

DINNER FOR SCHMUCKS

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Based on the original French film
"Le Diner de Cons"
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CREDIT SEQUENCE--

EXT. CENTRAL PARK - DAY

The Great Lawn. A GUY in a rumpled suit picks his way through the picnickers and sunbathers to an open spot, carrying a briefcase. He opens it up--

It's full of BOOMERANGS.

He carefully selects one, takes a moment's concentration, and throws it.

HENDERSON, a British lawyer in a Saville Row suit, looks up from his Financial Times as the boomerang arcs over his head and returns to its owner. Henderson eyes the Boomerang Guy. Then comes over--

HENDERSON

That's quite impressive.

The Boomerang Guy gives the wary look of someone who's used to being ridiculed--

BOOMERANG GUY

Thank you.

HENDERSON

Beautiful boomerang.

BOOMERANG GUY

The correct pronunciation is "bou-mar-rang." So named by the Turuwal tribe of Aboriginal peoples, to whom it means "throwing stick." This design hasn't changed for four thousand years. Better aerodynamics than any fiberglass sport boomerang.

HENDERSON

You don't say.

Boomerang Guy throws it again.

BOOMERANG GUY

NASA scientists studied it and came away stumped. They couldn't explain how it works!

Henderson eyes the boomerang as it makes its long arc. Boomerang Guy's not paying attention--

BOOMERANG GUY (CONT'D)

An Aboriginal hunter can knock a wombat out of a eucalyptus tree at 200 yards. Then his bou-mar-rang returns to his hand, as if drawn by an invisible thread!

He cockily puts up his hand without looking--

The boomerang sails past him and knocks a UNICYCLIST into a ditch. Henderson smiles.

HENDERSON

I realize this is somewhat spur of the moment, but what are you doing for dinner this Thursday?

CLOSE ON - Henderson's embossed leather appointment calendar, open to Thursday. 10:00 Partner's Meeting. 2:15 Squash w/ Kofi Annan. 8:00 Dinner--

Henderson writes "Boomer."

EXT. MIDTOWN STREET - DAY

CALDWELL, a high-powered sports agent, steps out of his black Mercedes. He glances at a tiny ad in the Village Voice, then looks up at a small storefront. On the awning--

"PETTERS. A sweater's good. But a Petter's better."

INT. PETTERS - DAY

Caldwell talks with the SWEATER LADY, the owner of Petters. She's wearing a sweater with decorative poodle-like pompons dangling off it. They watch as an EMPLOYEE shears a miserable-looking sheep dog.

SWEATER LADY

The dogs love it, because they know they're giving you a one-of-a-kind gift.

CALDWELL

That's great. But what about a short-haired dog?

They pass an EMPLOYEE at a spindle, spinning a pile of golden retriever hair.

SWEATER LADY

Not a problem. I've done dachshunds. I've done bulldogs.

CALDWELL
Now, I'm pretty tall...

SWEATER LADY
Don't worry. Just let us take your
measurements, and we'll go to town.

She picks up a trembling shaved poodle, who eyes her sweater
resentfully.

SWEATER LADY (CONT'D)
I like to say, a Petter's like a
hug that never ends!

CALDWELL
I feel like I'm being hugged
already.

SWEATER LADY
So, when would you like to bring in
your dog?

CALDWELL
Actually, I don't have a dog at the
present time.

The Sweater Lady frowns.

CALDWELL (CONT'D)
But what are you doing for dinner
this Thursday?

CLOSE ON - Caldwell's Treo. Thursday. 9:00 Phil Night.
11:30 Signing w/ Tiger. 8:00 Dinner--

Caldwell keys in "Knitwit."

EXT. KINDERGARTEN PLAYGROUND - DAY

A MAN stands in front of a KINDERGARTEN CLASS. He holds up a
cute hamster--

MAN
Say hi to Marvin, everybody!

KIDS
HI, MARVIN!

He hands Marvin to a LITTLE GIRL, who cups him in her hand.

MAN

Marvin's here to help me teach you about my favorite thing. I'm a cathartidaphile. Can you say that?

The Kids try to say it along with him.

MAN (CONT'D)

Very good! That means I love the most wonderful kind of bird in the whole world! And I brought one with me today!

He gestures to a huge cage covered in a red cloth.

MAN (CONT'D)

Who wants to meet him?

The Kids CHEER.

MAN (CONT'D)

Everybody, meet my best friend, Lorenzo!

The Man whips the cloth away--

A hideous VULTURE perches in the cage. It lets out a horrid SCREECH. The Kids recoil.

ALVAR, a silver-haired architect, walks by on the street. He stops, staring--

VULTURE LOVER

There's no need to be afraid.
Repeat after me: VULTURES ONLY EAT
YOU IF YOU'RE DEAD!

A couple of Kids repeat it reluctantly. A couple of Kids start crying.

VULTURE LOVER (CONT'D)

That's why Marvin here is perfectly safe. He's alive. But Jo-Jo on the other hand--

He holds up a DEAD HAMSTER. Then hands it to the Little Girl. She stands terrified, with the live hamster in one hand and the dead hamster in the other.

VULTURE LOVER (CONT'D)

Jo-Jo's time is done. And now it's time for his nutrients to go back into the ecosystem. Lorenzo, do your stuff!

He whips open the cage. The Vulture lets out a blood-curdling SHRIEK and lunges--

The Kids SCREAM.

Alvar picks his way through the fleeing children and smiles at the dismayed Vulture Lover.

ALVAR

What are you doing for dinner this Thursday?

CLOSE ON - Alvar's date book. Thursday. 10:30 MOMA retrospective. 1:00 lunch w/ Frank Gehry. 8:00 Dinner--

Alvar writes in "Birdman."

END CREDIT SEQUENCE.

EXT. MORRISON'S ZIPPER COMPANY - DAY

TIM WHITMAN looks up at a beautiful ART DECO BUILDING somehow surviving in a forest of skyscrapers.

INT. MORRISON'S ZIPPER COMPANY - DAY

A wall of company memorabilia. Charlie Chaplin playfully unzips the zipper on his galoshes. Charles Lindbergh shows the zipper on his flight suit and gives the thumbs up. FDR, Churchill and Stalin sit at Yalta, white circles highlighting their zippers.

Tim eyes the pictures as IKE MORRISON, the eighty-year-old owner of the company, leads him past.

IKE MORRISON

They all wore Morrison's. You know, nobody makes a stainless steel box-and-pin zipper anymore. They last forever. That's part of the problem.

INT. IKE MORRISON'S OFFICE - DAY

Ike looks out across the once-bustling factory floor. Now only a handful of WORKERS man the antique machines. He closes the door.

IKE MORRISON

Fact is, there's no way we can compete with the Koreans on price. The glory days are gone, and they ain't coming back.

TIM

Don't be so sure, Mr. Morrison. My investors think there's a future in this company. Personally, I think people will always pay for good craftsmanship.

Ike gives Tim a resigned smile--

IKE MORRISON

You don't have to bullshit me, kid. I know you're just in this for the real estate.

(he sighs)

Let's talk numbers.

But Tim's looking past him.

TIM

Can you hold that thought?

INT. MORRISONS' FACTORY FLOOR - DAY

Tim hurries across the factory floor toward--

A MAN sitting at a workbench with an enormous BEARD braided into elaborate knots. He notices Tim and grins.

BEARD CHAMPION

Linseed oil.

TIM

Excuse me?

BEARD CHAMPION

Noticed you admiring my bristles. Linseed oil. That's the secret to my award-winning sheen.

Tim steps closer, intrigued.

TIM

Award-winning?

The Beard Champion pulls a faded newspaper clipping from his wallet. A picture of him on the winner's podium at the 1997 Beard Olympics.

BEARD CHAMPION
 Zurich. 1997. Silver medal, Full
 Beard Freestyle. I won it by a
 hair.

He winks at Tim.

BEARD CHAMPION (CONT'D)
 I was doing Imperial Mustache for
 awhile, but the Germans are so
 dominant there's no point.

TIM
 I'm a member of a club. We invite
 interesting people to have dinner
 with us. What are you doing for
 dinner this Thursday?

He pulls out his cell phone and taps on the calendar. 8:00
 Dinner. A flashing cursor--

BEARD CHAMPION
 I'm afraid Thursday's out. Team
 Canada's coming to town. We're
 gonna be out watering the chin
 shrubbery till dawn.

Tim sighs and snaps his phone shut.

INT. FENDER CAPITAL, FENDER'S RECEPTION AREA - DAY

Fender's SECRETARY smiles at Tim--

SECRETARY
 He's just finishing up. You can go
 in.

INT. FENDER'S OFFICE - DAY

A massive office overlooking Midtown. Mies furniture and Cy
 Twombly on the wall.

In an adjoining glassed-off room, LANCE FENDER, an athletic
 forty-year-old multimillionaire, steps out of an endless lap
 pool. He pulls on a robe as he comes in--

FENDER
 You a swimmer, Tim?

TIM
 No.

FENDER
Bike?

TIM
No.

FENDER
Tennis?

TIM
I do a lot of walking. Brisk walking.

Fender eyes Tim's midriff. Tim nervously sucks it in.

Fender eyes a list of bullet points on his desk--

FENDER
Morrison's?

TIM
Took our low-ball offer.

Fender crosses it off his list and eyes the next bullet point.

FENDER
Bobby Brandt's looking to get out of oil. He's got a hundred million dollars he'd love to share with us. He just doesn't know it yet. Would you mind enlightening him for me?

TIM
Are you serious?

FENDER
You're having lunch with him and his wife Thursday. Bring Julie. Let them know we've got family values here in Sodom and Gomorrah too. You're running with the big dogs now.

He crosses it off his list. Then grins at the third bullet point. He flicks a PAMPHLET across the desk. A female MEDIUM surrounded by ghostly cats.

FENDER (CONT'D)
She does seances to communicate with dead animals.
(cat voice)
Meow! Why did you run me over?

TIM

Very nice.

FENDER

I can smell 'em, Tim. I'm like a pig hunting for truffles. So, what have you got?

Tim fidgets.

TIM

I want to surprise you.

FENDER

No, no, no. I vouched for you. If you show up with a mime, then I look like an idiot.

TIM

I'm not gonna show up with a mime. Come on!

FENDER

These guys are connoisseurs. You've gotta demonstrate that you can hold your own in that kind of company. You know, Borman didn't even want to let you in.

Tim gets up to go.

TIM

Tell Borman I'll let him polish the trophy.

Fender chuckles.

INT. FENDER'S RECEPTION AREA - DAY

Tim closes the door behind him. He takes a deep breath.

INT. FENDER CAPITAL, SUSAN'S DESK - DAY

Tim's assistant, SUSANA, hands Tim a message slip as he walks up--

SUSANA

Greg Morley called you back. He said he's a mime? Personally I don't think any self-respecting mime should be making phone calls. Anyway, he's free for dinner.

Tim crumples up the message and throws it in the trash.

TIM

Hey, how's your dad?

SUSANA

(suspiciously)

Fine.

TIM

Weren't you telling me he collects shoelaces?

Susana glares at him--

SUSANA

Don't even think about it.

Tim sighs and walks out.

EXT. CHELSEA ART GALLERY - NIGHT

Close on an art gallery window. A beautiful black-and-white PHOTOGRAPH. An incredibly good-looking MAN doing a graceful yoga posture next to a lion in the desert.

Tim eyes the exhibition title--

"Predator/Pray. The photographs of Kieran Volland."

He goes in.

INT. ART GALLERY - NIGHT

The opening is in full swing. Tim examines a photograph. The same man, kneeling in half-warrior pose with hands outstretched, reverently offering a newborn orangutan to its mother and father.

A BEAUTIFUL WOMAN notices him and comes over.

TIM

Do you work here?

WOMAN

Yes. Are you a collector?

Tim nods. He gestures toward the photo--

TIM

I like them very much, but...do you have any where the orangutans got angry and threw their feces at him?

The woman, Tim's fiancée JULIE, laughs and hits him--

JULIE

Be nice.

KIERAN, the handsome man from the photos, comes over.

KIERAN

She's done beautiful work, hasn't she, Tim?

JULIE

Kieran, they're your photographs.

Kieran puts his hand on Julie's back. Tim eyes it.

KIERAN

I brought you a few fragments of stained glass. You built the cathedral.

TIM

Hey, look at that. Sushi!

He points to the corner. A SUSHI CHEF works behind a small sushi station.

JULIE

Yeah. They just came in and set up. Said some anonymous person paid for it.

Tim grins.

JULIE (CONT'D)

Kind of weird, right?

Tim's smile fades. Julie looks at him--

JULIE (CONT'D)

You didn't!

TIM

I just thought, you've been working so hard on this...

JULIE

That's so nice!

She kisses him.

KIERAN

Of course, one does lament the tragedy of the endangered tuna.

Tim glares at him.

JULIE

Kieran, Tim was just saying how much he loves your pictures.

TIM

Yeah. You're like Dr. Doolittle or something.

KIERAN

I've collaborated with over forty species, Tim.

He gestures to another PHOTO. Kieran doing a natarajasana pose, his leg gracefully extended. Behind him, two gazelles leap in astonishing symmetry.

KIERAN (CONT'D)

I spent a month with that herd before they'd consent to pose with me.

TIM

So, do you just get one of the other animals to snap the picture?

Kieran laughs indulgently--

KIERAN

I use a timer. Although there was a greyback gorilla in the Congo basin who borrowed my Leica. He took pictures with the innocence of a child. Taught me more about photography than any professor at art school.

EXT. CHELSEA STREET - NIGHT

Tim and Julie walk arm in arm.

TIM

"You built the cathedral"? I mean, come on.

JULIE

You know, I've curated thirty shows, and Kieran's the first artist who's ever even acknowledged my contribution. I think it's nice.

TIM

Yeah. He's nice.

Julie looks slyly at him.

JULIE

Plus he's really, really handsome.

Tim looks sharply at her. She cracks up and throws her arms around him. Tim laughs.

TIM

You know, he's a great friend of the tuna.

EXT. GREENWICH VILLAGE STREET - NIGHT

Tim and Julie stroll past restaurants and boutiques.

JULIE

Why do they want to meet me?

TIM

I don't know. They're from Texas. It's a family values thing.

JULIE

Can I talk about how the oil industry's destroying the planet?

TIM

Yeah, that would be a big help.

Suddenly, Tim spots a shaggy-haired STREET MUSICIAN setting up in front of a small crowd. He takes out a SAW and a violin bow--

STREET MUSICIAN

I was gonna bring my Stradivarius, but I made the mistake of trying to saw some lumber with it.

He laughs awkwardly.

TIM

Hold on. I want to hear this guy.

The guy starts playing. A Bach cello suite. It's haunting and beautiful.

JULIE
He's amazing.

Tim sighs, disappointed.

TIM
Yeah. Let's go.

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Julie and Tim sit in a small Italian restaurant.

JULIE
I think we should just get married in Central Park.

TIM
I don't know. We'll get a bunch of perverts lurking in the bushes.

JULIE
Hey, your relatives are your responsibility.

She waits for a laugh. But Tim stares out the window, distracted, at a GUY on roller skates with a boa constrictor. She reaches out and flicks him in the head.

JULIE (CONT'D)
What's wrong with you?

TIM
I don't know.

JULIE
You just made a huge deal. You keep getting promoted. You're about to get married. I'd hate to see how depressed you get if something *really* good happens.

Tim hesitates--

TIM
Fender's part of this club. They have dinner once a month. All these big shots are in it. Kissinger shows up sometimes. Fender invited me to join.

(MORE)

TIM (CONT'D)

But there's this rule. You have to show up with...a joke.

She looks at him.

TIM (CONT'D)

They get really competitive about it. It's this Thursday, and I don't have a joke.

JULIE

Kissinger's doing stand-up?

TIM

It's a networking thing.

JULIE

I've got a joke for you. So this zebra walks into a bar and orders a martini. And the bartender says, that'll be eight fifty. So the zebra pays, and he's drinking his martini, and the bartender says, you know, we don't get many zebras in here. And the zebra says, at these prices, you're not gonna get many more!

TIM

That's not a good joke.

JULIE

Just don't go. It doesn't sound like it's gonna be fun.

TIM

It's not about fun. This is a big deal. Fender's grooming me. I could hit seven figures next year.

Julie rolls her eyes.

JULIE

I don't know, Tim. Work is one thing. But if you start hanging out with those guys, pretty soon you're going to be one of those guys.

Tim sighs.

JULIE (CONT'D)

What would you rather be doing Thursday night?

(MORE)

JULIE (CONT'D)
Telling jokes with your boss? Or
making sweet, sweet love to your
beautiful fiancée?

Tim grins.

TIM
I don't know. Fender's pretty
funny.

She kicks him under the table.

EXT. FIFTH AVENUE - DAY

Tim's Porsche speeds down Museum Mile.

INT. TIM'S PORSCHE - DAY

Tim's on his cell phone as he drives--

TIM
About Thursday...I'm not sure I can
make it. Julie and I really have
to talk about some wedding stuff,
and--

FENDER (O.S.)
Tim. You are going to spend every
night of your life with Julie until
the day you get divorced. Okay? I
told Borman you have somebody good.

TIM
All right. Here's the deal. I
don't really--

Suddenly he looks up and his eyes go wide--

BARRY is right in front of him. Members Only jacket, wide
tie, thick glasses. He bends over to pick up something lying
in the street.

Tim lets out a YELL and SLAMS on the brakes. The Porsche
SKIDS to a stop--

And TAPS Barry on the head. He sits down hard.

BARRY
OW!

Tim jumps out of the car--

EXT. FIFTH AVENUE - DAY

Barry rubs his forehead, dazed, as Tim races up--

TIM

Oh my god. Are you all right?

BARRY

I think so. What's your name?

TIM

Tim Whitman.

BARRY

What's the capitol of the United States?

TIM

Washington, D.C.

BARRY

Okay. I don't think there's any brain damage.

Tim eyes him. Barry grabs Tim's arm and awkwardly hauls himself to his feet.

TIM

Listen...if you're okay, I hope we can settle this thing without getting a bunch of lawyers involved.

Barry eyes the Porsche. A small dent in the hood. He sighs and takes out his wallet.

BARRY

All right. How much do you want?

Tim stops.

TIM

You know what? Let's call it even.

Barry smiles and shakes Tim's hand--

BARRY

Barry Speck.

He shakes a little too long, and stands a little too close. He smells weird. Tim finally frees his hand.

BARRY (CONT'D)
Whoah. Where's my head? I totally
forgot about the mouse!

He walks blithely into traffic. A taxi swerves to miss him
and SMASHES into a bus.

Oblivious, Barry bends down and picks up a dead MOUSE.

BARRY (CONT'D)
Handsome little guy. Nice pelt.
Good teeth. Probably just died of
fright.
(petting it gently)
It's okay, buddy. You're with
Barry now.

He takes out a can of "STOP-ROT" and dumps a bunch of white
powder on the mouse.

TIM
Can I give you a lift somewhere,
Barry?

BARRY
Actually, I was just going to see
the Doctor.

He winks.

EXT. LOWER EAST SIDE STREET - DAY

Tim and Barry climb out of Tim's Porsche--

BARRY
--I work at the Hackensack
Processing Center. You've probably
heard of it.

TIM
Can't say I have.

BARRY
(incredulous)
Um, it's only the biggest IRS
processing center on the eastern
seaboard! I make the voyage from
Jersey whenever I'm running low on
formaldehyde and septums.

Tim looks up at a sign. "GRUMMER'S TAXIDERMY."

INT. GRUMMER'S TAXIDERMY - DAY

Barry pushes open the door. A dusty old store, frozen in time. Taxidermied animals stare from every nook and cranny. Ancient wooden display cases line the walls, crammed with glass eyeballs and featureless white molds of animal heads.

BARRY

Doctor D!

He waves to DALE, a pale skinny figure in a t-shirt that says "Death and Taxidermy." He sits behind the counter, sorting freeze-dried waterfowl feet.

DALE

Hey Barry.

BARRY

Dale, I want you to meet my friend, Tim.

Dale reluctantly shakes Tim's hand, then squirts hand sanitizer on his hand.

BARRY (CONT'D)

Tim just hit me with his car. A Porsche.

DALE

Cool.

He hands Barry a box and Barry starts sorting through whiskers and eyes in tiny ziploc bags.

DALE (CONT'D)

So a guy comes in yesterday. He'd put plastic cartilage liners in a muledeer...then he puts on degreaser. He's like, can you help me?

BARRY

More like "can you help me to the insane asylum!"

DALE

Um, excuse me, my muledeer looks like a basset hound!

BARRY

(to Tim)
Where do these people come from?

TIM
Tell me about it!

DALE
How'd the moon landing turn out?

Barry grins and pulls out a three-ring binder. He flips it open. Tim and Dale peer at a photo--

A taxidermied mouse in a space suit planting a tiny American flag on the lunar surface.

BARRY
One small step for a mouse. One
giant leap for mouse-kind.

Tim looks at Barry like he's struck gold.

TIM
You made this?

BARRY
I'm doing a series called "Great
Moments in History."

Tim turns the page--

Washington Crossing the Delaware. A mouse in a powdered wig with his bedraggled mouse soldiers in a tiny boat. Tim tries to keep a straight face.

TIM
This is very very good.

DALE
Mice are the hardest. Most people
can't handle the detail work. They
just freeze-dry them.

Barry snorts derisively.

Tim turns the page. The Last Supper. A mouse in flowing robes at a long table surrounded by mouse disciples.

BARRY
I know what you're saying. Someone
doesn't have standard TS-33 mouse
eyes! I gave Judas mole eyes. So
he'd look shifty.

DALE
Genius.

BARRY

I need nose epoxy. Economy size.

Dale disappears into the back room.

TIM

So, you just comb the streets,
looking for dead mice?

BARRY

No. Most of these guys come from a
lab out in Jersey. They just use
them up and throw them away.

He looks tenderly at the pictures.

BARRY (CONT'D)

I like to think I'm giving them a
second chance. In the words of
John Lennon, "You may say I'm a
dreamer, but I'm not."

TIM

The only one.

BARRY

The only what?

TIM

That's the quote. "You may say I'm
a dreamer, but I'm not the only
one."

BARRY

(condescending)

I don't think so, Tim.

Dale comes back with the nose epoxy.

TIM

How many mice have you stuffed?

Barry and Dale exchange a look. Barry rolls his eyes.

BARRY

Um. None.

DALE

The term is "mounted."

TIM

Okay. How many mice have you
mounted?

BARRY

A gentleman never tells.

Dale cracks up. Barry launches into a SUPER-ANNOYING LAUGH. Finally he gets it under control.

BARRY (CONT'D)

Sorry. Old taxidermy joke.

He puts out his hand. Dale reluctantly gives him five, then squirts Purell on his hand.

BARRY (CONT'D)

A gentleman never tells!

He bursts out laughing again.

EXT. GRUMMER'S TAXIDERMY - DAY

Barry and Tim walk out.

TIM

You know Barry, this was sort of a strange way to meet. But I like to think everything happens for a reason.

BARRY

Wow.

He nods, thinking it over.

TIM

Yeah. I'm having dinner with some friends this Thursday--

BARRY

Are you serious? That's great. Kudos, Tim.

TIM

Anyway. We invite...extraordinary people to come and share their interests with us. I know we just met, but I can tell you're an extraordinary person.

Barry looks at him, surprised.

TIM (CONT'D)

What are you doing for dinner this Thursday?

INT. FENDER CAPITAL, HALLWAY - DAY

CLOSE ON Tim's cell phone calendar. Thursday. 8:00 Dinner--
Barry Speck.

Tim snaps it shut and strides down the hall. He passes
Fender--

TIM

Pet psychic's going down!

INT. TIM'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

A sprawling apartment with a stunning view of Central Park.
Tim comes into the living room wearing a towel.

JULIE

Nice skirt.

He twirls Julie around and kisses her. Then heads into the
bathroom and starts the shower.

JULIE (CONT'D)

(calling out)

I've gotta run out for a work
thing.

The phone RINGS and Julie answers--

JULIE (CONT'D)

Hello? Hi, Karen. You're very
welcome. I hope you liked them.

(she laughs)

Yeah, the joke dinner. I heard
about it. He's not going.

(she frowns)

What are you talking about?

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

Tim pulls on a bathrobe and walks into--

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Julie stares icily at him.

JULIE

We are going out tomorrow, right?

TIM

I forgot to tell you. I'm getting
hammered at work. Looks like I'm
gonna have to go late.

Julie laughs bitterly.

JULIE

Art Forum.

TIM

Excuse me?

JULIE

Our first date. You said you had a subscription to Art Forum. I knew that was BS! And part of me was thinking, this guy's so slick. He thinks he can play everybody. Well, you can't play me!

TIM

Can we back up a second?

JULIE

That was Karen Fender on the phone. You're not working late tomorrow. You're going to that dinner. Oh, and you forgot to mention, the jokes are *people*.

TIM

Okay. I wanted to tell you, but Fender made me promise--

JULIE

Fender? Tim, I am your fiancée!

TIM

Fine. I should have told you.

JULIE

This is how you entertain yourself? Making fun of people? I mean, who do you think you are?

TIM

It's a victimless crime! They never find out!

JULIE

Oh, I guess that makes it okay then.

TIM

Julie, I'm trying to make things happen. For us.

JULIE

Don't drag me into this! Is this how your mother raised you?

TIM

No, Julie. You know how my mother raised me? Three kids, fifteen thousand dollars a year. I don't like those numbers. And I don't think you'd be signing on for that either.

Julie stares at him.

JULIE

Do you actually think I'm with you because of your money?

She grabs a stack of Kieran's photos and shoves them in her bag--

JULIE (CONT'D)

I've gotta go.

She heads out the door. Tim follows--

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

Tim hurries after Julie--

TIM

Julie, wait--

She hits the elevator button--

JULIE

You know what my mom said the first time she met you? She said you had no soul.

TIM

She said *I had no soul*?

JULIE

She said you use people.

The elevator opens and Julie gets in. Tim holds the door--

TIM

I do not use people!

The adjacent elevator opens--

It's Barry. He smiles and waves. Panicked, Tim lets go of Julie's door--

TIM (CONT'D)
We'll talk later.

Julie frowns. The elevator doors close.

Barry steps out--

BARRY
Um, hello! It's seven-thirty!
What are you doing in your bathrobe?

TIM
God damn it!

He kicks the wall. A sickening CRACK.

INT. TIM'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Tim's stretched out on the couch. Barry examines his foot.

BARRY
Does this hurt?

He pulls on Tim's foot--

TIM
Ow! Yes!

BARRY
This?

He yanks it.

TIM
Ow!

BARRY
What about this?

He twists it.

TIM
YES! STOP IT!

BARRY
If you were dead, I could fix this up good as new.

TIM

Barry, what are you doing here?

BARRY

Um, earth to Tim! Dinner? I waited for you, but you never showed up.

TIM

Dinner's tomorrow.

BARRY

I don't think so, Tim.

TIM

Barry, I invited you. I know when it is.

BARRY

I'm pretty sure it's tonight.

TIM

IT'S NOT TONIGHT!

BARRY

Okay. I guess one of us got confused.

TIM

How did you find my apartment?

BARRY

I work for the IRS. We know where you live.

He chuckles.

BARRY (CONT'D)

Oh well. You know what they say. Everything happens for a reason.

He winks at Tim.

BARRY (CONT'D)

You said that.

TIM

I know.

BARRY

I was thinking about that. And you know what? You're right. Example.

(MORE)

BARRY (CONT'D)

The other day at work, I wanted to talk to my boss, and his secretary said he couldn't see me...and the reason was, he was busy. So that supports it right there!

TIM

Barry, you have to go now.

BARRY

Ah. But for what reason?

The phone RINGS. Tim starts to get up, then winces and falls back onto the couch. The machine picks up--

TIM

(on machine)

You've reached Tim and Julie.
Leave a message.

JULIE (O.S.)

It's me. I'm not coming home tonight. I just need some time to think. I don't know. Bye.

Tim slumps on the couch, his head in his hands. Barry looks at him. An awkward moment.

BARRY

I should go.

TIM

Yeah.

Barry gets up.

BARRY

I want you to know. I'm with you all the way.

TIM

Good to know.

Barry walks toward the door, then stops.

BARRY

I know what you're going through. My wife left me last year.

TIM

She didn't leave me. We had an argument. It'll be fine.

BARRY

That's what you keep telling yourself. Then one day you realize, that's it. She's gone. She's not coming back.

He sits down next to Tim and puts a hand on his shoulder--

BARRY (CONT'D)

It's all right to cry.

TIM

I don't want to cry.

BARRY

Just let it out.

Barry's face contorts. He tries to fight it, but tears well up in his eyes. He lets out a weird MOAN. Then he wipes away his tears--

BARRY (CONT'D)

Big hug.

He grabs Tim in a hug. He doesn't smell good.

TIM

Barry, this is fun, but I'm gonna go put some pants on now.

BARRY

Good man. It took me two weeks before I could do that.

Tim hobbles off. Barry snoops around, looking at Tim's stuff.

A little DING comes from Tim's laptop. Barry peers at it--

An INSTANT MESSAGE WINDOW pops up--

DARLA22: "Tim, are you online?"

Barry types "No."

Darla22: "How's the girlfriend?"

Barry: "Not good. She just walked out."

Darla22: "Is Timmy lonely?"

Barry: "Timmy is lonely."

Darla sends a PHOTO. A closeup of her ass in pink panties. Barry prints it out and gazes at it, stroking his face.

Darla22: "Are you touching yourself?"

Barry stares in amazement at his hand.

Barry: "Yes."

Darla22: "Where are you?"

Barry types and hits return. Tim hobbles in.

TIM

What are you doing?

Barry jumps.

BARRY

Nothing!

Tim limps over to the computer.

TIM

WHAT THE HELL IS THIS?

BARRY

She talked to me first!

TIM

You idiot! This is a crazy woman!

BARRY

She seems very friendly.

TIM

Yeah, friendly like a stalker! I spent one night with her two years ago. It was the biggest mistake of my life. I had to move and change my phone number. I DO NOT TALK TO THIS GIRL!

BARRY

You didn't. I did. Your conscience is clean.

TIM

Barry, please get out of here.

BARRY

Should I tell her not to come?

TIM
GET OUT!

Barry starts to go, then stops. He comes back, grabs the picture of Darla's ass, and heads out the door.

INT. TIM'S HALLWAY - NIGHT

Barry turns to Tim--

BARRY
Tim, don't worry. I made this mess--

Tim SLAMS the door in his face.

BARRY (CONT'D)
--and I'm gonna clean it up.

EXT. TIM'S APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

Julie climbs out of a taxi. She's on her cell phone--

JULIE
Mom, I don't know what to do.

JULIE'S MOM (O.S.)
Honey, you know I'm not the man's biggest defender. But you've got to try to talk it through.

Julie looks up at the light from Tim's window. She takes a deep breath.

INT. TIM'S HALLWAY - LATER

Julie steps out of the elevator and heads toward Tim's door. Suddenly, Barry steps out from the shadows--

BARRY
Well, well, well. If it isn't Little Miss Panty Bottom.

JULIE
Excuse me?

BARRY
I had a feeling you'd show up.

JULIE
Who are you?

BARRY
A friend of Tim's.

JULIE
I've never seen you before.

BARRY
Oh, so all of a sudden you know everything about Tim? You're the world's biggest Tim Expert. Let me tell you something. Just because your whole life revolves around Tim, doesn't mean his live revolves around you!

JULIE
Okay, I need to talk to Tim.

BARRY
He doesn't want to talk to you, okay?

JULIE
He told you that?

BARRY
He thinks you're crazy! You had *one good night* of sexual intercourse, and it was years ago!

JULIE
I don't believe this.

BARRY
Believe it. It's happening. It's over!

JULIE
You know what? I came over here because I'm an adult. But if Tim wants to act like a child, that's fine.

BARRY
HE DOES! GO AWAY!

Julie stomps to the elevator.

JULIE
Tell him he can kiss my ass
goodbye.

BARRY
Don't worry! We have a picture!

She frowns. The elevator doors close.

INT. TIM'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

A knock at the door. Tim answers. Barry's standing there cockily.

BARRY
Problem solved.

TIM
What?

Barry saunters past Tim into the apartment.

BARRY
I gave your stalker a dose of tough love. She got the message.

TIM
Darla came here?

BARRY
Yes.

TIM
And you got her to leave?

BARRY
You'll never see her again.

Tim stares at him, amazed.

TIM
Thank you.
(grudgingly)
Sorry I blew up at you.

BARRY
You're in a dark place. I understand.

He stretches out on the couch.

BARRY (CONT'D)
Where do you think Julie is?

TIM
I don't know. She had some work thing.

Tim glances at the CATALOGUE of Kieran's show lying on the coffee table. Barry picks it up--

BARRY

She works with *this* guy?

TIM

She curated his show.

BARRY

She's going to see this guy?
Tonight? After you had a fight?

TIM

I don't know!

Barry examines Kieran--

BARRY

The Other Man.

TIM

He's not The Other Man. He's just
a friend.

BARRY

The Other Man is always just a
friend. She needs a shoulder to
cry on. He sees his chance. He
strikes. Next thing you know
they're having lunch together at
the Ground Round! Never mind that
he's fat and bald and your
cubicle's only three feet away and
you have to listen to them having
phone sex all day when you're NOT
EVEN SUPPOSED TO MAKE PERSONAL
CALLS AT THE OFFICE!

Tim dials Julie's cell. Straight to voicemail. He hangs up.

BARRY (CONT'D)

Call his house. See if she's
there.

TIM

No.

BARRY

It's the only way to know.

TIM

If I call him looking for her, he's gonna wonder why she's not answering her cell, and he's gonna realize there's something wrong. And if she is there, and there's nothing going on, then she's gonna think I'm snooping around, and he's gonna be able to see that she's mad at me, and then he'll definitely know that something's wrong.

BARRY

You're like a chess master. You're seven moves ahead of everybody!

Barry thinks.

BARRY (CONT'D)

I'll call him.

TIM

Definitely not.

BARRY

Did I not take care of your stalker problem?

TIM

Why would you be calling him?

BARRY

Maybe I want to make a movie about him. You know, his adventures, how he became a famous photographer...

Tim snorts.

TIM

He's such an egomaniac, he'd probably go for it.

He thinks.

TIM (CONT'D)

If I tell you exactly what to say, do you think you can do it?

BARRY

Sometimes I think you think I'm an idiot.

Beat.

TIM

Tell him you're making a documentary, and you want to interview him. Then casually say you'd also like to talk to the woman who curated his show.

Barry stares blankly.

TIM (CONT'D)

Julie.

BARRY

Right! Right!

TIM

Can you do this?

BARRY

It's complicated. But I'll try.

TIM

It's not complicated! Just ask him how to get in touch with Julie!

Barry cackles, delighted.

BARRY

I get it. *Touch*, right? Double meaning!

TIM

No!

BARRY

There's only one thing that bothers me. Is anyone gonna go see a documentary about a photographer? Wouldn't we get a bigger audience if we give it the full Hollywood treatment? Brad Pitt is Kieran. He's up against these Zulus who want him dead--

TIM

(slowly, clearly)

We are trying to find out if Julie is at his apartment.

Barry grins--

BARRY
You sneaky dog. It's clever as
hell.

TIM
This is a bad idea.

BARRY
Dial the phone.

Tim hesitates, then dials the phone and hands it to Barry.

BARRY (CONT'D)
I'll do an accent.

TIM
No! Don't do an accent!

INTERCUT with Kieran at his loft.

KIERAN
Hello?

Barry does a terrible English accent--

BARRY
'Allo! Nigel Rogers, documentary
filmmaker from London, England!
May I please speak with Kieran...

He squints at the book and pronounces the name wrong--

BARRY (CONT'D)
Vollard?

KIERAN
Kieran Vollard?

BARRY
I don't think so...

TIM
(whispering)
Yes!

BARRY
Yes!

KIERAN
This is Kieran Vollard.

BARRY

Well, Kieran Vol...lard...we're making a documentary for British telly--

He winks at Tim.

BARRY (CONT'D)

--on a subject you might be very interested in. It's you!

He gives a hearty laugh. Tim gestures to him to cut the crap.

BARRY (CONT'D)

We'd like to interview you. I'm afraid we can't offer you much for your time. Say, five thousand... pounds.

He winks at Tim again.

KIERAN

The money's hardly important. I'd be honored to participate.

BARRY

Jolly good! I'll have my manservant make the arrangements!

KIERAN

...Okay.

BARRY

Tally-ho!

He hangs up and CACKLES in triumph. Tim stares at him.

BARRY (CONT'D)

What an idiot! I was prepared to go up to ten thousand! You can't out-fox a fox!

He growls like a fox. Tim glares at him.

BARRY (CONT'D)

You think I should have started lower?

TIM

Did he happen to mention if Julie was there?

BARRY
It didn't come up.

Then he stops.

BARRY (CONT'D)
Oh.

He picks up the phone.

BARRY (CONT'D)
I'll call him back.

TIM
No!

Tim grabs the phone away. Barry eyes the catalogue--

BARRY
He's an extremely attractive man.
(beat)
He's probably seducing her right
now.

TIM
I'm going over there.

He gets up. Then winces in agony.

BARRY
You're not gonna be able to drive
with that foot.

INT. TIM'S PORSCHE - NIGHT

Barry drives. Tim rides shotgun. They pull to a stop on a quiet Tribeca street.

Tim peers up anxiously at the lights of Kieran's loft. He takes out his cell phone and dials Julie. Voicemail again. He hangs up.

BARRY
(eyeing Tim's phone)
Ah, I see you've got the Prizm.

Tim nods.

BARRY (CONT'D)
But I thought those weren't
available in stores yet.

TIM

I have a connection.

Barry pulls an identical phone out of his pocket.

BARRY

I got mine three months ago.

Barry CACKLES annoyingly.

BARRY (CONT'D)

Dannon Fruitblast Sweepstakes. I ate seven hundred and fifty-five yogurts.

TIM

Okay. Just please be quiet.

He looks up at Kieran's window.

TIM (CONT'D)

This is stupid. We can't see anything.

Barry looks at the window--

BARRY

A cat could probably get up there and take a look...

(he thinks)

Or something that moves like a cat...

(he grins at Tim)

I see where you're going with this.

TIM

I'm not going anywhere. You're the only one who's talking.

BARRY

Sure I am.

He winks at Tim. Then hops out of the car.

TIM

What are you doing?

Barry moves cat-like across the street.

TIM (CONT'D)

Barry. Barry!

Barry heaves himself awkwardly onto Kieran's fire escape and starts climbing.

EXT. FIRE ESCAPE - NIGHT

Barry peers in Kieran's window. Kieran's photographs cover the walls. Indonesian shadow puppets, African masks and Himalayan prayer flags fill the loft. Barry dials his phone.

INTERCUT with - Tim in his Porsche. He picks up.

BARRY

Prizm 2, this is Prizm 1. I'm going in.

TIM

Barry, do not go in there!

Barry puts the phone in his shirt pocket and slips through the window--

INT. KIERAN'S LOFT - NIGHT

Barry moves cat-like through Kieran's loft. From his shirt pocket--

TIM (O.S.)

Barry. Barry!

Barry stops. He looks around, confused. Then sees a BUDDHA STATUE smiling placidly at him from a shelf. He peers at it--

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

Barry!

Barry steps closer, gazing in wonder at Buddha.

BARRY

Yes?

TIM (O.S.)

Pick up the phone!

Barry nods solemnly. He fishes in his pocket and presses the phone to his ear--

BARRY

Hello?

TIM (O.S.)

What the hell are you doing?!

Barry jumps.

BARRY

Tim, you've gotta see this place.
I mean, I thought you had a nice
apartment. This guy's amazing!
Successful artist, world traveller--

He gazes admiringly at a PHOTO of Kieran shaking hands with
Nelson Mandela.

BARRY (CONT'D)

Did you know he's friends with
Morgan Freeman?

TIM (O.S.)

Barry. Get out of there right now.

A low MOAN from the bedroom.

BARRY

Stand by.

He creeps cat-like toward the bedroom. A sudden YOWL--

As he steps on a CAT. It swipes at him. Barry swipes back,
hissing. The cat scratches him. He YELPS.

Kieran pokes his head out of his bedroom and looks around.
Barry presses himself against a bookshelf. Kieran goes back
inside. Another MOAN.

BARRY (CONT'D)

(into phone)

They're in the bedroom!

TIM

What?

Barry creeps to the bedroom door. It's open a crack. He
peers inside--

An indistinct view of flesh sliding against flesh.

BARRY

(into phone)

They're engaged in sexual
intercourse! I'm gonna videotape
it with my Prizm!

IN THE PORSCHE - Tim pounds the steering wheel.

TIM

GOD DAMN IT!

He staggers out of the car and SLAMS the door.

IN KIERAN'S LOFT - Barry aims his cell phone and takes video through the crack in the door. A hand rubs massage oil onto a calf.

KIERAN (O.S.)

That's it...

ON THE FIRE ESCAPE - Tim winces in agony as he hauls himself toward Kieran's loft.

IN KIERAN'S LOFT - Kieran's lips press against a foot. He moans.

Tim opens the window and stumbles in. He hobbles across the room, shoves Barry aside and pushes open the bedroom door--

INT. KIERAN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Kieran's doubled over on a yoga mat, his face pressed against his own feet. He's shirtless, glistening with oil, and alone.

He looks up, surprised.

KIERAN

Tim?

Tim stands there, speechless. Barry steps forward, hand outstretched--

BARRY

Nigel Rogers!

KIERAN

Okay. I get it now. Julie dropped off some pictures earlier. I could tell she was upset. She left you, didn't she?

Tim glares at him.

KIERAN (CONT'D)

You sent this man to spy on me? Tim, this makes me very sad for you.

BARRY

He certainly did not. I've never seen him before in my life. I'd like to know what he's doing in your apartment!

TIM

You can cut it out, Barry.

BARRY

My name isn't Barry. Maybe you know someone who looks like me. But I daresay this Barry of yours is no documentary filmmaker.

TIM

No. The Barry I'm thinking of is a fucking idiot.

BARRY

There, you see!

KIERAN

Julie must be in a great deal of pain right now.

TIM

Yeah. I'm sure you're very concerned. As a friend.

KIERAN

You know, Tim, monogamy is rare in the animal kingdom. Very few animals mate for life. Penguins. You might be a penguin, but somehow I don't think Julie is. She's a lioness. And a lioness won't be satisfied with her mate unless he's her equal. I've spent the last six months gaining her trust. Very soon she'll be eating out of my hand.

Tim glares at him. Then Barry cracks up. They look at him.

BARRY

I was just picturing you as a penguin.

He does a little penguin waddle. Then cracks up again.

INT. TIM'S PORSCHE - NIGHT

They're parked outside Kieran's loft. Tim fumes while Barry fiddles with his cell phone.

BARRY

He's got real charisma, doesn't he?
I mean, I know you're set on a
documentary, but hear me out.
Angelina Jolie is Julie.
Kieran...plays himself!

He examines the video on his Prizm.

BARRY (CONT'D)

He wasn't lying. Look, it's his
own foot.

Tim frowns, thinking.

TIM

Give me that.

He grabs Barry's Prizm and fast-forwards. A handheld view of
Kieran in his bedroom--

KIERAN

...very soon she'll be eating out
of my hand.

Tim turns to Barry--

TIM

Barry, you're a genius.

Barry smiles, confused.

BARRY

Thank you.

INT. TIM'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Tim's got his phone pressed to his ear, Barry's phone in his
other hand--

TIM

(to Barry)
She thinks I've been playing her?
Wait till she sees this.

He looks over and frowns--

Barry's cut a piece of fabric out of Tim's suit jacket and is
stitching together a small pair of pants for his dead mouse.

TIM (CONT'D)

What the hell are you doing?

JULIE'S MOM picks up on the other end--

JULIE'S MOM (O.S.)
 (groggily)
 Hello?

TIM
 Nancy, it's Tim.

JULIE'S MOM (O.S.)
 Tim, it's one o'clock in the
 morning.

TIM
 I know. I'm sorry. I'm looking
 for Julie.

JULIE'S MOM (O.S.)
 She called me from outside your
 apartment. I told her to talk to
 you. That was two hours ago.

Tim frowns, confused.

TIM
 If you talk to her, please tell her
 to call me.
 (he hesitates)
 Nancy...for the record, I do have a
 soul.

JULIE'S MOM (O.S.)
 Good night, Tim.

She hangs up. Barry's eyes fall on a framed PHOTO of Julie.

BARRY
 Whoah. This is interesting. You
 say you're over Darla, but you're
 keeping pictures of her around the
 house. No wonder Julie's mad at
 you.

Tim stares at him.

TIM
 That is Julie.

Beat.

BARRY
 Hmmm.

TIM
Barry. Is this the girl you talked
to in the hallway?

BARRY
Tim, she did not identify herself.
So she is partly responsible.

Tim glares murderously at Barry. The doorbell RINGS.

BARRY (CONT'D)
(sheepishly)
I ordered a pizza.

INT. TIM'S FOYER - NIGHT

Barry opens the door--

It's DARLA. Dragon tattoo. Contemptuous smirk. Powerful
thighs that could crush a man's head. Barry stares.

DARLA
Where's Tim?

Barry points wordlessly to the living room. Darla brushes
past him. Barry takes out the photo of her ass. He peers at
it, then at the real thing. He hurries after her.

INT. TIM'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Tim looks up in horror as Darla walks in--

TIM
Oh god.

She saunters toward him, peeling off her raincoat.

DARLA
Well, well. You blew it with Julie
just like you blew it with me. And
you'll never have me again. So
don't even try.

TIM
Okay, Darla. Good to know.

She slaps him. He sighs. She slaps him again.

TIM (CONT'D)
All right. Time to go.

He takes her arm and tries to guide her gently toward the
door. She flails wildly, whipping her hair across his face--

DARLA

Ow! You're hurting me!

Then she melts against him.

DARLA (CONT'D)

Tim! Why do we keep doing this?
Someday I really am going to leave
you.

She tries to kiss him. He quickly puts his hand in front of his mouth. She French kisses his palm.

TIM

Darla, I need you out of my
apartment right now.

He grabs her firmly. Like lightning, she grabs his finger in a jujitsu lock and bends it back. Tim gasps in pain.

DARLA

You can be very cruel, Tim. But I
can be cruel too.

She releases Tim and eyes Barry. He gives a little wave--

BARRY

Hello.

DARLA

(to Tim)

Is this your new boyfriend? You
perverted bastard. Would you like
to watch while I screw his brains
out? Would that excite you?

TIM

I can safely say no to that one.

Barry stands there gaping.

BARRY

So...we ordered a pizza...

Darla pushes Barry into a chair and sits on his lap, stroking his hair and staring evenly at Tim.

DARLA

Isn't he a silly little boy?

Barry laughs.

BARRY
He is. He's like a silly little
baby!

DARLA
Sometimes little boys need to be
spanked.

Barry laughs and swats playfully at Tim's butt.

DARLA (CONT'D)
I'm sick of little boys. I need a
man for a change.

She licks Barry's face, eyeing Tim the whole time. Then she
frowns at the taste.

Suddenly, the phone RINGS. Tim looks at the caller ID--

TIM
Shit!

He hops into--

INT. TIM'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Tim slams the door and answers the phone--

TIM
Julie!

JULIE (O.S.)
I don't even know why I'm calling
you back.

TIM
Don't hang up!

JULIE (O.S.)
What do you think you're doing?
You have some weirdo guarding the
apartment--

TIM
Honey, they had a party in 3C and I
think that guy was on drugs. They
have him under control now.

JULIE (O.S.)
What do you want?

TIM
Did Kieran call you?

JULIE (O.S.)

Yeah, Tim. He said you broke into his apartment.

TIM

Julie, listen to me. Do not go near that guy. I have something I really need to show you--

JULIE (O.S.)

He was concerned, Tim. He said I could stay at his country house tomorrow night.

TIM

What?

JULIE (O.S.)

He's not going to be there.

TIM

Oh, he'll be there, Julie. He'll be there.

Barry sticks his head in, whispering urgently--

BARRY

Tim! Tim!

Tim covers the phone.

TIM

What?

BARRY

I'm going to ask you a question, man to man. If you tell me Darla's off-limits, I won't pursue it. But I think she likes me.

TIM

She's yours! Get out of here!

Barry winks at him and leaves.

JULIE (O.S.)

Is someone there?

TIM

What? No.

INT. TIM'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Barry saunters back in. He stretches seductively on the rug and opens his binder of mouse photos--

BARRY

Have you ever seen a mouse operate a forklift?

Darla ignores him. She picks up the phone and listens--

DARLA

Tim, baby? Are you on the phone?

A long silence. Then a CLICK.

TIM (O.S.)

Julie? Julie?

Tim explodes out of his bedroom and hops furiously over to Darla--

TIM (CONT'D)

YOU HAVE NO RIGHT TO--

She grabs his finger and bends it back--

TIM (CONT'D)

OW! SHIT!

He hops back into his room and SLAMS the door. Darla tries the knob. It's locked. She eyes Barry.

DARLA

What do you say? Should we drive him crazy?

BARRY

I know how we could really drive him crazy. Glue all his furniture to the ceiling!

He cackles his annoying laugh.

DARLA

I've got a better idea.

She steps forward seductively--

DARLA (CONT'D)

I'm a naughty little schoolgirl...

Barry frowns, confused.

BARRY

You look kind of old to be a schoolgirl.

Darla glares at him.

DARLA

Don't you want to be my schoolteacher?

BARRY

I'm not really qualified. I work for the IRS.

DARLA

Not tonight.

BARRY

No. All the time.

DARLA

Okay. Fine. You work for the IRS, and I've been very, very bad. I've cheated on my taxes. You'd better spank me.

BARRY

That's not really how it works. We usually just assess a fine based on a percentage of underpayment.

DARLA

Catch me, Barry!

She pretends to run away. Barry catches her easily. She pitches her voice toward Tim's bedroom door--

DARLA (CONT'D)

Oh! You caught me! You're like a wild animal!

BARRY

Now you have to catch me!

He leaps away. She gives an irritated sigh and tries to catch him--

He races around, ducking and weaving as she grabs at him--

BARRY (CONT'D)

Whoop! Too slow! Too slow!

DARLA

Stop it!

Darla trips and bangs her shin.

DARLA (CONT'D)

Ow! God damn it! Get back here!

Barry cackles and takes off down the hall. She races after him. Suddenly he drops down and curls into a ball--

She trips over him, SMASHING to the floor. She gets up, feeling at a chipped tooth.

DARLA (CONT'D)

YOU SON OF A BITCH!

Barry races off, throwing sofa cushions in her path. Darla grabs a bottle of wine and hurls it. Barry ducks out of the way, cackling as it SMASHES against the wall.

INT. TIM'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Tim lies on his bed, staring at the ceiling, listening to the sound of his apartment being destroyed.

DARLA (O.S.)

YOU ARE GOING TO DIE!

Barry giggles. Another CRASH.

INT. TIM'S HALLWAY - NIGHT

A PIZZA GUY rings Tim's doorbell. Barry opens the door, panting--

BARRY

Finally!

And Darla TACKLES him. The Pizza Guy stares. Barry giggles uncontrollably as Darla unleashes a brutal series of blows. Finally she stops, fixes her hair, and calls over her shoulder--

DARLA

Good night, Tim. Sweet dreams.

She steps over Barry, pushes past the bewildered Pizza Guy, and heads off down the hall.

INT. TIM'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Tim glares at Barry as he sits in the wreckage of the room, cheerfully eating pizza.

BARRY

Women are funny. I remember my first girlfriend. Fourth grade. She tried to drown me.

TIM

Barry, I want you to go home.

BARRY

The last bus left two hours ago.

TIM

Go to the bus station and wait for the first bus that leaves tomorrow.

Barry looks hurt. He gets up to go.

BARRY

Who's going to help you with Julie?

TIM

Let me explain something to you, Barry. Because of you, Julie's going to Kieran's country house! You've driven her into his bed! Thanks!

BARRY

That's not good.

TIM

No, Barry. It's not.

BARRY

Maybe we should go there and show her the video--

TIM

I DON'T KNOW WHERE HIS HOUSE IS!

Sadly, Barry gathers his binder. He folds his piece of pizza in half and puts it in his pocket.

BARRY

I'm sorry.

TIM

Goodbye, Barry.

Barry heads for the door. Then stops.

BARRY
Wait a second! I'm an idiot!

TIM
Go on.

BARRY
If Kieran has a second home, the
address will be on his tax returns!

TIM
Can you get his tax returns?

BARRY
(laughing)
Can I get his tax returns? My
middle name is I Can Get His Tax
Returns! My office opens at seven.

Tim looks at the clock. It's two a.m. Barry smiles
hopefully. Tim sighs.

INT. TIM'S BATHROOM - NIGHT

Tim stands in the doorway wearing pajama bottoms and a t-
shirt, watching Barry brush his teeth. He's singing to the
tune of "Do Your Ears Hang Low?"--

BARRY
Are your teeth clean and white?
Do you brush them right?
Do you brush them every morning?
Do you brush them every night?
Do you floss them good
To remove the bits of food?
Are your teeth clean and white?

He spits into the sink and starts going through Tim's
medicine cabinet, peering at prescriptions. He grabs a tube
of hand lotion, sniffs it, and walks out.

Tim steps into the bathroom, picks up his toothbrush, and
throws it in the trash.

INT. TIM'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Tim comes in. A blanket and pillow are laid out on the
couch. Barry's standing in his tighty-whiteys, slathering
lotion all over his body.

BARRY

Are you sure you're gonna be able to sleep tonight?

TIM

Yes.

BARRY

When Martha left me, I couldn't sleep for two months. You just feel that empty space next to you in bed. If you want, I could sleep in there with you.

TIM

No thank you.

Barry takes out his can of Stop-Rot and sprinkles some into his shoes.

BARRY

The number one thing is, don't start thinking about how you can't sleep. Once you get that buzzing around in your head, it's over. You'll be up all night.

TIM

Okay. Thanks.

BARRY

You'll be like, where's Julie? Is she sleeping with Kieran? Is he a better lover than I am?

Tim glares at him. Barry takes out a bottle of Skin Bracer and starts slapping it all over his face.

TIM

Why are you putting on aftershave?

BARRY

Force of habit. I used to come to bed after working on my guys. Martha hated the formaldehyde.

TIM

You can smell them both, Barry. You can smell the formaldehyde, and the aftershave. Two layers of bad smell. It's not working.

Barry looks hurt.

BARRY

Well, I'm not sleeping with anyone,
am I? So it doesn't matter.

TIM

Good night, Barry.

INT. TIM'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Tim lies awake in bed, staring at the ceiling.

BARRY (O.S.)

(whispering)

Tim?

(beat)

Tim? Are you asleep?

(loud)

TIM?

TIM

WHAT, BARRY?

Barry's standing in the doorway.

BARRY

I can't sleep. The traffic's too
loud.

TIM

For Christ's sake.

He gets out of bed.

INT. TIM'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Tim limps in and grabs a universal remote. He turns on the
TV to a AMBIENT NOISE menu and selects WATERFALL. A
WATERFALL SOUND comes from the speakers.

He throws down the remote and hobbles back into his bedroom.

INT. TIM'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Tim lies awake in bed, listening to the WATERFALL SOUND from
the living room.

Then it changes to a CRASHING SURF. Then a JUNGLE AT NIGHT.
Then the call of BLUE WHALES. JUNGLE AT NIGHT. BLUE WHALES.
JUNGLE AT NIGHT. CRASHING SURF. JUNGLE AT NIGHT--

Loverboy's "Workin' for the Weekend" BLASTS out at top
volume. Then cuts out.

BARRY (O.S.)

Sorry.

The SOUND of the TV. "The Planet's Funniest Animals."

ANNOUNCER (O.S.)

--this kitty-cat has a pimped-out
ride that's totally paw-some!

Barry CACKLES along with the LAUGH TRACK.

INT. TIM'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Tim bursts out of his bedroom, switches on a pair of
HEADPHONES and jams them on Barry's head.

BARRY

(too loud)

THANK YOU, TIM!

Tim limps back to his bedroom.

INT. TIM'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Tim lies awake in bed. Silence. Then Barry CACKLES from the
next room. Silence. Barry CACKLES again.

INT. TIM'S BEDROOM - LATER

Total silence. Tim stares at the clock. It's four-thirty.
He looks at the empty space next to him. Then sighs and gets
up.

INT. TIM'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Tim limps in. "The Wizard of Oz" plays silently on the TV.
Barry's asleep on the couch, still wearing the headphones.
His three-ring binder lies open next to him.

Tim sits next to Barry and peers at the binder.

It's open to a DOMESTIC TABLEAU. A WIFE MOUSE waves goodbye
to a HUSBAND MOUSE as he leaves for work. But a SEDUCER
MOUSE spies on them from behind a tree. Tim turns the page--

The Husband Mouse comes home. He throws open the bedroom
door to find the Wife Mouse and the Seducer Mouse in bed
together.

The Husband Mouse watches helplessly as the Wife Mouse runs
off with the Seducer Mouse in his red Mazda Miata.

Tim gazes at the Husband Mouse. Somehow its glass eyes convey a profound sadness.

INT. TIM'S LIVING ROOM - MORNING

Sunlight streams through the windows. Tim opens his eyes. He's lying on the couch, Barry curled up next to him. He looks down--

Barry's MOUSE sits on his chest, looking at him. It's alive.

Tim lets out a SHOUT. The mouse scurries to the floor. Barry wakes up--

BARRY

Hey! He wasn't dead after all!

He crawls over to the mouse, smiling happily--

BARRY (CONT'D)

He must have just fainted. Then the Stop Rot put him into suspended animation!

Tim comes forward, wielding a tennis racket.

BARRY (CONT'D)

No!

He grabs Tim's wrist.

BARRY (CONT'D)

Tim, this little guy got a second chance. Don't kill your mascot, for god's sake!

Barry picks up the mouse and puts him in his pocket. He grabs a box of cereal and sprinkles some into his pocket.

BARRY (CONT'D)

Let's hit the road.

EXT. GEORGE WASHINGTON BRIDGE - DAY

Tim's Porsche speeds across the bridge toward New Jersey.

BARRY (O.S.)

I had the weirdest dream...you were there, and Julie, and Kieran...and all I kept telling everybody was, "There's no place like home."

INT. TIM'S PORSCHE - DAY

They hurtle down the New Jersey Turnpike, Barry at the wheel.

BARRY

So what do you do, anyway?

TIM

Corporate acquisitions and restructuring.

BARRY

In English.

TIM

We buy companies. We break them into pieces, and we sell whatever's valuable at a profit.

BARRY

Put it in terms that a normal person can understand.

TIM

Okay. A while back, we bought this company. Huge hot dog manufacturer. Got the whole operation for fifty million dollars. Sold the trucks to U-Haul. Turned the cold storage into high-end condos. In six months, we tripled our money.

Barry cackles, delighted.

BARRY

You sly fox! Meanwhile, you slip out the back door with all the hot dogs!

Tim sighs.

TIM

That's right, Barry. You got it.

BARRY

You won't have to buy lunch for a year!

TIM

Yeah. That's how I made seven hundred grand last year. Saving money on lunch.

Barry looks contentedly over the bleak New Jersey landscape. He points to a dismal, grey office complex--

BARRY
There she is, Tim. The mother
ship.

EXT. IRS PROCESSING CENTER - DAY

Tim's Porsche pulls into a parking space outside the ugly building.

INT. IRS PROCESSING CENTER - DAY

Barry leads Tim through the most depressing cubicle farm in New Jersey--

BARRY
Our whole group's basically a
family. We fight, we make up, we
do team building. Barbara!

He waves to BARBARA. She ignores him.

BARRY (CONT'D)
Anthony! Get off the internet!
Don't worry, I'm still on vacation.
I'm just here to bug you guys.

He goes to high-five ANTHONY. Anthony leaves him hanging.

BARRY (CONT'D)
Jaime! I want you to meet a friend
of mine.

JAIME looks blank.

JAIME
Who are you?

BARRY
Barry. Barry Speck.
(beat)
By the fax machine.

JAIME
Oh. Okay.

Barry makes a "he's crazy" sign to Tim as Jaime walks off.

BARRY

We do the A through J's here.
Unfortunately, Kieran's last name
starts with V. So we're gonna have
to take a little trip to the Dark
Side.

INT. THERMAN'S CUBICLE - DAY

Close on a packet of creamer being poured into a Red Bull.
THERMAN, wild hair, bloodshot eyes, takes a sip. Then spots
Barry and Tim approaching--

THERMAN

Halt! What intruder dares approach
my domain?

Barry winks at Tim--

BARRY

It is I, Barry! How go-eth it?

THERMAN

The Realm of Azeroth is overrun
with orcs. I haven't slept in six
nights.

He takes a sip of Red Bull and eyes Tim.

BARRY

Therman, meet Tim Whitman.

THERMAN

Sir Tim of Whitman. You may
approach.

TIM

(to Barry)

Is there anybody else who can help
us out with this?

BARRY

(to Therman)

His fiancee might be sleeping with
somebody else tonight. We need to
get an address for a non-deductible
vacation home.

THERMAN

It is a federal offense to divulge
tax information not related to IRS
business.

BARRY

Yeah, right. Like you didn't trade me a six-foot party sub for Carmen Electra's home phone number!

THERMAN

I tell you, I will have her.

Barry cackles.

THERMAN (CONT'D)

Very well. I will grant you this boon...if you defeat me in single combat.

Barry grins.

BARRY

Name the challenge.

Therman points to a towering stack of TAX RETURNS--

THERMAN

The Tower of Pain!

BARRY

The Tower of Pain!

They both make exploding flame noises and wave their fingers like flames around the stack of files.

TIM

Guys, I'm in sort of a hurry.

Therman hands Tim a single Twizzler--

THERMAN

Hold this. Do not eat it. Thank you.

He hands Barry a letter opener--

THERMAN (CONT'D)

The Ceremonial Blade.

Barry bows and accepts it. Therman riffles the stack of tax returns--

THERMAN (CONT'D)

Strike well, young one!

Barry lunges, thrusting the letter opener into the stack. Therman takes out the selected file and spreads it on his workstation. They peer at it.

THERMAN (CONT'D)

Greg Zimmer of Downers Grove,
Illinois...your hour of judgment is
at hand!

He opens the file, and the contest begins. Barry's eyes never leave the file, but his fingers fly like lightning on a calculator. Therman takes one look at the file, then closes his eyes like a meditating holy man.

BARRY

Done!

He sits back, satisfied.

THERMAN

Well?

BARRY

Zimmer's hiding a hundred ninety-
seven thousand dollars in an S-
Corporation. Audit the bastard.

Therman gives a grudging nod. Barry takes the Twizzler from Tim's hand. As he's about to take a bite--

THERMAN

Of course, it's so obvious I
hesitate to mention it. But I
assume you realize Zimmer's having
an affair.

Barry stops.

THERMAN (CONT'D)

Not only that, but his mistress
broke up with him in Key West on
March 12.

Barry and Tim stare. Therman plucks the Twizzler from Barry's hand and takes a bite.

THERMAN (CONT'D)

He rented a car in Key West on
March 10, and flew back to Chicago
on March 13. But the rental car
wasn't returned till the 17th. He
went home to his wife. She stayed.

(MORE)

THERMAN (CONT'D)
 Four hundred and seventy-eight
 dollars and thirteen cents...that
 rings a bell...

He grabs another tax return from the Tower of Pain--

THERMAN (CONT'D)
 Janice Tupps! You saucy
 seductress! They both submitted
 the same receipt. Unfortunately,
 fornication is not a recognized
 business expense! ALL HAIL THE
 VICTOR! LO, HE IS MIGHTY!

He sings like a choir of angels and spreads his arms skyward
 as if a heavenly light were shining on him. Then lowers a
 cardboard Burger King crown reverently onto his own head.

Barry hangs his head in shame.

TIM
 What's going on please?

BARRY
 I lost. That's it. It's over.

THERMAN
 I may still be willing to help
 you...for a price.

He leans close to Barry--

THERMAN (CONT'D)
 Kneel before me. Recite the Oath.

BARRY
 Out of the question.

THERMAN
 Do it, Barry.

BARRY
 Never.

TIM
 What's the Oath? I'm pressed for
 time here, guys.

BARRY
 He wants me to kneel down and
 acknowledge his supremacy, now and
 for all of eternity.

TIM

On your knees, Barry.

BARRY

No way. If word gets out, it's over for me. I might as well just pack up my desk, because none of my guys will respect me ever again.

TIM

As far as I can tell, Barry, none of your guys know who you are!

THERMAN

Gentlemen, begone. You are wasting my time.

TIM

Barry, I will pay you a thousand dollars to do the Oath right now.

Therman gives a low WHISTLE.

BARRY

It's a drop in the bucket. This guy made seven hundred grand last year.

THERMAN

And I presume you declared it all.

Tim stops.

TIM

Of course.

THERMAN

Let's see.

He types into his computer and peers at a list of Whitmans. Barry points--

BARRY

That's him.

TIM

You know what? Let's keep focused on the reason we came here.

Therman peers at his screen, then closes his eyes in meditation. A beat. He opens his eyes and smiles at Tim.

THERMAN

You almost had me. It's really very subtle. But you can't swap capital gains on derivative trades for a loss in a non-shareholder-owned LLC. Any child knows that.

BARRY

Darla was right! You are a bad little boy!

He spanks Tim.

TIM

I'll have to ask my accountant about that.

THERMAN

So will I. You, my friend, are being audited. WOE UNTO HE WHO DEFIES ME! FOR HE SHALL FEEL MY WRATH!!!

He thrusts his fingers at Tim and makes FIREBALL SOUNDS.

Tim sighs.

TIM

Look, could you please just--

THERMAN

Eh eh eh!

He holds out an IRS pamphlet.

THERMAN (CONT'D)

Call the 800 number.

EXT. IRS PARKING LOT - DAY

Tim hobbles toward his Porsche, furious.

BARRY

He's good. That's why they call him the Thermanator! But I want you to remember something a wise man once said. "Everything happens for a reason." Remember, Tim? The wise man was you.

Tim glares at him. His phone RINGS.

TIM

Hello?

FENDER (O.S.)

Where the hell have you been all morning?

TIM

Um. Hackensack.

FENDER (O.S.)

Hackensack? You've got lunch with Bobby Brandt in forty-five minutes!

Tim winces, remembering.

TIM

I know. I'm on my way.

FENDER (O.S.)

It's game day, Tim. Get it together.

Tim hangs up.

BARRY

Where are we going?

TIM

I'm going to the Four Seasons for a business lunch. Then I'm gonna try to find my fiancée.

BARRY

Good plan. What do you want me to do?

TIM

I want you to go away.

BARRY

So, are you gonna pick me up here for dinner?

TIM

Barry, as wonderful as it would be to show up to dinner with you, I just don't think I can do it.

He yanks open the door of the Porsche and climbs in, wincing in pain.

BARRY
You can't drive.

TIM
Any amount of pain I have to endure
will be worth it. If I crash my
car and lose all my limbs, it will
be worth it NOT TO HAVE TO SPEND
ANOTHER MINUTE OF MY LIFE WITH YOU!

Barry looks at him, deeply wounded.

TIM (CONT'D)
Goodbye, Barry.

Suddenly Barry looks past him. His face falls.

BARRY
Oh god.

He ducks down.

BARRY (CONT'D)
It's her.

Tim looks--

A red Mazda Miata pulls into a nearby parking place. Inside are Barry's ex-wife MARTHA and SID CARMICHAEL, a military history buff with a pompous air. He's wearing a t-shirt that says "RISK: The Game of Global Domination" and carrying a huge TROPHY.

They get out of the car, laughing. As they pass Tim's Porsche, they see Barry crouching down--

MARTHA
Barry? What are you doing?

BARRY
I was...looking for something. Oh!
Here it is!

He picks up a little piece of glass and puts it in his pocket.

SID CARMICHAEL
Barry, you're on vacation. You can
go further away than the parking
lot, for goodness' sake!

He chortles. Barry eyes Sid's trophy.

MARTHA

We just got back from Atlantic City. Sid won the Tri-State Risk Championship.

SID CARMICHAEL

I swept down from the cold steppes of Kamchatka to devour Asia and Africa. Conquered Europe just to cleanse the palate. Then had the Americas for dessert. Total world domination!

Sid fondles his trophy and smiles condescendingly--

SID CARMICHAEL (CONT'D)

So. How are the mice?

BARRY

Yeah. I remember when I won my first trophy.

Martha frowns.

MARTHA

Um...Barry, what trophy?

BARRY

I mean, I remember what I thought it would be like.

Sid smirks.

MARTHA

Well, we should really get going.

BARRY

Yeah, me too. I have a lot of stuff I need to do.

Sid holds up his trophy--

SID CARMICHAEL

Don't worry, Barry. You'll win one yet!

He laughs and puts his arm around Martha. Barry watches them go.

INT. TIM'S PORSCHE - DAY

Barry slumps into the passenger seat.

BARRY

I should have said, I probably will win a trophy...in the competition for whose wife runs off with the biggest jerk!

He shakes his head.

BARRY (CONT'D)

I always think of the perfect comeback when it's too late.

Tim looks at Barry. He looks truly pitiful.

BARRY (CONT'D)

I guess I thought if I got you and Julie back together, it would make up for how I blew it with Martha. But I screwed that up too.

TIM

You didn't screw up. Well, you did. But you tried.

Barry says nothing.

TIM (CONT'D)

Come on, Barry. You'll find somebody else. A guy like you...

Barry nods, unconvinced.

TIM (CONT'D)

Sorry about dinner.

Barry scribbles his address on a piece of paper.

BARRY

If you're ever in Hackensack, you have a place to stay.

TIM

Thanks.

The two Prizms lie side by side on the seat. Barry grabs one and climbs out of the car.

BARRY

Goodbye, Tim.

TIM

Goodbye, Barry.

Tim shifts the car painfully into gear and pulls out. In the rear view mirror, he sees Barry standing forlornly in front of the ugly grey building.

EXT. IRS PARKING LOT - DAY

Barry watches Tim pull out of the lot. Suddenly his phone rings. He frowns at the unfamiliar ringtone, then picks up.

BARRY

Hello?

INTERCUT WITH - Fender in his office.

FENDER (O.S.)

Me again. Bobby's wife won't stop talking about how she wants to meet Julie. Make sure she's at lunch.

BARRY

(trying to imitate Tim)

Okay. I will do that.

In his office, Fender frowns.

Barry hangs up. He takes off running. He exits the parking lot just in time to see Tim pulling onto the highway.

BARRY (CONT'D)

TIM!

He quickly dials the cell phone--

INT. TIM'S PORSCHE - DAY

Tim drives down the highway. Barry's cell phone lies beside him on the seat. It's turned off.

EXT. THE STREET - DAY

Barry has Tim's cell phone pressed to his ear, listening to his own voicemail message--

BARRY (O.S.)

(singing)

I'm taking a shower,
Or off counting sheep,
So please leave a message
at the sound of the beep!

BARRY (CONT'D)

(into phone)

Tim! We've switched cell phones!

(MORE)

BARRY (CONT'D)

I need to talk to you! Julie is supposed to be at lunch!

He hangs up. Then hits redial--

BARRY (CONT'D)

I just realized, you can't get my messages! My password is 3434!

He hangs up. Then hits redial--

BARRY (CONT'D)

I just realized you can't get that message either. I'm gonna think really hard, and will you to turn on my phone.

Barry hangs up and stares at the cell phone, thinking really hard.

He lets out a ROAR of frustration, then scribbles "CALL ME!" on a scrap of paper. He holds it up and FLASHES a picture with the camera, then sends it.

Then he dials again--

BARRY (CONT'D)

Tim, disregard that picture. You have my phone, so if you call me, you're just gonna get yourself.

Barry hangs up. He thinks for a minute, then takes off running.

INT. FOUR SEASONS, GRILL ROOM - DAY

Tim follows a MAITRE D' through the quiet room full of power lunchers. He turns on Barry's cell phone and peers at it--

"45 missed calls." A PHOTO of Barry pops up, his face frantic, holding up a sign that says "CALL YOURSELF!" Tim frowns. The Maitre D' gestures to a table--

Tim looks up to see BOBBY BRANDT, 50, a Texas oil wildcatter who now sleeps regularly in the Lincoln bedroom. His wife MARGIE, a trim 45 in a Chanel dress, smiles sweetly.

TIM

Mr. and Mrs. Brandt! Great to meet you.

BOBBY BRANDT

Good to meet you, Tim. Lance Fender's been singing your praises for a long time.

MARGIE BRANDT

Now, we were promised a glimpse of that fiancée of yours.

TIM

Julie sends her regrets, I'm afraid. She came down with a pretty bad flu.

MARGIE BRANDT

Oh, that's a shame.

BOBBY BRANDT

Margie wanted to try out her radar.

MARGIE BRANDT

I always say, you can tell a lot about a man by the woman he falls in love with.

TIM

In that case, I can already see that Bobby's someone I want to do business with.

MARGIE BRANDT

(to Bobby)

You watch out for this one. He's a smooth operator.

Suddenly, "Escape (The Piña Colada Song)" BLARES out of Barry's cell phone. Everyone turns to look. Tim frowns, confused, and hurriedly turns it off.

INT. GREYHOUND BUS - DAY

Barry hits redial. Everybody around him groans.

BARRY

Tim! It's me again. Barry. Disregard all previous messages. I figured it out! Help is on the way!

He looks out the window. The skyscrapers of New York City draw closer.

INT. FOUR SEASONS, GRILL ROOM - DAY

Tim and the Brandts eat lunch--

BOBBY BRANDT

We did pretty well on that Chinese deal.

(to Margie)

What was the name of that gorge they flooded?

(to Tim)

Anyway, it's no secret I'm trying to diversify. So this is the part of the lunch where you tell me I should give you a hundred million dollars.

TIM

I don't think you should.

Bobby and Margie look at him.

TIM (CONT'D)

I think you should do three hundred million. If you want a meaningful hedge against a downturn in oil.

Bobby grins at Margie.

BOBBY BRANDT

Yeah, he's smooth all right.

Suddenly, a WAITER comes over and hands Tim a PHONE.

WAITER

Call for you, sir.

Tim frowns, surprised. He picks up.

TIM

Hello?

BARRY (O.S.)

Did you get my last message?

TIM

I'm in the middle of lunch.

BARRY (O.S.)

Tim, Julie's supposed to be there!

TIM

I know. It's okay.

BARRY (O.S.)
Tell them it's Julie. Calling to
say she's sorry.

Tim hesitates. He smiles at the Brandts--

TIM
It's Julie. She just wanted you to
know how sorry she is.

The Brandts smile.

MARGIE BRANDT
That is so sweet--

TIM
(into phone)
Thanks, honey. Gotta go--

MARGIE BRANDT
Let me talk to her.

She grabs the phone. Tim won't let go. They wrestle. She
yanks it away. Tim watches in horror.

MARGIE BRANDT (CONT'D)
Hello? Yes?
(to Tim)
It's your brother Barry! He's with
Julie!

TIM
Yes! My brother! He is...my
brother.

Margie listens--

MARGIE BRANDT
They're right outside! They're
coming in!

Tim lunges for the phone. They wrestle again. Tim yanks it
away.

TIM
Hello? Hello?

BARRY
HELLO!

Tim whips around, and the blood drains from his face--

Barry's coming toward them. At his side, conservatively dressed and smiling sweetly--

Darla.

BARRY (CONT'D)

It's me, Barry! Your brother! And look! It's Julie! Everybody, this is Julie. And Tim, of course you know Julie.

Darla looks Tim right in the eye--

DARLA

Hi, honey.

Darla leans in and whispers in his ear--

DARLA (CONT'D)

You owe me for this.

TIM

Barry, I think Julie's pretty sick. Could you please take her home? Now?

BOBBY BRANDT

Hell, she looks healthier than you do! I'm Bobby!

Bobby Brandt gives Darla a hug. Then Margie hugs her too.

BARRY

Big hugs!

Barry hugs Bobby Brandt.

BARRY (CONT'D)

Big hugs!

He hugs Margie Brandt, lifting her off her feet. She laughs.

BARRY (CONT'D)

Oh, big hugs!

Barry hugs Tim. Then Darla.

BOBBY BRANDT

(to Darla)

I think Tim's been trying to keep you away from us!

DARLA

He doesn't like to be seen with me
in public.

BARRY

He doesn't like to be seen with me
either!

The Brandts laugh. Tim sits down weakly.

MARGIE BRANDT

Aren't you going to give this young
lady a kiss?

DARLA

Yeah, Tim. Aren't you gonna kiss
me?

TIM

I...don't want to get your germs.

BARRY

Boo! Booo! Kiss her!
(chanting)
Kiss! Kiss! Kiss! Kiss!

Tim glares at Barry. Then reluctantly pecks Darla on the
cheek. She grabs his head and kisses him. As he pulls away,
she flickers her tongue like a lizard on his lips.

Bobby and Margie stare. Darla straightens herself out and
sits primly at the table.

BOBBY BRANDT

Young love.
(he sniffs)
It smells like embalming fluid in
this damn place.

Darla stares straight at Tim and puts on lipstick in an
incredibly erotic way. Margie eyes her uneasily.

BOBBY BRANDT (CONT'D)

Barry, you're Tim's brother. Can I
trust him with my money?

BARRY

I wouldn't if I were you.

He nudges Bobby. They both laugh.

BARRY (CONT'D)

He's a tax cheat, and he steals hot dogs!

He winks at Tim and cackles his annoying laugh. Bobby looks confused.

Darla scribbles something in lipstick on a napkin and slips it to Tim. He glances at it--

"I'M WET"

Tim tries to tuck it under the table. Barry takes it, reads it, and passes it along to Bobby. Bobby reads it. Then frowns at Barry.

MARGIE BRANDT

So. Tell us the story of how you two met.

DARLA

Tim, do you want to tell her, or should I?

TIM

I don't think we should tell that story.

MARGIE BRANDT

He is so cagey, this one!

DARLA

He likes to play games. Don't you, Tim? Luckily, I like to play games too.

BARRY

If you guys like games, we should play And How!

They look at him.

BARRY (CONT'D)

This guy at work told me about it. Basically you try to have a regular conversation, but anytime someone says "and," they have to take a drink. Whoops! I said it!

He takes a sip of water.

BOBBY BRANDT

I think you're supposed to be drinking alcohol.

BARRY

I don't think so. You'd get incredibly drunk!

Bobby Brandt sighs.

BARRY (CONT'D)

Hey, what's everybody's favorite sandwich? Mine is peanut butter...
(he looks around expectantly)
...jelly...

Everybody ignores him.

MARGIE BRANDT

So, Julie. When are you and Tim--

BARRY

You said it! Drink! Drink! You said "and!" Whoops! I said it too!

He takes a sip of water.

BARRY (CONT'D)

Somebody's gonna have to pee pretty soon!

TIM

Cut it out, Barry.

BARRY

Cut it out...

He looks at Tim expectantly.

TIM

Just cut it out.

BARRY

Cut it out...and? Whoops! I said it again!

He takes another sip of water.

MARGIE BRANDT

(to Julie)

When are you...in addition to Tim,
getting married?

Darla stops.

DARLA

Married?

BOBBY BRANDT

Yeah. When's the big day?

Darla stares icily at Tim.

DARLA

I didn't realize there was going to
be a wedding.

The Brandts frown, confused.

TIM

I hadn't...officially asked her
yet.

MARGIE BRANDT

Oh my goodness!

BOBBY BRANDT

Well, the cat's out of the bag now!
You might as well go for it.

TIM

I'd rather do it someplace more
romantic. I don't have a ring.

Darla slams a napkin ring into his hand.

DARLA

Ask me now.

TIM

No, really...

BARRY

(chanting)

Ask her! Ask her! Ask her!

Tim stares at Darla, terrified.

BOBBY BRANDT

Get down on one knee, for god's
sake!

Tim gets down on one knee. The other DINERS turn to look.

TIM

Julie...

DARLA

Call me Darla.

TIM

I don't want to say Darla.

DARLA

(to the Brandts)

Julie's just my middle name. I want it to feel real.

BOBBY BRANDT

Call her Darla!

MARGIE BRANDT

This is the most romantic thing I've ever seen.

BARRY

Darla! Darla! Darla!

TIM

Darla...will you marry me?

Darla smiles triumphantly.

DARLA

I thought you'd never ask.

She shoves her tongue down his throat, and the room erupts in applause. Tim looks around nervously--

Then sees Julie. She stands there, staring in shock.

TIM

Julie.

BARRY

(panicked)

Her name is Julie too! Julie and Julie!

He winces and takes a sip of water.

TIM

What are you doing here?

JULIE
 What am I *doing* here? I said I
 would be here. I keep my
 commitments.

Julie turns and walks out.

TIM
 Julie!

Tim starts after her, Barry right behind.

DARLA
 Tim, don't you dare! Tim!

She takes off after them.

Bobby and Margie watch as Tim and Barry sprint for the door,
 Darla in pursuit. Barry collapses into a ball and Darla
 trips, CRASHING into a table.

DARLA (CONT'D)
 I'M GONNA KILL YOU!

Tim and Barry race out.

BOBBY BRANDT
 This is why you've got to meet
 people face to face.

EXT. FOUR SEASONS - DAY

Tim and Barry race out in time to see Julie jump into a cab
 and speed away.

TIM
 God damn it!

Barry jumps into Tim's Porsche.

BARRY
 Get in the car!

Tim looks at him.

BARRY (CONT'D)
 We can catch her! Get in!

INT. TIM'S PORSCHE - DAY

Barry drives like a man possessed as they race through
 midtown traffic, Julie's taxi ahead of them.

BARRY
Tim, I screwed up.

He puts up his hand--

BARRY (CONT'D)
Don't tell me I didn't, 'cause I
know I did. But we've come too far
to fail now. I swear to you, I
will not let her get away.

Tim clutches the dashboard in terror as they barrel through a red light.

INT. TAXI - DAY

The taxi's stopped at the entrance to the Midtown Tunnel. Julie sits in the back seat, eyes red from crying.

Suddenly, the Porsche SCREECHES up next to her. Barry leans on the horn and Barry gestures frantically for her to roll down the window. She ignores them.

The CAB DRIVER flips them off. The light turns green. He peels out--

EXT. MIDTOWN TUNNEL ENTRANCE - DAY

Julie's taxi races into the tunnel, Tim's Porsche in hot pursuit.

INT. TIM'S PORSCHE - DAY

They race through the darkness of the tunnel. Barry's fixated like a madman on Julie's taxi. He threads the needle between two cars, shaving off the Porsche's side mirrors.

EXT. MIDTOWN TUNNEL EXIT - DAY

The Porsche rockets out of the tunnel and SCREECHES to a stop. At the TOLL PLAZA ahead--

FIVE IDENTICAL TAXIS.

INT. TIM'S PORSCHE - DAY

Tim scans the taxis, desperately looking for Julie. Barry concentrates, then--

BARRY
Fireball.

TIM
What's fireball?

BARRY
I work with numbers all day. If you want to remember a number, you just associate it with a picture. 4257 is boy scouts sitting around a campfire. It makes it easier to remember. Boy scouts sitting around a campfire, 4257. 3118 is a pitcher winding up for the pitch. Subtract 3118 from 4257, you get 1139, so that's just the fire part of the boy scouts and the ball from the pitcher. 1139 is fireball.

He points to one of the taxis. The license plate reads NYT 1139. Tim looks at Barry, confused but impressed.

The taxi goes through the toll booth and drives off--

Barry SCREECHES up to the booth. They both fumble frantically for change--

BARRY (CONT'D)
Dollar fifty! Dollar fifty!

Tim shoves some change at him--

BARRY (CONT'D)
Canadian nickel! Canadian nickel!

Tim shoves another nickel at him. Barry throws it into the basket and peels out--

EXT. LONG ISLAND EXPRESSWAY - DAY

Barry races after the taxi, flashing his lights and blowing the horn like a lunatic. The taxi speeds up--

Barry floors it, weaving in and out of traffic as the taxi desperately tries to get away.

BARRY
We should put a chase like this in Kieran's movie!

A FLATBED TRUCK pulls between the Porsche and the taxi.

INT. TIM'S PORSCHE - DAY

Barry pulls up alongside the flatbed--

BARRY
I'll hold her steady! You jump
onto the truck, then onto the taxi!

TIM
No.

BARRY
Do it! Go!

TIM
No!

BARRY
Now! Go! Now!

TIM
No!

The taxi swerves onto an exit ramp. Barry cuts across three lanes of traffic and veers onto the ramp--

The Porsche SCRAPES against the curved cement wall as they barrel down the ramp.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Barry races up behind the taxi, repeatedly BUMPING the rear fender.

The taxi tries to make a turn. Barry cuts it off--

The taxi CRASHES into the Porsche.

Tim and Barry stagger out of the Porsche. The CAB DRIVER jumps out, panicked, and takes off running.

Tim and Barry peer into the back seat of the taxi--

A FAMILY OF FOUR huddles on the floor in matching "I LOVE NEW YORK" t-shirts. They look up in terror and the DAD holds out his wallet.

DAD
Take it. Just don't hurt the kids.

EXT. STREET - LATER

Barry and Tim sit on the curb by the battered Porsche. A long silence. Barry takes Tim's phone out of his pocket--

BARRY
I think we switched cell phones.

Tim grabs his phone and hurls Barry's phone at him. Another silence.

BARRY (CONT'D)
I'm sorry I wrecked your car.

TIM
Everything, Barry! You've wrecked everything!

Barry looks crushed. Then he makes up his mind. He dials his cell phone and takes a deep breath--

BARRY
You are the undisputed lord and master of all auditors throughout the known universe, now and for all of eternity. I prostrate myself before you.
(pause)
No, I'm pretty sure it's "prostate."

TIM
It's "prostrate"!

BARRY
(into phone)
Kieran Vollard.

He listens, then hangs up and turns to Tim.

BARRY (CONT'D)
He's in East Hampton. 17 Ocean Drive.

EXT. THE HIGHWAY - DAY

The battered Porsche clatters down the highway.

BARRY (O.S.)
I still don't understand why I thought it was "fireball."

EXT. KIERAN'S BEACH HOUSE - DAY

CLOSE ON - A vanity plate. "FIREBALL." Pull back.

The taxi pulls up in front of 17 Ocean Drive, a rustic shingled house on a windswept beach. Julie steps out.

INT. KIERAN'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

Julie comes in and stops--

Kieran sits on the couch, gazing sadly at his portfolio.

JULIE

Kieran! I thought you weren't going to be here.

KIERAN

Julie. I forgot you were coming. I'm afraid I just received some terrible news. A very close friend of mine has died.

JULIE

Oh, I'm so sorry. I should go.

KIERAN

No. Stay.
(he smiles sadly)
I could use your light around me now.

INT. KIERAN'S LIVING ROOM - LATER

A fire crackles in the fireplace. The room is bathed in candlelight. Kieran puts the needle on a record, and Peter Gabriel's "Mercy Street" plays soulfully. He comes over and sits next to Julie on the couch--

She's looking at Kieran's portfolio. A photo of Kieran in the lotus position, as an ELEPHANT gently touches his forehead with its trunk.

KIERAN

She was so wise. I don't know how I'll get along without her.

He touches the elephant's image, then looks at Julie--

KIERAN (CONT'D)

It's funny. You remind me of her.

JULIE

...thanks.

KIERAN

I wanted to photograph her one last time. But I didn't have the chance.

(he hesitates)

(MORE)

KIERAN (CONT'D)

This is silly, but...could I take some photographs with you? I think she'd have liked that.

Julie shifts uncomfortably.

JULIE

Yeah...I don't know, Kieran...

Kieran turns the page of his portfolio. A photo of Kieran naked, embracing the elephant's trunk as she lifts him into the air.

TIM (O.S.)

Whoah. Looks like that was a hot date!

They whip around. Tim and Barry stand behind the couch. Barry smiles and waves at Kieran.

JULIE

Tim! What are you doing here?

KIERAN

You keep breaking into my homes.

TIM

You know, Kieran, the last time I used Peter Gabriel to get laid, I was fifteen years old.

KIERAN

Tim, I don't know how many times I have to say this. I am not trying to "get laid." Julie and I are just friends.

TIM

Oh, really? Then maybe you can explain this.

He snaps his fingers. Barry holds out his cell phone and presses play. On the screen--

A shot of Tim's TV playing "The Planet's Funniest Animals." A kid giggles as a raccoon scrambles around on his head.

ANNOUNCER (O.S.)

I've heard of a coonskin cap, but this is ridiculous!

KIERAN

I can't explain that.

BARRY

Sorry. I wanted to keep that.
Hold on...

He starts fiddling with the phone, scrolling through options--

BARRY (CONT'D)

Nope...Nope...

"The Piña Colada Song" blares out.

BARRY (CONT'D)

Nope.

A FLASH as he accidentally takes his own picture.

BARRY (CONT'D)

Nope.

Tim's phone starts ringing.

BARRY (CONT'D)

Nope.

He looks apologetically at Tim.

BARRY (CONT'D)

We may not have that particular
piece of evidence.

Tim rubs his temples.

JULIE

Tim, last night you had a woman in
our apartment. Today I see you
proposing to someone at the Four
Seasons. Excuse me, but you're not
the one who should be making
accusations.

TIM

I can explain all of that.

JULIE

All right, then. Explain it!

Tim hesitates.

BARRY

Just tell her the truth, Tim.

Tim makes up his mind.

TIM

Can I talk to Julie alone, please?

Julie nods to Kieran, and he reluctantly goes into his bedroom.

Barry clasps Tim on the shoulders and gives him a look to say it's all going to be okay. He steps into the foyer, closing the door behind him.

Tim takes a deep breath.

TIM (CONT'D)

Julie, you were right. I lied about the dinner. And that guy--

He points to the doorway.

TIM (CONT'D)

--that guy's my idiot.

INT. FOYER - DAY

Barry lets out a deep sigh of satisfaction. Then puts his ear to the door and listens--

Then, slowly, his face falls. A look of utter devastation.

He turns and walks slowly out the front door.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Julie looks at Tim--

JULIE

So, you're saying everything that's happened has been Barry's fault.

TIM

He's like the Hope Diamond! He's perfect, but there's a curse on whoever possesses him!

He takes her hand.

TIM (CONT'D)

Julie, I would never cheat on you. I love you.

JULIE

Tim, I keep waiting for you to get it. But you don't. I don't think you're ever going to get it.

TIM
Julie, I want to marry you.

Julie shakes her head sadly. Tim stares at her in shock.
Kieran appears in the doorway. Tim looks at him, then at Julie.

TIM (CONT'D)
Okay. I get it now.

He gets up and walks out.

EXT. KIERAN'S BEACH HOUSE - DAY

Tim limps to his Porsche. It starts to rain. He looks back at the house. Then gets in his car and slams the door.

INT. TIM'S PORSCHE - DAY

Tim drives down the road. Ahead, he sees Barry walking along the shoulder in the pouring rain. Tim pulls up and rolls down the window.

Barry glares at him--

BARRY
Find somebody else.

EXT. THE HIGHWAY - DAY

Tim looks at Barry, then pulls away. Barry watches his tail lights recede into the distance.

INT. FENDER CAPITAL, SUSANA'S DESK - DAY

Tim trudges in, soaking wet. Susana looks up, worried.

SUSANA
Fender wants you in his office.
Right now.

Tim sighs.

INT. FENDER'S OFFICE - DAY

Fender looks up as Tim walks in.

FENDER
Bobby tells me you had an
interesting lunch today.

TIM

You know what, Lance? Skip it.
Just fire me.

FENDER

Uh, Tim--

TIM

You try to do the right thing and
it blows up in your face. I tried
to tell the truth. Women don't
want the truth. You know what they
want? A pretty-boy who does yoga
with orangutans.

FENDER

I'll...take it under advisement--

TIM

I've lost everything, Lance.
Everything. You may as well take
away my job too. I'm gonna clean
out my desk. And you can go to
hell.

FENDER

Tim, Bobby Brandt--

TIM

Bobby Brandt can go to hell too!

Fender laughs nervously and points. Tim turns to see Bobby
Brandt sitting on the sofa.

FENDER

(to Bobby)

It's a thing we do.

(to Tim)

NO, YOU GO TO HELL!

He laughs.

FENDER (CONT'D)

I was just telling Bobby about our
little game. Sounds like your guy
got a little out of control at
lunch. But I was explaining that
it's all part of the fun.

(locking eyes with Tim)

And we are still very interested in
working with him.

Tim looks at Bobby, who's sitting there stone-faced.

TIM

Of course! Bobby. My god...it's fun. It's all fun! Lots of fun here at the workplace.

Bobby eyes them coolly, watching them squirm. Then he smiles.

BOBBY BRANDT

We used to do something like that at Texas A&M. See who could invite the ugliest girl to dinner.

Tim and Fender laugh.

TIM

Hilarious.

FENDER

Bobby, I think this is going to be the start of a great relationship.

BOBBY BRANDT

I want to see it.

Tim and Fender stop.

BOBBY BRANDT (CONT'D)

If I'm gonna give you three hundred million, I want to get my money's worth. I'm coming to dinner.

(to Tim)

I want to see your guy in action.

FENDER

No problem. Right?

Tim stands there frozen.

TIM

No problem.

FENDER

(to Bobby)

I'll send a limo to your hotel.

Bobby leaves. Fender turns to Tim.

FENDER (CONT'D)

You haven't lost everything yet.

INT. TIM'S PORSCHE - DAY

Tim looks at the piece of paper with Barry's address. He jams the car into gear and peels out.

EXT. BARRY'S HOUSE - EVENING

Barry trudges, wet and bedraggled, up to his crappy suburban ranch house.

INT. BARRY'S HOUSE - EVENING

Barry comes in the door. He looks around at his few pieces of cheap furniture. A clock TICKS depressingly.

INT. BARRY'S BASEMENT - EVENING

Barry comes down the stairs and opens a door--

And enters another world.

Rolling hills. Forests. Lakes and rivers. Roads and towns. An entire world in miniature, populated by hundreds of TAXIDERMIED MICE.

They ride bicycles, buy treats at candy stores, float in hot air balloons, go to school, get married, raise families.

Barry gazes at the landscape, a god among his creations.

He looks sadly at the HUSBAND MOUSE, staring sadly as his wife drives off in the Mazda Miata. Then, tears streaming down his face, Barry opens up the spigots--

The water rises, slowly covering the Husband Mouse. Then pours into the nearby town. Streets fill with water. Buildings collapse. One by one, the mice disappear under the rising flood.

Sobbing, Barry reaches up through cotton ball clouds and yanks down the ROPE holding the stars and planets in their orbits. The universe crashes down, tiny lights winking out.

Barry gazes at the rope in his hands. Then eyes the rafters overhead.

EXT. BARRY'S HOUSE - EVENING

Tim jumps out of his Porsche and races to the front door.

INT. BARRY'S HOUSE - EVENING

Tim steps inside and looks around--

TIM

Barry?

He hears the sound of rushing water from the basement.

INT. BARRY'S BASEMENT - EVENING

Tim pushes open the door--

In the middle of his ruined world, Barry stands on a chair, a noose around his neck.

TIM

BARRY!

BARRY

What are you doing here?

TIM

Barry, let me explain--

BARRY

There's nothing to explain. I understand perfectly. I hope you remember what you're about to see for the rest of your life.

TIM

Barry, no!

Barry steps off the chair--

And lands harmlessly on the ground. The rope is way too long. He slumps, depressed.

TIM (CONT'D)

Barry, listen to me. Yes, originally I invited you to dinner because I thought you were an idiot. Why do you think I disinvited you?

Barry thinks.

TIM (CONT'D)

Maybe because I realized you weren't an idiot after all?

Barry looks skeptically at him.

TIM (CONT'D)

Don't you see? Once I saw how smart and talented and witty you are, I realized you were of no use to me. So I tried to get rid of you.

BARRY

I guess that does make sense.

TIM

I should have treated you better. I acted like a bastard.

BARRY

Yeah. You did.

TIM

You know, Barry. When my dad was dying, he said to me, "Tim, you're gonna be a big success someday." This dinner was my shot. I know it's juvenile. I know it's mean. But if I could hold my own with those guys, I'd be set. And my dad would look down on me, and he'd say, "You did it, Timmy. You did it."

Barry looks at him, moved.

TIM (CONT'D)

Anyway, it's not your problem. I really just came to say I'm sorry.

BARRY

Maybe...you could find someone else?

TIM

No. There's no time. It's over.
(looking heavenward)
Sorry, dad. I tried.

He turns to go.

TIM (CONT'D)

Unless...No. I wouldn't ask you to do that.

BARRY

What?

TIM

I don't know. It's crazy.
Unless...you could pretend to be an
idiot?

Barry thinks.

BARRY

But would it be believable?

TIM

You're right. Forget it.

BARRY

I mean...I'd have to really turn on
the acting.

TIM

It's insane.

BARRY

So insane, it just might work.

He winks.

BARRY (CONT'D)

Let's go to dinner.

Tim grins and dials his cell phone. Barry steps forward and the rope goes taut, yanking him off his feet. He flails, clutching his neck and gurgling.

TIM

(into phone)

I've got him. We're on our way!

INT. BORMAN'S PENTHOUSE APARTMENT, FOYER - NIGHT

The Sweater Lady hands her coat to a COAT CHECK GUY, revealing a spotted dalmation sweater. Caldwell escorts her into--

INT. BORMAN'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

A spectacular mansion in the sky. Commanding views of Manhattan in all directions. The WINNERS and LOSERS mingle. The Winners exchange knowing glances. The Losers shovel down hors d'oeuvres like there's no tomorrow.

We track through the crowd, catching snippets of conversation.

ROBIN, an attractive magazine editor, chats with the Boomerang Guy.

BOOMERANG GUY

...put a kangaroo anywhere in this room, and I can decapitate it *blindfolded*.

ROBIN

Amazing.

This is obviously the first woman who's ever shown an interest. The Boomerang Guy blushes.

Alvar chats with an INVENTOR as an obese SOUND EFFECTS GUY stands nearby. He makes a GLUG GLUG GLUG noise as a WAITER fills the Inventor's champagne flute.

INVENTOR

This is the investment opportunity of a lifetime. I've invented a snack that's incredibly delicious, highly addictive and extremely flammable.

He holds up a BOX--

INVENTOR (CONT'D)

Smokable ice cream.

The Sound Effects Guy makes a SLURPING noise as the Inventor sips his champagne. Then a stomach GURGLE. Then a FART.

The Sweater Lady shows Caldwell a tiny sweater--

SWEATER LADY

It's made from a chihuahua. The perfect baby shower gift.

The Vulture Lover talks to LITMAN, a publishing magnate.

VULTURE LOVER

A vulture's a true gourmet. He can distinguish two hundred types of road kill by smell alone.

Litman eyes the hideous bird.

VULTURE LOVER (CONT'D)

Don't worry. He's housebroken.

The vulture SCREECHES and craps into a bucket dangling from the Vulture Lover's arm.

BORMAN, an e-billionaire and this evening's host, watches as DAVENPORT, a restaurateur, walks in with a MIME. Davenport comes over.

BORMAN
Honestly, Davenport. A mime?

DAVENPORT
Wait for it...

The MIME takes out a VENTRILOQUIST DUMMY, also dressed as a mime.

BORMAN
He's a mime ventriloquist.

The Mime makes the Dummy pretend it's inside a glass box. Borman nods, impressed.

Fender leads Bobby Brandt over--

FENDER
David, I'd like you to meet Bobby Brandt.

BORMAN
Bobby and I met at Bohemian Grove last year.

BOBBY BRANDT
Good to see you again, David. Looks like a fine turnout.

BORMAN
We're gonna have a hard time agreeing on a winner tonight.

BOBBY BRANDT
I don't think so. I saw Tim Whitman's guy at lunch. He's gonna take it hands down.

Borman smiles.

BORMAN
Care to place a wager on that?

INT. ELEVATOR - NIGHT

Barry's in an intense state of concentration, doing stretches and deep breathing exercises. Tim eyes him.

BARRY
I'm getting into character.

TIM
Just be yourself.

BARRY
But, an idiot, right?

TIM
Right. But an idiot who's...almost exactly like you.

The elevator doors open.

INT. FOYER - NIGHT

The Coat Check Guy smiles at Barry--

COAT CHECK GUY
Sir, may I take your coat?

BARRY
Um, not unless you want to pay for it.

COAT CHECK GUY
I just mean...to hang it up.

Barry laughs and hands over his coat--

BARRY
I'm such an idiot.

He winks at Tim.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Tim and Barry step in and survey the room.

The Mime and the Dummy mime a tug of war with an imaginary rope as Henderson watches.

HENDERSON
Absolutely brilliant.

Barry whispers to Tim--

BARRY
What an idiot!
(he points at Henderson)
I mean, if you're going to do an English accent, do it right.

Tim sighs.

BARRY (CONT'D)

Don't worry, Tim. These guys are morons. But I can take 'em.

Barry saunters off toward the hors d'oeuvres. Tim turns to see--

The Beard Champion. Tim stares.

TIM

I thought you were busy tonight.

BEARD CHAMPION

Craziest thing! Half hour after I talk to you, my plans fall through. Then I go to lunch, and some guy invites me to the exact same party!

Tim sighs.

Fender waves Tim over to Borman and Bobby Brandt.

BORMAN

So this is the guy I simply had to invite.

Tim shakes his hand--

TIM

Mr. Borman. It's a pleasure to finally meet you.

BOBBY BRANDT

I've got some real money riding on your guy, Tim. Don't let me down.

Tim and Fender exchange a look, then look across the room--

Barry picks up a decorative hollowed-out pineapple from the Waiter's tray and bites into the rind.

Bobby Brandt chuckles.

BORMAN

Don't count your money yet, Bobby. My guy's pretty good. Brilliant military strategist.

The sound of a toilet FLUSHING. They look over to see--

Sid Carmichael step out of the bathroom.

SID CARMICHAEL

Sorry about the latrine. Small
uprising in the Southern
Hemisphere.

Barry looks up, and their eyes lock. Sid Carmichael smirks.
The pineapple drops from Barry's hand.

INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT

The Winners and Losers sit together at a long table. Barry
sits, shell-shocked, staring across the table at Sid
Carmichael.

Borman stands at the head of the table--

BORMAN

Ladies and gentlemen, look around
you. What word comes to mind?
Genius? No. Visionary?
No...Iconoclast? No...

The Losers eye each other, considering. A few carefully
concealed smirks from the Winners.

BORMAN (CONT'D)

...None of these words do justice
to the people gathered here.
Extraordinary. You're here because
each and every one of you is truly
extraordinary. Tonight, we hope to
learn more about who you are, so we
can better understand who we are.

He raises his glass--

BORMAN (CONT'D)

Welcome.

Everybody drinks.

SID CARMICHAEL

(under his breath)

Extraordinary? Barry, I think
you're at the wrong dinner.

He nudges Barry and chortles. Barry glares at him.

The WAITERS come in and set appetizers in front of everybody,
including the Dummy, who has his own place setting--

Each large white plate has a single shrimp in the center.
The head still on. The Winners watch the Losers--

The Sweater Lady peers at her shrimp. Its beady eyes peer back. The Vulture Lover eyes his six forks uncertainly.

BORMAN

We like to start out these evenings with a question to the group. Tonight's question is: what's the one thing you're most proud of?

Litman nudges the Beard Champion, who's trying to pry his shrimp's shell off with his butter knife--

LITMAN

I think I can guess what yours is.

BEARD CHAMPION

The '97 Beard Olympics. Took the silver medal by only three points. Talk about a close shave! Close shave! I don't like the sound of that. You know how it goes. Hair today, gone tomorrow!

The Winners laugh encouragingly--

ALVAR

Priceless!

BEARD CHAMPION

You've heard of the hair of the dog that bit you? How about a bit of the hair that dogged you?

He grabs his beard and makes it paw at the Boomerang Guy--

BEARD CHAMPION (CONT'D)

Woof! Woof!

The Vulture lets out a hungry SHRIEK. Everybody jumps.

VULTURE LOVER

He thinks there's a dying animal on your face.

FENDER

Dying animals. That's Eileen's specialty.

He points to the PET MEDIUM, a pale, spooky-looking woman.

PET MEDIUM

Our departed animal brethren have much to tell us. If we only listen.

WAITERS serve plates of steak tartare. The Sweater Lady eyes the raw beef.

WAITER

Steak tartare, madam.

SWEATER LADY

Um...I think you forgot to cook it.

Caldwell makes the soft "ding" of a point being scored.

The Pet Medium places her hand on Tim's steak tartare and closes her eyes. Tim frowns.

PET MEDIUM

It's dark. I'm going down a chute. I can hear the others mooing. They're afraid--NO! The bolt has smashed my skull! But I'm still alive! They're cutting off my skin! I try to scream, but they've cut off my tongue--!

She gives a silent, raspy SCREAM. Then slumps to the table.

Everybody pushes their steak away.

Fender grins proudly. Tim nudges Barry--

TIM

Barry, you know a few things about dead animals, don't you?

SID CARMICHAEL

Do tell, Barry. Everybody's been wondering what that smell is.

BORMAN

You two know each other?

SID CARMICHAEL

Oh, Barry and I go way back. Tell them about your hobby, Barry. Come on. Are you a man or a mouse?

Everybody looks at Barry. But he just sits there. Bobby Brandt frowns at Tim. Tim looks at Barry, concerned.

BORMAN

Sid, what about you? You've conquered the world literally hundreds of times. Is there a particular battle you're proudest of?

Sid Carmichael smiles.

SID CARMICHAEL

I'd consolidated my grip on Europe, and I set my sights on the fairest prize of all. Iceland. Whose fertile fields belie her frigid name.

He looks directly at Barry--

SID CARMICHAEL (CONT'D)

I knew my opponent was desperate. If he lost her, he would lose everything. But he was not man enough to keep her. Again and again I thrust my armies against her rocky shores, until finally I penetrated her virgin grassland.

Barry gazes at him, trembling.

SID CARMICHAEL (CONT'D)

Soon she was on her knees before me. And I took her without mercy.

Robin fans herself--

ROBIN

Whew. It's getting hot in here.

SID CARMICHAEL

Well, it is true what they say. Power is the ultimate aphrodisiac.

ALVAR

Is there a lucky lady in your life?

SID CARMICHAEL

Barry could tell you about her. She used to be his wife.

Everybody looks at Barry.

CALDWELL

Hold on. Your wife left you for him?

Barry nods.

HENDERSON

She has astonishing taste in men.

The Winners try not to crack up. Tim looks at them, then at Barry, looking miserable. Barry gets up and walks out.

TIM

Barry--

Tim hurries after him.

INT. BORMAN'S FOYER - NIGHT

Barry's pulling on his coat as Tim hurries in--

TIM

Barry, wait--

BARRY

I can't do it, Tim. He's too powerful. He's better at Risk, he's better with women, and he's a better idiot too.

TIM

That's not true. Barry, if you wanted to, you could be more of an idiot than anybody in that room.

Barry looks at him.

TIM (CONT'D)

Listen...if you want to get out of here...I'll go with you. To hell with this thing.

Barry thinks.

BARRY

If I leave now, then he wins. And I'll always have to live with that. I'll be like you with Kieran.

Tim frowns.

BARRY (CONT'D)

No. This is where I make my stand.

He looks at Tim--

BARRY (CONT'D)
Let's win this thing.

INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Everybody looks up as Barry marches back in, Tim right behind him.

BARRY
I've decided to stay. But I have just one question.

BORMAN
Yes?

BARRY
Who invited that guy?

He points to his own reflection in a mirror.

BARRY (CONT'D)
'Cause he looks like a total idiot!

He winks at Tim and sits down, shooting a triumphant look at Sid Carmichael. Bobby Brandt frowns at Tim. Tim shrugs nervously.

The Waiters come in with plates of pasta topped with small lobsters. Barry picks up his lobster and chomps down on it, CRUNCHING the shell between his teeth.

SID CARMICHAEL
Barry, you're supposed to take the meat out of the shell.

HENDERSON
Here, let me show you--

He demonstrates, using a lobster fork.

BARRY
I'm such an idiot!

He takes the meat out. Then pops the shell in his mouth and chews, staring steadily at Sid Carmichael.

SID CARMICHAEL
I see we have two dummies at the table.

The Dummy gets up as if to fight, but the Mime holds him back.

Barry whispers to Tim--

BARRY

Competition's pretty stiff. I'm gonna have to take it up a notch.

TIM

(whispering)

No. Don't take it up a notch!
Take it down a notch!

BARRY

Ah, but to an idiot, down is up!

He winks.

BARRY (CONT'D)

Hey, everybody!

Everyone turns to look.

BARRY (CONT'D)

I'm such an idiot. Guess how many people I think there are in the world? Five!

An uncomfortable silence. The Vulture Lover eyes Barry and whispers to Litman--

VULTURE LOVER

I'm sorry, but what is that guy doing here? He's a complete idiot.

Barry grins at Tim and "chalks one up." Bobby Brandt frowns. Fender shoots Tim a look.

TIM

(whispering)

Barry. Barry!

Barry turns to Henderson--

BARRY

Barry...why does that sound familiar?

HENDERSON

I believe it's your name.

BARRY

Oh, yeah. I forgot. I'm such an idiot!

Robin and Litman exchange suspicious looks. Tim shifts nervously.

BARRY (CONT'D)

I have to go to the bathroom!

TIM

You don't have to ask, Barry. Just go.

Barry gets a strange look on his face. The Beard Champion leaps away from him in disgust--

BEARD CHAMPION

Whoah! Mayday! Mayday!

TIM

BARRY! STOP IT!

ROBIN

All right. That's it. He's faking.

BORMAN

Tim, I think this charade has gone on long enough.

Tim looks around at the Winners. They all stare back coldly. Barry sighs.

BARRY

All right. I have a confession to make--

He stands up, a huge wet spot on his crotch.

BARRY (CONT'D)

I am not an idiot.

TIM

No. He is! Believe me.

BARRY

Tim, it's no use. They can clearly see I'm not an idiot.

FENDER

You told him?

Tim stares at the Winners in panic. Bobby Brandt shakes his head.

The Losers look at each other, confused.

BOOMERANG GUY

Excuse me. May I ask what's going on here?

BARRY

Boy, this is awkward. Let's see. How do I put this?

He takes a deep breath--

BARRY (CONT'D)

All of you people are losers. We invite you to these dinners to make fun of you.

The Losers stare at their hosts, shocked and betrayed.

BEARD CHAMPION

I see.

He neatly folds his napkin.

BEARD CHAMPION (CONT'D)

I was taught to say thank you when someone has me to dinner. But under the circumstances, I think I'll just say goodbye.

The Pet Medium gathers her purse--

PET MEDIUM

You should be ashamed of yourselves.

The Sweater Lady looks at Robin and blinks back tears--

SWEATER LADY

Unbelievable.

The Boomerang Guy SLAMS his fist down on the table.

BOOMERANG GUY

BASTARDS!

He whips out a boomerang and hurls it at Henderson. Henderson ducks. The boomerang hurtles around the dining room--

Sid Carmichael steps up to Barry--

SID CARMICHAEL
 You think you're funny, Barry?
 Let's see if you think this is
 funny--

He cocks back his fist--

and the boomerang NAILS him in the head, knocking him
 unconscious.

ALVAR
 That was pretty funny, actually.

Sid Carmichael slumps into the Mime, knocking his Dummy to
 the floor. The vulture utters a horrid CRY and swoops down
 on it.

VULTURE LOVER
 He thinks it's a dead baby!

The Mime lunges after the vulture, tipping a candle over onto
 the Inventor's box of smokable ice cream. A shower of
 sparks. The Sweater Lady SCREAMS as her sweater ignites.
 Acrid smoke billows across the table.

BARRY
 THE LOSERS ARE OUT OF CONTROL!

BORMAN
 (to a Waiter)
 We'll take our espresso in the safe
 room.

The Winners hurry out. Tim tries to follow, but the
 Boomerang Guy blocks his way.

He STOMPS on Tim's bad foot. Tim HOWLS in pain. He STOPS on
 Tim's other foot. Tim SCREAMS and collapses to the ground.

The Boomerang Guy starts pounding Tim as Sound Effects Guy
 provides accompaniment.

SOUND EFFECTS GUY
 Boosh! Doosh! Crack!

BOOMERANG GUY
 Shut up!

He starts pounding Sound Effects Guy. Sound Effects Guy does
 the sound effects for his own pounding.

Tim drags himself away on his elbows.

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

Tim crawls painfully down the hall, all hell breaking loose behind him. Ahead, the Winners file into the safe room. The heavy metal door closes slowly--

TIM

Wait!

FENDER

Sorry, Tim. No room at the inn.

The door SLAMS shut. Barry peers out through the bulletproof window and mouths "sorry!" Tim stares in disbelief.

Suddenly the Boomerang Guy looms over Tim, his boomerang raised high above his head. He brings it down with a YELL--

Everything goes dark.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Tim opens his eyes. Barry leans in close--

BARRY

He's awake!

Tim sits up and looks around groggily. The place is a wreck. Walls black with soot. Paintings slashed. Vulture crap everywhere.

The Losers are gone. The Winners are finishing their brandy. Bobby Brandt looks at Tim and shakes his head in disgust.

BORMAN

Tim, we have a little tradition at these dinners. At the end of the evening we vote on who brought the biggest loser. Today it was unanimous.

FENDER

The biggest loser, beyond a shadow of a doubt...is you.

BORMAN

Barry, you brought him. You win.

He hands Barry a cheap plastic BOWLING TROPHY, modified so the guy is bowling with his own head. Barry gapes--

BARRY

No way! Tim, do you see this! I won! I finally got my trophy!

He hands Tim his cell phone and proudly holds up the trophy--

BARRY (CONT'D)

Take a picture!

INT. TIM'S PORSCHE - NIGHT

Barry drives. Tim stares ahead, a beaten man.

BARRY

I know you feel bad. But that's just the guys being the guys. They seem a little mean, but underneath, they're actually pretty cool.

INT. TIM'S ELEVATOR - NIGHT

Barry carries Tim in his arms, the trophy balanced on Tim's chest. A DING as the doors open. Barry steps out--

SMASHING Tim's feet into the wall. Tim ROARS in pain.

BARRY

Sorry.

INT. TIM'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Barry carries Tim in and stops--

Julie's there, closing up her suitcase.

JULIE

I just came to get my stuff.

She heads for the door.

TIM

Julie, wait.

JULIE

What, Tim? What could you possibly have to say to me?

Tim looks at her. There's nothing to say.

BARRY

I have something to say.

He lays Tim on the ground at Julie's feet.

BARRY (CONT'D)

In the last few days, I've gotten to know Tim pretty well. I know a lot of people think he's a complete loser. I disagree. I saw the look on his face when you left him. Anyone who can love somebody the way Tim loves you is no loser in my book.

Julie looks at Tim.

BARRY (CONT'D)

My wife left me last year. I thought my life was over. The only thing that kept me going was some dead mice from a dumpster in Jersey. But Tim doesn't even have that. If you leave, he won't have anything.

Tim and Julie look at Barry, deeply moved.

TIM

You're wrong, Barry. I am a loser. I don't deserve either of you.

(he looks at Julie)

Julie...If you walk out that door, I don't blame you. But I want you to know, I've lost everything. My job. The people I thought were my friends. And the only thing I want back is you.

She looks at him, her eyes shining.

JULIE

You had me at "I'm a loser."

Barry blinks back tears--

BARRY

Come on. Big hugs.

He puts his arm around Julie and awkwardly pulls her to the floor for a three-way hug with Tim.

Suddenly, Julie shrieks. The Mouse pokes its head out of Barry's pocket.

BARRY (CONT'D)

Don't worry. That's just my friend.

He holds up the Mouse. It's wearing a little suit that looks just like Tim's. Barry looks at Tim--

BARRY (CONT'D)

He got a second chance after all.

He whispers in the Mouse's ear--

BARRY (CONT'D)

There's food in the kitchen.

He puts the Mouse down. Tim and Julie watch as it scurries into the kitchen.

TIM

Maybe everything does happen for a reason. Maybe I had to learn that it's more important to be good than it is to be rich.

BARRY

Of course, the best thing would be to be good *and* rich. Like Kieran.

JULIE

You know, after you left, he said he wanted to photograph me doing yoga. Naked. With a wildebeest. I caught the next bus back to the city.

BARRY

One thing I'll say about Kieran. Great guy...terrible taxidermist.

They look at him, confused. He grabs Kieran's book and points to a picture of Kieran and the elephant--

BARRY (CONT'D)

I mean, duh! C-29 hippopotamus eyes? It's amateur hour!

JULIE

That son of a bitch.

Tim and Julie look at each other. They crack up.

JULIE (CONT'D)

(to Barry)

Let's get him to the couch.

She grabs Tim's arms and Barry grabs his legs, and they start to carry him to the couch.

BARRY

And just to clear this up. About Tim's other girl. It was one night. Two years ago. And it's over.

Julie stops. She stares at Tim, furious.

JULIE

Two years ago. That's interesting.

TIM

Julie--

JULIE

"I would never cheat on you, Julie. I love you."

TIM

We had just started going out! I didn't know how serious we were gonna get!

Julie drops Tim. His head SLAMS to the floor.

JULIE

Goodbye, Tim.

She grabs her suitcase and walks out.

BARRY

I messed up.

Tim stares murderously at him.

BARRY (CONT'D)

Tim, don't worry. I'm gonna take care of this.

TIM

You idiot!

THE END.