

I LOVE YOU PHILLIP MORRIS

A true story of life,
love and prison breaks

by
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(Based on the book by Steve McVicker)

FINAL WHITE DRAFT
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1

EXT. SKY - DAY

1

Fluffy white CLOUDS drift across a clear blue sky.

TITLE CARD-

"This really happened"

FADE TO WHITE:

TITLE CARD-

"It really did"

A dull WHINE is heard building in volume until finally-

SMASH CUT TO:

2

INT. TEXAS STATE PENITENTIARY HOSPITAL WARD - 1998 - DAY 2

Startled, STEVEN RUSSELL (40) opens his eyes. Gaunt and pale, he seems to be on death's door. The whine we once heard is now the high-pitched ALARM of medical equipment.

The door BURSTS open. NURSES enter, rushing toward him.

The nurses pass him and attend to the PATIENT in the next bed over, frantically administering CPR.

SUPER: "TEXAS STATE PENITENTIARY INFIRMARY - 1998"

A DOCTOR appears and pushes the nurses aside.

DOCTOR

Where's the crash cart!?

He straddles the patient's chest and pushes down hard- the sound of a sternum CRACKING can be heard.

Steven returns his gaze to the ceiling. A CHEERY VOICE counterpoints the bleakness of this scene.

STEVEN (V.O.)

(upbeat and happy)

Love sure is a funny thing...

It makes you happy. Makes you sad. Makes you do all sorts of things you never thought you'd do before. Love's the reason I'm here actually.

SMASH CUT TO:

3

EXT. MARSHLAND - CHESAPEAKE BAY, VA - 1966 - DAY

3

A group of NINE YEAR OLDS lie in the grass atop a hill.
They stare up at the clouds, playfully arguing.

RED HAIREd BOY
I still don't see it.

LITTLE GIRL
It's right there.

A young STEVEN RUSSELL (9) is among them.

YOUNG STEVEN
It's really big.

STEVEN'S MOM (O.S.)
Steeeeeeeeeeeven...

Steven looks down the hill to see his mother calling.

STEVEN'S MOM (CONT'D)
Steeeeeeeeeeeven...

4

INT. LIVING ROOM CHESAPEAKE BAY, VA - 1966 - DAY

4

Young Steven sits in the middle of the couch. His PARENTS
and 11 year old BROTHER stand before him. He stares at
them- innocent and doe-eyed with a big smile on his face.

STEVEN'S MOM
Are you a happy little boy Steven?

Steven smiles and nods.

STEVEN'S MOM (CONT'D)
You've always been such a happy little
boy.

(then)
Now Steven, we want to tell you something
very important, but I want you to
understand that it doesn't change a
thing.

Steven awaits, smiling.

STEVEN'S MOM (CONT'D)
We're still gonna love you, you're still
gonna be our happy little boy and you're
still gonna--

STEVEN'S BROTHER
You're adopted.

YOUNG STEVEN

Shut up!

He glares at his brother, then turns back to his mother.
Her face says it all.

STEVEN'S MOM

It's true.

WHACK! She SWATS his brother in the head. Steven starts
putting things together.

STEVEN'S MOM (CONT'D)

Your brother overheard your Dad and I
talking and well, we didn't want you to
hear it from anybody but us.

(then)

It's true. You're a special little boy.
You know why? Because we chose you. Not
like your brother here who's natural.

STEVEN'S DAD

Your Mother's right. It's cause we love
you. So we put some money in a brown
paper bag and gave it to your real mom in
the hospital parking lot so you could
come home with us. Okay?

STEVEN'S MOM

It doesn't change a thing honey. We love
you just as much as we love your brother
here...

(best of intentions)

...and he's natural.

STEVEN'S DAD

So son, are you okay?

Steven smiles wide.

YOUNG STEVEN

Yes Daddy.

As his parents prattle on, Steven's VO comes full.

STEVEN (V.O.)

It hurt a bit, but I decided I wasn't
gonna let it get me down. No way. I was
gonna be the best son- No, the best
person I could be.

5 I/E. VIRGINIA BEACH CHURCH OF GOD - 1984 - DAY 5

A joyous Sunday. OPEN ON the LETTER BOARD of THE VIRGINIA BEACH CHURCH OF GOD. The date reads, MARCH 1984.

A congregation packs the church to the rafters as a Lawrence Welk-ish CHOIR praises Jesus to the tune of Hallelujah! We Shall Rise.

Amidst this white-man's paradise sits a smiling and healthy STEVEN- playing the organ with a happy-stick planted firmly up his ass.

As the joyous flock whoops it up, Steven winks to his wife (DEBBIE) and their 4 YEAR OLD DAUGHTER (STEPHANIE) who sit in the first row.

Steven, oblivious, hits a sour note or two-- but keeps on playing with happy abandon. The crowd continues to enjoy the inspiring hymn.

6 INT. VIRGINIA BEACH POLICE STATION FRONT DESK, 1984 - DAY 6

A police receptionist (MANDI) at a switchboard in a small-town police station answers the phone.

MANDI

Virginia Beach Police Department, how may I direct your call?

Steven enters in UNIFORM, smiling wide. Mandi waves happily. She covers the receiver and whispers.

MANDI (CONT'D)

Something came for you.

As he nods and moves on he's greeted by a VARIOUS POLICEMEN. We can tell he's well liked.

STEVEN

Hey fellas.

VARIOUS POLICEMAN

Hey Steve, Steve, mornin', etc...

Steven arrives at his desk to find a large FILE BOX. He turns it around to reveal writing on the side. It reads, "BASHAM, BRENDA"

6A INT. STEVEN'S HOUSE, VIRGINIA BEACH - 1984 - NIGHT 6A

Establishing of the empty parts of the home.

7 INT. STEPHANIE'S BEDROOM (VIRGINIA, 1984) - NIGHT 7

Steven switches off the small lamp beside Stephanie's bed. He kisses her forehead.

STEVEN
Have lots of dreams...

STEPHANIE
(smiling)
Okay.

8 INT. STEVEN AND DEBBIE'S BEDROOM (VIRGINIA, 1984) - NIGHT 8

Steven and Debbie kneel at the edge of the bed, praying.

DEBBIE
...and if it wasn't for you Jesus, I
would have never found that last coffee
filter and Prayer-Girls would have been
ruined. So thank you for that.

STEVEN
Amen.

Steven moves to get up but settles back in when she continues.

DEBBIE
And thank you for Steffie's allergy
screen coming back all negative. I always
knew it was in your plan for her to enjoy
nuts. And finally I want to thank you
for this man Jesus. This man who works
so hard to make us happy without even a
thought for himself.

Steven smiles at that sentiment. Again he moves to get up when--

DEBBIE (CONT'D)
This man who pursued me to the ends of
the Earth and promised me a life of
eternal happiness. A promise he has kept
oh Lord. Every day. Amen.

STEVEN
Amen.

Steven tries to get up again. Then-

DEBBIE

Sometimes when I think of how happy I am,
I just want to cry. Like the time when
you--

STEVEN

(politely)
Okay let's wrap it up...

DEBBIE

And in your gracious name, I find thee
and praise thee. Amen.

STEVEN

Amen.

CUT TO:

9 INT. STEVEN AND DEBBIE'S BEDROOM 1984 - NIGHT - LATER 9

CLICK. In bed with Debbie, Steven switches off the light
and lets out a hearty YAWN.

STEVEN

I'm absolutely bushed.

DEBBIE

Me too.

They turn on their sides, back to back in the bed. After
a few moments of SILENCE, Steven rolls over and puts his
arm around her, gently feeling her breasts.

Debbie turns on her back and they kiss quietly as Steven
quietly gets on top. In moments, they are rocking with
the gentle rhythm of everyday sex.

Just as things are peaking, Steven suddenly STOPS and
strikes a conversational tone.

STEVEN

Deb- You know how, as a cop, I have lots
of access? You know- records and things?

DEBBIE

(surprised)
Steven-

STEVEN

(oblivious)
Now do you think it's, you know,
unethical, to use that to find my mother?

Debbie quickly realizes where his head is at.

DEBBIE

Oh... that. Yeah, um, well I don't know-

STEVEN

I swear honey- getting around the system's so easy. No one would even know I did it.

DEBBIE

I know you want to find her Steven, but you need to think about this.

STEVEN

You're right, I shouldn't have done it.

DEBBIE

You did it!? Oh my God, Steven- what'd you find?

Steven shrugs.

STEVEN

I haven't looked. It's downstairs.

DEBBIE

Really? Well let's go!

She moves to get up. Steven takes umbrage.

STEVEN

Well hold on- let me finish.

DEBBIE

Oh, right.

Steven thrusts and tenses.

STEVEN

There- that's got it.

10

INT. STEVEN AND DEBBIE'S HOUSE 1984 - DINING ROOM - NIGHT10

Steven flips through the file box, reading through various pages. Debbie watches with compassion as he reads. Eventually he cracks an incredulous SMILE.

DEBBIE

What?

STEVEN

She's right here. She's been right here all this time.

DEBBIE
It's really her?

STEVEN
Yeah. No question.

DEBBIE
My goodness Steven, that's wonderful.

He reads on, his smile ever widening until-

He comes across something that concerns him and his voice trails off. His smile fades, replaced by a look of dread.

Debbie grows concerned.

DEBBIE (CONT'D)
What? What is it? Steven?

He cannot believe his eyes.

11 EXT. BASHAM HOME, VIRGINIA, 1984 - DAY

11

Steven walks up to a middle class home and raps on the screen door. A kindly woman (MRS. BASHAM) arrives behind the mesh wearing a birthday PARTY HAT.

MRS. BASHAM
(alarmed)
Is something wrong officer?

STEVEN
Are you Brenda Basham?

MRS. BASHAM
Yes. Is anyone hurt? One of my children?

STEVEN
(lip quivering)
In a manner of speaking, yes. You gave up a baby for adoption, correct?

An ashen look overcomes Mrs. Basham's face. She removes her hat.

MRS. BASHAM
I don't think I know what you're talking about.

Steven can see that behind her is a small FAMILY GATHERING at the table, grouped around a BIRTHDAY CAKE.

STEVEN

Elizabeth City? St Jude's Hospital?
Remember?

MRS. BASHAM

I don't know what you're talking about.

STEVEN

You were young. I know that you made a
mistake giving me away, but-

MRS. BASHAM

Listen-

STEVEN

Shhhhhh. Mommy please- let me finish.

What color that remains in her face drains away.

STEVEN (CONT'D)

We all make mistakes. What I came here
to say is, I forgive you because none of
us is perfect but now with a fresh start
we can build --

She SLAMS the door in his face. From behind the door-

MRS. BASHAM (O.S.)

I have no idea what you're talking about,
Steven.

STEVEN

No, it's okay, I know everything. But
it's fine. Just tell me why--

MRS. BASHAM (O.S.)

Go away!

STEVEN

Okay, okay. I understand. It's a lot at
once. But I can come back. How's that?
I can come back later, I'll bring us some
coffee and we can talk about...

(suddenly furious)

WHY YOU ABANDONED ME AND KEPT YOUR OTHER
TWO CHILDREN! I WAS THE MIDDLE CHILD!
WHAT WAS WRONG WITH ME?! WHAT WAS WRONG
WITH ME!?

Tears stream down Steven's face. He gets in his car and
slams the door. And as he sits there trying to make sense
of things...

STEVEN (V.O.) (CONT'D)
I quit the force that day. I packed up
the family and moved to Texas. I got a
great job and got to living the American
Dream.

12 I/E RUSSELL HOUSE - HOUSTON - 1986 - DAY

12

The ideal suburban American barbecue is in full swing at
the new Russell household.

In a series of brief vignettes, Steven shows off the
house, his family and his new corvette.

CUT TO:

A happy Steven moves through the backyard with a plate of
meat fresh off the grill.

Continuing past the buffet he enters the dining room to
find SIX YEAR OLD STEPHANIE (same actress) happen past.
Steven lovingly scoops her up without a thought.

STEPHANIE
I can't find my blue fish.

DEBBIE (O.S.)
Steven?

He turns to see Debbie across the room talking to a YOUNG
COUPLE. She waves him over.

STEVEN
(to Stephanie)
In the laundry room.

He puts her down and heads over to Debbie and the couple.

DEBBIE
Steven you haven't met our new neighbors
down two and across the street- Neil and
Sara.

STEVEN
No I haven't. I hope you're planning on
changing the paint. What do you call that
color?

NEIL
Oh we're changing it.

They all burst into loud breaking-the-ice laughter.

STEVEN

Good, good, good... good.

NEIL

So Debbie tells me you used to be in the police force back in Georgia.

STEVEN

Virginia Beach.

NEIL

Right. Sorry...

SARA

(embarrassed)

Neil...

STEVEN

Yeah, kinda lost interest. Got back into the family business.

NEIL

Which is?

STEVEN

Produce. I work for Sysco.

NEIL

That's a big outfit. They give you that Corvette out there?

STEVEN

Yes sir-ee.

DEBBIE

Great benefits, too.

STEVEN

And the hours don't crush me either. I get plenty of home time.

DEBBIE

It's good to have him where I can keep an eye on him.

STEVEN

(suggestive)

Among other things...

Debbie gives an embarrassed GUFFAW as he smooches on her.

SARA

Ooooooh! Watch out!

And as they giggle and play wrestle...

13 INT. HOUSTON APT. BEDROOM (TYLER) - 1986 - NIGHT 13

Amidst the moonlit shadows, the THUMPING of VIGOROUS LOVEMAKING is heard. It continues, getting louder and louder until we make out two forms doing it doggie-style in the bed.

Building to the climax, Steven moans with pleasure.

STEVEN

I'm gonna come, I'm gonna come...

Suddenly we see the face of the MOUSTACHED MAN he's fucking.

MOUSTACHED MAN

DO IT MAN! COME IN MY ASS!

SMASH CUT TO:

14 INT. TEXAS STATE PENITENTIARY HOSPITAL WARD - 1998 - DAY 14

We are back with Steven in his hospital bed at the Penitentiary.

STEVEN (V.O.)

Oh did I forget to mention I was gay?
Yeah, sorry about that. I'm gay. Gay,
gay, gay, gay, gay. Have been as long as
I can remember...

SMASH CUT TO:

15 EXT. MARSHLAND - CHESAPEAKE BAY, VA - 1966 - DAY 15

WE'RE BACK on the hilltop from the beginning of the movie.

Nine year old Steven and his young FRIENDS crest the verdant hill- running and laughing through the backlit dandelion fluff of an idyllic summer day.

They all collapse into the long grass like the splayed arms of a starfish. Catching their breath, they stare up at the sky- searching for shapes in the clouds.

LITTLE GIRL

I see a pony! What do you see!?

LITTLE BOY
I see a diesel train!

RED HAired BOY
I see a whirlybird!

YOUNG STEVEN
I see a wiener.

They look at him with incredulity.

RED HAired BOY
What?! What kind of wiener?

YOUNG STEVEN
A man's wiener.

LITTLE BOY
Shut up! There's no wiener!

YOUNG STEVEN
Uh huh!

RED HAired BOY
No there's not!

There is a long silence. Then-

LITTLE GIRL
Oh I see it. There it is!

YOUNG STEVEN
Told ya...

And as the other boys squint closely...

STEVEN (V.O.)
Anyway where was I? Oh yeah--

SMASH CUT TO:

16 INT. HOUSTON BEDROOM - 1986 - NIGHT

16

Once again, the MOUSTACHED MAN throws his head back in the throes of lust.

MOUSTACHED MAN
DO IT MAN! COME IN MY ASS!

Steven drives it home.

STEVEN (V.O.)
(matter of fact)
And I did.

17 EXT. HOUSTON APARTMENT DOORWAY, 1986 - LATER THAT NIGHT 17

The Moustached Man and Steven say goodbye at the door.

STEVEN (V.O.)
I had been living a lie for a long, long
time. I tend to do that... hide things.

MOUSTACHED MAN
You be careful out there, you're a little
drunk.

18 EXT. HOUSTON STREET - 1986 - NIGHT 18

Steven drives his red Corvette convertible with a
contented look on his face. He glows as the Pet Shop
Boys' "West End Girls" plays on the radio.

STEVEN (V.O.)
Now just because I was screwing around
doesn't mean I didn't love Debbie. I did.
I loved her with all my heart...
Stephanie too. My family was all I had
and they needed me. So I told myself it
was just a little lie and it was better
for everybody if it stayed that way.
(beat)
That's what I told myself.

A POLICE CAR passes in the opposite direction. Steven
lays on the brake. He glances into his mirror to see the
cop BRAKE AND U-TURN.

STEVEN (CONT'D)
Shit.

He bites his lip, thinking a moment until finally...

HE FLOORS IT. The Corvette speeds away and the cop gives
chase. The speedometer hits 100 plus.

19 EXT. HOUSTON RAILROAD CROSSING - 1986 - NIGHT 19

Steven soon finds himself way in the lead approaching a
RAILROAD CROSSING.

STEVEN
(into mirror)
Is that the best you have?
(seeing something ahead)
Uh oh-

At that instant the front tire HITS the rut of the track and SCREECH! The tire BLOWS OUT and the car PITCHES SIDEWAYS and CRASH! It FLIPS VIOLENTLY and rolls until-

RIIIIP! Steven is thrown through the ragtop and flies through the air for a peaceful moment until--

WHAM-SCRAPE! He hits the pavement and slides on his back for a good five seconds before SLAMMING into a SIGNPOST and caroming into a ditch. We see that the sign reads, "MEN AHEAD".

STEVEN (V.O.) (CONT'D)
This is right about the time I had an epiphany.

The Pet Shop Boys continue their song in the distance, growing LOUDER until-

CRASH! The skidding car barrels into the sign, flies over the ditch and buries itself in a fallow field beyond.

STEVEN (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Funny word, epiphany... wonder where it comes from?

20

EXT. DITCH - HOUSTON, 1986 - LATER THAT NIGHT

20

Badly mangled and triaged, Steven stares intently at the night sky with his one good eye as Paramedics remove him from the ditch on a back-board.

STEVEN
(low murmur)
I haven't lived my life.

PARAMEDIC
Try not to talk sir.

STEVEN
(bleary)
Fuck you... No one is going to tell me what to do anymore. No more lies. I'm going to live my life. My way. Be the real me. Time for some good living. Buy what I want, do what I want, fuck who I want. My way.

PARAMEDIC

Okay sir whatever you say.

STEVEN

I'm gonna be a fag.

PARAMEDIC

Okay.

STEVEN

A big fag...

PARAMEDIC

Alright.

(to other paramedic)

Let's move.

21 INT. HOUSTON HOSPITAL CORRIDOR - 1986 - NIGHT 21

Debbie walks alongside a DOCTOR, deeply concerned and listening to his assessment.

STEVEN (V.O.)

Yep, just like that I decided to start my
life over and live it like the real me.
No more lies. I was born again.

22 INT. HOUSTON HOSPITAL - 1986 - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS 22

Debbie enters the room to find Steven, bandaged and
bristling with tubes.

STEVEN (V.O.)

It would be hard to break it to Debbie,
but I knew I'd find a way...

He turns his head to her and smiles wide.

STEVEN (CONT'D)

Honey, I'm gay!

Debbie freezes, she can't believe her ears. And as she
stares at his smiling face in shock...

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

To my surprise, we stayed friends.
(then)

And I was finally free.

FADE IN:

23 EXT. STREET - PALM BEACH FLORIDA - 1992 - DAY 23

VINTAGE MAMBO MUSIC. Palm trees line an upscale Palm Beach shopping district. Well-heeled nabobs cruise the boulevard, shopping and being seen.

Two MINIATURE DOBERMAN PINSCHERS on a tandem leash appear from around a corner soon followed by the NEW STEVEN with a handsome young man on his arm (JIMMY KEMPLE).

Steven's pajama-like clothes, perfect tan and loose demeanor make him the very essence of a man with new found freedoms.

STEVEN (V.O.)

Life was good. Everything was falling right into place. I moved to Palm Beach, got a new job, had two adorable pups, I was dating a cute guy named Jimmy. I could do anything I wanted...

24 INT. GAY CLUB - MIAMI, 1992 - NIGHT 24

DANCE MUSIC THUMPS as Steven passes around a tray of drinks to friends.

STEVEN (V.O.)

But it didn't take me long to realize something that never occurred to me before. Actually no one ever talks about this but...

When everyone is served, he raises his glass and let's loose a PARTY HOOT. They concur and drink.

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

...being gay is really expensive.

(beat)

It is.

Steven leans over and makes out with Kemple.

25 QUICK MONTAGE 25

QUICK CUTS of Steven enjoying his gay life with Kemple at BOUTIQUES, SALONS, RESORTS, GYMS, HAUTE CUISINE RESTAURANTS, etc...

STEVEN (V.O.)

I mean it's not just sucking cock. It's wardrobe, it's hair, personal trainers, big labels, resorts, fine dining...

(MORE)

STEVEN (V.O.) (CONT'D)
it goes on and on and on. So I needed
money. And for a guy without a college
education, my options were limited.

26 INT. GROCERY STORE - MIAMI, 1992 - DAY

26

Steven inexplicably pours cooking oil out onto a grocery
store aisle with a basket slung over his arm.

STEVEN (V.O.)
So I had no choice--
(beat, giddy)
I became a con man!

SLIP-WHAM! Steven throws himself in the air and falls
flat on his back with a scream.

And as people gather around, he grasps his neck and moans
litigiously--

27 INT. LAW OFFICE - MIAMI, 1992 - DAY

27

OPEN CLOSE on A PARALEGAL. She opens a briefcase and
removes an envelope.

CUT TO REVEAL Steven holding crutches at his side, across
from a few LAWYERS. The paralegal hands him the envelope.

LAWYER
Your check.

STEVEN
Thank you.

With great difficulty, Steven gets on his crutches and
makes his exit.

STEVEN (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Now it didn't happen all at once. It was
sort of a gradual thing...

28 EXT. GROCERY RECEIVING DOCK - MIAMI, 1992 - DAY

28

An OLD WAREHOUSE MANAGER emerges from a darkened
PUREHEART PRODUCE trailer with a crate of tomatoes in
hand. As he steps out onto the dock, he passes Steven,
who is talking with a 500 pound PRODUCE MANAGER.

Tomato crates are all around.

STEVEN (V.O.)

It started with work. Tomatoes. I used to buy low grade tomatoes in the field and sell them to clueless chain stores as higher grade.

PRODUCE MANAGER

These are gorgeous. U.S-1 right?

STEVEN

(big smile)

Finest in the land...

And as they talk-

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

It's called 'field buying'. I could clear three thousand dollars in a good week doing that. But frankly it wasn't enough.

29

INT. MIAMI JEWELRY STORE - MIAMI 1992 - DAY

29

Steven stands before a SALESPERSON at a counter.

SALESWOMAN

Cash or charge?

STEVEN

Charge...

Steven flips through a handful of identical CREDIT CARDS.

STEVEN (CONT'D)

(sotto)

Steven A Russell, Steven G Russell,
Steven M Russell, Doctor Steven M
Russell, Doctor Steven J Russell...
(seeing one he likes)

Ah!

He gives a card to a smiling SALESWOMAN.

SALESWOMAN

Thank you...

(reading card)

...Mister Evans. Can I see some ID?

STEVEN

Of course.

And as Steven riffles through an equally large stack of DRIVER'S LICENSES...

30

INT. DEPARTMENT STORE - MIAMI 1992 - DAY

30

Steven stands atop a escalator, looking around.

STEVEN (V.O.)

But when money got really tight, the slip
and fall always came in handy.

He throws himself down the escalator, out of frame to the
floor below. Painful tumbling is heard.

*

At the BOTTOM of the escalator a hard THUD is heard. A
beat later, Steven's feet slide into frame.

31

INT. PALM BEACH APARTMENT - 1992 - LIVING ROOM - MORNING 31

CHRISTMAS MUSIC.

Dressed in pajamas, Steven and Kemple sit cross-legged at
the base of their Christmas Tree, surrounded by torn
paper and strewn gifts. Steven's arm is in a cast.

Kemple opens a hinged case to reveal a GOLD Rolex watch.

KEMPLE

Oh wow...

STEVEN

What do you think? Yes?

KEMPLE

Well Steven it's beautiful. It really
is.

STEVEN

You don't like it.

KEMPLE

No, no, no. I do.

STEVEN

You don't like it.

KEMPLE

I'm menstruating. Don't listen to me.

STEVEN

Tell me what's wrong with it. Is it the
gold?

KEMPLE

Well...

STEVEN

That's why I got you the stainless!

He takes out another box and hands it to Kemple.

KEMPLE

Steven!

As he opens it, Steven grabs the gold Rolex.

STEVEN

The gold one is for me, dipshit.

Kemple smiles broadly as he admires his new watch.

The PHONE RINGS. Steven rushes to answer it.

STEVEN (CONT'D)

Merry Christmas!

32 INT. DEBBIE'S HOUSTON HOME, 1992 - MORNING - CONTINUOUS 32

Debbie, on the phone, is INTERCUT. Stephanie is in the background, opening gifts at the base of their tree.

DEBBIE

Merry Christmas.

STEVEN

Hi Debbie!

DEBBIE

How's Jimmy?

STEVEN

Good. Did you get the gifts?

DEBBIE

Well that's why I'm calling...

CUT WIDE to reveal a GIFT BOX FILLED WITH STACKS OF CASH.

STEVEN

You're welcome!

DEBBIE

I can't keep this.

STEVEN

Why not?

DEBBIE

Well... it's not Christian.

STEVEN

Not Christian? Why's that?

DEBBIE

This is not what the Lord wants.

STEVEN

So you're saying you know what the Lord wants?

DEBBIE

No. I would never say that. Why? Do you think this is what he wants?

STEVEN

It's the leap of faith Deb. It's the not knowing that's the answer.

This gets traction with Debbie.

DEBBIE

Well I never thought about it that way...

STEPHANIE (O.S.)

Mommy look!

CUT TO REVEAL Stephanie has her own BOX OF CASH.

DEBBIE

Steven!

And as Steven listens to Debbie's rant--

STEVEN (V.O.)

Of course, Jimmy and Debbie had no idea what I was up to. For the time being, at least...

33

INT. PUREHEART FOOD SERVICE - MIAMI, 1992 - MORNING

33

Steven exits an elevator and saunters into work, happy as ever. He passes the Pureheart Tomato Logo and a CHERUBIC SECRETARY.

STEVEN

Morning Sandy!

CHERUBIC SECRETARY

Morning Steven. You have visitors.

STEVEN

Okey-dokey!

Steven quickly gets a deeply concerned look on his face as he approaches his office.

The door is slightly ajar. He secretly peeks in to see...

TWO FEDERAL MARSHALLS wait in Steven's office. He instantly knows what's going on.

STEVEN (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Federal Marshalls...

CUT TO:

34 INT. PUREHEART FOOD SERVICE - MIAMI, 1992 - MORNING 34

Steven paces nervously outside the elevator, growing more and more anxious as he waits.

STEVEN (V.O.)
They wanted me for all sorts of stuff-
Insurance fraud, identity theft, passport
fraud. They were probably gonna
extradite me all the way back to Texas. I
had to decide what to do next.

34A EXT. PALM BEACH APARTMENT - 1992 - DAY 34A

Steven's Ford Bronco cruises past the apartment building to find a few POLICE CARS parked outside. He drives on.

SMASH CUT TO:

35 EXT. ABANDONED LOT - FLORIDA, 1992 - DAY 35

Steven BLUBBERS TO HIMSELF inside his Bronco which is parked in a bleak lot near a looming billboard.

STEVEN (V.O.)
But one thing was for sure-- I was not
gonna let them put me away. I was a cop
and I knew what jail was like. And there
was no way I was going there. I had a
plan.

He continues to CRY uncontrollably as he raises a PRESCRIPTION BOTTLE and dumps all the pills into his mouth. He reaches into the back seat and pulls out a bottle of Galliano to wash it down.

He starts up the car.

STEVEN (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Yep. Everything was gonna be just fine.

36 EXT. ROAD - FLORIDA 1992 - DAY

36

CARS PASS through frame, quickly heading wherever it is they are going. Moments later, a car horn is heard, incessantly blaring and building in volume until--

STEVEN'S CAR IDLES INTO FRAME AT 1 MPH. The Heights', "How Do You Talk To An Angel" is barely audible over the car horn and STEVEN is slumped over the steering wheel.

Moments later, it veers off down into the grassy shoulder and out of frame.

FADE OUT.

37 INT. PALM BEACH HOSPITAL - 1992 - MORNING

37

Steven awakes in a hospital bed. He looks around and eventually looks through the observation glass into the hallway. He sees Debbie talking to a COP.

KEMPLE (O.S.)
Hey...

He readjusts to see Jimmy sitting nearby.

STEVEN
(bleary)
Sorry.

KEMPLE
Why didn't you tell me?

STEVEN
I can't go to prison, Jimmy. I can't. I
can't go to prison. I can't. I can't...

KEMPLE
Okay-okay calm down. It's okay. I just
want to tell them you're awake and we can
take it from there.

Confident that Steven is calm, Jimmy steps into the hall.

38 INT. PALM BEACH HOSPITAL CORRIDOR - 1992 - CONTINUOUS

38

Jimmy joins Debbie and the Cop in the hallway. Steven is visible in bed through the glass.

DEBBIE

Did you know Steven was wanted?

KEMPLE

Not until just now.

DEBBIE

He likes to keep little secrets
sometimes.

KEMPLE

Like the fact that he was a big queer?

DEBBIE

Yeah, like that.

KEMPLE

But suicide, my god.

DEBBIE

Well he does tend to overreact.

KEMPLE

I feel like I don't even know him.

DEBBIE

Well Jimmy, that's the thing. I'm not
really sure he knows who he is. He's
searching, at least that's how I figure
it. I'm just not sure he knows what it is
he's looking for.

KEMPLE

(to cop)

Can you tell me exactly what he did?

COP

He has several warrants out in Texas, as
well as...

As they CONTINUE TO TALK, they fail to notice Steven
getting out of bed and looking around blearily.

He picks up a bedpan, reaches into his gown and absent-
mindedly PISSES-- missing the pan completely. After that,
he dresses and walks out the door behind them.

KEMPLE

...he seemed so happy and--

Just then Debbie notices Steven is not in bed and looks
up in time to see him disappearing around the corner.

DEBBIE

Steven!!!

39 EXT. PALM BEACH HOSPITAL PARKING STRUCTURE - 1992 - DAY 39

Debbie, Kemple, Stephanie and the Cop exit the hospital and look around frantically. They spot him running across the open air lot and give chase.

Steven comes to a stairwell door. It's locked. He runs some more and finds himself cornered at the guard rail.

KEMPLE

Steven!!! Stop!

Kemple, Debbie and the cop slowly approach. Steven glances over the guard rail. ONE FLOOR DOWN is an OPENED DUMPSTER.

KEMPLE (CONT'D)

Steven!

Steven looks down again. Kemple knows what he's thinking.

KEMPLE (CONT'D)

Wait Steven. Don't!

Steven looks down. The soft bags of trash below beckon him to freedom.

KEMPLE (CONT'D)

Steven I'm serious! You stop or you'll never see me again!

(no response)

I mean it!

Steven looks to Kemple and then to the Cop right behind him. HE JUMPS and--

KEMPLE (CONT'D)

STEVEN!

They run to the guard rail and look over to see--

Steven lies MOANING and delirious on his back NEXT TO THE DUMPSTER.

FADE OUT.

40 EXT. TX STATE PENITENTIARY BREEZEWAY, 1995 - DAY 40 *

As inmates CHANT and STOMP, a new inmate walks the line to his new cell clutching his prison issue belongings.

Although we can only see him from behind, we can only assume this is Steven. He continues his walk amidst a shower of spit raining upon him.

INMATES
(yelling)

40A INT. TX STATE PENITENTIARY CELL BLOCK, 1995 - DAY 40A *

The unseen inmate continues past the open cells of his new home and eventually the unseen inmate enters a cell to find-- *

41 INT. TX STATE PENITENTIARY PRISON CELL, 1995 - CONTINUOUS 41

STEVEN is reclined on his bunk, relaxed and ready to greet the inmate (his new CELLMATE) with a smile.

STEVEN
Hi. Welcome to prison. I'm Steven.

The Cellmate is scared. Terrified. Speechless.

STEVEN (CONT'D)
Oh don't worry, I'm not gonna hurt you.
First time?

He nods.

STEVEN (CONT'D)
Shit, I was so scared when I first got here. But you get used to it. Only took me a year. You just need to know a few ins and outs and you'll be fine.

42 EXT. TX STATE PENITENTIARY BREEZEWAY, 1995 - DAY 42

Steven escorts his Cellmate through the prison, waving to various inmates and guards along the way.

STEVEN
(upbeat)
You're gonna catch a beating any day now, that's just the way it is. I lost three teeth and cracked a vertebrae. Anyway, all you need to do is fight back.
(MORE)

STEVEN (CONT'D)
Win or lose, just fight back.
(then)
Or you could try to suck the guys' dick.
Your choice.

He moves on.

43 INT. TX STATE PENITENTIARY LAW LIBRARY - 1995 - DAY 43

Steven and his new Cellmate stand at the door of the prison's law library.

STEVEN
Law Library. I pretty much live here. I don't really have anyone on the outside except my ex-wife- so I just hunker down here learning everything there is to know about the law. Ask me anything.

His Cellmate has no response. Steven points across the library where a menacing OLDER INMATE studies a law book.

STEVEN (CONT'D)
See him. Over there? Him? Anything you want from outside, he's the guy. Candy, cigarettes, drugs, whatever. He's the guy.
(then)
Just keep in mind- it's gonna cost you a lot of money. Or you could suck his dick. Your choice.

44 INT. TX STATE PENITENTIARY CAFETERIA - 1995 - DAY 44

Steven and his Cellmate stand outside the empty cafeteria.

STEVEN
Three meals a day. Not so bad. Just make sure if you make enemies with someone, he doesn't work here. Otherwise you'll wake up one morning shitting blood and find out you've been eating ground glass in your cornbread for six weeks.

Steven's Cellmate notices one of the INMATES working in the kitchen SPITTING a loogey into the mashed potatoes. He mixes it in and CACKLES with glee.

Steven pays no mind.

STEVEN (CONT'D)

Let me introduce you to the mail guy. His name's Gary.

45 EXT. TX STATE PENITENTIARY BREEZEWAY, 1995 - DAY 45 *

A mean-looking con named GARY mans a mail-cart while he talks with Steven and his Cellmate.

GARY

(mid-sentence)

...letters, magazines, shit like that- it all goes through unmolested. But if Grandma's sending you cookies, or porn or brownies or whatever-- you're gonna have to pay for it if you wanna get it. Five bucks per item or you can suck my dick.

Steven turns to his Cellmate.

STEVEN

Your choice.

46 INT. TX STATE PENITENTIARY CELL BLOCK - 1995 - DAY 46 *

Steven and his cellmate arrive at the doorway of their cell. *

STEVEN

Well that's about it. You're gonna be fine. Don't worry. And if you need anything you just let me know. Alright?

His Cellmate thinks a moment.

CELLMATE

So, uh, do I need to suck your dick?

STEVEN

That'd be great.

Steven gently shoves his new cellmate into the cell. *

47 INT. TX STATE PEN - PHONE BANK/COMMON AREA - 1995 - DAY 47

Steven is on one of the many pay phones.

DEBBIE (O.S.)

Hi this is Debbie and Steffie. Sorry we missed you. Leave a message. God Bless!

BEEP.

STEVEN

Hey Debbie. Hi Sweetheart. Sorry I missed you. I thought one o'clock was our time but maybe not. I sure miss you guys. Thanks for the picture and the article. Sometimes it's just nice to know there's someone out there who still cares about me since Jimmy left and all. So... uh...

Steven is holding the stainless steel ROLEX he gave Kemple as a gift. He regards it wistfully.

STEVEN (CONT'D)

(thinking, drifting)

Do you think I broke his heart?

(snapping out of it)

Sorry. Sometimes I forget it's just the machine... I'll try you again next time. One O'clock. Don't forget.

He hangs up. Bored and lonely, he has a moment of repose. Just then, a loud RUCKUS across the COMMON AREA gets his attention.

Steven watches as a group of ROWDY PRISONERS throw whatever they can find at a small BIRD as it flies around, trapped in the cavernous hall.

The men LAUGH and HOOT as the bird is struck down and lies motionless on the ground.

As the prisoners resume their activities, Steven notices a GENTLE LOOKING INMATE approaching the bird.

Rapt, Steven watches as the inmate sympathetically scoops up the bird and walks off. Steven is quite taken.

CUT TO:

48

INT. TX STATE PENITENTIARY - LAW LIBRARY - 1995 - DAY

48

The gentle inmate, PHILLIP MORRIS, is a slightly built, handsome blonde boy-man. He struggles to reach a book on a high shelf. Helpless and irresistible, he is surprised when Steven reaches in to help retrieve the book.

Their eyes lock and they stare in a short silence, until-

PHILLIP

(slightly Blanche DuBois)

Thanks. Guess I need a few extra inches.

STEVEN

Glad to help. How's the bird?

PHILLIP

Huh?

(realizing)

Oh. Him, yeah... he's at peace.

STEVEN

Oh, I'm sorry.

PHILLIP

It was for the best. He was suffering.

Steven acknowledges his kindness with a smile.

STEVEN

(referring to law book)

Civil law? You know, I'm an attorney.

PHILLIP

Really?

STEVEN

You suing someone?

PHILLIP

No, I just like the stories. I just read one about a lady whose dog bit an old man. He sued the heck out of her and she lost everything. But while they were arranging the settlement, they found out he was wanted for homicide. Killed his whole family. And if that lady's spaniel hadn't bit him, and she hadn't lost everything, he'd have never been caught. Isn't that great?

Steven is intrigued.

STEVEN

My name's Steven Russell.

PHILLIP

Pleased to meet you Steven Russell, my name's Phillip Morris.

STEVEN

I haven't seen you around Phillip. I'm always in the yard...

PHILLIP

I don't go to the yard. You know what happens to 98 pound queers in the yard...

STEVEN

It is kind of rough out there.

(then)

You don't look like you belong here
Phillip.

PHILLIP

I don't.

STEVEN

Why are you here?

PHILLIP

I rented a car... and kept it too long.

STEVEN

Grand theft?

PHILLIP

Theft of service.

STEVEN

Insurance fraud.

PHILLIP

No. Just theft of service.

STEVEN

No. Me. Insurance fraud.

PHILLIP

Damn, we're both in a mess aren't we?

STEVEN

Don't seem fair, does it?

PHILLIP

No, it don't.

STEVEN

You know, I keep finding that life's a
little shittier than I thought it was
gonna be.

PHILLIP

Oh, listen to you, Gloomy Gus. I think
you're gonna be just fine, Steven
Russell.

Steven takes this to heart.

STEVEN

(playful)

I guess I'm inclined to believe you.

PHILLIP

Why's that?

STEVEN

I met you today, didn't I?

Phillip smiles.

49 INT. TX STATE PENITENTIARY - LAW LIBRARY - 1995 - LATER 49

Steven sits close to Phillip at a table. A large open law text lies between them.

STEVEN

(mid-sentence)

...I made the mistake of writing her and saying I was lonely in here. And next thing you know, my ex-wife catches her putting the neighbor's puppy in a box to mail to me.

PHILLIP

Ohhhhh, she sounds so sweet...

STEVEN

Oh she's an angel.

(then)

I think I'll be sure to write her back and tell her I'm not lonely anymore... that I made a good friend.

Phillip smirks for a moment, but soon Steven notices the smirk turn to a reticent frown.

STEVEN (CONT'D)

What?

PHILLIP

Why'd I have to meet you today?

STEVEN

Something wrong?

PHILLIP

It's just- I'm being transferred to Terrell Unit today.

STEVEN

What?

PHILLIP

I'm sorry.

STEVEN

Don't be sorry. It's just across the yard.

PHILLIP

Well I don't go into that yard so it might as well be Oklahoma.

(then)

Just figures with my luck. I was born Friday the 13th...

STEVEN

It's not gonna change a thing, Phillip. In fact, Friday the 13th's my lucky day. Don't worry, this right here. This is destiny.

PHILLIP

But we only just met.

STEVEN

Listen, I've loved a lot. And I've been around, so I recognize the feeling. That one you and me are having right now- the one you're trying to forget exists because you're going away. But there's about 6000 volts shooting across this table here and you know you can't deny it.

PHILLIP

Don't you think you're coming on a little strong?

STEVEN

I know you're trying to protect yourself, I get that. It's fine. Give me a chance to prove you wrong.

Phillip is melting but tries to hide it.

PHILLIP

I'm sure I don't know what you're talking about.

Steven smiles wide as if to throw down the gauntlet.

STEVEN

Good...

Phillip turns to walk away and hides his giddyness.

50 INT. TX STATE PENITENTIARY - MICHAEL UNIT, 1995 - DAY 50

Phillip passes the cells of Michael Unit, clutching his belongings and soon enters his cell. He looks around sheepishly until he is interrupted-

CLEAVON (O.S.)

You Phillip?

Phillip turns to see CLEAVON- a huge black inmate mopping the hall outside his cell

PHILLIP

Yes.

He tosses Phillip a folded note. He catches it and looks at it with a smile.

PHILLIP (CONT'D)

Already?

Phillip opens it up. As he reads, his face brightens considerably.

STEVEN (V.O.)

Phillip, hope your new place is nice.
Nice enough anyway. I hope the chocolate
made it to you okay. Check the T.P.

Phillip looks at the spare roll of toilet paper and turns it over. A small chocolate bar is stuck in the tube.

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

I hope you try to make some new friends
and not be too shy. I guess I should tell
you a little bit about myself...

DISSOLVE TO:

51 INT. TX STATE PEN - MICHAEL UNIT - PHILLIP'S CELL - DAY 51

OPEN CLOSE ON a note as Phillip scrawls it.

PHILLIP (V.O.)

Dear Steven. I keep thinking about you
saying I'm shy. I guess you're right,
but I don't feel shy around you. I think
that means something...

As his VO continues, Phillip folds up the paper and passes it through the bars back to Cleavon.

52 INT./EXT. TX STATE PENITENTIARY, 1995 (MONTAGE) 52

VARIOUS SHOTS as we follow the note being passed by different hands and means throughout the prison on its way to Steven.

PHILLIP (V.O.)

Anyway thanks for the chocolate, but I should tell you I'm diabetic so I probably shouldn't... but I did anyway. It's been so long since anyone's shown me any kindness and well, it means a lot. I just wish you were here...

53 INT. TX STATE PEN, 1995 - STEVEN'S CELL - CONTINUOUS 53

Steven reads the letter on his bunk.

PHILLIP (V.O.)

...Write me back soon. Phillip.

Steven finishes the letter and folds it up, looking strangely expressionless.

54 INT. TEXAS STATE PEN, 1995 - PHILLIP'S CELL - DAY 54

Phillip peers out of his cell to see Cleavon working his way nearer with his mop. He's giddy.

Moments later, Cleavon passes him by. Phillip is bummed.

55 INT. TEXAS STATE PEN, 1995 - PHILLIP'S CELL - NEXT DAY 55

Again Phillip watches as Cleavon passes his cell without leaving a note.

56 INT. TEXAS STATE PEN, 1995 - PHILLIP'S CELL - NEXT DAY 56

Phillip lays in bed, impatiently. He seems upset. He anxiously peers out the bars and catches a glimpse of the mopping Cleavon working his way closer to his cell.

PHILLIP

Hurry up would you?

CLEAVON

I ain't no motherfucking DHL, faggot. Besides I ain't got nothing for you anyway...

PHILLIP

But it's been three days.

CLEAVON

You got a tracking number, motherfucker?

PHILLIP

No.

CLEAVON

Then shut your faggot ass.

Phillip slumps back onto his bed, depressed.

PHILLIP

Congratulations Phillip, scared off
another one.

A few moments later, he's startled by the CLANG of his
cell door sliding open.

He looks up - a CORRECTIONS OFFICER stands over him.

CORRECTIONS OFFICER

Morris - you got a new roommate.

This is no consolation to Phillip. He heaves a heavy sigh
until he sees STEVEN enter his cell, clutching a pile of
belongings.

Phillip is overwhelmed as the cell door slams shut behind
Steven.

PHILLIP

Oh my God. How the hell did you do this?

Steven slowly moves closer.

STEVEN

I know a guy. I took care of it. I'm
gonna take care of everything...

Steven gently caresses Phillip's face. Phillip is
melting. Then suddenly, Phillip grabs Steven's ass.

PHILLIP

Enough romance, let's fuck.

They launch themselves onto the bunk and as they get to
business...

FADE OUT.

57 INT. TEXAS STATE PEN, 1995 - PHILLIP'S CELL - THAT NIGHT 57

Phillip and Steven spoon in a glowing post-coital cuddle.

PHILLIP

And for a while I was Executive Assistant
to a Broadway Producer...

STEVEN

Really? What's a Broadway producer doing
in Atlanta?

PHILLIP

I didn't ask.

STEVEN

What'd you do for him?

PHILLIP

I mainly just rode around town in his
limo, drinking and sucking him off.

There's a moment of silence, then a realization...

PHILLIP (CONT'D)

Now that I hear myself say it, I think he
was just some rich chicken hawk.

They get a GIGGLE out of this.

PHILLIP (CONT'D)

Oh well, he was a nice guy. I only dated
him for a little while anyway. Then I
dated this full-blooded Apache who made
me dress up like a baseball player.

STEVEN

Apache? What was his name?

PHILLIP

Melvin.

STEVEN

Phillip- you amaze me.

PHILLIP

What? He was a nice guy too.

STEVEN

That's what I'm saying- you only see the
good.

Phillip shrugs, but before he can reply- a piercing human
SCREECH interrupts him.

STEVEN (CONT'D)
What the hell was that?

CUT TO:

58 INT. TEXAS STATE PEN, 1995 - SCREECHER'S CELL - NIGHT 58

The inmate who spit a loogey into the mashed potatoes in the cafeteria is sitting up on his bed, SCREECHING at the top of his lungs. This is "THE SCREECHER"

BACK TO:

Phillip continues to talk.

PHILLIP
That's the Screecher next door. He does it all night. I never get any sleep. He drives me crazy.

STEVEN
You poor thing. How awful...

The Screecher continues his routine.

FADE OUT.

59 OMITTED 59

60 EXT. TEXAS STATE PEN CANTEN, 1995 - - DAY 60 *

Phillip emerges from the line munching on a candy bar when he notices a ruckus at the other end of the cafeteria. *

He wanders over to see a LARGE PRISONER beating the crap out of the Screecher.

LARGE PRISONER
I'm gonna cut out your motherfucking tongue with your screeching all night.

As guards descend on the two, the Large Prisoner tries to cut out the man's tongue with a plastic spork.

Phillip sidles up next to a BALD PRISONER.

PHILLIP
What does he care- he ain't in our block...

BALD PRISONER
Someone probably paid him.

61 INT. TEXAS STATE PEN, 1995 - PHILLIP'S CELL - LATER 61

Reclined on his bunk, Steven does a crossword puzzle.
Phillip enters, standing by the door.

PHILLIP
Get up...

Steven sits up.

PHILLIP (CONT'D)
Did you pay to have the Screecher beat
up?

STEVEN
Me?

PHILLIP
Don't bullshit me. Did you pay to have
him beat up?

STEVEN
Well you said he bothered you.

PHILLIP
Just answer me.

STEVEN
Yeah. Yeah, I did.

PHILLIP
Steven...

A tear comes to Phillip's eye.

PHILLIP (CONT'D)
This is the most romantic thing anyone's
ever done for me.

He clamps onto Steven and hugs with all his life.

STEVEN
I just want you to be happy, baby.

PHILLIP
You are so amazing!!!

And as they roll on the bed playfully...

62 INT. TEXAS STATE PEN, 1995 - CLEAVON'S CELL - NIGHT 62

CLEAVON lays on his cot staring at the ceiling.
Eventually a hand enters through the bars holding a
cassette tape.

PHILLIP (O.S.)
Cleavon- put this in.

CLEAVON
No man- not now.

PHILLIP (O.S.)
It's important.

CLEAVON
How important?

Phillip's hand disappears for a moment and comes back
with a FIVE DOLLAR BILL.

CLEAVON (CONT'D)
Ten.

PHILLIP (O.S.)
Fine. But you gotta play the whole thing.

CLEAVON
Yeah, alright.

PHILLIP (O.S.)
Promise?

CLEAVON
Fuck you- my word's my bond motherfucker.

Cleavon takes the cash and puts the tape in a BOOM BOX.

A familiar romantic TUNE begins to play...

CLEAVON (CONT'D)
Fuck man- Johnny Mathis? Fucking white-
ass nigger...

He buries his head in the pillow as "Chances Are" plays.

63 INT. TEXAS STATE PEN, 1995 - PHILLIP'S CELL - NIGHT 63

As the MUSIC seeps into their dark cell, Steven reads a
LAW BOOK by pen light. Phillip grabs Steven's hand and
tries to pull him off the bed.

PHILLIP
C'mon...

STEVEN
What?

PHILLIP
C'mon. Dance.

STEVEN
No. No... I can't dance.

PHILLIP
Yes you can.

STEVEN
No I can't. I'm serious...

PHILLIP
Honey, you're queer- it comes with the package.

STEVEN
Well not me.

PHILLIP
C'mon, I'll show you...

He drags him up and begins his lesson.

PHILLIP (CONT'D)
Hold me here... and here. Okay watch...

Steven stumbles his way through the slow dance for a while, but with Phillip's help he begins to settle in.

Soon they are nestled into each other, swaying sweetly to the music.

64 INT. TEXAS STATE PEN, 1995 - COMMON AREA - NIGHT

64

The MUSIC CONTINUES as a group of prisoners watch a VHS copy of GHOST on a TV.

Phillip wipes away a tear and Steven holds him closer while, in the front row, a ONE-EYED LATINO jerks off to the sight of Demi Moore.

LATINO MAN
Yeah you fucking bitch...

65 INT. TEXAS STATE PEN, 1995 - CAFETERIA - DAY 65

MUSIC CONTINUES as tray after tray is filled with gray slop. This persists until suddenly two of the trays receive a beautiful STEAK and some SHRIMP.

Steven nods at the Slopmaster and offers a wink to a very impressed Phillip.

66 INT. TEXAS STATE PEN, 1995 - SHOWERS - MORNING 66

MUSIC CONTINUES as Phillip and Steven shave side by side, smiling at one another.

67 INT. TEXAS STATE PEN, 1995 -PHILLIP'S CELL - NIGHT 67

MUSIC plays on as Steven and Phillip continue their romantic dance.

They are unfazed as the lights in the cellblock go out with the loud sound of circuits tripping. They dance on.

GUARD (O.S.)

LIGHTS OUT!

Eventually, the hollow sound of Johnny Mathis reverberating through the block is the only thing we hear. They dance on.

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

LIGHTS OUT!

They continue to dance. Footsteps approaching are heard.

GUARD (CONT'D)

I said lights out. Turn it off.

CLEAVON (O.S.)

Fuck you pig.

GUARD (O.S.)

Turn it off or we're coming in.

CLEAVON (O.S.)

Well come on in. I got a dick that needs sucking.

CLANK! OFFSCREEN we hear the cell door open and the sound of a scuffle is heard.

VOICES (O.S.)
ON THE GROUND! FUCK YOU! MY WORD IS MY
FUCKING BOND! MY WORD IS MY FUCKING BOND!

And as the sounds of a horrendous beating echo through
the cellblock, Phillip and Steven dance their dance-
oblivious to all but each other.

FADE TO BLACK.

68 INT. TEXAS STATE PEN, 1995 - PHILLIP'S CELL - MORNING 68

Phillip and Steven sleep soundly together in the bunk. A
CLAXON blares and their cell door OPENS- accompanied by
the sound of a dozen others.

GUARD (O.S.)
Rise and shine!

They barely stir until-- CLANG-CLANG-CLANG! A GUARD hits
the bars with his club.

GUARD (CONT'D)
Russell! Get up!

Steven and Phillip are rudely awakened.

GUARD (CONT'D)
Grab your shit! Let's go!

The GUARDS enter to roust Steven.

PHILLIP
What's happening?

GUARD
You're transferred. Nonney snitched you
out about the Screecher. You're going to
Ramsey Two.

STEVEN
Ah shit...

They grab Steven and yank him out of the cell.

PHILLIP
Wait!

Phillip tries to follow but a guard knocks him back down
onto the bunk.

STEVEN
Don't you touch him!

PHILLIP

Steven-

STEVEN

Don't worry Phillip- I'll-

GUARD

Shut up and move.

They drag him off. Phillip watches with deep worry as another guard keeps him there. He grows more and more upset, pacing and working himself up.

*
*

Finally, the guard leaves and Phillip exits his cell and bolts down the tier after Steven.

*
*

68A EXT. TEXAS STATE PEN BREEZEWAY, 1995 - MORNING

68A

*

Phillip runs after Steven, quickly arriving at a LOCKED GATE. Steven is on the other side, still being escorted away. Phillip is forced to find an alternative route.

*
*
*

69 INT. TEXAS STATE PEN, 1995 - COMMON AREA - CONTINUOUS

69

Phillip marches through the common area, fighting tears.

*

70 INT. TEXAS STATE PEN, 1995 - M BLOCK - CONTINUOUS

70

*

Phillip runs through another cell block until he comes to a window. He looks outside.

*
*

PHILLIP

Steven!

71 EXT. TEXAS STATE PEN, 1995 - SALLY PORT - CONTINUOUS

71

PHILLIP'S POV: Steven is waiting in line with some other prisoners to board a bus.

*

Phillip can be seen through the small window, but he fails to get Steven's attention.

He bangs silently on the glass.

72 INT. TEXAS STATE PEN, 1995 - M BLOCK - CONTINUOUS

72

*

Phillip continues in vain to get Steven's attention.

PHILLIP
STEVEN!! STEVEN!

He sees the line at the sally port start to move and stops to think. He knows what he has to do.

73 EXT. TX STATE PEN BREEZEWAY, 1995 - YARD GATE - DAY 73 *

Phillip runs down the breezeway until he reaches a heavily populated gate, manned by a GUARD. *

PHILLIP
I wanna go in the yard.

YARD GUARD
You do?

PHILLIP
I WANNA GO IN THE YARD!

YARD GUARD
Hold your horses Dorothy.

The Yard Guard pushes a button that opens the gate and Phillip bursts through.

74 EXT. TEXAS STATE PEN, 1995 - YARD - DAY 74

Phillip runs through the yard, passing GIANT WOLF-WHISTLING INMATES as they put down their weights and stop their basketball games.

Phillip maintains his focus on the sally port on the other side of the far fence.

PHILLIP
STEVEN!!!!

Boarding the bus, Steven hears him and turns. Delighted, he's forced on board by a Guard before he can respond.

PHILLIP (CONT'D)
STEVEN!

Steven gets in his seat and yells out the window.

STEVEN
What the hell are you doing!?

PHILLIP
I love you!

STEVEN
I love you too!

VROOM! The bus starts up and begins to move.

STEVEN (CONT'D)
We'll be together soon! I promise!

The bus drives off. Phillip runs along with it for a while as they share a long goodbye. And eventually, the bus disappears from view.

Phillip clings to the fence a moment, hanging on to hope. He slumps and turns-

-only to find himself confronted by several HULKING MEMBERS OF THE ARYAN BROTHERHOOD with one thing on their minds.

Phillip marches right toward them and as he draws close-

PHILLIP
GET THE FUCK OUTTA MY WAY!!!

Startled, they split to let Phillip pass unmolested.

75 INT. TEXAS STATE PENITENTIARY HOSPITAL WARD - 1998 - DAY 75

Back in the present, Steven remains in his hospital bed at the Penitentiary Infirmary.

STEVEN (V.O.)
Those were the longest three months of my life. I wrote to Phillip every day until I got released.

76 EXT. TEXAS STATE PENITENTIARY, 1995 - SALLY PORT - DAY 76

CLANG! The gate of the prison closes behind Steven as he exits. He approaches a waiting TAXI.

STEVEN (V.O.)
And once I did, I was determined to get us back together as soon as possible.

77 INT. TAXI, 1995 - CONTINUOUS 77

Steven gets in.

STEVEN
Hi, how are you?

TAXI DRIVER

I'm well. Where you headed? The Greyhound?

STEVEN

Nearest thrift store please.

TAXI DRIVER

(harelip)

Sure. You mind if I tell you the word of our Lord, Jesus Christ?

The car pulls out, the prison receding behind them.

78 EXT. TEXAS STATE PENITENTIARY, 1995 - SALLY PORT - LATER 78

The same taxi pulls up in front of the prison and Steven emerges with a BRIEFCASE, wearing a THREE-PIECE SUIT.

He rings the buzzer at the front gate.

79 INT. TEXAS STATE PEN, 1995 - GUARD BOOTH - DAY 79

Steven approaches the DUTY OFFICER.

STEVEN

Hi there, my name's Steven Rousseau. I'm an attorney. My client is Phillip Morris. I called earlier.

The guard checks his roster.

DUTY OFFICER

Mmm hmmm. There you are. Rousseau... Phillip Morris. Like the cigarette huh?

STEVEN

I beg your pardon?

80 INT. TEXAS STATE PEN, 1995 - VISITING AREA - DAY 80

Phillip enters to see Steven waiting for him on the other side of the glass. Thrilled, he rushes to the phone.

PHILLIP

You said you'd come right away, but Jesus!

STEVEN

I got work to do honey, I'm getting you out of here early.

(MORE)

STEVEN (CONT'D)

I got a hearing tomorrow morning, I got motions to file. The law don't sleep baby.

PHILLIP

I love you so much.

STEVEN

Phillip, you are the sweetest, most gentle man I have ever met. And I know people have taken advantage of that. But I don't ever want you ever to lose that innocence. I want to build a life with you Phillip. I want to protect you.

They share a smile.

PHILLIP

Get me out of here.

81 INT. DELI OFFICE - DAY

81

Steven stands over a desk, talking sternly into a telephone.

STEVEN

The motion was filed, I presented to the DA and got a letter from the judge- I do not understand what the hold up is. I'm not some paralegal- I am Steven fucking Rousseau and I expect proper adjudication!

PULLOUT to reveal he's actually standing behind a KROEGER'S SUPERMARKET DELI COUNTER in uniform as a HOUSEWIFE waits impatiently. He hangs up.

STEVEN (CONT'D)

(big smile)

My boyfriend's getting out of prison next week!

She smiles back.

HOUSEWIFE

How nice...

STEVEN

You want mayo with that?

82 INT. TEXAS STATE PEN, 1995 - PRISON RECEIVING AREA - DAY 82

Steven slides paperwork through a slot in plexiglass window toward a RELEASE OFFICER.

STEVEN

I have an early release order for Phillip Morris.

The Officer glances at the paperwork.

RELEASE OFFICER

Yep- Morris- we got him right here waiting.

CLANK-CLANG. The door begins to open as the Officer stamps some of the paperwork.

RELEASE OFFICER (CONT'D)

And you are--?

STEVEN

I'm his lawyer.

Phillip runs into his arms. As they kiss, the officer offers a surprised look.

PHILLIP

You're incredible.

STEVEN

I know.

83 INT. PASSABLE APARTMENT, 1995 - HOUSTON - NIGHT

83

A PARTY to celebrate Phillip's release. Steven and Phillip stand at the door as FRIENDS file in and greet him boisterously.

BAYLOR

Philllllip! It's so good to see you...

Another friend enters.

BLAKE

Oh my God! You look great. Prison agreed with you. How do I get on that diet?

PHILLIP

Oh you couldn't handle it- not unless we smuggled an espresso machine in a cake.

BLAKE

Throw in a Sicilian Barista and I'm there!

PHILLIP

This is Steven. Steven- Blake and Baylor.

BLAKE

(Gasp) This is him?! This is your gay lawyer prison boyfriend?! Pleased to meet you.

BAYLOR

Much better than the guy who had you kidnapped. What was his name?

Steven looks to Phillip, perplexed.

PHILLIP

Long story.

STEVEN

(regroups, to others)
Can I get you all a drink?

84 INT. PASSABLE APARTMENT KITCHEN, 1995 - LATER THAT NIGHT 84

Steven works his way through the crowded apartment struggling to hold a few cocktail glasses for guests.

He eventually arrives next to Phillip, who is having a great time with another friend- and older woman named EUDORA MIXON.

STEVEN

We gotta get a bigger place.

PHILLIP

Steven I want you to meet my old neighbor- Eudora Mixon. She is just the sweetest.

EUDORA

Pleasure Steven.

STEVEN

Eudora...

PHILLIP

Eudora owns a little building in Montrose and she's having a hell of time with the architect. He sounds like a real asshole.

EUDORA

His plans were useless and he's trying to sue me to pay him! I need your expertise Steven. Phillip says maybe you can help.

STEVEN

I could certainly try.

EUDORA

Can you still practice law, having been to prison?

STEVEN

Sure- why not?

EUDORA

I just thought- Oh what do I know? I'd just be glad to have someone I could trust. I'll pay your normal fee.

Steven doesn't miss a beat. He smiles wide.

STEVEN

It would be my pleasure. Litigation is my speciality.

Phillip beams with pride over Steven's decision.

85 INT. HOUSTON COURTHOUSE CORRIDOR, 1995 - DAY

85

Eudora waits on a bench in the corridor, nervously glancing at her watch. Steven stands behind a column down the hall hiding and watching. He looks at his watch, then approaches her.

STEVEN

Sorry I'm late but I've been hung up in court all day. Let's go in.

86 INT. HOUSTON COURTROOM, 1995 - DAY

86

STEVEN'S POV: A beautifully ornate courthouse LIGHT FIXTURE hangs from a courthouse ceiling.

*
*

ON STEVEN, staring up at it with admiration.

JUDGE (O.S.)

Mister Russell?

Steven snaps out of it and responds to a waiting JUDGE.

STEVEN

It's a beautiful *fixture*.

*

JUDGE

I know. It's *your* turn.

*

STEVEN

Oh...

(then)

Your Honor, Ms. Mixon engaged Mr. Evans service in good faith and was given an inferior product. She is entitled to deem that work to be unacceptable according to the contract that Mr. Evans signed.

LAWYER

The terms of that contract were ambiguous at best. The truth is, defendant engaged my client for three years without full payment.

STEVEN

Your honor I have, in my briefcase, fourteen other contracts, all on public record, in which Mr. Evans entered into litigation with past clients of his!

Eudora glances into Steven's opened BRIEFCASE. It contains only a SANDWICH and a PHOTO OF PHILLIP.

The shocked LAWYER turns to his client (EVANS).

LAWYER

(whispers)

Is this true?

EVANS

No.

LAWYER

You're making me look like an idiot.

He regroups and addresses the judge.

LAWYER (CONT'D)

Your honor, I don't have to tell you that none of this is admissible or applicable to the case at hand. Mr. Russell's histrionics do not erase the fact that his client is in breach of contract.

JUDGE

He is right Mr. Russell- what do you have to say?

Steven is stonewalled. He looks to Eudora as if to say, "What do I do now?" and it terrifies her.

Desperate, Steven bangs his fist on the table and looks resolutely to the judge.

STEVEN

I demand to be seen in chambers!!

The judge and lawyer seem mystified by this response.

JUDGE

Okaaaaaaaaay...

87

INT. HOUSTON JUDGE'S CHAMBERS, 1995 - DAY

87

The Lawyer sits impatiently while Steven peruses a wall of plaques, photos and diplomas. He focuses on a law school DEGREE from INDIANA COLLEGE OF LAW. Next to it, a PHOTO of the judge as a YOUNG MAN on a farm. He's from humble roots.

A moment later, the Judge enters.

JUDGE

Okay gentlemen, let's get this over with, the two for one at the Crab Boiler ends at five o'clock.

LAWYER

This seems to be cut and dried here, sir. I don't even know why we're back here. Mister Russell is treating this like an episode of Matlock.

STEVEN

I'll admit your honor- I'm a plain spoken man. I didn't go to Princeton. I didn't go to Yale. My education was modest. I went to a small school. I grew up on a small farm. But I passed the same bar exam as my colleague here and I am not going to let him push around this humble woman.

This scores with the judge.

JUDGE

Point taken Mister Russell...

He glares at the other lawyer with scorn.

JUDGE (CONT'D)

...but where are you going with this?

STEVEN

I think it's obvious where I'm going with this sir.

A long SILENCE. The Judge waits and waits until something occurs to him.

JUDGE

Are you talking about Feinders vs. Chao?

Steven doesn't know what this means... But the other lawyer does. And he's not happy.

LAWYER

(sotto)

Shit...

Seeing this, Steven puffs with confidence.

STEVEN

Your honor, that's exactly what I'm talking about.

The Judge slowly nods to himself as he considers this.

SMASH CUT TO:

88

INT. HOUSTON COURTHOUSE CORRIDOR, 1995 - DAY

88

Outside the courtroom with Eudora, Steven is ecstatic.

STEVEN

YES! I did great! Can you believe how great I did!?

EUDORA

(wary)

Yes. You did very well, Steven. Thank you.

STEVEN

I mean, I did great! Really great! I'm so proud of myself! You want half my sandwich?!

EUDORA

Um...

STEVEN

No! We're going out! I'm paying!!

89

INT. NEW HOUSTON APARTMENT, 1996 - DAY

89

Phillip stands flabbergasted next to Steven in the middle of a large modern apartment.

PHILLIP

Oh my God, it's amazing.

STEVEN

I thought you'd like it honey.

PHILLIP

Can we afford this?

STEVEN

You let me worry about the money
sweetheart.

PHILLIP

Okay, well I guess I better start packing
boxes.

STEVEN

Not this weekend.

PHILLIP

Why not?

STEVEN

I think we both need a vacation. Key
West?

Phillip smiles.

90

OMITTED

90

91

I/E. KEY WEST COVE - 1996 - VARIOUS

91

*

PALM TREES undulate on the constant breeze, inviting us
to a beautifully solitary cove. Eventually Steven and
Phillip's voices are heard.

*
*
*

PHILLIP (O.S.)

*
*

I've been meaning to ask you something.

STEVEN (O.S.)

*
*

Yeah?

DIALOGUE CONTINUES OVER VARIOUS SHOTS of their romantic
getaway to the Keys. In a SERIES of SHOTS we see where
they've been and what they've been doing in the moments
AFTER they've been there.

*
*
*
*

- A Hammock blowing in the breeze. *
- A quaint COTTAGE nestled in the vegetation. *
- Half empty glasses of beer on the porch. *
- Dirty dishes in the cottage sink. The remains of a romantic meal on a table. The swaying palms are visible through the windows. *
- Footsteps in the sand. *
- Two beach chairs facing the surf. *
- Etc... etc... *

PHILLIP (O.S.)
That birthday cake you got me in the pen?
Where'd you get those candles? *

STEVEN (O.S.)
Oh you know... just... people I knew. *

PHILLIP (O.S.)
Yeah, I know. But how? *

STEVEN (O.S.)
Remember that guard? Skinny guy? Smoked a lot? *

PHILLIP (O.S.)
Lance? He couldn't been more than 98 pounds. *

STEVEN (O.S.)
Yeah, that's him. *

PHILLIP (O.S.)
Oh he was such an asshole. *

STEVEN (O.S.)
Actually- I was in the yard once. Another guard asked him to pay him back five. He opened his wallet and I saw this picture of a little girl about Steffie's age. So I brought it up to him once, just to get him talking. That's the thing about having kids, you know? Gets people talking. Shared experience. Builds bridges. Something I learned. Anyway he tells me he's worried about her- mamma was gone. We talked awhile. You know, I just listened. That's all. *

(MORE)

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

I brought up the candles just one time
but mostly just listened... And the next
day, bedtime, there they were.

*
*
*

91A EXT. PALM BEACH COVE - 1996 - DUSK - CONTINUOUS

91A

*

The dialogue continues on the beach as we finally see
Steven and Phillip enjoying the sunset by the light of a
small fire on the beach.

*
*
*

PHILLIP

How'd you know he'd do that?

*
*

STEVEN

I didn't. I just knew I wanted 'em for
you... and I found a way to do it. That's
all.

*
*
*
*

Phillip smiles, eyes never leaving the sunset.

*

PHILLIP

Just listenin' huh?

*
*

STEVEN

That's it...

*
*

And as the sun sets on the shimmering water--

*

92 EXT. OCEAN, 1996 - DAY

92

An empty 24-foot MOTORBOAT bobs atop placid seas, fishing
poles dangling over the side. The SOUND of two men
enjoying themselves can be heard.

After reaching their inevitable conclusion, the VOICES
gasp for air.

PHILLIP (O.S.)

(wind)

I'm gonna get a Coke... you want a Coke?

STEVEN (O.S.)

Uh huh...

Phillip rises into view and as he opens a cooler in the
back of the boat, he notices something.

PHILLIP

Steven?

STEVEN (O.S.)

What?

PHILLIP

Get up...

STEVEN (O.S.)

Oh you know I can't move after I come.

PHILLIP

Get up. Look. Something's funny...

STEVEN

Okay... okay...

Steven rises into view and joins Phillip by the back of the boat.

STEVEN (CONT'D)

What is it little buddy? You need the Skipper to shiver your --

(seeing something)

Holy shit.

PHILLIP

What is it?

On the horizon, a BLACK CHURNING MASS OF CLOUDS looms over the ocean.

Steven quickly tosses the fishing rods into the water, then rushes to the wheel and starts the motor.

STEVEN

Get a bucket.

PHILLIP

A bucket? Why?

STEVEN

For bailing.

PHILLIP

BAILING?! What bailing?!

STEVEN

Trust me.

Steven pushes the throttle and steers TOWARD THE STORM.

PHILLIP

Steven- those are the black clouds.
Let's go that way there...

STEVEN

No.

PHILLIP

Why?

STEVEN

Trust me.

PHILLIP

But the black clouds...

SMASH CUT TO:

93

EXT. STORMY OCEAN, 1996 - DAY

93

The little boat is tossed about on the viciously undulating body of the storm. Phillip is bailing frantically while trying to contain his near hysteria. Steven faces the storm with grim resolve.

PHILLIP

What the fuck are we doing?! This is fucking insane!

STEVEN

(bravely, assured)
You can't outrun a storm.

PHILLIP

Oh how the fuck do you know that!?

STEVEN

I read it in a magazine.

PHILLIP

WHAT? A fucking magazine!? What magazine!? And if you say The Advocate I'm gonna fucking kill you!

STEVEN

I don't remember, I was taking a shit.

PHILLIP

You were taking a shit!? Jesus!! They're going to find my body on the beach like a queer blonde manatee with a family of eels living in my ass!

STEVEN

Just keep bailing!

PHILLIP

Fine!

Steven fights the storm as best he can while the two of them are smashed by waves.

The seas grow ever rougher and Phillip sees Steven struggling with diminishing returns. Just then-

CRASH! A torrent of water knocks Phillip into the transom. Steven sees this and--

WHAM! He's hit too and skids across the deck, crashing into him.

Steven scrambles to the helm but Phillip just sits there. He's losing faith as water whips across his face. He's about to give up when he looks to Steven confidently and defiantly negotiating the storm.

Phillip gets up and approaches him

PHILLIP (CONT'D)

Who the hell do you think you are? Why do you think you can do this?

Steven looks right into him.

STEVEN

Because... I can do anything.

For a long beat they just stare at each other- wind whipping around them.

Phillip picks up his bucket and stands up.

Steven turns back to focus on the storm. A beat later Phillip WHIPS HIM AROUND and KISSES HIM intensely.

Without saying a word, he goes back to his bailing.

And as the storm rages on--

SMASH CUT TO:

94

EXT. BEACH PARTY, 1996 - DUSK

94

A Jimmy Buffett COVER BAND plays as a BEACH PARTY is in full swing. At the water's edge the BATTERED BOAT drifts onto the shore.

Windburned and tattered, Phillip and Steven emerge from the boat. People stare with concern and bewilderment as they pass. They soon arrive at a thatched-roof beach bar.

All music and conversation STOPS as the BARTENDER awaits their first words. Then finally...

STEVEN
(husky whisper)
Two Banana Daquiris...

And with the WHIRR of a blender--

95 INT. TEXAS STATE PEN HOSPITAL WARD - 1998 - PRESENT DAY 95

BACK on his deathbed at the prison hospital, Steven resumes his VOICE OVER.

STEVEN (V.O.)
With Phillip I felt strong. I felt invincible. I promised myself he would never want for anything ever again. That meant I needed a real job. Something dependable. And- no more scams.

FADE IN:

96 INT. USAMM HQ - LINDHOLM'S OFFICE - 1996 - DAY 96

A bored Steven waits in the middle of a big wig's office. He looks at PHOTOS on a nearby wall of a broad-shouldered all-American man dressed in a NASA jump suit performing various astronautical training tasks.

He picks up a small ASTRONAUT FIGURINE and examines it.

LINDHOLM (O.S.)
Sorry to keep you waiting Steven.

Steven turns to find Dan Lindholm, the broad-shouldered man himself.

LINDHOLM (CONT'D)
I'm Dan Lindholm.

STEVEN
Were you a spaceman?

LINDHOLM
Yep. Never got out there though. NASA's a real political place. Never could figure out whose ass to kiss to get a mission.
(then)
All in the past. Barely even think about it now...

CUT TO REVEAL a HUGE MODEL of the SPACE SHUTTLE that engulfs half the room. Steven puts the figurine back.

STEVEN

A spaceman, huh? How do you crap up there?

LINDHOLM

Ass gasket.

(draws on his coffee)

Have a seat.

Steven sits across the desk from Lindholm .

LINDHOLM (CONT'D)

With the popularity of HMO's in today's health care system, doctors need help managing their billing-- so they can focus on their patients. That's where USA Medical Management comes in. Hundreds of millions of dollars pass through our system from the HMO's to the doctors. It's a critical business. A powerful business...

(beat)

So when I read your resume, I wasn't sure what to think. Your level of education and your past experience would factor heavily into this decision and frankly...

Steven deflates in expectation.

LINDHOLM (CONT'D)

...you were head and shoulders above the rest. I mean, I could hardly believe it. But when I called your references-- well they couldn't speak more highly of you.

SMASH CUT TO:

97

INT. NEW HOUSTON APARTMENT KITCHEN - 1996 - DAY

97

Steven makes breakfast in his tightie-whities while talking on the phone. Phillip is in the background doing a crossword puzzle at the kitchen table.

STEVEN

I could not speak more highly of Steven Russell, Mr. Lindholm . A real straight shooter. We were damn lucky to have him at Prudential as long as we did.

In his own world, Phillip chimes in.

PHILLIP
Brando's wet debut?

Steven covers the phone with his hand.

STEVEN
On the Waterfront.

BACK TO:

98 INT. LINDHOLM'S OFFICE - 1996 - DAY 98

Dan continues to wax on about Steven.

LINDHOLM
Employee of the year two years running?
Developing software with IBM? You're the
kind of people we need here Steven. We
want you as our Chief Financial Officer.
So what do you say? I want your answer
right now. C'mon Steven- let's light
this candle.

As Steven pretends to mull--

99 INT. USAMM - STEVEN'S OFFICE - 1996 - DAY 99

An uptight assistant (RHEBA) leads Steven into his fancy
new office. *

RHEBA *

...for example "he's in a meeting" sounds
better than "he's away from his desk" at
least I think so, but whatever you
prefer.

STEVEN
That's fine... sure.

She leads him to his new desk which is stacked with
folders, files, printouts and reams of data.

RHEBA *

I pulled all the claims for the last two
years as well as the statements,
transfers and confirmations from the
bank. Most of it's routine and I think
you can get up to speed in a day or two.
(then)
Anything else I can do for you?

STEVEN

Uh.... cup of coffee?

RHEBA

I'll do it today but I don't do that really.

*

Steven nods and turns his attention to the sea of numbers before him. He looks concerned as he begins to leaf through.

100

INT. USAMM BOARDROOM - 1996 - DAY

100

Steven sits in a board meeting, surrounded by all of the company honchos. Dan Lindholm lords over the gathering at the head of the table while a suit (MARK) reads from a report to the group.

MARK

Crossover from traditional markets shows declination and inverse diffusion seems commensurate with net-trade trending. HMO penetration still leads PPO, NMO and FMO as usual but attenuation is growing more prevalent in Q4 as projected... As for Q3, well Q3 is what Q3 always is: Q2 with training wheels.

*

Everyone LAUGHS, but no one quite as hard as Steven who desperately tries to fit in.

Larry Birkheim, the CEO of USAMM sits beside Dan Lindholm. He chimes in.

BIRKHEIM

Okay Steven, your turn. I know you've only had the one quarter to play catch up but I tell you, we can't wait to get some insight here.

STEVEN

Sure. What about?

BIRKHEIM

Mark's projections.

STEVEN

Mmm hm. Sure.

BIRKHEIM

They seem kind of flat.

STEVEN

Oh. Okay. Ummm...

Steven fumbles through some folders and vamps a while.

STEVEN (CONT'D)

Well I did a lot of work here and uh... I think maybe... well I could just read it to you but uh... it might be better to just uh...

The group looks at him quizzically. Just as it seems Steven has been up to nothing--

STEVEN (CONT'D)

Well, I'll just show you. Todd?

TODD, an incredibly hot assistant fires up a data PROJECTOR and dims the lights. Steven walks the board through an incredibly well prepared presentation.

STEVEN (CONT'D)

If you look here at Mark's projections again for Q3, you'll see- well you'll see they're just that- projections. Projections based on a model set by my predecessor. I decided to reject that model and do things a little differently. I want to show you my results. This is what we actually made in Q3--

The graphs GROW exponentially. The group is intrigued.

STEVEN (CONT'D)

Now let me tell you how I did it...

The slide CHANGES, the men are impressed by the unseen image.

And as Steven explains himself, Dan and Birkheim smile broadly and turn to each other with smug assurance.

101

INT. NEW APARTMENT KITCHEN - 1996 - NIGHT

101

OPEN CLOSE on a candy wrapper opening. A hand removes the candy revealing an INSPIRING MESSAGE printed inside the wrapper- "When two hearts race, both win."

ON PHILLIP. He's deeply touched by the sentiment as he chews on the candy. He puts the wrapper on the REFRIGERATOR with a MAGNET.

He opens ANOTHER. He chews and reads- "Commit random acts of kindness"

Again he's touched and puts it on the refrigerator.

He opens ANOTHER and pops the candy in his mouth. He reads- "A smile is a flower on your face"

He's disgusted by the trite sentiment and THROWS THE WRAPPER IN THE TRASH. A beat later, he REMOVES THE CANDY from his mouth and THROWS THAT IN THE TRASH TOO.

Just then Steven walks by in a TUXEDO, adjusting his tie.

PHILLIP

The tux? Where are you going?

STEVEN

It's just a work thing. Were we supposed to--

PHILLIP

No- I just thought- it's fine. Where you going?

STEVEN

Some stupid gala ball thing...

PHILLIP

Gala? Oh...
(playing it off)
Sounds boring.

STEVEN

Yeah. I'll be home early. Promise.

102 INT. HOUSTON BALLROOM - 1996 - NIGHT

102

A black-tie cocktail party is in full swing. Steven eats a canapé by a window. Something outside catches his eye.

103 EXT. HOUSTON BALLROOM BALCONY, 1996 - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS103

Dan Lindholm is out on the balcony staring up at the starry sky. Steven approaches.

LINDHOLM

You see that?

Dan points out a small dot of light moving across the sky. Steven squints.

STEVEN

No...

(realizing)

Oh- is it...?

LINDHOLM

Yeah. Probably deploying the arm right now. Just a satellite deployment. Nothing special... Just touching the face of God.

He chokes back a tear, then throws an arm around Steven.

LINDHOLM (CONT'D)

I want you to meet my wife.

104

INT. HOUSTON BALLROOM, 1996 - NIGHT

104

Dan Lindholm escorts Steven to BEVERLY Lindholm and a ghastly gaggle of Texas society WIVES.

LINDHOLM

Bev- Ladies- I want you to meet Steven Russell, our CFO.

MRS. LINDHOLM

Oh I heard about you.

STEVEN

Good things I hope.

MRS. LINDHOLM

Yes and no. Don's bellyaching about how big your Christmas bonus is gonna be because you're making him so much money.

A GIGGLE infects the group. Another WIFE speaks up.

FACELIFT WIFE

Are you married Steven?

STEVEN

Uh... engaged.

BLONDE WIFE

Well where is she, sweetheart?

STEVEN

She works. Travels a lot. It's killing her she couldn't be here.

And as the wives fret symathetically-

105 INT. USAMM OFFICE - 1996 - DAY

105

Steven saunters over to VERA the company accountant who is stamping some checks. He places some papers on her desk.

STEVEN

These are ready for Dan ...

VERA

Thanks Steven. You doin' good?

STEVEN

Kind of. I just got back from my lawyer's office. I asked him, "What's your fee?" He says, "I charge \$50 for three questions." So I ask, "Don't you think that's a little expensive?" And he says, "Yes it is... Now what's your final question?"

Vera EXPLODES with laughter.

VERA

It's so true. Lawyers!

She turns to a colleague.

VERA (CONT'D)

Annie! Come here, you gotta hear this!

106 INT. UPSCALE HOUSTON RESTAURANT - 1996 - DAY

106

Steven sits at a high powered lunch with Dan Lindholm and Larry Birkheim. He is diligently taking notes.

BIRKHEIM

That's the thing about the back nine at Pebble Beach. I don't care what your handicap is... that sand wedge is gonna get a workout-

LINDHOLM

I couldn't agree with you more. I remember one time, I was at Augusta...

As Dan prattles on, Steven continues to write on his pad. CUT TO REVEAL he's doodling pictures of SMILEY-FACED PENISES.

107

INT. USAMM - BREAK ROOM - 1996 - DAY

107

Steven refills his mug of coffee while in the background,
two SECRETARIES dish.

SECRETARY

The woman says, "That's awful expensive,
isn't it?" and the lawyer says, "Yes and
now you only got one question left!"

She laughs LOUDER than the woman listening to the joke.

SECRETARY (CONT'D)

'Cause he already asked the two!

They both laugh loudly now as Steven exits.

108

INT. HOUSTON BANQUET ROOM - 1996 - DAY

108

*

Steven and Dan Lindholm stand at the omelette station at
a high class brunch buffet.

LINDHOLM

(to cook)

Mushroom and cheese.

(to Steven)

Anyway like I was saying the Northrup guy
says to the NASA "well that question's
gonna cost fifty million to answer" so
NASA says, "Don't you think that's a lot
of money?" and Northrup says "Yep, now
you owe us another fifty million. Next
question please!"

This sounds eerily familiar. Steven laughs a COURTESY
LAUGH.

STEVEN

Yeah that's a good one...

LINDHOLM

That's why there's so few shuttle
missions. They're wasting all their
money on bureaucracy. And probes...
Unmanned probes.

(then)

Like people care if there's life on Mars.

(to cook)

No mushrooms, I said.

109 INT. NEW HOUSTON APARTMENT, 1996 - LIVING ROOM - MORNING 109

Phillip test his blood sugar by applying a test strip to his bloody thumb. He compares the strip to small card with a blood sugar chart.

Contented with the result, he puts the everything away in a small BLACK LEATHER BAG containing INSULIN and SYRINGES.

Steven passes by in the BACKGROUND with a brand new bag of golf clubs. Phillip is instantly puzzled.

PHILLIP

Golf!?

STEVEN

What?

PHILLIP

You're a homosexual.

STEVEN

It's work.

PHILLIP

You know, you can tell them. They can't fire you for being gay.

STEVEN

I know...

PHILLIP

I'm trying to be understanding here honey, but golf? Why not just eat pussy?

STEVEN

(exiting)

Wish me luck.

PHILLIP

Good luck!

110 EXT. HOUSTON GOLF COURSE - 1996 - DAY

110

Steven, Lindholm and two CLIENTS are at the first tee.

Steven nervously tees up. He does his best recollection of a warm up and hits the ball. It's not a good drive, but it does go about thirty yards.

STEVEN
Oh! This is easy!
(cocky, Butch)
Your turn Dan!

111 EXT. HOUSTON GOLF COURSE SANDTRAP - 1996 - LATER 111

As Lindholm and the Clients wait, a periodic spray of sand flies up from the trap behind them as unseen Steven swings in vain.

LINDHOLM
Hell of a hazard ain't it Steven?

Eventually, a ball flies out of the trap.

STEVEN (O.S.)
(to ball)
Oh yeah! How ya like that, sister!?

CUT TO:

112 EXT. HOUSTON GOLF COURSE FAIRWAY - 1996 - DAY 112

Steven and the Client amble along a few yards behind Dan and the other client. Steven is covered in sweat and sand.

CLIENT
So the black fella says to the jew lawyer-
"50 bucks a question? Ain't that
expensive?" "Yeah it's expensive," he
says, "I'm a Jew, you nigger!"

The man laughs to himself.

CLIENT (CONT'D)
Get it?!!

He soon spots his ball up ahead.

CLIENT (CONT'D)
There I am.

He moves on, leaving Steven standing there, disgusted.

MATCH CUT TO:

113 INT. USAMM - STEVEN'S OFFICE - 1996 - DAY 113

Steven sits at his desk, detached and fed up.

STEVEN (V.O.)

Maybe it was because it's just my nature,
or maybe it was because of my past... or
maybe it was because they were the most
boring fucking people I'd ever met in my
life...

(beat)

Whatever the reason, I had been robbing
them blind for months.

114 INT. USAMM - STEVEN'S OFFICE - 1996 - DAY 114

FLASHBACK to Steven's first day on the job as his RHEBA
escorts him to a desk piled high with financial reports. *

RHEBA *

Anything else I can do for you?

STEVEN

Uh.... cup of coffee?

RHEBA *

I'll do it today but I don't do that
really.

Steven nods and begins to leaf through various folders.

It isn't long before something catches his eye.

115 MONTAGE: HOW MONEY FLOWS AT USAMM-- 115

QUICK CUTS of Steven researching by leafing through
folders and files INTERCUT with a slow push in on a CHECK
PRINTING MACHINE as it spits out product as well as TIME
LAPSE footage of employees buzzing through one of the
USAM hallways. *

STEVEN (V.O.)

The thing about U-SAMM was that they took
in all this HMO money and distributed it
to doctors. But in the time between
receiving the money and paying it out- it
was just sitting there, not making
interest or anything.

116 INT. USAMM - STEVEN'S OFFICE - 1996 - DAY 116

At his desk, Steven leafs through the company finances.

STEVEN (V.O.)

It occurred to me to set up an investment account where the held money would earn interest for the short time that the company had it. We're talking twenty two million at any given time here, so even short term the interest adds up pretty quickly. I'd be making the company millions virtually overnight.

He leans back to think to himself.

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

...and I of course would take a commission. Say... fifty percent. The only problem with that was-- I wasn't the one signing the checks.

117 INT. USAMM OFFICE - 1996 - DAY

117

OPEN CLOSE on a check being signature-stamped with a RUBBER STAMP. A hand places the stamp into a small wooden box and closes it.

CUT WIDE to reveal the hand belongs to VERA, the company accountant and STEVEN is standing over her. It is now we realize we are revisiting an earlier scene.

STEVEN

So I ask, "Don't you think that's a little expensive?" and the lawyer says, "Yes it is, now what's your final question?"

Vera EXPLODES with laughter.

VERA

It's so true. Lawyers!

She turns to a colleague.

VERA (CONT'D)

Annie! Come here, you gotta hear this!

And as ANNIE comes over, Steven's hand moves to the wooden box and secretly plucks the RUBBER STAMP.

118 INT. USAMM - STEVEN'S OFFICE - 1996 - DAY

118

Lindholm raps on the open door as he enters.

LINDHOLM

Steven, we got a problem. Vera lost that stupid rubber stamp again. Her office is a goddamned disaster and she's the o-ring if you know what I'm saying.

STEVEN

(faux)

Oh... how long till we can get a new one?

LINDHOLM

Nope. Time to overhaul the program. I got a computerized system already on order. No more room for pilot error.

Steven hangs his head, visibly disappointed.

LINDHOLM (CONT'D)

Should be up and running in a couple months. I want you signing the checks until then.

Steven brightens up suddenly.

STEVEN

Really?! Great!

LINDHOLM

You play golf?

STEVEN

Uhhh... yeah. Sure.

119

EXT. HOUSTON SUBURB - NEW HOUSE - 1996 - DAY

119

A huge MOVING TRUCK is parked before an impressive house in an upscale neighborhood. MOVERS unload and roll dollies past two matching MERCEDES COUPES.

Steven and Phillip oversee the work- each holding matching MINIATURE PINCERS.

They smile wide. Moments later an OFFSCREEN HONK gets their attention.

They look to see a SPORTING GOODS TRUCK pulling up with two JET-SKIS hitched to a trailer.

PHILLIP

(wowed)

How big was this Christmas bonus?

STEVEN
(covering)
Pretty big.

PHILLIP
In July?

Phillip is slightly suspicious.

120

INT. NEW HOUSE - BEDROOM - 1996 - MORNING

120

In their opulent new bedroom, Steven and Phillip enjoy breakfast in bed as the min-pins prance around them waiting for scraps.

PHILLIP
(mid-story)
The sheriff is desperate and goes to a psychic. All the woman says is rabbit. Rabbit-rabbit-rabbit, that's all. Well he thinks 'bullshit' and he's driving back home and what happens? He sees a rabbit crossing the street in front of him. So he pulls over and follows it into the woods and he finds the missing car. All wrecked and turned over and the girl's inside... still alive.

STEVEN
No.

PHILLIP
I swear. It's in the Ricky Martin People in the bathroom.

Steven smiles and cuddles up.

PHILLIP (CONT'D)
Yeah... they can find out all sorts of stuff, those people.

STEVEN
Mmm hmm...

PHILLIP
They can find out anything about anyone... anything.
(then)
They could even find out something about you...

Steven grows suspicious.

STEVEN

Phillip... what is it?

PHILLIP

It's just-- Is something going on?
Something you're not telling me?

STEVEN

No.

PHILLIP

Because if there is, stop now.

STEVEN

There isn't. There's nothing.

PHILLIP

I don't care about the money, the house,
jet-skis- all I want is you. I just want
us to be together.

STEVEN

We're always going to be together. And
there is nothing going on. I promise.

(then)

I wouldn't lie to you, baby.

Steven stares back and convinces Phillip with a look.
They kiss.

121 INT. USAMM PARKING GARAGE - 1996 - DAY

121

Birkheim emerges from his parked MERCEDES C-CLASS. After
locking it he notices a little smudge and buffs it out
with his handkerchief.

As he admires his car proudly, the building volume of the
MIAMI SOUND MACHINE gets his attention.

He sees as Steven arrives in his NEW and MUCH MORE
IMPRESSIVE SL500 and parks a few spots down.

He watches as Steven tries on several watches and tosses
them back in the glove compartment before settling on one
and exiting the car.

Birkheim raises a brow.

122 INT. USAMM ELEVATOR - 1996 - A SHORT TIME LATER

122

Birkheim and Steven share the elevator.

BIRKHEIM

Nice car.

STEVEN

Thanks, Larry.

BIRKHEIM

Which one is it?

STEVEN

SL. That the C you're driving?

BIRKHEIM

Yeah.

STEVEN

Good car.

BIRKHEIM

Mmm hm.

STEVEN

Good value.

DING! The door opens. Steven exits, leaving a disgruntled Birkheim in his wake.

123 INT. BIRKHEIM'S OFFICE - 1996 - DAY

123

Birkheim pores over spreadsheets, taking notes and comparing numbers. CLOSE UPS on headings like "INTEREST EARNED" and "DEPOSIT" indicate he's looking for something

He continues to make notes, growing ever more suspicious until something catches his eye.

In the margin of one of the pages is a DOODLING of a SMILEY-FACED PENIS.

Birkheim doesn't quite know what to make of this... but it seems to stare at him mockingly.

124 INT. USAMM HALLWAY - 1996 - DAY

124

Steven whistles happily and takes a draw off his coffee mug. As he passes an office, something catches his ear.

BIRKHEIM (O.S.)

I have some questions about these new accounts we've opened.

Steven slows to a stop.

125 INT. BIRKHEIM'S OFFICE - 1996 - CONTINUOUS 125

Birkheim, his back to the door, is on the phone as Steven eavesdrops outside.

BIRKHEIM

Yeah... I was wondering if we could compare some numbers. I know you usually talk to our CFO but this is a delicate matter and I'd like keep it secret for now.

Steven is worried.

126 INT. USAMM CUBICLE - 1996 - DAY 126

OPEN CLOSE on blank copies spitting out of a copier. Steven stands over the machine, his finger on the button as he keeps surveillance on Birkheim's office door.

A SECRETARY arrives with a stack of papers.

SECRETARY

Hi Mister Ru--

STEVEN

I'M MAKING COPIES!!!

She leaves, terrified.

Finally, Steven spots Birkheim leaving his office.

127 INT. BIRKHEIM'S OFFICE - 1996 - DAY 127

Steven runs into Birkheim's office and scans the papers on his desk. Nothing.

He turns his attention to Birkheim's briefcase, but he can't get it open.

Eventually he spots a blank legal pad and looks at it closely. He grabs a pencil and does the old detective trick of shading in the page to reveal what was written on the now missing page above.

The embossed text reads, "837,502.12"

He stares at it a moment. This number looks familiar. He grabs the phone and dials. An AUTOMATED VOICE answers.

AUTOMATED TELLER

Hello, you've reached the Automatic
Teller at Texas Commerce Bank. Please
enter your personal account number
followed by the pound sign.

Steven quickly enters some numbers. As he listens he
flips through Birkheim's desktop calendar.

AUTOMATED TELLER (CONT'D)

Thank you. Your account balance is eight
hundred-thirty seven thousand five
hundred and two dollars and twelve cents.
To repeat this-

It's the SAME NUMBER as on the pad. He hangs up. And
turns his attention to the calendar. He spies an entry
that reads, "Harris County Police, 12:30"

He leaps out of the chair and exits the office.

128 INT. USAMM COPIER ROOM - 1996 - DAY 128

Steven furiously shreds documents in the company's PAPER
SHREDDER. Moments later the same SECRETARY enters the
room with an armload of work- enraging Steven.

STEVEN

CAN'T YOU SEE I'M SHREDDING!?

Terrified, the woman runs away.

129 EXT. BANK - DAY 129

OPEN CLOSE on an ATM keypad as Steven punches some keys
and retrieves a handful of cash. He stuffs it into his
breast pocket and hops back into his SL.

130 INT. DEBBIE'S HOME - NIGHT 130

The phone RINGS. Debbie answers.

DEBBIE

Hello?

131 INT. MERCEDES SL (DRIVING) - GULF FREEWAY, 1996 - DAY 131

INTERCUT. Steven is on the phone while driving with the
top down.

STEVEN

Hey Debbie.

DEBBIE

Steven. How are you?

STEVEN

Good. How's Steffie doing?

DEBBIE

Good. Real good. She sure is your daughter...

STEVEN

She's interested in boys already?

DEBBIE

Ha-ha. How's Phillip?

STEVEN

He's good. He says hi, but listen- I just wanted to call and let you know I'm switching all my phone numbers. I'll let you know when we get a new one.

DEBBIE

Oh Steven, are you on the lam again?

STEVEN

Deb, you always knew me best.

DEBBIE

Steven you really should stop all this, you are such a good man and I know that Jesus has a plan for you.

STEVEN

Well, maybe this is his plan.

DEBBIE

Now don't start.

A CALL-WAITING TONE is heard.

STEVEN

Anyway Debbie- that's my boss calling. I love you both and I'll call you soon.

Steven clicks over to the other line.

STEVEN (CONT'D)

Hello?

132

INT. LINDHOLM'S OFFICE - 1996 - DAY

132

INTERCUT with Lindholm on the phone, with Birkheim in the background, spreadsheets in hand.

LINDHOLM

Steven? Where are you?

STEVEN

The Gulf Freeway. Where are you?

LINDHOLM

At the office. You coming back anytime soon?

STEVEN

Is something wrong?

LINDHOLM

No, we just want to see you Steven. We miss you is what it is.

STEVEN

Oh, that's nice Dan. But I don't think I'm coming back in. I think we both know why.

LINDHOLM

You sure about that Steven?

STEVEN

Bye-bye Dan.

Steven hangs up.

133

INT. NEW HOUSE - 1996 - DAY

133

Steven storms into the house, panting. A worried Phillip comes to greet him.

PHILLIP

People keep calling, what's going on?

Steven starts pulling wads of money out of every available pocket and piling it on the kitchen table.

STEVEN

Nothing. Thought we'd take a little vacation. Key West. Let's pack. Quick! Okay I'll pack for you!

Phillip follows him through the house.

PHILLIP

I fucking knew it- you did do something.
You lied to me! You looked me right in
the eye and lied!

STEVEN

Now don't get angry, it's gonna be fun, I
swear.

PHILLIP

Are you going back to jail? Steven, you
promised we'd always be together!

STEVEN

Of course we are! We're never gonna be
apart. Never.

Steven ducks into the bedroom. Phillip doesn't follow.

PHILLIP

You lying son of a bitch! You took
advantage of my stupid Pollyanna nature!
Just like the rest of them! SON OF A
BITCH!

134 INT. NEW HOUSE BEDROOM - 1996 - CONTINUOUS

134

Steven furiously packs a suitcase, yelling out to Phillip
in the hallway.

STEVEN

We'll get a place. Do some fishing. I can
work on my key lime pie recipe...

Steven picks up the suitcase without zipping it up and
heads back into the hall.

STEVEN (CONT'D)

...I might even grow a beard and enter
the Papa Hemingway contest!

He stops short in the hallway. Phillip is gone.

STEVEN (CONT'D)

Phillip? Honey?

135 EXT. NEW HOUSE - 1996 - DAY

135

Steven bursts from the house still clutching the suitcase
just in time to see Phillip's car rounding the corner.

STEVEN
COME BACK! WAIT!

136 INT. NEW HOUSE - 1996 - DAY 136

He re-enters, emptying the suitcase along the way. He then proceeds to fill it with the cash on the table.

137 EXT. NEW HOUSE - 1996 - DAY 137

Steven exits and heads for his car, but before he can get in-

WHAM! He's grabbed by a group of POLICEMEN. He SQUEALS like a rabbit's death bleat and flails wildly.

This continues for a while until--

SMASH CUT TO:

138 INT. TEXAS STATE PEN HOSPITAL WARD - 1998 - DAY 138

Steven resumes his VOICE OVER in the penitentiary infirmary.

STEVEN (V.O.)
There I was, keeping secrets, living a lie. Like I said, I tend to do that. Now I didn't blame Phillip for running out on me, but I had to make things right. I had to get him back. You see, there's something I didn't tell you...
(beat)
...it's about my old boyfriend. Do you remember him? His name was Jimmy.

CUT TO:

139 INT. PALM BEACH APARTMENT - 1991 - MORNING 139

The Florida sun bathes the bedroom in a heavenly glow, illuminating Jimmy Kemple as he wakes. He opens his eyes to see Steven staring longingly at him.

KEMPLE
What?

Steven just smiles.

KEMPLE (CONT'D)

What?

STEVEN

I love you Jimmy.

Kemple smirks.

KEMPLE

It's only been a month, Steven.

STEVEN

I know.

KEMPLE

Don't fall for me Steven.

STEVEN

Why the hell not?

KEMPLE

You know damn well why.

Steven thinks a moment, but never stops smiling.

STEVEN

I don't give a shit about that.

They kiss.

140 EXT. PALM BEACH HOSPITAL PARKING STRUCTURE - 1992 - DAY 140

FLASHBACK. We're back at the scene where Steven tries to jump in the dumpster. He leaps over the guard rail and--

KEMPLE

STEVEN!

WHAM!!! Steven hits the ground next to the dumpster.

CUT TO:

141 EXT. PALM BEACH HOSPITAL PARKING STRUCTURE - 1992 - DAY 141

A short time later, Steven lies MOANING and delirious. Kemple cradles his head as Debbie and the cop watch nearby.

KEMPLE

You need to do the time. I'll wait for you. I will. I'll wait for you. I promise. I love you. I'll wait for you.

142 INT. MIAMI JAIL - CELL BLOCK - 1993 - DAY 142 *

Steven pushes a cart of food through the block delivering sandwiches to fellow detainees. *

143 INT. MIAMI JAIL - PHONE BANK - 1993 - DAY 143

OPEN CLOSE on fingers dialing a pay phone. Cut wide to reveal it's Steven making a call. *

STEVEN
Hi baby. What do you mean? It's noon. I
always call at noon.
(listens)
Well it's prison honey, it sucks. But I'm
getting used to it. What's wrong?

144 INT. KEMPLE'S MOTHER'S APT, 1993 - DAY - INTERCUT 144

Kemple, on the phone at his mother's home, is INTERCUT.
He looks ill.

KEMPLE
I'm sick.

STEVEN
I know.

KEMPLE
No really sick. You haven't seen me in a
year. You don't know. I just came back
from the doctor. My T-cells are...

He begins to cry.

KEMPLE (CONT'D)
Why did you have to go to jail? How could
you do this to me?

STEVEN
I know, I'm sorry...

KEMPLE
I don't want to die alone.

STEVEN
You're not gonna die alone.

KEMPLE
Yes I am. Who knows how long I have.

STEVEN

You're not gonna die alone, okay? Just believe me.

KEMPLE

You don't know that.

STEVEN

Yes I do. I promise.

He hangs up, tortured by this news. His eyes catch a glimpse of a DETECTIVE exiting the cell block, banging on the GUARD BOOTH glass with his walkie-talkie.

He just stares at the door, long and hard.

145 INT. MIAMI JAIL CORRIDOR - 1994 - DAY

145 *

Steven approaches a section of bars where a BLONDE INMATE is waiting. *

*

STEVEN

Did you get 'em?

BLONDE INMATE

Yeah.

The inmate looks around then shoves a BALL OF CLOTHES through the bars. Steven gives a look. Something upsets him.

STEVEN

What the hell's this?

BLONDE INMATE

It's all I could get.

STEVEN

Jesus!

146 INT. MIAMI JAIL NURSE STATION - 1994 - DAY

146

Dressed in prison orange, Steven walks up to a counter, a paper sack in hand. He holds it up before a HUGE NURSE.

STEVEN

Lunch is served.

As the Nurse goes through the bag, Steven reaches over the counter and swipes a WALKIE TALKIE. He beats a nervous exit.

147 INT. MIAMI JAIL HALLWAY - 1994 - DAY 147

OPEN CLOSE on a MAN'S ASS IN RUBY RED, SKIN TIGHT HOTPANTS.

CUT TO REVEAL Steven walking nervously down the hall clad in said hotpants as well as a tight spaghetti strap top. Walkie Talkie in hand, he tries to give as authoritative an aura as he can.

148 INT. MIAMI JAIL GUARD STATION - 1994 - DAY 148

OPEN CLOSE on a DESK CALENDAR that denotes the date: Friday, May 13th. CUT TO reveal it is in the guard station where TWO GUARDS sit around, bored.

Steven appears on the other side of the glass and TAPS on it confidently with his WALKIE TALKIE.

The guard gives a glance and presses the button without a second thought. A loud BUZZ signals Steven and he goes through a heavy steel door. He turns to the other guard.

GUARD
(shaking head)
Undercover vice...

149 INT. KEMPLE'S MOTHER'S APARTMENT - 1994 - BEDROOM - DAY 149

HELEN KEMPLE brings a tray of toast and water into the bedroom where Steven sits over Kemple's rapidly deteriorating body.

KEMPLE
Thanks Mom.

She kisses both Jimmy and Steven.

HELEN
I'll be in the other room.

She exits. Steven tries to give Kemple some water. Kemple resists.

STEVEN
Come on. You need to drink something.

Kemple meekly hands Steven his stainless steel ROLEX.

KEMPLE
I want you to have this because I'm gonna be leaving soon...

STEVEN

Well that's not okay with me baby. You can't leave. I need you around here. You're the love of my life.

KEMPLE

You're sweet... but no, I'm not.

STEVEN

Shhhh...

KEMPLE

I'm not. I've seen him. You haven't met him yet, but you will...

Steven is perplexed.

KEMPLE (CONT'D)

You're gonna be so happy. And I know you don't think so, but you deserve to be happy...

STEVEN

You're not thinking clearly baby.

KEMPLE

Yes I am... And you have to promise me... When you find him, you're gonna treat him right... okay?

Steven gives in gently.

STEVEN

Okay, okay. Now drink some water.

KEMPLE

Treat him right.

150

INT. KEMPLE'S MOTHER'S APARTMENT - 1994 - CONTINUOUS

150

Helen is on the couch, watching the TV news as OJ Simpson is apprehended. It isn't long before a KNOCK on the door gets her attention. She gets up.

HELEN

Who is it?

She reaches for the door and-- SMASH!! The door bursts open.

SMASH CUT TO:

151 EXT. KEMPLE'S MOTHER'S APARTMENT BUILDING 1994 - DAY 151

Steven is dragged kicking and SCREAMING to a squad car by a group of POLICEMEN.

STEVEN
NO! JUST GIVE ME SOME TIME! I PROMISED!
I PROMISED I'D BE THERE! I PROMISED HE
WOULDN'T DIE ALONE!

And as he futilely fights--

152 INT. TEXAS STATE PEN, STEVEN'S CELL - 1994 - DAY 152

A CLAXON BLARES and the cell door slides OPEN with metallic ROAR, revealing a very impatient Steven with a few days stubble on his face.

STEVEN
It's about damn time!

He rushes out.

153 INT. TEXAS STATE PEN - PHONE BANK - 1994 - DAY 153

Steven hurries to the phone and dials. He nervously awaits an answer. Then-

STEVEN
Hi Helen it's me. Is--

He's interrupted and proceeds to listen. The look on his face says it all.

STEVEN (CONT'D)
Okay... mmm hmm...

Through the glass wall outside the phone room, we watch as Steven continues to absorb the bad news.

He hangs up the phone and falls to pieces as the CACOPHONY of the prison masks any sound of his grief.

BACK TO:

154 I/E NEW HOUSE, 1996 - HOUSTON POLICE CRUISER - DAY 154

OPEN CLOSE ON the stainless steel ROLEX. WE'RE BACK outside Steven and Phillip's house in a POLICE CRUISER. Steven stares at it, reflecting on his memory of Kemple.

STEVEN (V.O.)
I'm sorry I didn't tell you before. I
just don't like talking about some
things.

The door opens and a COP hands him a black LEATHERETTE
CASE.

COP
This what you wanted?

STEVEN
Oh thanks.

COP
Diabetes huh?

STEVEN
Yeah...

The cop gets in and they drive off.

155 INT. HOUSTON POLICE CRUISER - 1996 - A SHORT TIME LATER 155

The COPS ride up front, not paying much attention to
their passenger.

In the REAR, Steven nervously and quietly prepares an
INSULIN SYRINGE and inexpertly INJECTS IT in his belly.

STEVEN (V.O.)
I wasn't going to lose Phillip. No way.
I broke Jimmy's heart and I was not gonna
break Phillip's. I was gonna make
everything alright. No matter what it
took, I was going to escape.

He gives a quick look around and prepares another
syringe. After another injection, he prepares another.

And then ANOTHER and ANOTHER...

156 INT. HOUSTON POLICE CRUISER - 1996 - A SHORT TIME LATER 156

The DRIVING COP watches the road blankly until his nose
catches a putrid scent in the air.

DRIVING COP
Fuck... what is that?

The other cop smells it too. They begin to look around.

The Driving Cop glances back to see Steven CONVULSING AND FROTHING AT THE MOUTH like a rabid bobble head doll.

DRIVING COP (CONT'D)

Fuck!

They turn around.

COP

Ahh! He shit himself! Get us to the hospital!

The SIREN WAILS.

157 INT. HOUSTON HOSPITAL ROOM - 1996 - DAY

157

Steven wakes up in a hospital bed. A little bleary at first, his eyes scan the room. He's alone.

He sits up, pleased and very excited. He pulls out his IV, hops out of bed and heads for the window when-

CLANG! He stops short to find his ankle is shackled to the bed.

STEVEN

Shit!

The door opens and the Cop peers his head in. He looks back to his unseen partner.

COP

He's up.

158 INT. HARRIS COUNTY JAIL, HOUSTON - 1996 - DAY

158

Three manacled PRISONERS, one of them Steven, follow a CORRECTIONS OFFICER into the Processing Area at the Harris County Jail.

Each of the men are still in their street clothes and manacled separately.

CORRECTIONS OFFICER

Take a seat.

They take a seat on a bench outside a large steel door as the officer talks to a PROCESSING CLERK. Steven is visibly agitated and ignores the other men on the bench with him.

The FIRST PRISONER turns to the SECOND PRISONER.

FIRST PRISONER
What'd they get you for?

SECOND PRISONER
Grand Theft. You?

FIRST PRISONER
B and E.

The Second Prisoner turns to Steven...

SECOND PRISONER
How about you?

...but STEVEN IS GONE. The man looks around.

Across the room, Steven stands in an elevator amidst a group of lackadaisical JANITORS, clutching a mop. The prisoner watches in awe as the doors CLOSE.

159 INT. HARRIS COUNTY JAIL, HOUSTON - 1996 - LATER 159 *

The elevator doors OPEN to reveal Steven, not with the janitors, but with a GROUP OF OFFICERS-- re-emerging from the elevator and back into the processing area. *

The LEAD OFFICER talks to the clerk. *

LEAD OFFICER
This slippery son of a bitch is going straight to lockup.

Steven heaves a sigh.

160 INT. HARRIS COUNTY JAIL PHONE BANKS, 1996 - DAY 160

Steven, in a fresh prison jumpsuit, paces while talking on the phone.

STEVEN
C'mon Phillip, pick up, it's me. I'm sorry. C'mon.
(then)
Dammit!

He hangs up. A nearby inmate chimes in.

NEW CELLMATE
How long you in for?

STEVEN

Not long.

(picks up phone)

Can you hit me in the face with this?

And off the inmate's quizzened expression--

161 INT. HARRIS COUNTY JAIL - 1996 - INFIRMARY - DAY 161

OPEN CLOSE on Steven's BLOODY FACE. A PRISON PHYSICIAN is examining it closely. We notice Steven is wearing WHITE SCRUBS (as opposed to the doctor who wears GREEN SCRUBS).

PHYSICIAN

That's a pretty big gash. Just stay still...

STEVEN

It sure hurts...

As Steven talks and the doctor looks, Steven stealthily plucks the doctor's ID BADGE and slips it in his pocket.

162 INT. HARRIS COUNTY JAIL CELL - 1996 - DAY 162

Steven finishes filling the sink in his cell and pulls out a GREEN MAGIC MARKER. He breaks it open and drips the ink into the water.

And as the water turns GREEN, Steven removes his white scrubs and plunges them in the sink.

163 INT. HARRIS COUNTY JAIL GUARD STATION - 1996 - NIGHT 163

The NIGHT GUARD watches his monitors when a rap on the glass gets his attention. He looks up to see Steven in newly (and badly) dyed GREEN SCRUBS, awaiting exit on the other side, holding the stolen ID BADGE against the glass.

NIGHT GUARD

'night Doc.

He pushes the buzzer and Steven pushes open the door.

164 EXT. TEXAS MOTEL - 1996 - DAY 164

Seven State and Local police cruisers sit in the parking lot, a shirtless Steven is removed from his motel room by a pair of OFFICERS. His skin is stained green but his expression is pure resolve.

*

165 INT. HOUSTON COURTROOM - 1996 - DAY 165

OPEN CLOSE on a GAVEL striking. Steven stands before the judge flanked by his attorney and a bailiff.

HOUSTON JUDGE
Set bail at 900,000 dollars.

ATTORNEY
Your honor...

STEVEN
Nine hundred thousand!? It's a white collar charge.

ATTORNEY
Your honor-

The judge begins FILLING OUT A FORM. He barely looks up at them.

HOUSTON JUDGE
Mister Russell is a flight risk. The bond is set. Nine hundred thousand.

STEVEN
This is bullshit.
(sotto to attorney)
Set a reduction hearing.

ATTORNEY
(off this)
Your honor we'd like to set a reduction hearing.

HOUSTON JUDGE
That's your right, but I strongly advise you don't.

The judge finishes filling out the form and PLACES IT AT THE EDGE OF HIS BENCH for Steven to see.

It clearly reads his bail amount, his charge, everything. As the Attorney PRATTLES ON in the background, Steven just STARES AT THE FORM LONG AND HARD.

HOUSTON JUDGE (CONT'D)

Fine. You can have your hearing tomorrow.

Steven interjects.

STEVEN

(sotto to Lawyer)

Next week.

The attorney looks at him quizzically and turns back to the judge.

ATTORNEY

We'd like next week if that's okay.

STEVEN

(sotto)

On the thirteenth.

ATTORNEY

Oh the thirteenth if possible.

HOUSTON JUDGE

Fine. Friday the thirteenth. Now go away.

166 INT. HARRIS COUNTY JAIL CELLS - 1996 - NIGHT

166 *

A block of holding cells well stocked with men waiting on the legal system.

We soon come upon Steven who is furiously SKETCHING OUT A COPY of the form from the judge's bench from memory.

167 INT. HOUSTON APARTMENT (TYLER) - 1996 - DAY

167

OPEN CLOSE on an opened envelope next to Steven's sketch and a letter.

STEVEN (V.O.)

Dearest Tyler. Long time no talk. I won't beat around the bush. I got into a spot of trouble here in Houston and find myself needing help. That's right, jail again. Anyway I was wondering if you could type up this thing for me on your computer just like I sketched out...

As Steven 'reads' the letter we reveal a MAN hacking away on a computer nearby. As we move closer, we see that he's the MOUSTACHED MAN from the night of his car crash and he's not wearing pants.

168 INT. HARRIS COUNTY JAIL CELL - 1996 - DAY 168 *

Steven opens a letter and pulls out the FORGED FORM.

STEVEN

Great!

He grabs a pen and begins filling it out.

169 INT. HOUSTON COURTHOUSE CORRIDOR - 1996 - DAY 169

Manacled to a line of prisoners, Steven shuffles through a crowded hallway. Courthouse staff are everywhere.

Steven spots a HARRIED woman approaching with an armful of paperwork.

He reaches into his jumpsuit and pulls out the FORGED DOCUMENT and as she passes- HE DROPS IT.

STEVEN

Ma'am?!

The woman turns back, annoyed.

STEVEN (CONT'D)

Dropped something.

She picks it up and puts it on her pile. He smiles as he watches her walk away.

170 INT. HARRIS COUNTY JAIL PHONE BANK, 1996- DAY 170 *

Steven dials the phone.

171 INT. HOUSTON COURTHOUSE - CLERKS OFFICE, 1996 - DAY 171

INTERCUT, a CLERK answers her RINGING PHONE. Her desk CALENDAR reads: "Friday the 13th"

CLERK

This is Julie.

Steven puts on his best SOUTHERN BELLE VOICE.

STEVEN

(as woman)

Hi, I have Judge Charles Hearn for the clerk's office.

CLERK

Alright.

STEVEN

I'll put him through.

Steven switches to an authoritative JUDGE VOICE.

STEVEN (CONT'D)

(gruff)

This the clerk's office?

CLERK

It is.

STEVEN

Charles Hearn- I got a bail adjustment coming through, sent it over today.

CLERK

Sure thing. What's the name?

STEVEN

Russell. Steven Jay.

CLERK

Got it right here.

STEVEN

Good, I need that to go through right away. Because if it don't, I'm gonna have to chug about a quart of Tidee Bowl on account of all the shit I'll be eating. Know what I mean?

Julie GIGGLES.

CLERK

You got it Judge.

STEVEN

And say- Julie? Can you save me a dime and connect me to a good bail bondsman?

JULIE

Sure thing.

172

EXT. GALVESTON HOUSE - 1996 - DAY

172

A LIMOUSINE pulls up outside a modest Galveston house. The CHAUFFEUR opens the door and Steven emerges dressed in new linen suit and clutching champagne and flowers.

He approaches the door and just as he's about to knock--

PHILLIP (O.S.)

Go away Steven!

Steven is surprised.

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

You think I didn't know you were coming!?

STEVEN

Phillip-

PHILLIP (O.S.)

Get the hell out of here! I'm done with you!

STEVEN

Don't say that.

PHILLIP (O.S.)

They probably have a psychic after you right now! Did you see any bunnies!?

STEVEN

Honey, I know you're upset- but we love each other.

PHILLIP (O.S.)

You opened a bank account for Doctor Phillip Morris! Now they think I'm in on everything! I'm facing real time! You know I can't go back to prison.

STEVEN

I'm sorry about that- they weren't supposed to find that. It was for your own good. So we could be together.

PHILLIP (O.S.)

Fuck off! I'm in enough trouble.

STEVEN

C'mon Phillip, just trust me-

PHILLIP (O.S.)

FUCK YOU YOU FUCKING LIAR! Do you realize how bad you've fucked me over!! You made me an accomplice! You fucking liar! I don't want to see you. Go away! I never want to see you again!

STEVEN

Phillip don't say that.

No response.

STEVEN (CONT'D)
Well what am I supposed to do?

PHILLIP (O.S.)
You're the lawyer, you figure it out.

This time, it's Steven who remains silent.

PHILLIP (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Oh my God...

THE DOOR SWINGS OPEN, revealing a SEETHING PHILLIP.

PHILLIP (CONT'D)
You're not even a lawyer?! You fucking
liar!

STEVEN
Well...

He slams the door shut again.

PHILLIP (O.S.)
What the hell's going on?! Who the hell
are you!?

STEVEN
Open the door Phillip.

PHILLIP (O.S.)
No.

Steven walks up to the door and pleads gently.

STEVEN
(quietly)
Open the door. Just open the door.
(beat)
Open the door. Please. I just want to
say one thing. Please. Just one thing.
That's all. Please.

A long silence. Steven waits longer than he should with
the certainty that it will open. And eventually it
does... slowly and tentatively.

Through the screen door, their eyes are just inches
apart. Steven looks into Phillip's soul. He opens his
mouth and--

SWAT COMMANDER (O.S.)
Down on the ground faggots!!

*

Steven and Phillip are shocked to see a small SWAT team surrounding the front porch with automatic weapons.

SWAT COMMANDER (CONT'D)

DOWN! DOWN! NOW!

And as they comply and the armed men descend--

173

INT. GALVESTON POLICE STATION - 1996 - DAY

173

Steven and Phillip sit manacled, side by side. They stare at the floor in miserable uncomfortable silence.

STEVEN

Phillip?

PHILLIP

Don't.

STEVEN

I love you.

No response. Phillip can only sit and stew. And stew. Until finally, he's had enough.

PHILLIP

From the moment we met, you've done nothing but lie. Our whole relationship... just lies. I'm such an asshole. You took advantage of me- just like all the rest of them. You were supposed to protect me- but you've done nothing but make a fool of me. And you expect me to love you? How can I love you? I don't even know who you are. And you know what's sad? I don't even think you know who you are. So how am I supposed to love something that don't even exist? You tell me.

Eventually a POLICEMAN stands before Phillip.

POLICEMAN (O.S.)

Morris. You're up.

*

Before he stands up, Phillip manages a terse statement.

PHILLIP

I will never forgive you Steven. Never.

Steven is speechless as he watches Phillip walk away-
disappearing down a long corridor.

SLOW DISSOLVE TO WHITE:

STEVEN (V.O.)

That was the last time I ever saw him.

174 INT. TX STATE PEN, 1997 - CELL BLOCK - DAY 174 *

PHILLIP carries his belongings past a line of hulking,
cat-calling convicts.

STEVEN (V.O.)

...But I knew he was right. Phillip,
Jimmy, Debbie- they've all been right.
My whole life was nothing but a bunch of
lies. Lies to make people love me, lies
to keep them from leaving me and lies to
make them give me their money.

He enters his cell. *

175 INT. TX STATE PEN, 1997 - MICHAEL UNIT BLOCK- DAY 175 *

Steven carries his belongings to his new cell in Michael
Unit. *

STEVEN (V.O.)

And in the process I lost track of who I
was. Maybe Brenda Basham had me pegged
right from the beginning and that's why
she gave me up...

175A INT. TX STATE PEN - MICHAEL UNIT CELL, 1995 - DAY 175A *

Steven stares at his distorted face in the polished metal
MIRROR in his cell. *

STEVEN (V.O.) *

Whatever the case, how does a person who
doesn't exist go on existing? Well the
answer is- he doesn't.

176 OMITTED 176 *

177 INT. TEXAS STATE PEN, 1997 - MICHAEL UNIT CELL - NIGHT 177 *
Steven is curled up in a ball in his cell, SOBBING as he
stares at a SNAPSHOT of Phillip in Key West pasted to the *
wall.

BUNKMATE (O.S.)
Shut the fuck up, I'm trying to sleep.

178 INT. TEXAS STATE PENITENTIARY CAFETERIA, 1997 - DAY 178
Steven sits over an untouched tray of food, staring at it
detached. He looks thin. Pale.

179 INT. TEXAS STATE PEN, 1997 - MICHAEL UNIT CELL - NIGHT 179 *
Steven kneels over the toilet in his cell. The sound of
PUKING reverberates.

180 INT. TEXAS STATE PEN, 1998 - MICHAEL UNIT CELL - MORNING 180 *
Months later, Steven sits up in his bed. He now has a
grey beard and with his shirt off we can see he has lost
an unhealthy amount of weight.

181 INT. TEXAS STATE PEN, 1998 INFIRMARY - DAY 181
OPEN CLOSE on the gaunt and grey-skinned Steven. A MALE
NURSE places a thermometer in his mouth and looks at
Steven's medical history. He looks concerned.

MALE NURSE
I'll be right back.

182 INT. TEXAS STATE PEN, 1998 - INFIRMARY OFFICE - DAY 182
Steven sits before a YOUNG PRISON DOCTOR who looks
through his records.

YOUNG DOCTOR
I'm sorry to have to tell you this
Steven, your t-cell counts indicate that,
uh... Well... you have AIDS.

Steven sits expressionless.

STEVEN
How long do I have?

And off the Doctor's grave face--

DISSOLVE TO:

183 EXT. SKY - 1966 - DAY

183

CLOUDS drift slowly across the sky.

The OPENING SCENE again- the kids lying on the hill,
staring at the clouds. Young Steven smiling at the sight.

A dull WHINE is heard, building until--

SMASH CUT TO:

184 INT. TEXAS STATE PEN HOSPITAL WARD - 1998 - DAY

184

The first hospital scene in the movie. The cardio ALARM
blares. Steven watches from his bed as a DOCTOR appears
and pushes the nurses aside.

DOCTOR

Where's the crash cart!?

He straddles the patient's chest and pushes down hard-
the sound of a sternum CRACKING can be heard.

STEVEN (V.O.)

So here we are, where you first met me...

CUT TO:

185 INT. TEXAS STATE PEN HOSPITAL WARD - 1998 - LATER

185

A sheet is pulled over the cardio victim's corpse and
Steven watches as it is wheeled out of the ward.

He returns his bleary gaze to the ceiling.

STEVEN (V.O.)

I've been in this bed for months now.
Waiting to die. The only thing that keeps
me going is the thought that I might get
a chance to see Phillip one more time.

(beat)

But I don't know how much longer I can do
this...

Steven's eyes roll back into his head as he slips into
unconsciousness.

186 INT. TEXAS STATE PEN, 1998 - CELL - DAY

186 *

A slightly built, effeminate inmate (SAMUEL) raps on Phillip's open cell door as he enters.

SAMUEL

Got a minute?

PHILLIP

Samuel. You want some crackers?

SAMUEL

No... thanks. Look- I just talked to my friend- he's a nurse at the infirmary, in the AIDS ward. I don't know if you know this or not but uh...

Phillip looks to him with curiosity.

SMASH CUT TO:

187 INT. TEXAS STATE PEN, 1998 - INFIRMARY ENTRANCE - DAY

187

Phillip flails as GUARDS hold him back from a DOCTOR.

PHILLIP

LET ME IN! Just let me in!

DOCTOR

He's not here!

PHILLIP

I need to see him!

DOCTOR

I told you he's not here! You need to calm down.

Phillip calms himself.

PHILLIP

Just tell me where he is. What happened?

DOCTOR

He slipped into a coma for a few days. He's conscious now, but he's very sick. We had him transferred to a private care facility. There was nothing we could do for him here. It's just a matter of time now.

Phillip listens in devastated silence.

188

EXT. RESTFUL ACRES CARE CENTER - 1998 - DAY

188

Steven looks worse than ever in his semi-private bed, looking out the window at the clouds with a catatonic gaze.

He's at peace. It is the moment of his death.

CARETAKER (O.S.)

Steven?

Death will have to wait another few moments. A nurse leans over him as he tries to focus.

CARETAKER (CONT'D)

Steven? Someone wants to talk to you.
He keeps calling. He's driving us crazy.

Steven can't respond. The nurse picks up the phone.

CARETAKER (CONT'D)

(into phone)
Okay you can put him through.

She puts the phone to Steven's ear. He can muster only a few words.

STEVEN

(wisp)
I didn't want you to find out...

189

INT. TEXAS STATE PENITENTIARY PHONE BANK - 1998- DAY

189

Phillip is INTERCUT with the helpless Steven.

PHILLIP

Steven. Oh God... Why didn't you write me? I don't know how this happened, they say I'm fine. Oh God, who did this?

(then)

It doesn't matter. I had to talk to you Steven.

(tearing up)

I am still angry with you, but I need you to know something. Even if sometimes I don't know who you are, I love you. I never stopped loving you.

(smiles)

You and me are just fools for love I guess- written in the stars or some crap like that.

(tears)

(MORE)

PHILLIP (CONT'D)

But it was never better, never more real
than with you Steven. I realize now that
all that crazy shit you did- in your
fucked up way- it was always for me.
Always for us. You are the most amazing
man Steven. It takes my breath away. And
even though I can't be with you now, I
will always be yours... Forever.

He steels himself as best he can.

PHILLIP (CONT'D)

Now if you have to go, go. It's okay.
I'm right there. Okay? I'm right there.

Tears surface again. He chokes back a sob.

190 INT. RESTFUL ACRES CARE CENTER - 1998 - CONTINUOUS 190

As a single tear runs down Steven's face, the nurse puts
the phone on the hook and leaves.

Steven lies motionless. He gazes out the window to the
passing clouds in the sky. It's time.

DISSOLVE TO:

191 INT. TX STATE PEN, 1998 - CELLBLOCK - DAY 191 *

Samuel walks past cell after cell with a grave look in
his eyes. Eventually he arrives at Phillip's cell to
find him sitting on his bunk.

SAMUEL

Phillip...?

Phillip looks up.

SAMUEL (CONT'D)

Uh- my friend in the infirmary... Uh,
they got a call from that long term care
place and uh, well a few days ago Steven-
(then)
...I'm so sorry Phillip.

Phillip nods as it washes over him. He sends Samuel on
his way with a look. Once he's alone, Phillip lets go
and SOBS.

He buries his face in his pillow. After a long while-

CLANG. A sound gets his attention. A BOSSY GUARD stands at the door of his cell.

BOSSY GUARD
Morris. Come with me.

Phillip composes himself and follows the guard out.

192 INT. TEXAS STATE PENITENTIARY CORRIDOR - 1998 - DAY 192

The guard leads Phillip down the corridor. Still coming out of his mournful haze, he becomes curious. They arrive at a door marked, "MEETING ROOM 2".

PHILLIP
Where are we going?

BOSSY GUARD
Your lawyer's here.

He swings open the door to reveal STEVEN, alive and well and wearing a thrift store suit.

Phillip is aghast, frozen.

STEVEN (V.O.)
Did I forget to mention I didn't die? Yeah,
I didn't die. Faked the whole thing.

SMASH CUT TO:

193 INT. TEXAS STATE PEN, 1997 - MICHAEL UNIT CELL - NIGHT 193 *

FLASHBACK. Steven is curled up in a ball, sobbing as he stares at a picture of Phillip pasted to the wall.

BUNKMATE (O.S.)
Shut the fuck up, I'm trying to sleep.

STEVEN
Fuck you. I got a broken heart here.

We see now his Bunkmate is Cleavon.

CLEAVON
Well then do something about it mother
fucker- 'stead of crying like Whitney
Houston looking for her crack pipe.

Steven takes his kind words to heart.

STEVEN

Yeah I know...

CLEAVON

Damn right. Love creates miracles
motherfucker. Ain't you ever read the
Bible? So get off your ass and go forth
unto the Canaanites you faggot bitch.

Steven returns his gaze to Phillip's photo.

STEVEN

When you're right you're right Cleavon...

Long pause.

CLEAVON

Wanna suck me off?

STEVEN

No thanks.

CLEAVON

Well sweet dreams then.

STEVEN (V.O.)

Lying there in all my misery, I had a
moment of clarity. It became clear to me-
I had to get to Phillip. No matter what.
Even if it meant dying...

194

INT. TEXAS STATE PEN, 1997 - CAFETERIA - DAY

194

FLASHBACK. Steven sits over an untouched tray of food,
staring at it detached.

STEVEN (V.O.)

Faking your death from AIDS is no easy
task, believe me. But after watching
Jimmy die, I thought I could make it
convincing. First, you have to starve
yourself- I ate half as much every day
for ten months. After that, you have to
fake all sorts of symptoms.

195

INT. TEXAS STATE PEN, 1997 - MICHAEL UNIT CELL- NIGHT

195

*

FLASHBACK. Steven kneels over the toilet in his cell,
sticking his finger down his throat until he pukes.

STEVEN (V.O.)
You gotta keep this up for months until
you lose about, say, 80 pounds.

196 INT. TEXAS STATE PEN, 1998 - MICHAEL UNIT CELL - MORNING 196 *

FLASHBACK. Months later, Steven sits up in his bed. He now has a grey beard and with his shirt off we can see he has lost an unhealthy amount of weight.

STEVEN (V.O.)
But the hardest part is falsifying your
records.

197 INT. TX STATE PEN, 1998 - MICHAEL UNIT CELL(LAWRENCE) DAY 197 *

Steven enters an inmate's cell (LAWRENCE) with a BIG BAG OF COFFEE.

STEVEN
Hey Lawrence- you still work in the
infirmary?

LAWRENCE
Mmm hmm...

Steven holds up a three pound BAG OF COFFEE.

STEVEN
You like coffee?

198 INT. TEXAS STATE PEN, 1998 - INFIRMARY OFFICE - DAY 198

Lawrence sweeps up in an empty office. He looks to see if the coast is clear and bolts for some file cabinets.

After some searching, Lawrence pulls out a file entitled "Russell, Steven A". Reading from a scrap of paper, he scrawls something with a pen.

Lawrence then reaches into his pants and pulls out some forged forms- stuffing them into the folder.

199 INT. TEXAS STATE PEN, 1998 - INFIRMARY - DAY 199

FLASHBACK. OPEN CLOSE on the gaunt and grey-skinned Steven. A MALE NURSE places a thermometer in his mouth and looks at Phillip's medical history.

CLOSE ON THE FILE- a doctor's entry reads "HIV+ since 91"
A few flips of the pages reveal FORGED BLOOD TEST
DOCUMENTS. Buzzwords like T-CELL COUNTS and other terms
catch the Nurse's eye.

He looks concerned.

MALE NURSE
I'll be right back.

200 INT. TEXAS STATE PEN, 1998 - INFIRMARY EXAM ROOM - DAY 200 *

FLASHBACK. Steven sits before a YOUNG PRISON DOCTOR who
looks through his records.

YOUNG DOCTOR
...you have AIDS.

Steven sits expressionless.

STEVEN
How long do I have?

And off the Doctor's grave face--

201 INT. TEXAS STATE PENITENTIARY HOSPITAL WARD - 1998 - DAY201

Steven lays in his hospital bed. A FAT NURSE puts a pill
in his mouth and follows it with some water. She exits.

Once she's clear, Steven reaches into his mouth and pulls
out the pill. He secretly places it into a small HOLE in
his mattress for safe keeping.

202 INT. TEXAS STATE PENITENTIARY HOSPITAL WARD - 1998 - DAY202

FLASHBACK. Again, we are at the first hospital scene of
the movie. The cardio ALARM blares. Steven watches as a
DOCTOR appears and pushes the nurses aside.

DOCTOR
Where's the crash cart!?

He straddles the patient's chest and pushes down hard-
the sound of a sternum CRACKING can be heard.

With the staff distracted, Steven reaches into his
mattress hole and pulls out scores of pills. He stuffs
them into his mouth as fast as he can.

STEVEN (V.O.)

But the hardest part by far is getting transferred to a private care facility. It's standard procedure for late stage patients, but convincing them I was about to die would involve taking a few risks.

He chases the pills down with a glass of water.

203 EXT. RESTFUL ACRES CARE CENTER, 1998 - DAY 203

Steven is helped from a corrections van into a wheelchair outside the Restful Acres facility.

STEVEN (V.O.)

After a four day coma, they were convinced.

204 INT. RESTFUL ACRES CARE CENTER, 1998 - DAY 204

In his bed at the care facility, Steven looks around and picks up the phone. He talks with a FOREIGN ACCENT.

STEVEN

This is Doctor Rios from the Hamblin Center, Houston. I'm looking for AIDS patients for a study we're...

And as he talks--

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

And once I got settled in, I just called the Department of Corrections and convinced them I was a state-sponsored doctor looking for late stage AIDS patients for an experimental treatment.

(then)

As luck would have it, they had one patient that was eligible...

Steven continues his Dr. Rios imitation on the phone.

STEVEN

Oh you do? Steven Russell? Could you spell that?

CAMERA SETTLES on a nearby CALENDAR. It reads: "MONDAY, JANUARY 5"

MATCH DISSOLVE TO:

205 INT. RESTFUL ACRES CARE CENTER, 1998 - DAY 205

The calendar reads "FRIDAY, MARCH 13" An ORDERLY enters with a WHEELCHAIR.

ORDERLY
Mister Russell, the clinic sent a taxi
here to pick you up.

206 I/E. RESTFUL ACRES CARE CENTER, 1998 - DAY 206 *

Later that day, Steven is helped out of his wheelchair into a waiting taxi.

STEVEN (V.O.)
And for all that time- all those doctors,
all those nurses and all those
facilities... not one of them ever
thought to give me an AIDS test...

The door SLAMS and off he drives.

STEVEN (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Fucking Texas...

207 INT. TAXI, 1998 - DAY 207

Once clear, Steven speaks to the driver.

STEVEN
I had a special request when I ordered
the cab. Did they tell you?

TAXI DRIVER
Yeah- right here.

He lifts a GREASY BROWN BAG into view.

STEVEN
Thank God.

Steven grabs it and begins to gorge himself on BURGERS.

STEVEN (V.O.) (CONT'D)
A week later, the hospice was to get a
call from Doctor Rios, telling them
Steven Russell had died undergoing
treatment. And after all that hard work
dying? Where's the first place I go?

208

INT. TEXAS STATE PEN MEETING ROOM, 1998 - DAY

208

BACK TO MEETING ROOM. Phillip stands frozen before Steven

STEVEN (V.O.)

Funny, huh?

The guard pushes Phillip past the threshold. The door
SLAMS SHUT behind him.

He staggers toward Steven as a kaleidoscope of emotions
plays across his face. Bewilderment, relief, sorrow, joy
and finally, anger-

WHACK! He slaps Steven across the face.

PHILLIP

You're such a fucker!

STEVEN

I know- I'm sorry- You weren't supposed
to find out.

PHILLIP

Well I did!

STEVEN

I couldn't take a chance telling you. You
know that. I couldn't. But Phillip, I
only did it so I could get here to you.

(then)

Just to talk to you. And here I am.

Phillip tries to take this to heart. After a moment...

PHILLIP

You're so skinny.

STEVEN

I'm fine. Just hungry.

PHILLIP

Steven I don't-

STEVEN

Wait. Listen. I just came here to tell
you one thing and that's it. You don't
have to take me back, I just want to say
one thing.

Phillip is listening.

STEVEN (CONT'D)

I know you thought we were nothing but a lie- but underneath all those lies there was always something that was real. I thought about what you said to me. You said you don't know who I am. But I have to tell you- I know now. I know who I am. I mean- I'm not a lawyer, I'm not a CFO, I'm not a cop. Hell I'm not even an escape artist. Those Steven Russells are dead. And now, all that's left is the man that loves you. That's all. Nothing else. I'm just the man that loves you.

(then)

And if you can see that... believe it... then I promise I'll never be anything else ever again.

A LONG, LONG SILENCE. Phillip looks to him.

PHILLIP

How do I know you're not bullshitting me again?

Steven pauses. He looks Phillip square in the eye.

STEVEN

You don't.

And as Phillip stares at him-

CUT TO BLACK:

A long SILENCE. Then finally...

FADE IN:

209 INT. TEXAS COURTHOUSE CORRIDOR - 1998 - DAY 209

At a window, a CLERK stamps a few documents and hands them to Steven, who is dressed in his lawyer attire.

Steven exits the line and ducks into a nearby bathroom.

210 INT. TEXAS COURTHOUSE MEN'S ROOM - 1998 - DAY 210

At the urinal, Steven whistles to himself.

SUPER: "Steven Russell was arrested two weeks later trying to secure Phillip's release."

Steven turns his head to find the man at the next urinal staring at him. It's a very surprised Birkheim with a badge affixed to his jacket reading, "JUROR".

Steven SMILES at him.

211 INT. TEXAS COURTROOM - 1999 - DAY 211

Steven sits in court while a FEMALE D.A. argues her case.

SUPER: "An embarrassment to the State of Texas and Governor George Bush, Steven was given an unprecedented life sentence."

She nods to the audience where Lindholm sits smiling.

SUPER: "Coincidentally, the D.A. who prosecuted him was the Sister in law of Dan Lindholm- Steven's former boss"

212 INT. LOCKDOWN CELL, 1999 - NIGHT 212

Steven smiles wide, shackled in a solitary 6 by 7 cell.

SUPER: "Steven sits in 23 hour-a-day lockdown, with only one hour a day for supervised showers and exercise."

Steven stares at his Key West CALENDAR with a small photo of Phillip attached to it.

The cell brightens, everything around Steven blooms with white light. He looks to see.

213 EXT. OCEAN - DAY 213

STEVEN'S POV. Phillip also enveloped in white light, sits on the bow of staring at him with a smile.

Steven smiles back.

FADE TO BLACK.

SUPER: "On average, there are 1.7 Friday the 13ths a year."

214 EXT. TEXAS STATE PENITENTIARY - DAY 214

A SIREN BLARES over a wide of the facility. Small in frame, we see Steven running from the prison gaining ground on the two guards chasing him.

THE END