERT TURNER

But- I... miss, it IS true.

MRS MCQUILLEN

Oh, Rupert-

RUPERT TURNER

I swear, miss, every bloody word I-
I brought the letters with me, but the
bell rang and I just couldn't show them
to the class.

Silence.

MRS MCQUILLEN

May I see them?

Rupert walks to his desk grumpily. He opens his schoolbag, gives a quick, sulky look at his teacher. He freezes. He won't move. Mrs McQuillen is waiting.

MRS MCQUILLEN (CONT'D)

Well?.

RUPERT TURNER

Shit.

150 EXT. SCHOOL YARD - ST GEORGE ACADEMY - CONTINUOUS

150

RUPERT runs out the side door of the school - right in time to see a SCHOOL BUS pulling away. Rupert stares at it, scanning for passengers. At the BACK, he sees CEDRIC - holding up a LETTER and WAVING maliciously. Cedric is clearly READING THE LETTER OUT LOUD to other kids. Rupert looks like he may burst into tears, but instead of crying, he thinks: and has an IDEA.

151 EXT. CEDRIC'S HOUSE - NIGHT

151

CEDRIC and his FATHER are leaving their house - Cedric is all dressed up in SOCCER gear. The two pile into the car. As it pulls away, we reveal RUPERT, hiding behind a BUSH, watching them.

152 INT. CEDRIC'S HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

152

A ROCK, wrapped up in a sweatshirt, is smashed through the BACK DOOR WINDOW. Rupert's hand comes in and opens the door from the outside. Rupert enters the house. He moves through the KITCHEN, into the LIVING ROOM - his eyes always scanning for the letters, or Cedric's school bag.

Rupert arrives at the bottom of a flight of stairs, right before he starts to climb them, he hears:

CEDRIC'S MOTHER

(at the top of the stairs)

Helena Bonham Carter! Who are you?

CUT TO:

153 INT. CORRIDOR - THE GOSSIP - DAY

153

We are FOLLOWING the BACK of a young woman as she SCURRIES down the hallways at the offices of The Gossip magazine. She hits the MAIN OFFICE, where a secretary looks up at her :

SECRETARY

She's on the phone-

JEANETTE

Mhmm.

JEANETTE knocks and quickly enters, saying:

JEANETTE (CONT'D)

I brought you happiness...

The office is massive, but SPARSE. Sitting behind a large desk, facing the window and away from us is MOIRA McCAULEY KING. She spins around and faces us: she is beautiful, cold and unreadable. We've met her before, 300 pages ago. Sound shifts to a throbbing level.

154

INT. HALLWAY - THE GOSSIP - DAY

154

MOIRA McCAULEY KING proudly walks through the corridor, followed by JEANETTE, carrying numerous FOLDERS. Their conversation is inaudible, but Moira's victorious, yet self-restrained expression augurs badly.

INTERVIEWER (O.S.)

You responded to our add, and said you were present the night he clubbed in-

155

OMITTED

155

156

INT. STAIRCASE - SCHOOL - DAY

156

YOUNG ASIAN students are sitting on the steps of a staircase during lunch break, one or two very close to the camera, the others seated further up.

YOUNG BLEACHED ASIAN

Yeah, no, my girlfriend was there. He showed up, and she filmed him, and he was like, so drunk, it was amazing. And he danced with her and told her she looked good. And then he was so drunk he fell. And she texted me a pic and I posted it on Twitter and man, I swear, I got like, 300 hundred followers in like, 10 minutes. It was sick.

157

EXT. TERRASSE - HOUSE - BLUE HOUR

157

TEENS are drinking WINE and smoking POT in the backyard of someone's house. Some music plays in the background.

TEENAGE GIRL BACKYARD 1

I thought it was... inappropriate. I don't know. He's supposed to set an example, you know what I'm saying. Like, honestly, I don't care, but he's a role model, so...

TEENAGE BOY BACKYARD 1

Maybe you should think before you talk, Shirley, this is filmed-

TEENAGE GIRL BACKYARD 1

Maybe you should shut your face, Doyle!

TEENAGE BOY BACKYARD 1

Maybe you should suck a dick!

TEENAGE GIRL BACKYARD 1
OMG, you're SO immature at the moment-

158

INT. UNKNOW OFFICE - DAY

158

[...]

ELLEN DEGENERES

You consent to anonymous, virtual hatred,
you consent to exposure and public
opinion, to the industry's approval, or
refusal. It's... non-stop.

ANTHONY JESELNICK

And there will always be demagogues out
there to remind the "real" people that
making millions and millions of dollars
should compensate for the nostalgia of
missing out on a cold Carlsberg in a
Chelsea bar. But some would think of
paying a couple millions for that. If it
wasn't purely indecent.

159

INT. JOHN'S CAR - DAY

159

The sun is FLARING through the vehicle, bathing it. JOHN is talking on
the phone. We can't hear his conversation for now.

JEANETTE (V.O.)

*Knowing who the man behind the hero's
mask is... isn't enough. Who is the actor,
behind the hero. And most of all, why,
when, and HOW, after all, isn't he so
different from... me? From us?*

Sound goes up to a normal level. John has arrived at the SECURITY GATE
of the STUDIO. He rolls down his window, lowers his sunglasses and, to
the GUARD says:

JOHN F. DONOVAN

Hey.

The SECURITY GUARD nods his head, but is looking at John very strangely
- John barely notices. The GATE is lifted and John keeps driving.

JOHN F. DONOVAN (CONT'D)

Okay, ma, I gotta go - I'm at work. just
ask Jimmy to send the bill to Barbara,
he's got her email.

GRACE DONOVAN (V.O.)

Nah, Jimmy can't fix it, he said.

JOHN F. DONOVAN

What?

GRACE DONOVAN

Well, it's a big hole, Jonathan.

JOHN F. DONOVAN

That's what he said.

GRACE DONOVAN

What?

JOHN F. DONOVAN

No, nothing, ma, I'm at work, just have whoever fix it and send the bill to Barbara and I'll pay, okay. I gotta-

GRACE DONOVAN (V.O.)

Okay. Oh, Johnny, I keep getting all these Goggle warnings about-

JOHN F. DONOVAN

Google, ma, google - it's not snorkeling-

GRACE DONOVAN (V.O.)

Fine, googles, they're all about you, but now my internet's not working. I called the people, but they can't get anyone out here today-

JOHN F. DONOVAN

Everything's fine, ma. I really have to go. I'll call later, okay?

160

INT. STUDIO - NEW YORK

160

JOHN walks through set. People keep giving him strange looks. John is starting to notice.

161

INT. MAKE-UP TRAILER - MOMENTS LATER

161

JOHN is getting his TATTOOS covered up - the MAKE-UP ARTISTS are also looking at him funny.

162

INT. POLICE STATION - NEWCASTLE - DAY

162

RUPERT is waiting in the hallway of the POLICE STATION for his mother to come and pick him up. Rupert keeps looking over at a group of COPS, who are idling around, also staring at him, and laughing together (likely at his expense). One of them is texting.

RUPERT TURNER

You don't have the right to read the letters!

POLICE OFFICER 1

Don't worry mate, we'll respect your privacy, haha!

RUPERT TURNER

And my most basic rights, thank you.

POLICE OFFICER 1

Sure, should we gift-wrap them?

SAM arrives, quietly fraught. The POLICE OFFICER start briefing her. As she listens to them, she scans the room to find her son... As their eyes meet, Rupert envisions the lovely evening in store.

163

INT. STUDIO - NEW YORK - LATER

163

JOHN and SARAH GADON have just finished shooting a scene. As they arrive at the CRAFT TABLE, TWO COSTUME GIRLS GIGGLE and move away. John turns to Sarah quizzically.

JOHN F. DONOVAN

So... what's the deal?

Sarah laughs, but she seems to know something.

JOHN F. DONOVAN (CONT'D)

What?

SARAH GADON

Have you seen the thing on Gawker?

JOHN F. DONOVAN

What thing?

SARAH GADON

Oh, nothing, some dumb gossip piece-

JOHN F. DONOVAN

About me?

SARAH GADON

It's nothing-

JOHN F. DONOVAN

Show me.

Sarah takes her PHONE out of her pocket and hands it to John. As he starts READING, his face falls.

164

INT. LIVING ROOM - RUPERT'S HOUSE - NIGHT

164

RUPERT is standing in the middle of the living room, not flinching, not blinking, almost not breathing.

His POV reveals SAM pacing in front of him, seeing red, not even looking at him. She seems like she's going to say something, but she stops herself, restraining her impulses.

Rupert is staring at his mother, pulling off a tough, unguilty, almost bored expression. Sam finally looks at her son.

SAM TURNER

How you could disappoint me in so many different ways in the course of ONE single afternoon is nothing short of inexplicable, Rupert Turner.

RUPERT TURNER

I am pretty impressive.

In the twinkling of an eye, Sam sharply smacks Rupert. His face swivels to his left. He doesn't move, paralyzed by the hit. He breathes deeply. Sam stares at him, furious.

Rupert still won't move. Tears are coming down his flushed cheek. Sam notices them, looks down. Rupert's face is still exaggeratedly tilted to the left. Sam grabs her son's chin violently.

SAM TURNER

Look at me when I'm talking to you!

Rupert starts crying, looking at the floor.

SAM TURNER (CONT'D)

And stop crying! I'm not buying it! After having lied to your teacher and having me wait for a goddam hour in the parking of your school, you **BROKE INTO** someone's house... to recover letters from a 30 YEAR OLD AMERICAN MOVIE STAR? WHO ARE YOU?

RUPERT TURNER

(mumbling through tears and drool)

I'm sorry mum...

Sam deeply sighs and starts pacing again.

SAM TURNER

Being sorry is not enough! You... you do understand that I am fully entitled to very, VERY elaborate explanations!

Rupert looks at his mother, still crying. He tries to catch his breath.

RUPERT TURNER

I've been exchanging letters with John F. Donovan-

SAM TURNER

The actor?!

RUPERT TURNER

Yes, mum. I've been writing letters to him for... five years now. He's answered the first one, the one we wrote together.

Silence. Sam is stunned. She knew this already (from police officers), but hearing it from her son's mouth is another story.

SAM TURNER

I... Ha... He wrote back?

RUPERT TURNER

Yes. We're friends...

Sam rolls her eyes.

SAM TURNER

How many letters?

RUPERT TURNER

Many.

SAM TURNER

And... and this uh... the kid in your class stole them... and you went back for them?

Rupert nods.

SAM TURNER (CONT'D)

Couldn't you knock on the door?

Rupert shrugs.

SAM TURNER (CONT'D)

I... uh... Rupert... I... Why did you lie about those letters?

RUPERT TURNER

I never lied---

SAM TURNER

Oh, please! You're a compulsive liar,
just like your father!

RUPERT TURNER

I just didn't say anything!

SAM TURNER

Well excuse my choice of words! You lied
anyway, and I won't be treated like a
stranger, I'm your mother?

RUPERT TURNER

ARE YOUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUU? CAUSE YOU NEVER
ASKED! YOU NEVER ASK ANYTHING ABOUT MY
ACTING AND MY AUDITIONS AND THE ONLY
THING YOU CARE ABOUT IS SCHOOL! SCHOOL
AND BEING NORMAL, AND BEING HUMBLE AND
BEING SOMEONE I AM NOT AND SOMEONE I
DON'T WANT TO BE! YOU COACH THOSE PEOPLE
ALL AROUND THE COUNTRY SO THEY KNOW WHO
THEY ARE BUT YOU DON'T HAVE THE SLIGHTEST
CLUE ON WHO I AM, AND WHO YOU ARE, IT'S
JUST RUBBISH! SO NO, I NEVER TALKED
ABOUT THOSE LETTERS, CAUSE YOU PROBABLY
WOULDN'T HAVE CARED OR EVEN LISTENED TO
ME OR BELIEVED ME AND ONCE YOU'D HAVE
FOUND OUT YOU'D WOULD HAVE BEEN CONFUSED
AND WEIRDED OUT, AND THEN WORRIED AND
THEN YOU WOULD HAVE FORBIDDEN ME TO WRITE
TO THE ONLY PERSON THAT SEEMS TO CARE
ABOUT ME, IN THIS UTTERLY STUPID' BANAL'
POINT-FUCKING-LESS LIFE I CAN'T WAIT TO
GET OUT OF, AWAY FROM THIS SMALL HOUSE,
AWAY FROM YOU AND YOUR SMALL DREAMS AND
YOUR STUPID SMALLNESS!

SAM TURNER

You just said goodbye to your audition in
London!

RUPERT TURNER

You couldn't have it so neither can I?

SAM TURNER

Shut up!

Sam raises her hand again, but doesn't strike. She looks at Rupert in
the eye, and likewise, for a very long time. These two are officially
strangers under their own roof.

DING DONG. Sam looks to the front door, shocked, and looks at her
watch. One plus one; she looks at Rupert.

SAM TURNER (CONT'D)

It's probably Scotland Yard!

Sam rushes to the door, while Rupert stays still. He discreetly rubs
his cheek, massaging the reddened spot.

Sam opens the door. Scores of FLASHES spontaneously blind her. She
instinctively raises her hands before her face to protect her eyes.

Her frightened POV reveals the street swarming with DOZENS OF JOURNALISTS, from her driveway to her porch, standing in front of her. REPORTERS are shutting MICS in Sam's face, asking questions all at once, a bunch of CAMERAMEN filming her. NEWS VANS are stationed outside, cluttering up the street. NEIGHBORS with their CHILDREN, posted on their porches or huddled together at their windows, are watching the scene.

DOLLY IN on Sam's shocked face :

SAM TURNER (CONT'D)

Good God.

CUT TO:

165

NEWS FOOTAGE

165

A FEMALE ANCHOR is throwing to our UK TABLOID REPORTER (previously seen in an early interview montage), who's standing in front a "PRIVATE" SCHOOL, holding an umbrella. Needless to say, it's raining.

FEMALE ANCHOR

And now Tom, with a bizarre story out of Harrow. Tell us, Tom, how a movie star and a ten year old are connected to an incident involving the local police?

UK TABLOID REPORTER

It's quite a story, Yoshi! Of how a fan letter from a little boy in Harrow became a correspondence with one of the biggest movie stars in the world! Most of us know John F. Donovan as the Academy Award Winning star of *Haven on Earth*, but third former Rupert Turner knows him in a very different way, it seems...

CUT TO:

166

INT. JOHN'S TRAILER - DAY

166

JOHN, on the phone with BARBARA, has knelt down and is searching for something in his MINI-FRIDGE: on the top shelf, a DOZEN BOTTLES of meds... all empty. John hits the back of the fridge... all the bottles he picks are empty. He slams the door.

JOHN F. DONOVAN

Don't tell me to calm down, Barbara! I wanna know what we're supposed to do-

BARBARA FISHER (O.S.)

Honey, there is nothing to do about this right now. Stop worrying-

JOHN F. DONOVAN

Barbara! Who's taking care of-

BARBARA FISHER (O.S.)

Your 19 transgendered agents at CCCP and me-

JOHN F. DONOVAN

Barbara-

BARBARA FISHER (O.S.)

Oh my fucking God, say my name ONE MORE TIME, just ONE MORE TIME, Johnny! Listen! This is nothing, it will blow over. I'm on my way to you, and I've arranged to have extra security on set. So all you have to do is not answer your phone, don't talk to any journalists, take a deep breath, have a decaf and go for a walk-

JOHN F. DONOVAN

I can't go for a fucking walk! There's no ground beneath my feet!

BARBARA FISHER (O.S.)

I'm relieved to hear you haven't lost your sense of drama.

John almost laughs at this. There is a KNOCK on his door.

P.A (O.S.)

They're ready for you, Mr. Donovan.

JOHN F. DONOVAN

Yeah!

BARBARA FISHER (O.S.)

So, besides bribing random sexual partners, is there anything else I should know about?

JOHN F. DONOVAN

Isn't that enough?

BARBARA FISHER (O.S.)

It sure fucking is.

Barbara hangs up. John sighs and looks at himself in the LIGHT-BULB MIRROR hung on the wall. He smashes it. It fractures under the impact and crazes John's reflection.

167

INT. STUDIO - NEW YORK - MOMENTS LATER

167

JOHN and SARAH are running lines. John is skimming through his sides, sliding his finger along each page, underlining his lines fastidiously, still humming, and rather loudly. Sarah's trying to keep her cool, but she's discreetly agitated.

SARAH GADON

"He misses you so much. He asks about you all the time."

JOHN F. DONOVAN

"You think I don't miss him too? That I don't think about him every minute of every day that I'm stuck in this hell hole?"

SARAH GADON

Johnny, you look sick?

JOHN F. DONOVAN

It's the dialogue.

BIG BILLY passes by, carrying a GOBO stand. He stops behind John, leans forward and whispers in his ear:

BIG BILLY

Busy week-end, huh, Johnnyboy?

John doesn't hear him, his tinnitus getting stronger and stronger, resonating painfully. Sarah gives Big Billy a reproachful look, but he won't leave. Sarah plows on.

SARAH GADON

"They made him captain of the baseball team. You should see him in his little uniform."

JOHN F. DONOVAN

"Quit breaking my-

BIG BILLY

(puts his hand on John's shoulder)

Busy boy, right, Johnny?

John jumps, startled.

JOHN F. DONOVAN

Huh?

BIG BILLY

I said BUSY BOY, Jesus are you deaf or somethin'!

JOHN F. DONOVAN

I'm sorry, Billy, I didn't hear you.

SARAH GADON

Listen, we're running lines?

BIG BILLY

(leaving)

Sorry, Miss Gadon.

SARAH GADON

That guy is such a douche, someone should cut him down to size, Jesus...

(back to her line)

Uh... *"I don't mean to hurt you."*

JOHN F. DONOVAN

"Then stop reminding me how my whole life is out there, and I'm in here fighting to survive."

SARAH GADON

"When will this nightmare be over?" I'm gonna change nightmare. I mean.

JOHN F. DONOVAN

"Soon, Meredith, soon. I've got a plan-"
Argh, fuck, gimme a fuckin' break!

John covers his ears again. Tinnitus won't stop. The throbbing increases as John's eyes fill up with tears.

SARAH GADON

John, I... should I call an ambulance?

JOHN F. DONOVAN

Yes! To the ER, please! More press! Let's make this worse!

SARAH GADON

Well I dunno John, if it doesn't fade away, I- Have you tried pinching your nose and blowing air through it-

JOHN F. DONOVAN

I've been stuck with tinnitus my entire life! I was pinching my nose when you were still sucking on your mom's tits in Canada!

Sarah is silenced. John sighs. He looks up to her, feeling sorry. She drinks her tea, still a bit shocked. She feels like this is merely the trailer to whatever is coming up.

JOHN F. DONOVAN (CONT'D)

Look, I'm sorry, it's a bad day-

Someone friendly smacks John's back. Their DIRECTOR.

DIRECTOR

Johnny, what's this whole letters thing you've got going on?

JOHN F. DONOVAN

What?

SARAH GADON

Speak louder, Marcus.

John briefly smiles to Sarah.

DIRECTOR

Oh. I said "WHAT'S THE WHOLE LETTERS THING"?

Other people on set listen, their attention drawn to the conversation. John notices.

JOHN F. DONOVAN

Uh... what letters, Marcus?

DIRECTOR

The letters to the...

(bracketing)

..."kid", is what they call him...

John doesn't understand. Or doesn't want to.

DIRECTOR (CONT'D)

You guys just run your lines, and you've got time, by the way, they've still got to set up the whole shebang! I say we have a good 20.

John gets his phone out: 43 text messages. And at that very moment pops an incoming call from ENT. WEEKLY. John blocks it and shuts his eyes, nervous. Another call pops: PEOP MAG. John blocks again and puts his cellphone back in his pocket.

JOHN F. DONOVAN

Sarah, can I borrow your phone? I'm sorry I insulted you by saying you sucked your mother's tits in Canada.

SARAH GADON

(handing her phone)

It was pretty factual.

John starts typing as his tinnitus, which had given him somewhat of a respite, kicks back.

JOHN F. DONOVAN

Argh! Fuck!

John types with one hand, covering his ear with the other. He's googling himself. A beat. What he finds shocks him. He starts reading under Sarah's worried eye, scrolling down. But WORDS on the screen are blurred by his tears as his tinnitus severely pulsates.

JOHN F. DONOVAN (CONT'D)

Can you read for me, Sarah. Just read, alright, I can't with this shit in my ear, my eyes are killing me-

SARAH GADON

(taking her phone, reticent)

Um... sure, I... That article?

JOHN F. DONOVAN

Yeah, just read. Not too loud, ok. But loud enough, cuz...

SARAH GADON

Yeah...

Sarah leans forward John.

SARAH GADON (CONT'D)

Letters To A Young Actor and Hush Money for Risky Sex lead to suspicions about JFD's biggest secret ever?

John looks at Sarah in the eye. He's paralyzed, but motions for her to continue.

SARAH GADON (CONT'D)

The affair went public as a school yard quarrel was blown out of proportion today in Harrow, England. A 10 year old boy named Rupert Turner-

JOHN F. DONOVAN

11 year old, 12 in 3 months, motherfuckers. Whatever. Keep going...

Sarah realizes whatever she is reading is true.

SARAH GADON

-broke into private property to take back letters he claimed were stolen earlier that day by a schoolmate, letters that were apparently written by John F. Donovan himself.

John's face falls. He slowly closes his eyes, devastated.

SARAH GADON (CONT'D)

The incident occurs less than eight hours after Donovan made news for his participation in a scandalous affair - involving male prostitutes - he tried to hush up with bribes... Any connection between these love letters-

JOHN F. DONOVAN

You got any meds in your trailer?

SARAH GADON

What?

JOHN F. DONOVAN

Meds? Clonapam? Xanax? You don't... you don't have lithium or know someone who takes some, do you?

SARAH GADON

What?!

JOHN F. DONOVAN

I need meds Sarah, do you speak English!

SARAH GADON

I've only got natural-

JOHN F. DONOVAN

Argh, fuck me!

SARAH GADON

Listen, you need to get out of here-

Sarah stops herself. John can hear people chirping, laughing in the background. He's sweating now, with both ears covered. He's in pain. His phone buzzes. A TEXT message from BARBARA: "*just heard on radio. dnt so anything stupid. I'm at gate.*"

Big Billy is back. He sets a LIGHT, standing between John and Sarah, blocking their eye contact. Sarah sighs, annoyed.

BIG BILLY

Johnny, on a scale o' 1 to 10, what do you gimme? What am I, huh? These fucking morons say you won't gimme more than 5, fuck that, I'm not a 5, come one!

Big Billy goes behind John, fixing a light that's out of frame. John is on the edge of breaking. Sarah can feel it.

BIG BILLY (CONT'D)

Hey, what's that whole letters bullshit, Johnny? Did you write these letters to that kid? Seriously, man, wow, busy boy, huh? Big week-end! Huh? Ha ha, Jesus Christ, how do you like, em, Mondays!

In a heartbeat, John SPREADS OUT HIS ARMS to his back, blindly GRABS Big Billy's waist and TOPPLES HIM OVER with both arms. Sarah stands up and quickly gets out of the way, scared.

Big Billy lands on the ground, caught off guard. John jumps on Big Billy and starts beating the shit out of him, punching him in the face. One, two, three, four times, until Billy's nose and mouth are bleeding.

The whole set freezes. Some GRIPS run up to them. John grabs Billy's shirt and brings his mortified face to his own:

JOHN F. DONOVAN

(between his teeth)

You wanna know about my fucking week-end?
You're asking ME how my fucking week-end
was, BILLY? And you stand in my face with
your fucking fat ass and-

BIG BILLY

I'm sorry, Johnny-

JOHN F. DONOVAN

(back to Billy)

You fucking call me, Johnny? Who the fuck
do you think I am? Who the fuck are
YOOOOOOUUUUUUUU? You think I want to tell
you about my fucking week-end?

BIG BILLY

Johnny, I thought we were friends-

John aggressively tightens his grip on Billy's shirt.

JOHN F. DONOVAN

NO! NO, WE'RE NOT FUCKING FRIENDS, MAN! I
COME HERE, I SAY MY LINES, I DON'T
FUCKING BELONG TO MYSELF FOR A FUCKING
SECOND AND I ACT THE DOGSHIT OUTTA THIS
LUDICROUS SCRIPT FROM A FUCKING HACK FOR
ALL THE RETARDED KIDS OUT THERE WHO THINK
I CAN ACTUALLY GO THROUGH PRISON WALLS,
ALRIGHT! YOU THINK I CAN DO THAT, GO
THROUGH WALLS? NO I CAN'T BILLY, BUT I
WILL, AND I SHOW UP HERE AND YOU DON'T
KNOW ME, YOU DON'T KNOW MY LIFE AND I SAY
HELLO AND I TELL YOU ABOUT MY FUCKING
WEEK-END BECAUSE IF I DON'T, YOU'RE GONNA
GO OUT THERE AND TELL EVERYBODY WHAT A
PRETENTIOUS PIECE OF SHIT I AM, AND I
DON'T WANT THAT, THEY DON'T WANT THAT,
RIGHT!

Sarah watches, her hand on her mouth. BARBARA FISHER arrives on set.
But John isn't done.

JOHN F. DONOVAN (CONT'D)

THEY WON'T LET ME BE THAT, THEY WON'T LET
ME BE THAT SON OF A BITCH, RIGHT?! "DON'T
TELL US THIS BASTARD NEVER TAKES A SHIT
LIKE THE REST OF US!" SO I GOTTA BE GOOD
AND I GOTTA TELL YOU EVERYTHING ABOUT MY
GODDAM WEEKEND, SO HERE WE GO!

John catches his breath. Everyone is standing, frozen.

168

INT. MMK'S OFFICE - THE GOSSIP

168

TWO ASSISTANTS are showing CANDIDS of John projected on a BIG HD SCREEN
to MOIRA. One shot of him, smiling at the cameras, in Cannes.

M. M. KING

Yawn.

One of the two assistants skips to the next picture with a remote. John is waving to a crowd of fans, getting in a Lincoln, in Beverly Hills.

M. M. KING (CONT'D)

No.

(next picture)

No!

(next picture)

No. I said "ugly", have we been raised in the same galaxy, boys?

Now a picture of John turning around to identify the paparazzi taking the picture, eyes closed, a worried look on his face. Moira laughs and naturally :

M. M. KING (CONT'D)

Yes! Eric... did you find those pictures of John and the kid from the Sci-Fi Channel show? In the mall?

ERIC

Yep.

M. M. KING

You two free this afternoon? Yes you are otherwise you're fired. That MALL is twenty miles away.

JEANETTE storms in, panting.

JEANETTE

JFD got into a fight on set. He went ballistic and beat the shit out of a crew member.

Miranda smiles and turns to Jeanette.

M. M. KING

It's payday, sugar.

169 **INT. CORRIDOR - THE GOSSIP - MOMENTS LATER**

169

MOIRA steadfastly scurries down the main corridor of the Gossip. EMPLOYEES "greet" her on her way. Her gait is as sensual as it is menacing.

170 **INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - THE GOSSIP - MOMENTS LATER**

170

The room is boiling with enthusiasm. EDITORS are shouting their ideas, fighting for their point, standing, pacing. MOIRA walks in with JEANETTE.

M. M. KING

Recess is over! I want y'all to sit down and listen carefully. I've got some precious memory I made with my grandfather back in Wichita Falls, where I grew up, 'bout two hours North of Dallas. Now, I don't know if y'all ever heard of this cold, cold weather we get six months a year in Texas, anyone?

EDITOR 2

The Norther?

M. M. KING

The Norther, sudden, crispy, bitching cold; weather goes up to 60 and down to 20 in a matter of hours. Can be dangerous if you're not prepared. But my grandfather owned a ranch back there and we needed to be ready 'cause of the cattle, right?

Yesses.

M. M. KING (CONT'D)

Middle of the afternoon, sun went blue, sky went black, snow fell like the world was coming to an end. And THAT was my favorite part. The chaos. I walked out in the storm and breathed that air like it was my last day down here.

Moirra walks to the window and watches the city. She knocks on the glass... Everybody's waiting. She turns to her employees.

M. M. KING (CONT'D)

Who is it? It's the world. It's the fucking world who wants John F on a platter, and by God it's what we'll give him. Let's give the world the weather it deserves. We're the storm coming, y'all! You say Donovan's at the end of his rope? I say that rope is TWICE as long! He screws dudes? Prove it. If it sticks his little toe out of the closet, I'mma drag the whole leg! Talk to make-up girls, ex-leading ladies, hunt them on the Net, hunt them on their phones, hunt them in their goddam bathtub for crying out loud, do your job! He's writing letters to a little boy in England? I don't wanna read 'bout them letters ; I want to read THEM! What's next? Was he always that violent? Probably. Go to his hometown. Go find me some jealous, bitter wreck selling cokes and smokes who will sell him out to ya! Sunny, Lisa, Male intern, you're leaving for Pennsylvania.

(to everybody, proud)

Folks... We're gonna cook ourselves up a John F. Donovan issue!

CUT TO:

171

IPHONE FOOTAGE

JOHN is still sitting on BIG BILLY's chest on set. It's the scene we've witnessed earlier.

171

JOHN F. DONOVAN

(still hysterical)

THEN I WENT TO MY MOM TO GET SOME FAMILY LOVE AND TO BE TREATED LIKE A FUCKING PIECE OF SHIT BY MY DRUNK-ASS IRISH FAMILY AND THEN I THOUGHT I DESERVED SOME FUN SO I WENT DOWN TO GLOOM AND I KISSED A GIRL, AND I KISSED A GUY AND THEN I FUCKED HIM IN HIS TERCEL AND I CAME ON HIS FACE ALRIGHT!

(MORE)

JOHN F. DONOVAN (CONT'D)

I CAME ON HIS FACE AND HE WIPED IT WITH HIS HAND LIKE YOU WIPE YOUR DICK WITH YOUR WIFE'S HAIR AFTER SHE SPAT ON YOUR JUNK! AND THAT WAS ABOUT IT FOR FRIDAY! YOU WANNA HEAR SATURDAY? BUT WHY DON'T YOU REGALE ME WITH YOUR OWN WEEK-END, NOW, BILLY? CAUSE I'M POLITE, SO YOU TALK NOW, WHAT DID YOU DO THIS WEEK-END???!! I CAN'T HEAR YOU!

BIG BILLY

I'm sorry, man, get off me, Johnny!

JOHN F. DONOVAN

JOHN! CALL ME JOHN! I'M JOHN FUCKING DONOVAN! SAY MY NAME!

BIG BILLY

John F. Donovan!

JOHN F. DONOVAN

THAT'S RIGHT, MOTHERFUCKER! AND FROM NOW ON, YOU'RE NOT ALLOWED TO PUT YOUR FUCKING GREASY FINGERS ON MY SHOULDERS! AND YOU'RE NOT ALLOWED TO LOOK ME IN THE EYE, YOU'RE NOT ALLOWED TO TALK TO ME, YOU'RE NOT ALLOWED TO BREATHE, YOU'RE NOT ALLOWED TO FUCKING EXIST!

CUT TO:

172

INT. BARBARA'S OFFICE - TALENT MANAGEMENT AGENCY

172

BARBARA shuts down her MAC, which was playing the excerpt. Sitting here and there, on chairs, sofas, or even on her office: RYAN, very feminine, somehow transgendered, two OTHER AGENTS of John's, the APPELBAUMS and JOHN, facing Barbara, who's sitting behind her desk.

Ryan is being "fitted" for a suit by a tiny ITALIAN TAILOR who's marking the sleeves with chalk. The Appelbaums are sitting on each other, both cooped up in the same sofa.

IRA APPELBAUM

You can jizz on my face any-

BARBARA FISHER

SHUT UP! You think this is funny?

NOA APPELBAUM

Maybe.

IRA APPELBAUM

Maybe.

BARBARA FISHER

We'll see if it's still funny when you two gaylords are on fucking welfare two weeks from now-

*(turning to the Italian
tailor)*

I'm sorry, are we bothering you?

ITALIAN TAILOR

No, Madam-

BARBARA FISHER

Get outta my space!

RYAN

It's ok Donatello.

ITALIAN TAILOR

I'll wait outside.

RYAN

Werk.

The Italian tailor leaves.

RYAN (CONT'D)

Djee, Barbs, you need to NAMASTE, sister!
This is ALL under control?!

BARBARA FISHER

Under control?

(angry)

What exactly is your experience in
handling crisis like these, Ryanette?

IRA APPELBAUM

Ryanette!

NOA APPELBAUM

Buuuuurn!

BARBARA FISHER

How many frappuccinos have you spilled on
your coke table, today?

IRA APPELBAUM

Ryan's a total coke-whore!

RYAN

Barbs sweet Barbiedoll, I got it all
figured out! We're gonna write a press
release, send it to the Deadline people
and just fucking say Jay was rehearsing
for another part, and the video's taken
out of context.

Silence. Everybody's staring at Ryan.

BARBARA FISHER

I'm sorry what?

RYAN

Like he was rehearsing for a part, a new
thing, and the video is freaking taken
out of context, y'know?

BARBARA FISHER

(dead serious)

I'm sorry what?

Silence. John sighs in deep despair.

RYAN

He was... rehearsing. John was rehearsing-
Are you fucking with me?

Barbara turns to John, dismissing Ryan.

BARBARA FISHER

So. The video was online for 2 minutes
and got 7,000 views.

(MORE)

BARBARA FISHER (CONT'D)

Legally, we couldn't take down the footage for defamation since it consists of, literally, evidence assault, verbal abuse-

Ryan interrupts her. Barbara rolls her eyes.

RYAN

But thank God you're with CCCP who owns -
tadah!- more than 55% of AddCIP, whose
mother company Google, owns YOUTUBE. So
we fucked our way through the system and
got the video taken down-

BARBARA FISHER

So it wouldn't ruin your career, which we've
been building together for four years, four
LONG years over the course of which I've
never heard a word about any... "clubbing"... or
"letters"... or "ludicrous scripts for
retarded kids".

John looks down. He sighs and buries his head in his hands.

JOHN F. DONOVAN

I lost it.

BARBARA FISHER

Shit on a brick!

JOHN F. DONOVAN

What about the movie?

Barbara smiles. She sits in the back of her chair and waits.

BARBARA FISHER

Paramount called- sorry, Paramount texted. I
WILL have dinner with Sally tonight, but
there's a 95% percent chance that there'll
be a 100% chance you're fired.

JOHN F. DONOVAN

What are you gonna do?

BARBARA FISHER

I'll do my job, and you'll do yours.
You're booked on Jimmy Fallon tonight.

173

TV FOOTAGE - LATE NIGHT WITH JIMMY FALLON

173

JIMMY FALLON is at his desk.

JOHN F. DONOVAN

Next!

JIMMY FALLON

Next is - pen pals, I believe.

Another huge laugh from the crowd - and from John.

JOHN F. DONOVAN

This one's my favorite - maybe ever.

JIMMY FALLON

It's so good.

JOHN F. DONOVAN

It's so good I wanna hear you ask me the question.

JIMMY FALLON

Okay, do you have a pen pal-

JOHN F. DONOVAN

A child pen pal! Do your job!

JIMMY FALLON

Do you have a child pen pal, in England-

JOHN F. DONOVAN

Why not? I mean, why not England? They speak English, I speak English - it's a match made in Heaven. Keep going!

The crowd is eating this up. John is killing it.

JIMMY FALLON

Do you have a written correspondence with a British child actor-?

JOHN F. DONOVAN

And have I had it for years? In the article I read - and I read 'em all-

JIMMY FALLON

Ya gotta!

JOHN F. DONOVAN

How else would I know what I'm up to, right? And man, I have been busy! I'm not as young as I used to be, Jimmy, I can't believe how energetic I am, ya know?

JIMMY FALLON

Are you doping? Are you using performance enhancing drugs?

CUT TO:

174

INT. RUPERT'S ROOM - RUPERT'S HOUSE

174

RUPERT is devastated.

JOHN F. DONOVAN

Who are you - Oprah? I'm saving my gold for her.

JIMMY FALLON

Fair enough.

JOHN F. DONOVAN

This isn't even Letterman, buddy.
(fakes to get up and go)
Arrivederci Amore Ciao!

JIMMY FALLON

Ciao, haha! See you soon! Roll credits!

More laughter (TV). As the show carries on, he slowly puts his laptop down and closes his eyes, a single tear trickling down his cheek.

175

TV FOOTAGE

175

In DROP-FRAME SLO-MO, JOHN continues to entertain the guests on Fallon. He answers the questions, laughs, claps and, every once in a while, fleetingly, breaks out of character, pressing down his pants, fixing his tie or looking backstage. No one could tell he's nervous. Except us, now.

MRS MCQUILLEN (V.O.)

Most kids will spend a lifetime figuring out that in the end, we're on our own.

176

INT. UNKNOWN OFFICE - DUSK

176

Sun has set. The light is changing in the studio as our story continues. And the interviews.

MRS MCQUILLEN

Rupert realized it by the time the Fallon interview was over.

177

INT. BACKSTAGE - LATE NIGHT STUDIO - NIGHT

177

JOHN walks down the corridor leading to his dressing room, IRA APPELBAUM following him, talking on the phone. He hands John a BOTTLE OF WATER, who takes it and drinks, preoccupied.

AMY BOSWORTH (V.O.)

Reading on Perez Hilton that your husband has written more than a hundred letters to a boy immediately confronts you to your abyssal stupidity.

John enters his dressing room and shuts the door. NOA stands up. They do a quick round-up of the performance.

178

INT. UNKNOWN OFFICE - DUSK

178

AMY BOSWORTH deeply sighs. She's emotional. But proud.

AMY BOSWORTH

Sometimes in life when you love people... when you love people A LOT, alright, the obvious vanishes. You lie to yourself, and when that lie is an entire apartment and a car and a whole life it's a little late to back out and say there's an elephant in the fucking closet.

179

INT. BACKSTAGE - LATE NIGHT STUDIO - NIGHT

179

JOHN walks to the craft table. BARBARA FISHER waits, a GLASS OF WHITE WINE in HAND. She's talking with JIMMY FALLON. They all start talking.

MRS MCQUILLEN (V.O.)

I think that, for Rupert, it was the inciting moment for everything. The fact that his best friend - well, that's what he called him - could give up on him could have been... fatal. But it ended up being quite inspiriting, for him.

We can't make it out, but they seem to be encouraging John, who's obviously worn down. The guilt of what he did to Rupert is overwhelming. Barbara pours him a glass of wine and gives him a motherly tap on the shoulder.

180

INT. UNKNOWN OFFICE - DUSK

180

[...]

MRS MCQUILLEN

The end of John F. Donovan was the beginning of Rupert Turner, somehow. That was his... awakening.

MARTIN SCORCESE

Everybody decided they were love letters between an adult and a child, and that no further... investigation was required. This... lack of imagination, largely sponsored by social networks and the cult of instant information, led to the loss of both the "message", AND the messenger.

181

INT. DRESSING ROOM - LATE NIGHT STUDIO - NIGHT

181

JOHN finishes to write a LETTER with his GREEN PEN, IRA and NOA waiting behind him. He folds it, looks at it for a moment, and inserts into an envelope.

DAVID ROBINSON

And all we remember now is Donovan's cruelty, or presumed perversion, while it might have been an opportunity to LEARN, or at the very least, be entertained.

182

INT. UNKNOWN OFFICE - DUSK

182

[...]

DAVID ROBINSON

Beyond the private information they contained, there were probably tons and tons of... fascinating confidences, opinions of all kinds on the business, on contemporaries... A caring bond between an anonymous child... and a legend. These letters should have mythologized the man.

DIRECTOR (O.S.)

Didn't they?

DAVID ROBINSON

They buried him first.

JAMES DONOVAN

The only thing he ever said about Rupert Turner when the whole thing broke out was, I tried to remember it, and I wrote it down...

(looks for a paper in his jacket, then unfolds it)

"It's not love, he's a kid. It's not friendship, we never met, never looked at each other in the eye.

(MORE)

JAMES DONOVAN (CONT'D)

It's just absolute trust relying on the conviction of sheer goodness." John loved words.

JEANETTE

The release of the John F. Donovan issue was the tip of the iceberg, really. We were pretty adamant that, after Moira's... thorough research, there was nothing to add to the John F. Donovan file. But I guess we were wrong.

183

INT. RUPERT'S ROOM - RUPERT'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

183

RUPERT is sitting immobile on his bed. SAM walks in.

SAM TURNER

You guys are going to visit this retirement home today...

Rupert shrugs. Sam opens Rupert's closet, gets out a clean WOOL BLAZER, a TIE, some pressed PANTS and a WHITE SHIRT.

SAM TURNER (CONT'D)

I've read in your agenda you have to be dressed formally...

Silence.

SAM TURNER (CONT'D)

I'll help you.

Rupert lets his mother dress him lifelessly. She takes off his T-Shirt, puts on his white shirt.

SAM TURNER (CONT'D)

It will be fun, Rupert. Fun, and healthy. You'll do a nice thing for someone else. And it will give you a break from all this... insanity. Feet.

Rupert lifts his right foot. Sam puts his pants on him.

RUPERT TURNER

He said he never wrote the letters.

Silent beat. Rupert is back to us, and back to Sam. She unfolds a new pair of SOCKS, puts them on her son.

RUPERT TURNER (CONT'D)

They're gonna kick my ass. They're all gonna make fun of me. It's the end.

Sam turns Rupert around in order to face her son. She buttons up his shirt.

SAM TURNER

You will never write to this man again, do you hear me? Whether it is true or-

RUPERT TURNER

(his eyes welling up with tears)

It IS true-

SAM TURNER

Do you see what he did to you? Wrote you off in a heartbeat, and would probably do it again if he needed to! And that is exactly what this whole business is about, Rupert, crooks and liars and phoneys and... and I know how much you love it, and how much you want to be a part of it, but... this is a dream, Rupie... You need to... you need to come back down to Earth. Focus on your grades, make a girlfriend... or a boyfriend who knows-

RUPERT TURNER

Ew!

SAM TURNER

Rupert, just... forget about this.

RUPERT TURNER

Today's audition was my first audition in London. And my last.

Sam rolls her eyes.

SAM TURNER

When school is over you can audition again. In the summer. We'll talk about it then.

RUPERT TURNER

You disappear for a few weeks, you disappear forever.

(almost for himself)

You more than anybody else should know that.

Sam is silenced - this hurt her feelings good. She opens her mouth as if she was going to address the remark, but nothing comes out. Instead, she just clenches her jaw in such an exaggerated fashion that we'd think they're gonna throw another fit. But Sam's face collapses for a nanosecond and forces her to look down. Completely. She closes her eyes, finds her cool back, and laughs, affected and stunned by her son's ability to hurt her feelings. Rupert is looking at the floor... until he gathers the courage to look at his mother in the eye. She stands.

SAM TURNER

Julie will pick you up at school. I'll see you tomorrow.

Sam leaves and carefully shuts Rupert's door. Rupert sighs and looks at his iPhone on the floor, John's frozen image on it. And onto the wall... A picture of John with a child's handwriting on it, reading : *STYLE IS KNOWING WHO YOU ARE*. Rupert stares at it decisively.

184

INT. MMK'S OFFICE - THE GOSSIP - NIGHT

184

A THIN, GLEAMING BLADE emerges of an X ACTO in a typical sound. A HAND slowly slides it along the transparent scotch-tape that's keeping a BOX closed, sensually piercing it, and forcing it to open... REVEALING a FRAMED COPY of the latest *Gossip* issue, still warm. We CRANE up to reveal MOIRA, watching her new-born baby with satisfaction.

M. M. KING

Oh baby. You gon' be on my CV.

Facing MOIRA is JEANETTE, exhausted, tired, having worked all night. She politely SMILES, acknowledging Moira's victorious comment, evidently uncomfortable with the whole Donovan case.

JEANETTE

Moira, don't you think that's too far?

Beat. Moira sighs and grabs her coat off her big leather chair.

M. M. KING

(quoting)

"Nothing is never too far, nothing is ever too soon."

JEANETTE

Who said that?

Moira leaves Jeanette alone in the office.

M. M. KING

(on her way out)

The guy on the cover.

185

INT. SCHOOL BUS - ST GEORGE ACADEMY - DAY

185

MRS. MCQUILLEN is going down the SCHOOL BUS alley, tapping children on their heads, counting them.

MRS MCQUILLEN

Good morning Olga, hello Catherine,
Timothy... Celeste, lovely dress... Rodrigue,
Jamal, Karim, Guita, Cedric-

A boy wearing a GIANT SHARK hat is next. McQuillen lifts the hat up to see his face.

MRS MCQUILLEN (CONT'D)

Giant Shark, Florence...

Mrs McQuillen's now at the front of the bus. She looks at her list and seems worried. She turns to the whole bus, scanning it. TWO TEACHERS, a man and woman, are sitting next to her.

TEACHER ONE

Missing anyone?

MRS MCQUILLEN

Where's Rupert.

CEDRIC

Rupert Donovan's missing!

Kids are laughing. But Mrs McQuillen isn't.

SECRETARY (O.S.)

Mrs. McQuillen!

Mrs McQuillen looks out the window. The school's SECRETARY is running towards the bus, holding a LETTER in her hand.

MRS MCQUILLEN

Oh, what now...

186

EXT. FRONT DOOR - RUPERT'S HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

186

The door is closed. SAM opens it. She's dressed in a suit, ready for her coaching class.

SAM TURNER

Oh my God.

Her POV reveals MRS MCQUILLEN, standing in front of her, apologetic.

MRS MCQUILLEN

(handing her the letter)

Rupert dropped this letter at school this morning.

Sam snatches the letter, worried.

SAM TURNER

Well, is he all right?

MRS MCQUILLEN

I don't know, I don't know, I assume he is...

SAM TURNER

Oh my God, oh my God-

(reads through her lips)

Dear Mrs. McQuillen, na na na, please don't worry, all is well, I'm off to London-

(stops herself, looks away, closes her eyes for a moment)

...for the day for an audition. Ideally, you wouldn't tell my mother.

(she crumples the letter)

Son of a bitch.

A beat.

SAM TURNER (CONT'D)

I mean... uh, you know what...

Sam buries her head in her hands, exasperated. She loudly sighs, as if to kill the anxiety. Mrs McQuillen stands there, not knowing what to do. She opens her mouth but:

SAM TURNER (CONT'D)

I forbade him from going to that audition, Mrs McQuillen!

This last sentence sounded like a reproach. Mrs McQuillen is agape, not knowing how to respond to the "accusation".

SAM TURNER (CONT'D)

(controlling her emotions)

I know you two are... I know how much Rupert loves you, and keeps talking about you all the time, and... I...

Sam knows she's gone too far. But somehow her face isn't as reproachful as it is desperate.

MRS MCQUILLEN

Miss Turner, I... I'm sure you DID forbid him to go, and I would never-

SAM TURNER

(proud)

I know! I'm not stupid! I just...

Sam seems nervous. Mrs McQuillen looks at her for a while, and Sam holds her stare with courage, knowing she was wrong.

MRS MCQUILLEN

I'm... Is Rupert safe? I mean, will he be alright? Does he have a cellphone?

SAM TURNER

Yes. No. He wanted to. I- He's still a boy. He knows the city. Goes there every month to visit his father. Well, used to.

Silent beat again.

SAM TURNER (CONT'D)

I have a conference in London this afternoon anyway! Not that I need a conference to go after my son, I'm his mother.

Mrs McQuillen smiles compassionately. Time to leave.

MRS MCQUILLEN

I just... Just brought the letter as soon as I got it. I should really go.

Mrs McQuillen leaves. Sam stays on her porch, lost. We precede Mrs McQuillen on her way back to her car, as she seems to fight her impulses. She finally turns around.

MRS MCQUILLEN (CONT'D)

Miss-

SAM TURNER

Yes?

Mrs McQuillen walks back towards Sam.

MRS MCQUILLEN

I... I see Rupert and, I mean he's got such a brilliant future ahead of him... which is more than I can say for most of the kids I've taught in my life, and I'm still young but- I mean I see a future for kids out there, I didn't mean to be reductive. I see a future. But I rarely see... a destiny. And I guess that's the reason why I came here today instead of calling or...

Sam is on the edge of bursting into tears. She holds it.

MRS MCQUILLEN (CONT'D)

Anyway...

Mrs McQuillen smiles. Sam smiles back.

SAM TURNER

Rupert must be pretty ashamed of his mother, right?

MRS MCQUILLEN

In the fall, I gave the kids an exercise and told them they had to pick a role model. He picked you. We're talking about the kid who's writing to John F. Donovan.

Mrs McQuillen leaves. Sam is shocked.

187 **EXT. CENTRAL PARK - NEW YORK - DAWN**

187

DAWN has not even broken yet. A MAN is jogging, breathless. He is wearing grey jogging pants and a HOODIE pulled up on his head, under which he is wearing a BLACK NECKWARMER rolled up to under his nose. The man stops, tired. He lifts down his neckwarmer, revealing his face: it's JOHN. He reaches for the bottle of water in his pocket, and gulps it down. Other JOGGERS pass by, early birds. John looks at them, looks at the Park, and continues his run.

188 **EXT. 5TH AVENUE - NEW YORK - DAWN**

188

JOHN passes PRETZELS, NEWSPAPERS and HOTDOGS stands... Few cars are driving in the street. New York is awakening.

John runs, and runs... Suddenly stops himself. He turns around, and slowly backtracks... His POV reveals a MAGAZINE STAND. John slowly moves towards, his face hidden by the neckwarmer.

He picks up the magazine. Cover reads: *THE TRUTH ABOUT JOHN F. DONOVAN IS OUT.*

John quickly buys it and walks away. He skims through the whole thing, sees the PHOTOSHOPPED PICTURES of him and a guy we've never met.

In a LARGER SHOT, they seem to be walking alongside, John slightly forward, hiding a part of his friend's body. Lower, a ZOOMED-IN CLOSE-UP of their HOLDING HANDS, as if someone had taken a back shot at the same moment.

DOLLY IN on John as he lifts his eyes. His PHONE buzzes. John looks up his texts. It's BARBARA: "Meet me @ office 8am".

CASTING DIRECTOR 1 (O.S.)

So... Rupert...

189 **INT. AUDITION ROOM - CASTING AGENCY - DAY**

189

CASTING DIRECTORS, PRODUCERS and other decision-makers are sitting behind a big table. Facing them is RUPERT, and beside him, his READER.

CASTING DIRECTOR 1

Talk a little bit about yourself. I can see here you've been in a few commercials and... but personally I had never heard of you before.

RUPERT TURNER

Well, uh... That makes two of us...

Other casting directors giggle. Rupert bites his lip, wondering if he went too far. He is nervous.

CASTING DIRECTOR 1

This part is... very demanding, Rupert, and I can see here that you have no... training at all, did you ever attend any classes or school?

RUPERT TURNER

Uh... no, Ma'am.

CASTING DIRECTOR 2

What makes you want to act?

CUT TO:

190

I/E. INTERCITY TRAIN - WATERLOO STATION - LONDON - SAME TIME

190

SAM is facing the doors, arriving at Waterloo. As they open, she hops out of the wagon and rushes through the station. She turns around, looking for directions, somewhat anxious.

CUT TO:

191

INT. AUDITION ROOM - CASTING AGENCY - CONTINUOUS

191

RUPERT is still facing the BOARD. He just had a vision. And an answer.

RUPERT TURNER

(almost for him)

My mum.

CASTING DIRECTOR 1

Come again?

RUPERT TURNER

My mother, Ma'am. She's an actress. Was.

CASTING DIRECTOR 1

Oh. What's her name?

CUT TO:

192

I/E. TAXI - LONDON - SAME TIME

192

A quick FLASH OF : SAM in a cab. It's RAINING.

CUT TO:

193

INT. AUDITION ROOM - CASTING AGENCY - CONTINUOUS

193

Rupert clears his throat, nervous and vulnerable. He laughs, nervously.

RUPERT TURNER

I doubt you've heard of her too. She... My mum and my dad were head of the Turning Point theater troupe and... he directed her in a play he wrote and uh... left her for a... for a person when I was still a baby... She stopped acting ever since.

Awkward silence.

CASTING DIRECTOR 3

I've heard you've been writing to John F. Donovan? How's that?

Rupert is caught off guard.

RUPERT TURNER

I'd rather not be talking about this, sir, if you don't mind.

ANother silence. Casting directors exchange a knowing glance.

CASTING DIRECTOR 2

Shall we carry on? We have a tight schedule.

RUPERT TURNER

Yes, sure, um...

Rupert looks at every person calmly, breathing deeply, nervous.

CUT TO:

194

INT. RUPERT'S ROOM - RUPERT'S HOUSE - SAME TIME

194

Fast DOLLY IN on JOHN'S MAGAZINE PICTURE on Rupert's wall, reading : *STYLE IS KNOWING WHO YOU ARE.*

CUT TO:

195

INT. AUDITION ROOM - CASTING AGENCY - CONTINUOUS

195

RUPERT turns to his reader, and motions he is ready. But as they're about to start, Rupert stops and turns to the board.

RUPERT TURNER

I'm sorry I talked about my mum, I know it wasn't professional.

Casting directors smile. Rupert turns to his reader, who winks at him.

READER

I can't let you on the boat without your parents, young man-

RUPERT TURNER

But they're already on board sir!

READER

They went on board without you and your sister?

RUPERT TURNER

Yes! We lost them in the crowd and-

READER

Son, you don't have tickets, you don't have parents-

RUPERT TURNER

But I do! We do! If you'll just let us on board, I can find them and-!

READER

*There's another boat that leaves for
America in 3 days-*

RUPERT TURNER

No! We need to be on this one!

CUT TO:

196

EXT. STREET - LONDON - CONTINUOUS

196

SAM gets out of the CAB. It's raining cats and dogs and her umbrella, of course, is torn, letting water through, dripping down on her hair and face. Highly displeased, she gets a PIECE OF PAPER out of her purse. Reads an address. Gets in the building in front of which she's been dropped.

CUT TO:

197

INT. AUDITION ROOM - CASTING AGENCY - CONTINUOUS

197

The continuous audition scene.

RUPERT TURNER

*Just help me, sir. My sister, sir, she's
ill - and I've heard that the doctors in
New York can cure anything! And once she's
cured, well then, she'll be a star on the
stage singing and dancing-*

READER

*And what about you, son? Do you only
dream for your sister?*

CUT TO:

198

INT. CORRIDOR - BUILDING - CONTINUOUS

198

SAM walks to the casting agency, going through the same dark corridor, her coat undulating behind her.

CUT TO:

199

INT. AUDITION ROOM - CASTING AGENCY

199

The continuous audition scene.

RUPERT TURNER

*No, sir. We dream for each other.
Please, sir, I know that you're not
supposed to let people on without a
ticket-*

READER

I most certainly am not!

RUPERT TURNER

*- but looking at you, I don't believe
your heart is so black that you would let
my sister and me stand here on the dock,
watching as our parents set sail for a
new life, a better life in a new world.
(MORE)*

RUPERT TURNER (CONT'D)

*It's the answer to our prayers. What we
can't be here, we will be there.*

CASTING DIRECTORS are looking at RUPERT with satisfaction. His READER gives him a friendly tap on the shoulder. A moment of silence. Rupert smiles bashfully, then turns around to look through the door's window. No one behind it.

200 **INT. WAITING ROOM - CASTING AGENCY - CONTINUOUS** 200

SAM walks in, drenched. Looks for Rupert. She heads for the RECEPTIONIST'S desk.

SAM TURNER

Hi, my son, Rupert Turner, is here for an audition. At 3.

RECEPTIONIST 2

They're all running a little early.

SAM TURNER

Running early?! Does that exist?

RECEPTIONIST 2

Yes. Rupert... has left. And you are?

Sam doesn't even answer and storms out.

201 **INT. CORRIDOR - BUILDING - CONTINUOUS** 201

SAM gets out of the casting agency, looks to her left and right: the corridor is empty.

202 **EXT. STREET - LONDON - CONTINUOUS** 202

SAM gets out of the building, panting. She looks for Rupert everywhere. She spots him, entering the SUBWAY, with his EARPHONES on.

SAM TURNER

Rupert! Roop!

Rupert goes down the stairs and into the subway station, surrounded by dozens of people. Sam runs after him, running into streetwalkers on the peopled street.

203 **INT. SUBWAY STATION - LONDON - CONTINUOUS** 203

SAM hastily walks down the stairs and rushes to the TICKET BOOTH. People are lining up.

SAM TURNER

Excuse me, my son is in there, please let me pass!

People let her go first, some grumpily, some grumpily-ier. Sam spots Rupert waiting for the metro. She is desperately looking for money as she tosses a couple of PENCE to the TICKET LADY. But she won't let her go through. Sam is hysterical.

SAM TURNER (CONT'D)

(yelling)

Rupert, wait!

TICKET LADY

*(pointing the prices written
on the glass)*

Can't you read? It's 3-

SAM TURNER

Argh, you are SO annoying, lady!

Sam tosses a bunch of other PENCE at her and goes through the turnstyle. She elbows her way to her son. The METRO arrives.

SAM TURNER (CONT'D)

No! Damn it!

Rupert goes in, listening to his music. He turns around, standing amongst taller passengers, and sees his mother. She waves at him, hysterical. Rupert's eyes bulge out. His "busted" expression soon melts into emotion as he understands his mother is there for the good reasons.

SAM TURNER (CONT'D)

Rupert, come back! Please!

Rupert suddenly tries to get out of the metro but the door closes on him. Passengers surrounding him help push the doors back in, helping him. Rupert escapes. The doors shut for good and the subway leaves.

Sam is still going through people, rushing to her son, who is slowly walking towards her, and progressively start to run towards her too. They fall in each other's arms. Sam lifts Rupert high, relieved, and sad, and happy.

SAM TURNER (CONT'D)

(crying, kissing her son)

I'm so sorry, Rupert, I'm so stupid, I'm so stupid!

RUPERT TURNER

(crying too)

You're not mad, mum?

Sam speaks fast and crazy, as if everything she silenced finally emerges in a garrulous and confused explosion of words.

SAM TURNER

(she kisses him relentlessly)

No, no I'm not mad, baby, I- I'm so stupid- Please, please Rupert, forgive me, I- Your teacher came and I knew I had made a mistake but I didn't know that I knew and she was so beautiful and then I hated her but I loved her too and I understood it all-

RUPERT TURNER

It's okay, mum-

SAM TURNER

It's NOT okay, I'm so sorry, God, how can your mother be so stupid, uh, what are you gonna do with a stupid mother like that?

Rupert is crying childishly, finally acting like the kid he's tried so hard not to be.

RUPERT TURNER

You're not stupid mum!

SAM TURNER

Rupie, I didn't want to hurt you, ok and, and, and I'm sorry that you think I'm small, and my smallness and-

RUPERT TURNER

You're not small, mum! I'm sorry-

SAM TURNER

No you're right I am, I AM, and I don't wish that for you, alright, and we'll do it, we'll... YOU, YOU Rupert, you'll do it, the auditions, and the acting and this... whole... we'll do it and I'll be there for you, alright, I'll be, I'll... be... right here.

RUPERT TURNER

Am I not grounded?

SAM TURNER

Huh? Well... of course! Of course, honey! We'll find something, haha-

Rupert laughs. They both do, their cheeks ridiculously wet. Sam stands and looks around, dries her cheek.

SAM TURNER (CONT'D)

Alright, I need a good, cold, cold beer. It's too bad you're underage. Come on, let's get out of this town for the love of God, the air is so damp, and it's so dirty in here...

Sam carries on. Rupert holds her hand as they walk out of, looking at his mother fiercely.

JOHN F. DONOVAN (V.O.)

Barbara... This can't be serious...

CUT TO:

204

INT. BARBARA'S OFFICE - TALENT MANAGEMENT AGENCY - DAY

204

JOHN's discomposd face... He is sitting in front of BARBARA, who is looking at him, holding a pretend look of compassion.

BARBARA FISHER

God created Earth in 7 days. You destroyed it in 48 hours...

Barbara's marmoreal expression leaves no room for hope.

JOHN F. DONOVAN

We've... we've been through so much together... We're... I need you. And you...

John won't speak his mind aloud. Barbara is waiting...

BARBARA FISHER

Ha ha... say it... I... need YOU, John? Is that it?

John is stunned. Barbara chooses her words.

BARBARA FISHER (CONT'D)

I don't need anybody, John. I do Academy lobbies and HFPA luncheons. I charter private jets, I read every piece of shit that lands on my desk for you, I renew Clonapam, Xanax, Vallium, Ativan prescriptions all over the State and I even order thousands of PMOP felt-tip pens on AMAZON dot D-E dot flichtdästenFUCK for my most extravagant clients. Yes, that IS what I do.

John smiles. He knows Barbara isn't finished. As a matter of fact, she leans forward on her desk, joining hands.

BARBARA FISHER (CONT'D)

Here is what I do NOT do. I do NOT elbow my way out of my fucking porch every morning through journalists who want to know everything about your violent history back in high school in Armpit, Pennsylvania. I do not deny the fact that you have a manic disorder, diagnosed in 1995, because I was NEVER told you did.

JOHN F. DONOVAN

Barb-

BARBARA FISHER

I'm not finished-

JOHN F. DONOVAN

Listen, I'm sorry-

BARBARA FISHER

I AM NOT FINISHED! I do not negotiate with customers of the "Gloom" who are blackmailing me, telling me that GOSSIP magazine is offering MORE than we can afford. I do NOT-

JOHN F. DONOVAN

I hear you and-

BARBARA FISHER

I AM STILL NOT FINISHED WILL YOU SHUT YOUR FACE IN THE NAME OF SAINT JOSEPH PATRON OF THE HARD-WORKING! I do not beg Paramount to take you back claiming you had an "episode" and shat on their script and their movie and everything that studio ever did for you. I do NOT beg Paramount to take you back on my knees to LOSE the battle and I do not explain to the entire public and industry why you wrote to a prepubescent kid in the UK cuz, again, I didn't know about it, and I do not talk about what I do not know, I do not fix the fights that I can't win and I DO NOT... represent you, anymore, Johnny.

John is stunned, his eyes full of tears. Barbara catches herself for a second, impressed by her own speech.

She realizes she might have gone too far, but what is done is done and she tosses a BOX OF KLEENEX at him.

BARBARA FISHER (CONT'D)

I'm finished.

Phone rings.

BARBARA FISHER (CONT'D)

You'll find another manager, Johnny. That is the best thing for you right now. I'll tell everyone you fired me.

John holds her stare expectantly. Barbara picks up the phone.

BARBARA FISHER (CONT'D)

Barbara Fisher?

John is devastated. He keeps looking at Barbara, who's talking on the phone, avoiding his eyes. She looks through the window, talks... and holds his glance, at last, for a long time. John nods, resigning himself, gets up and goes.

205

EXT. TALENT MANAGEMENT AGENCY'S BUILDING - LATER

205

JOHN comes out, troubled and pale, hands in his pockets. He pulls down his HOODIE and hails a cab. Nope. Behind John, TWO TEENAGERS, about 17, tall, athletic, whistle at him.

TEENAGE BOY 1

Mister Donovan ?

John turns around.

TEENAGE BOY 1 (CONT'D)

Can I have an autograph, please!

John smiles, duped.

TEENAGE BOY 1 (CONT'D)

(mocking him)

It's for my 8 year old gay step-brother!

Both kids start laughing stupidly. John turns back, ignoring them. He hails another cab, but no luck.

TEENAGE BOY 2

How was your week-end, man?!

John shuts his eyes, trying to focus, motions to another cab.

TEENAGE BOY 1

Oh, I'm so sorry Sir-

TEENAGE BOY 2

John F. Donovan, bitch, that's my name!
Say my name, buddy!

John starts walking down an avenue; fuck this, change of plan. The two boys follow him.

TEENAGE BOY 1

Aw, bro, you scared him away! Mr Donovan,
we just want your autograph!

The boys won't leave him alone. John is walking faster and faster. PEOPLE on the street notice him, and notice the boys.

JOHN F. DONOVAN

(for himself)

I'mma autograph my fucking fist on your face, you fuck-

TEENAGE BOY 2

(lisping queerly)

Ooh, sassy!

TEENAGE BOY 1

Harvest is angry!

John finds a cab, jumps in.

TEENAGE BOY 2

Yeah, go and hide in your 4 billion dollar house, you freak!

206

I/E. TAXI - NEW YORK - CONTINUOUS

206

JOHN is in the cab. He looks back. Through the back windshield, the TWO BOYS are shrinking, already far. John's eyes are watering. He lets out a nervous laugh, trying to act manly.

JOHN F. DONOVAN

Fucking f...

John bites his lower lip, thoughtful.

JOHN F. DONOVAN (CONT'D)

Idiots.

TAXI DRIVER (O.S.)

Should I just guess where we're going, my Captain?

JOHN F. DONOVAN

Oh, sure, yes 10-

John's voice just cracked. He is in some sort of emotional distress. He covers his face, trying to keep it together.

JOHN F. DONOVAN (CONT'D)

(solid)

1070 5th Avenue, please.

Silent beat.

TAXI DRIVER (O.S.)

That's where we're goin', my Captain.

207

INT. CORRIDOR - PENTHOUSE FLOOR - JOHN'S BUILDING - LATER

207

JOHN is walking through the darkly lit hallway. He stops in front of his door, and pops an ORANGE PILL and a RED ONE, before going in.

208

INT. HALLWAY - JOHN'S PENTHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

208

JOHN shuts the door and stops himself as soon. His POV reveals a MEDIUM SIZED BLUE SUITCASE, handle lifted up, standing in the middle of the floor, at the end of the corridor. Beat. John listens up. Clears his throat, looking for his "serious", cool voice.

JOHN F. DONOVAN

Ames?

No response. John slowly walks in... arrives at the end of the hall, revealing as we FOLLOW HIM the open space filled with light, he stops... and stares at AMY, who is standing straight, her coat on. It may seem like John has interrupted something. Silence.

John looks at her. She smiles like she's never smiled. John walks to the fridge, opens the door and drinks from the ORANGE JUICE BOX, looking at her straight in the eye. After a generous gulp:

JOHN F. DONOVAN (CONT'D)

Going somewhere?

AMY BOSWORTH

(softly)

I don't want to fight, John.

John knows exactly what is going on. But he decides he doesn't, for the time being. He shrugs.

JOHN F. DONOVAN

Ok. Where you going?

Amy sighs. John chugs the rest of the orange juice and tosses it in the recycling bin absentmindedly.

AMY BOSWORTH

Nowhere. LA.

JOHN F. DONOVAN

Fancy nowhere.

Silent beat.

JOHN F. DONOVAN (CONT'D)

Barbara dropped me.

Amy sighs - she doesn't seem surprised.

JOHN F. DONOVAN (CONT'D)

Did you know about this?

AMY BOSWORTH

No but... she called here this morning,
when the...

(sighing)

Magazines came out.

John can't speak.

AMY BOSWORTH (CONT'D)

She didn't say anything, but... I could
tell it wasn't a friendly call.

John's silenced. He opens the fridge and opens a new ORANGE JUICE BOX. And drinks. He then walks to the giant bay window, still drinking. Offering Amy his back, he mutters:

JOHN F. DONOVAN

When are you coming back?

Amy doesn't answer. She just sighs.

JOHN F. DONOVAN (CONT'D)

If you sigh any louder you might shatter the window.

He turns to her.

JOHN F. DONOVAN (CONT'D)

Is this really how you're going to do things, Amy? After - how long has it been - 10 years? Is this how you're gonna quit on me?

Amy closes her eyes. This is painful and somehow she thought, or hoped, it wouldn't be. She whispers. They both do.

AMY BOSWORTH

John... you quit on me such a long time ago... And it's been TWELVE years-

JOHN F. DONOVAN

It's just an expression-

AMY BOSWORTH

And of those, twelve too many, perhaps... And I'm not quitting on you, John. You're not a cause or a bad habit, or a crippled kid who needs assistance. You're my husband.

JOHN F. DONOVAN

We've been happy, Ames. This is what we wanted. Honestly, let's just pretend the last three days never happened, okay, let's just pretend - we've been happy, we had exactly what we wanted, we breathe the air we wanna breathe, we live in the appartement we dreamed of, we are dressed by the greatest designers, we travel the world and we eat the food we love, we-

AMY BOSWORTH

So what? You know what... SO... WHAT? And... "we"? Do I have to explain the difference between "we" and "I" to you, John? Do I have to explain that to someone with an IQ of 140? Really?

JOHN F. DONOVAN

Alright! You're still young, what if you had to... live this vicariously for the first years-

AMY BOSWORTH

The FIRST years? How old do you think I wanna get? Come on! People call me Emily, or Emma, or Amanda-

JOHN F. DONOVAN

People are dumb! I hate them!

Amy sighs. John is standing there with his OJ, helpless.

JOHN F. DONOVAN (CONT'D)

When did we become such a cliché? I hate fucking clichés!

AMY BOSWORTH

Your entire life is a cliché, John, and your job is to convey them, and clichés are clichés because they are true and they exist, so... There's nothing wrong with that. And there's nothing wrong with... giving up on them.

Amy takes off her WEDDING RING delicately. John notices.

JOHN F. DONOVAN

Oh my God, what are you doing-

Amy stops herself. John takes a few steps towards her, looking like a lost child, raising his hand as if trying to stop her. She almost laughs at him for being so naive.

JOHN F. DONOVAN (CONT'D)

Is it because of the sex thing, Ames? Is it the letters? Is it the magazines? Don't believe that shit. Those pictures were photoshopped, don't be stupid!

Somehow, John breaks Amy's heart. Again. She shrugs.

AMY BOSWORTH

I don't need magazines to tell me who you are, Jonathan.

JOHN F. DONOVAN

Don't. Don't call me Jonathan.

AMY BOSWORTH

Sorry. I just don't know when this whole business sucked out all the fun and perspective out of us so much we'd disrespect ourselves and each other so shamelessly.

JOHN F. DONOVAN

Boo hoo.

Amy drops her wedding ring on the kitchen counter and walks to her suitcase. John is suddenly disgusted - and just mixed up, obviously.

JOHN F. DONOVAN (CONT'D)

If you're thinking of going to Los Angeles for your career you should probably get real too, Ames. Stop wasting your time and humiliating yourself and forcing people to lie to you. This business has nothing to offer you. You got nothing to win, everything to lose.

Amy slowly turns around to face her ex-husband. Evidently hurt, she still pulls off that calm attitude.

AMY BOSWORTH

I'm going to LA to see my sister, not to have a career. But thanks for the advice.

Amy walks away. She turns around half way through the hall, in the shade. John is at the other end of the appartement.

AMY BOSWORTH (CONT'D)

I hate you John, ok? I hate you... with all my heart. And... you hate me too. We hate each other so much... as much as we used to hate our parents. Do you remember how much we hated them? And all the plans we made to murder them, and oh, the list of possible murders-

JOHN F. DONOVAN

That was a great list.

AMY BOSWORTH

I still have it-

JOHN F. DONOVAN

No shit-

AMY BOSWORTH

In my purse.

Silent beat.

AMY BOSWORTH (CONT'D)

Those letters, though... All those letters. Did you really feel that lonely?

JOHN F. DONOVAN

Rupert is a special kid, I felt like he could understand me.

Amy smiles, moved, and also convinced now that John is sick, and that it's time for her to leave.

AMY BOSWORTH

You should write to him. I watched you on Fallon when I came home from my last show-

JOHN F. DONOVAN

Oh shit-

Amy motions that it is of no importance anymore.

AMY BOSWORTH

You're alone now, John. You hate your mother, you hate me, you hate the people... Don't let that kid hate you.

Amy looks at John for a while. She turns around and turns back, looking at him, awkwardly, bemused and amused.

AMY BOSWORTH (CONT'D)

When we moved in, you stood in front of that window in a very similar light. That sort of um... brown bright sky, very peculiar. We had no furniture... I'll see you soon.

Amy turns around and leaves for good. John stays there. Alone.

DOLLY IN on the GOSSIP magazine, opened on the kitchen table.

We very, very SLOWLY DOLLY IN on John as he thinks, desperate, confused, abandoned. And has an idea.

CUT TO:

- HALL, THE GOSSIP BUILDING: FEET walk the grounds; high heels, boots, lacquer shoes, etc.

Arrive TWO RUNNING SHOES. We TILT-UP, revealing GREY JOGGING PANTS... a dangling NYLON GREY BAG, a BLACK *LORD OF THE RINGS* T-SHIRT, used and torn, too short to be worn by... JOHN, wearing black RAY-BANS, who appears in the packed hallway of the big, luxurious building decorated with an immense, preposterous logo in golden letters: THE GOSSIP, dominating the space, hung over the SECURITY DESK.

John studies the environment, looking up to the endless ceiling, the spectacular chandelier... He smiles and walks towards the elevators.

- ELEVATOR, THE GOSSIP BUILDING: JOHN is waiting, alone in the elevator. The NEONS are reflected in his SUNGLASSES like two white dots, two Machiavellian eyes.

- ELEVATORS HALLWAY, GOSSIP RECEPTION: A entirely white space. A corridor of elevators facing each other. People, JOURNALISTS, ASSISTANTS, EDITORS, PHOTOGRAPHERS emerge from their respective lifts, crossing the corridor, waving "hello", walking towards the end of the hallway. Amongst them, JOHN, blending in.

On each sides of the reception desk are frosted-glass doors giving access to the offices. The GOSSIP RECEPTIONIST stands, happy to see someone, who runs towards her. She opens her arms: kisses and hugs, morning chat.

We FOLLOW John, following a young brunette trying to walk in. She rubs her EMPLOYEE CARD on the magnetic detector locking the door, but she's obviously having a hard time with all the messily piled-up DOCUMENTS she is carrying. John comes to the rescue, holding her coffee, opening the door for her. She thanks him. He walks past her, to the deep of the offices. Thinking she might have recognized his voice... she slowly turns around to look at him: it's JEANETTE.

- CONFERENCE ROOM, THE GOSSIP: MOIRA and her DEPARTMENT HEADS are going through the next issue's outline. Someone is writing on a board with a MARKER, drawing circles, writing names. Moira takes the lead, starts talking... and stops.

JOHN has entered the room. EDITORS facing Moira turn around, trying to understand what she is looking at.

John gently "rolls" the EDITOR at the end of the table to the left, making space for himself. Moira slowly stands, apprehensive. John raises a finger, motioning for her to wait. He turns his back, drops his nylon bag on the table behind him, unzips it... As Moira and her colleagues wait, exchanging worried glances.

John finally turns back to them. And reveals a GOLF CLUB. Suddenly, John SMASHES the conference table. Editors and writers JUMP AWAY, terrified. At the opposite end of the table, MOIRA backs away from the madness, but with a gleeful SMILE plastered across her face.

John eyes Moira and begins moving towards her. Lining the room are FRAMED GOSSIP MAGAZINE COVERS. John smashes them one at a time, never taking his eyes off of GRINNING Moira. He approaches Moira and WRAPS a HAND AROUND HER THROAT. The smile has never left her face.

- THE GOSSIP BUILDING: Still in SLOW-MOTION, JOHN emerges from the building, led by POLICE, his hands CUFFED behind his back. John is resisting, forcing the officers to manhandle him. The cops ROUGHLY place John in the back of a POLICE CAR as the camera DOLLIES IN on him.

210 **EXT. POLICE STATION - NEW YORK / INT. JIMMY'S CAR - LATER**

210

JOHN emerges from the front of the police station, cautiously - he looks around to see if there are any cameras. But all he sees is JIMMY, waiting outside his car, smoking. John heads over to him. Jimmy gets in the driver's seat, John in the passenger side. He looks over at Jimmy, who doesn't return his glance. John sighs. It's raining. Jimmy places a VIAL OF LITHIUM on the dashboard, right in front of his cousin. He looks him straight in the eye.

FADE TO BLACK.

211 **INT. JOHN'S VILLAGE APARTMENT - DAY**

211

We are inside a small Greenwich apartment. It is TINY, WHITE and almost empty. We see a LEAKING FAUCET, water dripping down rhythmically.

We DOLLY DOWN a hallway. Old, shitty CHANDELIERS dangle from moldy plaster, the WALLPAPER peels and rots. The WINDOWS are covered by SHEETS that have thumb-tacked up.

We see a WROUGHT IRON BED FRAME. The nightstand next to the bed is a mess of HALF-EMPTY glasses and OVERFLOWING ASHTRAYS. A PIZZA BOX is lying on the floor amongst SCATTERED DIRTY CLOTHES.

THROUGH THE WINDOW, a foggy New York can be made out, and it is understood that we are up at the 8th or 9th floor, at least.

A MIRROR leaning against the wall REFLECTS the BEER BOTTLES and LIQUOR BOTTLES everywhere on the floor.

IN SOUND BRIDGE, we can start to make out some weird crackling, slowly increasing...

212 **INT. KITCHEN - JOHN'S VILLAGE APARTMENT - DAY**

212

An EGG is frying in oil. A man is offering us his BACK, a THIN GOLDEN CHAIN hanging from his NECK. JOHN is cooking, shirtless, wearing torn BLUE JEANS. He looks like shit.

GRACE DONOVAN (V.O.)

He rented an apartment in Greenwich. I never saw it. Amy told me it looked a lot like their first apartment.

213 **INT. LIVING ROOM - JOHN'S VILLAGE APARTMENT - DAY**

213

JOHN is reading a HIGH TIMES magazine, sitting on the floor. There is one SOFA against the wall, but it's covered with POLYETHYLENE. DOLLY IN on John as he is skimming through the magazine, peaceful and quiet, smoking a cigarette. He drops a REDOXON TABLET in a glass of water and stirs it with his finger nonchalantly.

JAMES DONOVAN (V.O.)

He needed peace. And quiet. He told me he got disgusted with himself, from living alone in the penthouse. He couldn't stand it.

AMY BOSWORTH (V.O.)

He got disgusted with himself whenever he felt ashamed that he loved himself so much. I know the drill.

AUNT FAITH (V.O.)

They sold the penthouse. John took his share and gave all the money to whatever cause he'd find. He sold all the clothes too. Gave some to theater troupes, or to the poor.

214

INT. BEDROOM - JOHN'S VILLAGE APARTMENT - DAY

214

A languid CRANE UP on an AIR MATTRESS. The bed is unmade, the BABY BLUE SHEETS are dirty, stained with disgusting COFFEE SPOTS and BURN MARKS.

MRS MCQUILLEN (V.O.)

Rupert told me he kept writing. He apologized and... they had actually made plans to finally meet, should Rupert come to New York for a callback. He ended up getting the part of course.

The VOICE OVERS seem distant, and their lines overlap with one another.

MARTIN SCORCESE (V.O.)

I had never seen Johnny again since we had shot Warner Won't Be Back. But I did run into him in the meat market. He was running errands. Stared at me for a long time before he recognized me.

DAVID ROBINSON (V.O.)

An opportunity to LEARN.

MARTIN SCORCESE (V.O.)

We lost both the message, AND the messenger.

STUDIO EXECUTIVE (V.O.)

There certainly was a seductive opportunity for... well, opportunists, of course, people from the indie side, the voyeur half, the reality shows and the poem-adaptations for HBO but... for the Majors and... for the public, John F. Donovan had lost his credibility.

JOHN is lying there, still shirtless, his right arm covering his head. The sun bathes the room, the light hazes the air. There are DRAWINGS, WRITINGS on the walls.

215

EXT. ROOF - JOHN'S VILLAGE APARTMENT - DAY

215

We CIRCLE AROUND JOHN as he stands on the roof of his apartment building, looking at the city, smoking a cigarette. It's raining. But he won't move, as if screwed there. If the weather wasn't so depressing, and the sky so grey, he would almost remind one of those superhero movie shots: the avenger watching over his town, invincible.

JAMES DONOVAN (V.O.)

John was diagnosed as bipolar at 17. He got kicked out of hockey after getting into an umpteenth fight in which he hurt his knee.

GRACE DONOVAN (V.O.)

At first we thought it was just ADD. And then we pretended it was ADD.

AMY BOSWORTH (V.O.)

He didn't want it to ruin his career, even though he didn't have one at 17. But he knew the day would come where people would want to find out the truth about him.

216

EXT. FIELD - INDUSTRIAL ZONE - NEW JERSEY - DAY

216

JOHN is walking down a desert field in a brown pea coat, wearing a very red scarf puffing out in the wind, looking disheveled, "underdressed" for the apparent bitter cold. He coughs, drinking a Coke. Then yells and tosses it away crazily.

GRACE DONOVAN (V.O.)

So we had to lie about this from the very beginning. Sometimes he would say "I think I could be borderline", just to mix people up.

ZOE SALDANA (V.O.)

He stopped answering his phone.

STUDIO EXECUTIVE (V.O.)

He became a sort of caricature in a matter of seconds.

MARTIN (V.O.)

The number of seconds it takes to read a 147 characters tweet, that is.

217

INT. SHOWER - BATHROOM - JOHN'S VILLAGE APARTMENT - DAY

217

JOHN is standing still under the water dribbling down his face. He swallows some every now and then, but mostly stays still, as if he hadn't taken a shower in days - which probably is the case. He is wearing a childish, homemade necklace.

The WORDS AND SENTENCES of every voice collide and AMALGAMATE in an increasingly disturbing and annoying clamor:

MARTIN SCORCESE (V.O.)

No such thing as a greater star than John F. Donovan-

BARBARA FISHER (V.O.)

Next big motherfucking deal-

JAMES DONOVAN (V.O.)

He was crazy-

AMY BOSWORTH (V.O.)

He was a genius. With all the downsides, the ego, the temper, the paranoia, the shit that comes along, the... package deal.

AMERICAN FILM CRITIC (V.O.)

All that remains are the films... No books, no serious, real interviews - he wouldn't do any, only talk shows and light stuff-

GRACE DONOVAN

Said it scared him.

AMY BOSWORTH (V.O.)
Everything scared him.

ZOE SALDANA (V.O.)
Hypochondriac. Funny.

MINKA KELLY (V.O.)
I kept asking myself, WHY? Why him? What have we done?

STUDIO EXECUTIVE (V.O.)
Who was John F. Donovan?

All THE VOICES stop as a POWERFUL CLICK buries them, putting and end to the medley. It's the SOUND of an ELECTRIC RAZOR.

218 **INT. BATHROOM - JOHN'S VILLAGE APARTMENT - DAY**

218

All we hear now is the BUZZING of the RAZOR, as LOCKS OF HAIR fall down, landing on JOHN'S feet. He is shaving his head in front of an old, shattered, rusty mirror.

219 **INT. HALLWAY - JOHN'S VILLAGE APARTEMENT - DAY**

219

JOHN is dressed in a impeccable beige suit, looking quite at odds with the indigent looking space. He puts his coat on, picks up DOCUMENTS left on the floor, and leaves.

DOLLY IN on the shut door as a muffled chattering we cannot make out starts in SOUND BRIDGE :

220 **INT. FLAHERTY BINGHAM STEIN OFFICES - DAY**

220

Slow DOLLY IN on the GLASS WALLS of the conference room. EMPLOYEES hustle around the office, SECRETARIES answer the phone.

In the conference room, LAWYERS discuss the ins and outs of the JOHN F. DONOVAN trial. A formal conversation.

221 **INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - FLAHERTY BINGHAM STEIN - CONTINUOUS**

221

LAWYERS ask questions to LAWYERS as we DOLLY IN on JOHN's back. He's dressed in the same beige suit... Looking down at the glass table... in which the sky is reflected. An abstract shape runs through... John lifts his eyes. His POV reveals:

In the SKY, seen from behind the window: a TWIN-ENGINE JET circles the buildings, a SIGN reading: HAPPY VALENTINE'S DAY from Macy's!

John looks down again, bored. And up to: MOIRA, texting. She puts her phone down, looks at the LAWYER sitting next to her. He whispers something to her ear. She smiles, looks at John and winks.

222 **EXT. SKY - FLAHERTY BINGHAM STEIN - CONTINUOUS**

222

From the building facing the Flaherty Bingham Stein one, we can clearly make out John's ongoing lawyers meeting, the sky reflecting perfectly in the all-glass façade. In SOUND BRIDGE:

LAWYER 1 (V.O.)
Alright, gentleman. Let's call it.
Tomorrow, same time, same place.

LAWYER 2 (V.O.)

Same lawyers?

LAWYER 1 (V.O.)

Larry...

223

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - FLAHERTY BINGHAM STEIN - DAY

223

JOHN is sitting with his head down on the table, his hands wrapped around the top of his neck.

MOIRA comes back in, notices John. She starts looking for something under the table. Finds it: her PURSE. John does not look up. Moira watches him for a moment, and leans forward to knock on the table, right above John's head. Startled, he looks up, sees Moira.

M. M. KING

Ever heard of the Flangbenny fish Mister Donovan? Ever heard of him?

John sits in the back of his chair, still numb.

JOHN F. DONOVAN

Please educate me.

M. M. KING

This cute little fish turns out to be a chameleon fish. And now he's the talk of the town for them scientists... the first, real manifestation of animal mutation... I saw one in Jakarta at the Angkasa Aquarium, last year. They literally disappear if they need to and adapt astonishingly well to any environment: corals, sand or Burberry skirts, hell, there's nothing they can't do. He even morphs, I'll be goddamned, into another sort of fish, a bigger, longer, fish that rids other fishes of their parasites. They're like spiders with insects. And you don't kill spiders, right? So the flangbenny gets away with it all, acting like something indispensable to the real predators.

JOHN F. DONOVAN

Fascinating-

M. M. KING

So as long as our little friend is using his skills, he's safe. But that takes a lot of energy and a lot of focus for such a little fish. He's pretty and he's fast... but he ain't got that big of a motor inside, if you catch my drift. So every once in a while he gets tired and hides in reefs... and he turns back to his real color, his real self.

(she snaps her fingers)

That's when he gets eaten. The moment he thinks no one's watching, the moment he takes off his little costume... He's gone.

Moira closes her eyes and takes a deep, crazy inspiration breath.

M. M. KING (CONT'D)

I LOVE that story.

John and Moira hold each other's glance for a moment. Moira looks to the window, artificially thoughtful, as if moved by her own lousy metaphor.

JOHN F. DONOVAN

What the hell did I do to you, Moira?

Moira turns back to John, stunned.

M. M. KING

Oh, come on now, you know better-

JOHN F. DONOVAN

I certainly know you were kicked out of Juilliard in 1983-

Moira bursts out laughing. John is doing his best not to react.

M. M. KING

Oh, Mister Donovan...

Moira dramatically makes time pass with her hand, a gesture introducing the synopsis of her life.

M. M. KING (CONT'D)

In the eighties, a young actress is kicked out of her acting class. Embittered and vindictive, she swears to God - but above all, to herself - that she will WRECK vengeance upon the TALENTED? Are we on a night-time soap? Is this ABC?

John is silenced and can't afford outbursts.

JOHN F. DONOVAN

We shouldn't be speaking.

M. M. KING

(laughing)

Hell no, we shouldn't... But it's so goddam entertaining!

JOHN F. DONOVAN

It's illegal, get the fuck outta here.

M. M. KING

(grabbing her purse)

Alright, big daddy.

Moira leaves the room. She stops at the door, turns back to him, smiling.

M. M. KING (CONT'D)

You wanna know what you're like to me, Mister Donovan?

JOHN F. DONOVAN

(not looking at her)

Nope-

M. M. KING

You wanna know what you look like to me with your nazi haircut and your Italian pants? You look like a goddam lottery winner.

John lets out a nervous laugh. Moira stays still, not moving.

JOHN F. DONOVAN

You certainly have a gift for images, Moira-

M. M. KING

A tourist with big, green smelly new money. You won the jackpot in Vegas and you're buying real estate in Beverly Hills, the trunk of your van filled with cash and cheap dreams. So you pick some big-guy red car and you drive around town wearing the latest Balenciaga but you're nothing more then a lucky kid. And how y'all must have listened to the Smiths, you and your wife - sorry your... best friend forever - on your way to New York City back in 1996, trying to get away from illiterate, indigent, Irish Mommy...

John puts both his hands on the arms of his chair, controlling himself. Moira notices. She slowly moves towards him as she carries on.

M. M. KING (CONT'D)

...reeking of Jack Daniels, shamefully tasteless, freshly divorced from big mean Daddy, living off her son's guilt-ridden charity like a hooker with her pimp.

John clenches his jaw and smiles.

M. M. KING (CONT'D)

Does she kneel down in front of your photo every night? The one she keeps next to her bed, or on a wall covered with beauty shots of her boy wonder? All the glitter, all the glory she's asking for... And the premieres she keep asking to attend... But you are ashamed.

John looks at Moira, refusing to speak or communicate. He's not getting into any more trouble. Moira knows she's got some room to play.

M. M. KING (CONT'D)

Does she deserve to be treated like this? What makes you so goddam special, Donovan?

(looking at his crotch)

Is it that big? Are you that good? I don't give a shit. To me... you're just half an inch above average. It's all about goddam timing.

John laughs, helpless.

JOHN F. DONOVAN

This is so fucking unfair.

M. M. KING

Unfair! Did someone ever tell you it was gonna be fair? Hell no. I'mma take away the best years of your life, bud... I hope you like my face, cause you're gonna see it for the next five years. Five years of long, interminable paperwork and outrageous bills. All to probably lose your money, your case, your dignity. And every time you think you're just about done with this, I'll happily remind everyone that you might like to fuck little British boys-

JOHN F. DONOVAN

That's bullshit-

M. M. KING

Of course it is- And we'll finally shake hands on the stairs of the City Court in 20...19? I'll look at you, and I'll see an old man. "Hey, you know that hot kid, you wanna play his dad?"

Silent beat. Moira's about to leave again.

JOHN F. DONOVAN

I'm sorry but I'm a good actor, Moira. It was never about timing. I've worked every minute of my life for this. What did you ever do in yours except ruin mine?

Moira turns around, all smiles.

M. M. KING

Haha! He did it! Bingo... In 2003 I was Assistant Managing Editor at Condé Nast Publications. For the October Vogue, they wanted that red-head model from the Ukraine, supposedly an "atypical beauty". They still called me greenie then but I spoke up and told them what I thought was the right thing to do. Let's get that kid everybody's talking about : JOHN FORD DONOVAN. Everybody looked at me, silenced. I told them to give us a man on the cover, for once. But I hated your name: John Ford Donovan, it was long, pretentious, confusing. "*Ladies, drop the Ford, make it an F., put him in a suit and Bob's your uncle*" is what I told 'em. THAT'S what I do... in MY life. It's got nothing to do with you, Mister D. It's a business. We take, we make, we move on. If you don't go with the flow, we can't follow. Your flavor's dead, you're spoiled cologne.

John is seeing red. But controls himself.

JOHN F. DONOVAN

You wanna make me believe you're my good angel, now? We're Gods down here, Moira, and you're spam. You might get to decide who's last week and who's next, but 20 years from now... who the fuck will you be? What the fuck will be left of you?

Moira buttons up her coat, acting indifferent.

JOHN F. DONOVAN (CONT'D)

I'm the one they'll remember. I'm the one that will keep inspiring them, touching them, making them laugh. I'm here to stay. I WILL BE REMEMBERED, OK!

M. M. KING

You sure will.

She leans towards him to susurrate her goodbyes to his ears - she is the villain, after all.

M. M. KING (CONT'D)

You artists are so keeewte. You make it your mission to be loved by a public who looooooves to hate ya.

Moira leaves John alone. Without ever turning back to him :

M. M. KING (CONT'D)

Arrivederci... Amore... I don't care.

DOLLY BACK as he stays put, looking to the window, silenced.

224

INT. LIVING ROOM - JOHN'S VILLAGE APARTMENT - DAY

224

NOA APPELBAUM is putting RANDOM TRASH in a GARBAGE BAG, emptying ASHTRAYS, getting rid of TAKE-OUT FOOD BOXES.

JOHN is lying on the couch, a WET TOWEL on his forehead, a sheet against a thick book lying on his lap. He's writing a letter with his green PMOP felt-tip pen. Noa finds an ashtray full of ROACHES.

NOA APPELBAUM

(to his brother)

Oh my God, can you do your job properly, brotherfucker!

IRA APPELBAUM (O.S.)

Fuck off, Mary!

NOA APPELBAUM

You're Mary!

John focuses on his letter.

NOA APPELBAUM (CONT'D)

I think it was Garrett Hedlund who once said that your outter life is a manifestation of your inner heart.

IRA APPELBAUM (O.S.)

Na-han! It was RYAN GOSLING who said that! Hey gurl!

JOHN F. DONOVAN

Guys, I feel like an asshole, why are you doing this, you said you were coming over for a beer!

IRA chimes in, armed with plastic gloves and a giant GARBAGE BAG. He is dressed with a HAT and DIANE KEATON'S SUNGLASSES. Noa lifts a giant MERRIAM-WEBSTER dictionary.

NOA APPELBAUM

You lived in the best decorated, most gorgeous penthouse in the world and the only thing you bring to the Paris of crap is the biggest Merriam Webster ever!

John turns his head to Noa with an endearing baby smile.

JOHN F. DONOVAN

Without the biggest Merriam-Webster ever, how could I find the words to express my gratitude to you guys...

Noa smiles, sensitive to John's charm. He gets a tiny VIAL out of his pockets and plops a couple drops under his tongue and hands it to John.

NOA APPELBAUM

Liquid THC?

Ira comes back in, taking off his plastic gloves, done.

IRA APPELBAUM

John, you gotta get your shit together, you can't just conceal yourself in this dark asshole-

NOA APPELBAUM

Yaaasssss, you gotta bounce the fuck out! There is no light, here, and no Campari---

IRA APPELBAUM

(disappears in the kitchen)

Do you solely repeat what I say but in dumber terms, you hot mess?

NOA APPELBAUM

Go to hell, Ira, and don't come back!

Thoughtful, John looks at the LETTER that lies on the table. It is folded in three, but the top part is visible, reading *Dear Rupert...*

JOHN F. DONOVAN

Ok. You're right. I'm outta here. Just...

John stands up and turns to the Appelbaums. He hands the letter to Noa.

JOHN F. DONOVAN (CONT'D)

Be sure to drop this at the Dream Hotel-

IRA APPELBAUM

Ew.

JOHN F. DONOVAN

Tomorrow, before 9 o'clock. Not after.

Noa grabs the letter. John snatches it away for a second.

JOHN F. DONOVAN (CONT'D)

Can I trust you with this?

NOA APPELBAUM

Of course. Who do I make it out to?

JOHN F. DONOVAN

Rupert Turner.

John finally hands Noa the letter that will come to be known, beyond a reasonable doubt, as the last one.

225

I/E. TAXI - FDR FREEWAY HUDSON RIVER - NEW YORK - MAGIC HOUR

225

THE HUDSON RIVER rolls by, reflected in a car's window. NEW YORK BUILDINGS, lit only now by the setting sun, appear in reflection too... RUPERT's face soon adds to the transfigured scenery he's admiring.

Sam proudly looks at her son. They stretch their necks to see more of the skyscrapers, talk and laugh, pointing various sculptures and other famous monuments as magic hour casts its darkness upon town.

DING DONG.

226

EXT. PORCH - DONOVANS HOUSE - NIGHT

226

GRACE opens the door. Her POV reveals JOHN hiding behind a BOUQUET OF RED ROSES. Grace doesn't understand until John puts it down, revealing his clownish face.

GRACE DONOVAN

(opening her arms)

Ah! God almighty! What are you doing here!

Grace hugs John, in seventh heaven. John closes his eyes, enjoying the moment. Grace buries her head in her son's neck, which she smells deeply.

GRACE DONOVAN (CONT'D)

Well this is such- This is SO nice - Look at me, you look pale, hon, have you eaten? Are you hungry? Oh! You smell so good!

JOHN F. DONOVAN

Speaking of which.

John raises a brand new bottle of L'AIR DU TEMPS. Grace covers her mouth with her hand, impressed.

JOHN F. DONOVAN (CONT'D)

Straight off Canal Street. Expired, fake, and poisonous.

GRACE DONOVAN

Perfect! Oh my God... Well, don't stand on the porch like a goddam stranger, come on in! I can't believe it. What a great surprise. A great, great surprise.

John walks in.

227

INT. DINING ROOM - DONOVANS HOUSE - LATER

227

JOHN and GRACE are playing cards. That Samantha Ronson song from *Mean Girls* plays on the kitchen radio. Grace is laughing loudly, fanning her face.

GRACE DONOVAN

But Faith didn't know Beth's lover was hiding in the closet - haha! Ouf!

(MORE)

GRACE DONOVAN (CONT'D)

- so she opens the door and gets the... ha
ha... the snow suits out, ready to skiiiiii!

John laughs. They're obviously in the middle of some funny "inside" story.

GRACE DONOVAN (CONT'D)

That kid ski-

JOHN F. DONOVAN

Skiied his way home!

John knows the rest of the story. They both laugh for a moment. We can't tell if John is laughing because of the story, or because seeing Grace laughing herself makes him happy. She stands and heads for the kitchen, but stops herself and sits down like she is suppressing a rising crave. John notices. A moment.

JOHN F. DONOVAN (CONT'D)

You got something to drink, ma-

Grace immediately stands. John laughs. Grace walks to the kitchen.

GRACE DONOVAN

Me too! Well, alright, I mean... so you can
uh... you're not shooting-

JOHN F. DONOVAN

No. I want to drink profusely.

GRACE DONOVAN

Well, I... you'll be disappointed, you'll
be disappointed because I've only got
this new beer, see, I... I got rid of the
other stuff. And this beer it's uh...

Grace is looking for her words, mixed in her own abstruse phrasing.

GRACE DONOVAN (CONT'D)

It has no um... almost no um... oh come on,
the guy said it, it's uh-

JOHN F. DONOVAN

Near-beer?

GRACE DONOVAN

(jumping to the ceiling)

NEAR-BEER, YES! But, lemme tell you...

Grace slaps her own behind, implying the beer is fattening whatsoever. She brings two cans of BEER to the table, opening them up. John takes a sip of beer.

GRACE DONOVAN (CONT'D)

So? You like it?

JOHN F. DONOVAN

Yes, Ma'am.

Grace smiles. So does John.

GRACE DONOVAN

Well that is just a perfect night.

(looking down on the table)

Um... Hearts... now, yes.

Long silence.

GRACE DONOVAN (CONT'D)

How's Amy?

John opens his mouth but nothing will come out. He just doesn't answer. Grace deals the CARDS.

GRACE DONOVAN (CONT'D)

Well that's um- I'm sure you'll figure it out, hon.

A beat.

GRACE DONOVAN (CONT'D)

Is it um... because you met someone... a new uh... person?

John closes his eyes gently, knowing his mother so well. Grace sings while dealing the cards. It is her own way of dealing with stress. They both sort their cards in silence now. John looks at his mother, and puts his hand down. She notices.

GRACE DONOVAN (CONT'D)

Oh no! You! No, don't do this to me? Are you leaving-

JOHN F. DONOVAN

No-

GRACE DONOVAN

We're in the middle of a-

JOHN F. DONOVAN

I'm sorry, mom.

GRACE DONOVAN

Oh, come on now, we're-

JOHN F. DONOVAN

No, mom, ha, I'm not going anywhere, just.. I'm sorry, not like "I'm sorry, I gotta bail", but... "I'm sorry, sorry". Period.

Grace plays with a lock of hair dangling before her eyes and fixes it behind her ear.

GRACE DONOVAN

We... well what? What for?

John sighs, getting emotional. Grace sorts her cards, multitasking.

JOHN F. DONOVAN

Mom, I love you? I live far, I don't call a lot, and... and... and I'm not kind when I answer the phone, or when I see you - last time was a nightmare-

GRACE DONOVAN

Well, I was drunk like you hate-

JOHN F. DONOVAN

I hate MYSELF for all the time I spoke badly to you, and all the opportunities like this I've missed. Being with you and... having my ass kicked by you like this at a kid's game.

Both are making giant efforts not to cry. Grace lets out a nervous laugh and fans her eyes to dry the upcoming tears.

GRACE DONOVAN

I... I read your interviews, I... see and watch and read everything, and... well it's not something you said it's just... something that, with time, I felt like... well, I know this isn't the greatest town for you but you loved it when you were a kid...

JOHN F. DONOVAN

Mom, what did you read?

GRACE DONOVAN

Well, so many times you said you came from a place of little ambition, you won the Oscar, John, and the whole world was watching, and you told that whole world that from where you were brought up, people dreamed small. And I know that you think I have no ambition, John. I know that, you know, but...

John is quieted. Grace is crying but speaking as if she isn't. She can't find the words. She wipes the abundant tears off her cheeks.

GRACE DONOVAN (CONT'D)

You're SOO... far and it's SO... hard to prove to you that I can change or get better because I am getting older, and you, farther, and... I miss you.

Grace looks up to the ceiling, trying to control her feelings. John looks down. Grace chugs her beer. A silent beat. Grace laughs now and shakes her face and body like a horse, trying to get a grip on herself. She gets up and brings back the whole pack of booze on the table. John looks at his mother, amused, and moved. Somehow, he knows he got his message across.

JOHN F. DONOVAN

Would you run me a bath and ask me to spell words like before?

Grace laughs. She gives her son another beer. These two sure drink fast.

GRACE DONOVAN

If you'd like.

JOHN F. DONOVAN

And... Can I sleep here tonight?

Grace looks at John in the eye.

GRACE DONOVAN

You can sleep here for the rest of your life.

John smiles. Back to cards, now.

FEET jumping on a bed. We can make out a HAIR DRYER blowing in the background. A larger shot REVEALS RUPERT jumping on the bed, laughing.

SAM TURNER (O.S.)

Rupert, stop it!

RUPERT TURNER

What?

SAM TURNER (O.S.)

Stop jumping on the bed, you're gonna break the bed, you're gonna break the floor, you're gonna break your neck.

SAM comes out of the bathroom. They're in a SMALL, SQUARE studio in the Dream Hotel, also known as King Triton's spaceship.

SAM TURNER (CONT'D)

I don't know of a human being capable of drying his hair in blue light.

Rupert is still jumping on the bed.

SAM TURNER (CONT'D)

Do you want to go back to England?

Rupert jumps off the bed, landing on the floor like an excited insect. Sam is searching for something in her luggage. She takes out a hairbrush and brushes her hair in front of the mirror. Rupert lies down on the bed, suddenly thoughtful.

RUPERT TURNER

Mum, do you think John's answered my letter, yet?

SAM TURNER

Well, the front desk said they'd call...

Sam notices Rupert's expression in the mirror : he seems morose, suddenly.

SAM TURNER (CONT'D)

Perhaps you could consider the email alternative for your next correspondence with an icon. But maybe that's too expected.

Rupert sighs, in his own mind. Sam feels helpless, but she doesn't want to accentuate the wait.

SAM TURNER (CONT'D)

You need to focus on your audition, now, love. Tomorrow's D-Day.

Sam looks through the window into the interior yard.

SAM TURNER (CONT'D)

It's a full moon, tonight, uh? I bet that's a sign.

GRACE is quizzing JOHN on his words. He's doing quite well. The radio's playing in the background. John is smoking a JOINT.

GRACE DONOVAN

Pescetarian.

JOHN F. DONOVAN

P. E. S. C. A- no, E. T. A. R. I. A. N.

Grace has been looking at her son while he stares at the ceiling, spelling. When John is done with the word, he hands his mother the joint, catching her staring at him.

JOHN F. DONOVAN (CONT'D)

What?

GRACE DONOVAN

Nothing.

JOHN F. DONOVAN

Did I get it right?

GRACE DONOVAN

Yes.

Grace grabs the joint. She takes a deep toke off the joint. John doesn't know what to say.

JOHN F. DONOVAN

What do you want to ask me, ma?

GRACE DONOVAN

Are you alright? Will you be alright? Are you happy?

John freezes. Looks down. Stirs the foamy water. Runs more hot water. A beat. Grace hands him the joint. He takes it.

JOHN F. DONOVAN

I'm fine, mom. It's alright, nothing's wrong. I just need to be here. This is exactly what I need right now.

GRACE DONOVAN

So you'll come back again soon?

We hear a KNOCK from downstairs.

JAMES DONOVAN (O.S.)

Yello?

JOHN F. DONOVAN

(calling out)

We're upstairs in the bathroom! R. S. P.
I. C. A. C. I. O. U. S.

Jimmy's head pops in the door.

JAMES DONOVAN

Mmm. Smells nice in here. We got a little mother-son hot box bonding going on?

Grace and Jimmy giggle. Grace hands Jimmy the joint. John pretends to cover his naked body from Jimmy, like a Japanese school girl.

JOHN F. DONOVAN

Don't let him stay, ma, I'm not decent!

JAMES DONOVAN

You're never decent you dirty bastard.

Jimmy starts splashing John with his own bath water. The boys start giggling. "This Moment" - a terrible, yet shamefully pleasurable song-comes on the radio. John starts singing along.

JOHN F. DONOVAN

Turn it up!

JAMES DONOVAN

Absolutely not!

JOHN F. DONOVAN

Turn it up fucker!

JAMES DONOVAN

I'll turn it up if you do your jazz hands.

JOHN F. DONOVAN

Fuck you!

JAMES DONOVAN

Jazz hands or I turn off the radio!

John relents, delighted: he does a Bob Fosse-inspired flutter of jazz hands that cracks Jimmy up. Jimmy turns up the radio. John splashes him in defiance. Jimmy splashes back - it's war.

GRACE DONOVAN

Ok, too messy for me. Don't splash me Jimmy Donovan!

JAMES DONOVAN

Sorry Grace!

Grace watches as Jimmy and John splash each other, playing like little boys. John's face is lit up like a lamp, carefree, happy like we've never seen it. Grace smiles. The camera moves in on her face - also the happiest we've ever seen it. We get closer and closer until we are INSIDE GRACE'S IRIS.

230

INT. UNKNOWN OFFICE - BLUE HOUR

230

STILL ON GRACE DONOVAN'S IRIS, but in another space-time. As we DOLLY BACK, we REVEAL the unknown office, with it's unidentified painting in the background, and the various shades of blue now tinting the room.

GRACE DONOVAN

That was the last time I saw him.

Martin Scorsese takes off his glasses, moved.

AMY BOSWORTH

The... last time I saw him... I should say the last time we spoke, uh... He told me um... we had a conversation about the business, and... he was... mean to me in a way that... I mean, it had been a long time since I hadn't felt... like John cared about me, weirdly. But anyhow... Now, I... I've decided to put the acting career on hold. I'm gonna... write, maybe, produce, Or maybe just... keep away from the business for a while.

MAXWELL

At the diner, of course. John would come four, five times a week, if not every day he would come. But he had not come here for six weeks, one month.

231

INT. MAXWELL'S - NIGHT

231

MAXWELL is behind the bar, cleaning up. The DOORBELL rings as the door opens. It's raining and thunder strikes. Maxwell looks up, and seems relieved.

MAXWELL (V.O.)

And then, one night, he came. We didn't talk a lot. No tuna on rye, no pasta. Just a glass of water.

The KITCHEN WOOD DOORS slowly swing back and forth and a SILHOUETTE sits down in the kitchen, warped and blurred through the door's frosted windows.

MAXWELL (V.O.)

He left by the backstreet door.

232

INT. UNKNOWN OFFICE - BLUE HOUR

232

JAMES DONOVAN is uncomfortable. He has cried.

JAMES DONOVAN

(on the edge of bursting into tears, very proud)

Are we done? Cuz uh... Ha ha... Wow. Wow, I mean... Man!

Zoe Saldana is looking outside, thoughtful. She can't talk.

BARBARA FISHER

What were the odds... of meeting him again, in a gas station, on the eve of um... well... of IT.

233

I/E. GAS STATION - NEW YORK STATE - NIGHT

233

BARBARA FISHER is putting gas. Something catches her eye.

BARBARA FISHER (V.O.)

What were the odds, really?

Her POV reveals, about twenty meters away, a MAN carrying two BOUQUETS OF FLOWERS. Barbara hides behind her pick-up as she watches.

His BACK TO US, the YOUNG MAN is walking to his own car. The TWO BOUQUETS are peeking from both sides of his body : on the left, RED ROSES ; on the right, WHITE AMARYLLIS.

From Barbara's POV, the man walks into his car and leaves. Barbara humbly smiles, alone, as the car drives away.

234

INT. UNKNOWN OFFICE - BLUE HOUR

234

BARBARA FISHER is still smiling.

BARBARA FISHER

I was frozen. I didn't walk to him or...
After what had happened, it would have
been... out of place.

GRACE DONOVAN

A mother's heart isn't like any woman's
heart. It can be broken endlessly. But...
when John died...

(she catches herself)

Thank God I... Jimmy comes a lot, and
Faith.

(...)

If... we got to do this again, if we could
go back... I would pay more attention. I
wish I could have been helpful, I wish I
could have answered questions. I wish I
could have been special. I just know him
as much as anybody else.

DIRECTOR (O.S.)

I guess we've... pretty much covered it,
Mrs Donovan. Which brings me to the...
final stretch of this interview... How did
you find out? If I may...

Grace smiles absentmindedly. She lifts her eyes.

235

INT. JOHN'S BEDROOM - DONOVAN HOUSE - EARLY MORNING

235

John's childhood bedroom is empty. His SINGLE BED is perfectly made,
the PILLOW featuring CARTOON SHARKS, fluffed and straight. On a
DRESSER, HOCKEY TROPHIES and other TOYS, TRINKETS, etc.

We DOLLY BACK further still to REVEAL a TV of which we can barely make
out the sound... And JIMMY, at last, asleep on the couch.

236

INT. HALLWAY - DONOVAN HOUSE - SAME

236

Grace's WALL OF FAME... PRESS CLIPPINGS, starting with pictures of John
as a boy, going all the way up to PICTURES from his acting career. And
then a PICTURE OF JIMMY and JOHN together, laughing like crazy... a MALL
PICTURE of JIMMY, alone... and then GRACE, alone in her garden, smiling.

We DOLLY BACK on the empty corridor as we can clearly hear GRACE, in
her kitchen, cooking something, mumbling the indistinct words of a
recipe, talking to herself.

237

EXT. STREET - SUBURBS - PENNSYLVANIA - SAME

237

We see the empty, sleepy streets of SUBURBAN Pennsylvania, all streets
we've seen John drive down.

238

EXT. HIGHWAY - NEW YORK - SAME

238

The free way that John takes to get to his mother's place is just
beginning to fill up with morning TRAFFIC. John's car, however, is
nowhere in sight.

239

EXT. JOHN'S VILLAGE APARTMENT - SAME

239

The sun has barely begun to hit the front of John's new building. AMY, a box in her hands is making her way up the stairs. A TENANT emerges from inside.

AMY BOSWORTH

Oh, hey - would you mind-?

TENANT

Sure, no problem.

The woman holds the door open for her. Amy smiles gratefully. The CAMERA follows Amy into:

240

INT. JOHN'S VILLAGE APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

240

From behind, we move with AMY as she walks up a flight of stairs and arrives at the door of an apartment. She KNOCKS on the door lightly with her FOOT.

AMY BOSWORTH

It's me.

Amy waits a moment, then knocks again with her foot, this time LOUDER.

AMY BOSWORTH (CONT'D)

Come on Johnny, answer the door, I've got a big box.

Still silence.

AMY BOSWORTH (CONT'D)

That's what she said.

Amy sighs, puts down the box, and tries the door HANDLE. To her surprise, it OPENS. Amy picks up the box and goes inside the apartment. The CAMERA, however, stays outside.

As Amy dives into the dark apartment, we steadily lose focus on her and RAMP to slow motion : her soft, dangling silhouette wanders along the hallway before disappearing in the deep of the studio.

From inside the apartment, we HEAR the following: Amy putting down the box and moving about. She is being LOUD, assuming John is asleep.

AMY BOSWORTH (CONT'D)

When was the last time you opened a window in here? God, it's so dark-

We HEAR: Amy pulling the SHEETS OFF the WINDOWS.

AMY BOSWORTH (CONT'D)

Pretty on the nose. Did you ask for the room Sid Vicious died in? Johnny? John?

From this point on, all we hear is noisy, yet ethereal traffic and windy streets. Time stops, but not sonically. An ALL SLOW-MOTION MONTAGE begins :

241

INT. COUTURE WORKSHOP - DAY

241

SARAH GADON is in the middle of a fitting, but she is looking down at her PHONE, reading a text message. Her face blanches, shocked. The PHONE FALLS from her hands.

242 **INT. STUDIO - MOVIE SET - DAY** 242

BARBARA is facing TRISH and the movie's EXECUTIVES. Time stops. She swallows, and slowly turns around, leaving.

243 **INT. MAXWELL'S - DAY** 243

MAXWELL is mopping the floor of his empty diner - he hasn't opened yet. He TURNS AROUND.

244 **INT. COUTURE WORKSHOP - DAY** 244

Sarah's PHONE is in free fall.

245 **INT. MAXWELL'S - DAY** 245

MAXWELL is walking towards the front window of his diner, his face perplexed. We cut to his POV: Two TEENAGE GIRLS, in the backseat of a CAR stuck in traffic, are CRYING HYSTERICALLY.

246 **INT. STUDIO - MOVIE SET - DAY** 246

BARBARA FISHER is walking away, leaving TRISH and the EXECs behind. The entire CREW stands immobile behind her. She's devastated, but, of course, won't allow herself any emotional display.

247 **INT. STARBUCKS - DAY** 247

The APPELBAUMS are being handed a TRAY of COFFEES by a barista, but both have their faces buried in their phones. They look up at each other, AGHAST.

248 **INT. COUTURE WORKSHOP - DAY** 248

Sarah's PHONE still hasn't hit the ground.

249 **INT. MMK'S OFFICE - THE GOSSIP** 249

A THUMB is hiding someone's signature on a CARD attached to a BOUQUET OF WHITE AMARYLLIS. The card reads : *You were right*, in green ink.

MOIRA MCCAULEY-KING lifts her eyes, her face souring. She turns to the inner windows of her office, distracted by a sudden stir.

250 **INT. DONOVANS HOUSE - BASEMENT - DAY** 250

JAMES DONOVAN wakes up on the couch in Grace's basement. His eyes open right on the TV, and they open WIDE. Jimmy clearly HEARS something upstairs.

251 **INT. DONOVANS HOUSE - DAY** 251

GRACE opens her front door to reveal her sister. FAITH's face is devastated. Grace looks confused. We can see Faith's mouth form the words: *I'm so sorry, Grace.*

252 **INT. COUTURE WORKSHOP - DAY**

252

Sarah's PHONE finally hits the ground and breaks into pieces.

253 **INT. DONOVANS HOUSE - DAY**

253

JAMES DONOVAN runs into the hallway. He sees his mother at the door. Grace has her back to him, but when she hears him approach, she turns around. She sees the look on Jimmy's face, and bursts into tears.

254 **INT. PUB - ENGLAND - DAY**

254

MRS. MCQUILLEN is having a pint with some FRIENDS, when she looks up at the ROW of TELEVISIONS. Almost every box is playing SPORTS except one, which is showing BREAKING NEWS. People stand, watching. McQuillen is shocked.

255 **INT. TIMES SQUARE CAFÉ - NEW YORK**

255

RUPERT, ordering food, is distracted by the WAITRESS turning to the front door. Rupert turns his head too. His POV reveals CUSTOMERS standing in the front window, offering they're back to him.

SAM slowly stands up, worried, looking at her son...who looks at her, before walking to the front door. Rupert gently elbows his way through the tall adults and old ladies. He finally reaches the front door, and stops.

256 **EXT. TIMES SQUARE CAFÉ - NEW YORK**

256

DOLLY IN on RUPERT'S face behind the café's front door. Rupert comes out and starts walking through Times Square. Cars are jammed there, or have stopped. Many people are standing in the street amongst other rushed passersby who keep walking, talking on their phones.

CUT TO:

A small, BLURRY SILHOUETTE slowly moves towards us in slo-mo, becoming more and more precise. RUPERT TURNER comes in focus. His face is phlegmatic, but his eyes are welling up with tears as he moves towards us, still.

Until he stops, staring at something big, something high. Something that kills him inside. His POV reveals: On Times Square's highest, biggest screen, JOHN's picture, a black and white Studio Harcourt photo, has appeared. On it, we can read JONATHAN MARKUS FORD DONOVAN, 1987-2014, an animated FLAG OF THE UNITED STATES slowly dissolving into the image, waving.

DOLLY IN on numerous PEOPLE (men, women, children, asian tourists, taxi drivers) looking up to the billboard, moved, shocked, angry, or crying.

And on Rupert, who is devastated.

RUPERT TURNER (V.O.)

*Although, at one point, he denied it -
and, with time, I came to understand why,
and forgave him - John F. Donovan and I
DID write letters for... almost... seven
years, throughout my childhood, that is.*

MUSIC slowly FADES IN, replacing the urban noise we've been hearing for a while now :

[Music : *Outro* by M83]

We keep DOLLYING on his face as we slowly, very slowly:

DISSOLVE TO:

257 **EXT. SKY - COUNTRY - ENGLAND**

257

A huge panoramic shot of a CAR moving through the English country-side. The camera moves closer towards the car until we are in a CLOSE-UP of RUPERT, staring out the window.

RUPERT TURNER (V.O.)

During this period of time, I... saw him rise and make history in a way that few of us can, and... through his dreams, I dreamt mines, through his words I spoke my mind, and through his nightmare, I had the opportunity to... understand the price of whatever he taught me to desire, or despise.

258 **INT. SAM'S CAR - SAME**

258

SAM TURNER, behind the wheel of her car, is looking at her son, concerned, but silent.

RUPERT TURNER (V.O.)

And... NO... we never met. Never talked on the phone, or... I don't even have a picture of him, other than the ones I found in magazines, or in the Internet, like any other fan.

The narrow road unfolds endlessly before them.

259 **EXT. WHEAT FIELD - DAY**

259

(SLOW MOTION) The CAMERA flies over the wheat, nearly trimming the tops of the grains, until we discover SAM'S CAR, pulling up. RUPERT gets out, in his hands a bundle of LETTERS. SAM gets out too - the strong WIND blows her hair about.

RUPERT TURNER (V.O.)

He kept saying to me that... our letters were our secret property, and meant to be read by their senders and receivers only.

Sam calls for Rupert, who turns around. She walks over to him, hands John's last letter. They exchange a few words. Rupert looks at his mother forgivingly.

260 **EXT. WHEAT FIELD - LATER**

260

With his BACK to US, RUPERT walks through the field, reading John's last letter. Finished, he folds it in three and puts in his backpack. When we finally see his face, it is set with DETERMINATION.

RUPERT TURNER (V.O.)

Should something ever happen to him, I was to get rid of them.

Rupert's POV reveals a WELL, isolated in a clearing.

261

EXT. WHEAT FIELD - MOMENTS LATER

261

The FOCUS is on the WELL. RUPERT walks in focus.

RUPERT TURNER (V.O.)

*He was adamant -and was right, I guess-
that people would want to... publish them,
that they would misinterpret,
misunderstand...*

His HANDS rip the LETTERS as he throws them in the well.

RUPERT TURNER (V.O.)

*...and that there should be no travesty, no
money made off our backs.*

Rupert bends over to see John's missives swallowed by the well, falling into darkness to eventually slowly disappear. Rupert stands back up, looks at his mother, who's still standing by the car, a hundred meters away. SAM vaguely waves to her son, smiling.

Rupert looks at the well one last time, sad but relieved, knowing this was the correct thing to do. He finally resigns to leave.

RUPERT TURNER (V.O.)

*I am sorry to disappoint you, but... I
never got that... LAST letter.*

Rupert is on his way to the car, head down. Until he stops himself.

RUPERT TURNER (V.O.)

*I never read it. I don't even know if it
exists... I don't know what happened to J...
I never will... He exists now... only in my
memory.*

Rupert slowly turns around, as if something had caught his attention : Slow DOLLY IN on the well, calm and quiet.

DOLLY IN on Rupert's questioning face. The WIND picks up, messing with his clothes and hair as he slowly walks back to the well. Above which is FLOATING a small DEBRIS of what seems to be paper with green words scrawled on it. Rupert furrows his brow as he is walking to the well. The music builds, and builds.

Rupert reaches the well, looking at the levitating shard of letter. He picks IT UP delicately, troubled.

RUPERT TURNER (V.O.)

*The only thing I want- my only wish is to
let the world know, now, about the man I
knew, as far as I could know him I guess.
But... I think that was pretty well.*

As the music suddenly climaxes, a strong, almost supernatural force propels Rupert meters away while LETTERS, a lot of letters, all of them, emerge from the well in a stunning tunnel of air, filling the space.

Rupert lands on his back as Sam rushes towards him, yelling his name. Rupert looks up, astonished: PAPERS are - there is a certain grace to it - chaotically wafting about in the sky.

Rupert is stunned, the wind strongly blowing on his face. Sam finally reaches him, and takes her son in her arms, trying to protect him, herself struck by the oneiric spectacle.

Then, among letters, still profusely coming out of the well, a HAND emerges, going up.

DOLLY IN on Rupert, who is in awe - so is Sam. Rupert's face is hidden behind his arms as he hugs his mother and watches. Only his eyes are visible. In his EYES is reflected the SHADOW of an ascending figure.

TIGHT CLOSE-UP on JOHN'S statuesque face covered with his hair. His eyes open suddenly as we :

DISSOLVE TO:

262

INT. UNKNOWN OFFICE - DAY

262

THE FLIGHT OF ICARUS by Jacob Peter Gowy, matching almost every detail from our last shot : the eyes, the hair, the expression. We slowly DOLLY BACK as it is well understood it is a laminated copy hanging on a wall. As we PAN DOWN, we reveal RUPERT sitting in a chair. Since the very beginning, these colors and details we kept seeing behind every interviewee belonged to the painting.

Rupert is now older. His hair is different, and he is wearing a blue shirt under a nice, preppy wool sweater to which a mic is affixed. Rupert is looking down.

DIRECTOR (O.S.)

We're ready when you are, son.

Rupert finally looks up. His eyes are thoughtful, but the exercise should be liberating. SAM, behind the CAMERA, alongside the crew, is looking at her son, her eyes filled with pride, and esteem, at last.

Rupert takes a deep breath, and dives into it. His interview begins as our story finishes.

RUPERT TURNER

Alright. Here is what I know.

A SUPERIMPOSE smashes the screen as Elliot Smith's *Waltz No. 2* announces the credits :

ARRIVEDERCI AMORE CIAO

THE END