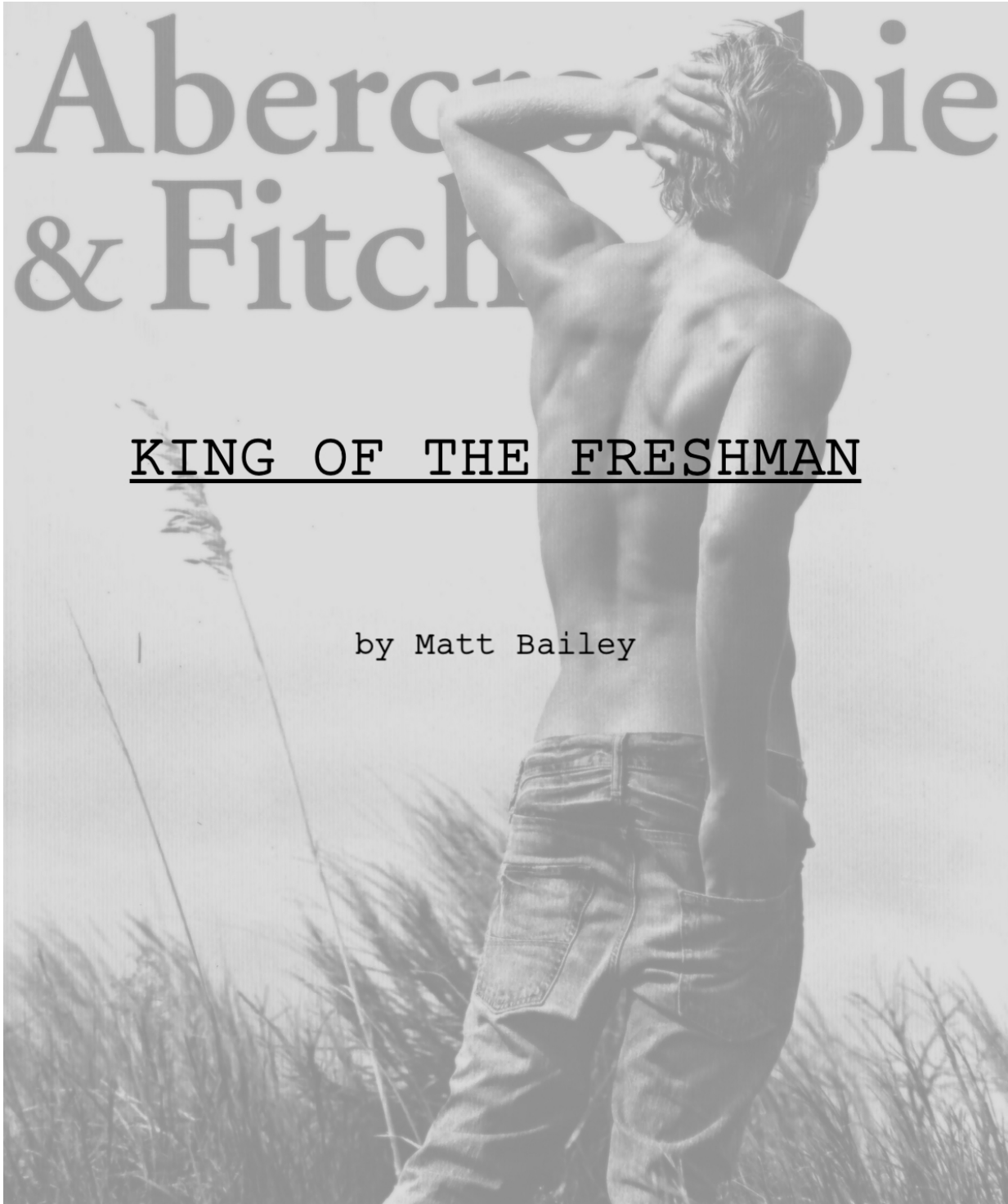


VERVE



Adam Rejwan



Abercrombie & Fitch

KING OF THE FRESHMAN

by Matt Bailey

25 June 2024

OVER BLACK

Birdsong. Blue Birds and Warblers. Apparently mating season.

FADE UP ON:

INSERT - Abercrombie & Fitch PROMOTIONAL VIDEO

A tiny AMERICAN FLAG. Frayed edges waving in the wind. Colors faded from too many years in the sun. Kind of hard to tell, because we're in BLACK & WHITE.

The flag is secured to a post, part of a wooden dock that stretches out over a calm, undisturbed lake. Pure Americana.

IN SLOW MOTION:

DAVID (19) runs out onto the dock. Budding, beautiful and barefoot. Notably Caucasian. Shirtless, clad only in blue jeans, how very American indeed.

Turning towards us, David raises his perfect arm to clear his perfect hair from his perfect face. The ideal human specimen.

He cracks a smile as he spots:

ANOTHER BOY approaching. And the chase is on.

David TEARS OPEN his button-fly and slides off his jeans, down to only Polka-dot boxer shorts. Then with a (rather sexy) cannonball -- SPLOOSH! David's in the water.

And -- SPLOOSH! The Other Boy follows.

UNDERWATER: The boys dive deeper, both agile Mermen. Surreal. Poetic. Sunbeams refracting all around them like joyous prison bars. No shame. No hesitation. Only freedom. Bliss.

WHEN FROM FAR ABOVE, the sound of **VARIOUS NEWS CLIPS ERUPT:**

VARIOUS NEWS CLIPS (V.O.)
*Abercrombie & Fitch in some hot
water tonight, as another lawsuit
was filed alleging discriminatory
hiring practices / A breach of the
Fair Labor Standard Act / Depriving
employees proper wages...*

But the two boys play on: Winding. Twirling. Tickling.
Bubbles of laughter rising to the surface.

Yet, for whatever reason, *we never see the Other Boy's face.*

The game continues -- as MORE NEWS piles on:

VARIOUS NEWS OUTLETS (V.O.)
*A class action lawsuit, with
 allegations of Fraud / Misconduct /
 Coercing employees / Harassment /
 Caught videotaping in the dressing
 room / And what the Plaintiff
 claims are Abercrombie's "overtly
 racist policies"...*

Heading to the surface, the boys need Oxygen.

VARIOUS NEWS OUTLETS (V.O.)
*And the Supreme Court has agreed to
 hear the appeal - of whether or not
 Abercrombie acted in violation of
 Section VII of the Civil Rights Act
 / Seeking damages to the tune of
 Fifty Million Dollars...*

CRASHING THROUGH THE SURFACE, the two boys emerge as we --

CRASH TO BLACK.

And a charming British Man speaks. Unknown, but omnipotent.

THE BRIT (V.O.)
*How did it start? Simple:
 Everything, all of it, from the
 very beginning - started with Mike.*

SMACK TO:

INT. UPSCALE CLOTHING BOUTIQUE - MIRROR GALLERY - DAY

The face of **MICHAEL "MIKE" STANTON JEFFRIES** (48). Strong jaw. Shaggy brown hair. Oddly in shape for his age. He's not - *not* handsome, but far more Gary Busey than Nick Nolte.

SUPER: LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA. 1988.

Staring in the dressing room mirror, Mike's unimpressed.

MIKE
*Someone actually thought this was a
 good idea. There was a meeting. And
 several people thought "yes" - that
 looks reasonable. Fucking idiots.*

He's wearing a HUGE CAMELHAIR BLAZER, looking quite silly. Chandler Bing couldn't pull off a coat this size.

MIKE (CONT'D)
 Yeah, no.

Respectfully, Mike HANGS the camelhair coat on a rack and redons his own perfectly tailored, double-breasted Navy blazer.

And about to depart, HEARS:

STYLIST (O.S.)
See? This is way better now, yes?

FEMALE CUSTOMER (O.S.)
I guess so, it's... I like the...

Sensing her hesitation, Mike can't help himself... And peeks around the wall into the NEIGHBORING VIEWING AREA to find --

A slick, black-suited **STYLIST** (50, exaggerated European accent) buttering-up his customer **SALLY** (44), who's unconvinced by her flowery-silk-blouse and boot-cut slacks.

STYLIST
 See, it's not just *elegant* -
 it's also *empowering*. You know?

Sally doesn't love the look.

And Mike will have none of it.

MIKE
 Hi, sorry. Did he put you in that?

STYLIST
 Don't you think she looks *fabulous*?

MIKE
 She can't wear that in public.

STYLIST
 Sir, this top is a *Goulé*. Imported.
 See - Sally here is a working
 professional, this is not just
 comfortable... it's also a
statement. A 'holistic rescue from
 traditional gender symbolism.'

Stone-faced, Mike calls bullshit.

MIKE
 I'm sorry, what's your name? *Rico*?

STYLIST
 Gary.

MIKE

Gary, listen: Belching out mistaken scholastic theology doesn't change the fact that you've made this delightful young lady look frumpier than a triage nurse.

(off Gary's SCOFF)

Do you work on commission, Gary?

GARY

No...

MIKE

Then do both of us a favor and go away? Please? Pretty please?

Gary huffs away, appalled.

MIKE (CONT'D)

Hi, Sally? Sorry - but you don't want that guy dressing you. You want your barber to have good haircut, not wearing three different shades of black. Now - do you like this? What he put you in?

Sally does not.

MIKE (CONT'D)

Good, because this outfit is a goddamn travesty. Do you mind if I select something else for you?

A bit thrown, Sally nods nonetheless, desperate for help.

MIKE (CONT'D)

Great. What's the occasion?

SILLY

A um... a friend's wedding.

MIKE

And who's gonna be there?

Sally balks.

MIKE (CONT'D)

You could've gone anywhere, but you commuted to a destination Boutique. So - who are we trying to impress?

SALLY

...My Ex.

MIKE

And are you bringing a date?

Sally shakes her head, embarrassed.

MIKE (CONT'D)

Okay, sit tight. Gimme two minutes.
And hey, you're gonna look great.

Mike walks off, leaving Sally to crack a smile in his wake.

IN NO TIME AT ALL -- Mike returns with a NAVY DRESS.

MIKE (CONT'D)

Here. Midnight ruffled-hem wrap
dress. Inside tie, clasp up top.

Sally's immediately skeptical. It looks *short*. And *snug*.

MIKE (CONT'D)

It fits, trust me. This is my job.

Though flustered, Sally steps behind the curtain to change.

Mike looks around, spots something, and walks off...

IN NO TIME AT ALL -- they re-convene, but Sally's clearly uncomfortable. The dress is unflattering. Hangs too loose. Off-white bra-straps glare atop her now-bare shoulders.

SALLY

I'm... Not really sure this is me.

Mike TURNS HER to face him, examining her head to toe.

MIKE

But that's the great thing about
fashion, see: It lets us be whoever
the hell we want. It accommodates
the chameleon in all of us. May I?

With Sally's permission -- Mike GOES TO WORK, nipping and tucking, flawlessly and effortlessly, like he has nine hands.

MIKE (CONT'D)

See, what you're wearing is a form
of expression. It tells a story...
I'm gonna lose this okay?

Before she can even react -- Mike's already UNSNAPPED HER BRA, SLIDING IT OFF. CLENCHING her front, Sally fears she'll show too much -- but Mike TUGS it shut, securing her safely.

MIKE (CONT'D)

There we are. Now eyes here.

Mike snags a COMPACT and LIPSTICK from the sitting table, and with the care of a surgeon and the patience of an artist, gives Sally a touch of blush and two lips of red.

MIKE (CONT'D)

Fashion is a mood, Sally. An aura.
It whispers to everyone passing by.
Saying: This is who I am. Or at
least -- This is who I want to be.

He pulls a CLAW CLIP out of nowhere and WRAPS HER HAIR -- once, twice -- securing it into an effortless, stylish updo.

MIKE (CONT'D)

Every little tweak, every tiny
detail, every move you make:
Should be in service of the self.

Mike steps back, admiring his work...

MIKE (CONT'D)

For centuries, people have argued
over what makes people attractive:
Is it Science? Simply the
appearance of one's ability to
procreate? Or is it Math? Merely
symmetry and ratios. Or is it
something more? Something beyond?
Well to me? Only one thing matters:
Do you like what you see?

He spins her to the mirror. Finally, the finished product...

And Sally's eyes go wide. *She looks goddamn fantastic*. Like a whole different person. Younger. Healthier. *Aphrodisiacal*.

SALLY

Wow. The dress is something.

MIKE

Fuck the dress. Listen to the
question: *Do you like what you see?*

Sally looks over at Mike -- now standing *intimately close*... But sensing nothing romantic, freed from that expectation, she looks back in the mirror, happy tears brewing.

SALLY

I've never felt more beautiful in
my life.

MIKE

Good.

As Mike grins, we -- **FREEZE ON HIM.** And HEAR--

THE BRIT (V.O.)

*Now obviously, there were a lot of
people involved...*

MUSIC: "JUMP AROUND" by HOUSE OF PAIN explodes, as --

EXT. CORPORATE COURTYARD - NIGHT

A HUGE CROWD of attractive EMPLOYEES (20s-30s) bounce up and down in unison. A giant undulating CULT of intoxication.

THE BRIT (V.O.)

*One does not construct an empire
purely by themselves. That said...*

ON A BALCONY HIGH ABOVE, TWO MEN walk onto a terrace: A BRUNETTE in a dark suit and a BLONDE in a white dress shirt. As they arrive at the balcony rail for a glimpse of the bouncing CROWD BELOW --

BANG! -- **TWO CONFETTI CANNONS FIRE,** filling the sky with GOLD GLITTER. Cascading down like rain.

THE BRIT (V.O.)

*None of it, and I mean none of it,
would have happened without Mike.*

INT. MIKE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

SQUEAK. Mike arrives home. Same Navy Blazer, grey flannel pants, and worn leather loafers. A drab, forgetful outfit, but it moves well and - as always - fits him immaculately.

SUPER: COLUMBUS, OHIO, 1992.

THE BRIT (V.O.)

*He'd moved home after losing his
Son to college, his Wife to
divorce, and his consulting job to
apathy. He wanted to regroup.
He wanted to... start over.*

Mike picks up a GOLDEN RETRIEVER PUPPY.

MIKE

Ooo, Sammy-Sam-Sammerson. Hungry?

DOG FOOD pours into a bowl. Sammy goes to town.

MIKE (CONT'D)
Whoa. Easy boy. Don't get fat.

INT. MIKE'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT - 1992

Plopped on the couch with Sammy in his lap, Mike FLIPS THROUGH CHANNELS: Kurt Cobain screaming. Oil Fires raging in Kuwait. A USSR Banner falling. Beavis and Butthead giggling.

He stops on -- the **Freddy Mercury UK Tribute Concert**, where ANNIE LENNOX (in full Joker-esque make up) and DAVID BOWIE (in a Sea-foam suit) perform "UNDER PRESSURE" at Wembley.

Mike can't look away, transfixed by these two icons who - despite their mysterious androgyny - seem 1000% themselves.

Something about this bothers Mike.

MIKE
Fucking weirdos.

INT. CRAMPED BATHROOM - NIGHT - LATER

Awful overhead fluorescents click on.

MIKE
Ugh, goddamn hospital lighting.

Mike opens the medicine cabinet, pulls a prescription bottle and chokes down a horse pill. Then closing it, does what every human has done since the discovery of reflections:

Looks in the mirror -- taking stock of the damage.

And like most of us, only sees the things he hates.

Shifting his skin around with his fingers, he watches, as the lines disappear and reappear, imagining just how happy he'd be, if he were somehow...

Different.

Then with a defeated SIGH...

SMACK -- SLAPS HIMSELF across the face. Disappointed.

THE BRIT (V.O.)
*He was lost. Completely alone.
Had no idea who he was anymore.
And then, the phone rang...*

A PHONE RINGS. Mike perks up...

THE BRIT (V.O.)
Right out of the blue. They'd never met. Had no prior contact. But the very next night, Mike was sharing a drink with the most powerful man in retail - Mister Victoria Secret himself...

LES WEXNER (PRE-LAP)
Les Wexner.

INT. FANCY-ASS STEAKHOUSE - BAR HIGH-TOPS - NIGHT - 1992

LES WEXNER (54) offers Mike a hearty handshake. Ghost white hair and pointy eyebrows, Wexner looks part Gorbachev, part Christmas Elf. Surprisingly approachable for a Billionaire.

LES WEXNER
 Pleasure to meet you, Mike.

MIKE
 No, please. "Merlin of the Mall?"
 Trust me, the pleasure is mine.

Settling in, Mike straightens out his errantly-folded napkin.

LES WEXNER
 When I heard you came back to Ohio,
 I just knew I had to meet you.

MIKE
 Likewise, it's nice to connect.
 And congrats on the valuation by
 the way. What a goldmine that
 acquisition turned out to be.

LES WEXNER
 Oh, thank you. "The Angels" do most
 of the work at this point. But I'm
 a firm believer that you get the
 right people in charge, good things
 can happen fast. Though I will say,
 the underwear is getting so skimpy
 these days, I don't know how many
 'secrets' Victoria has left.

Mike forces a laugh, pleasing Wexner, as -- a handsome male
WAITER (26) arrives, setting down a pair of OLD FASHIONS.

WAITER
 Here we are.

LES WEXNER

Thank you, Darling. Give us a few.

Both Men take a moment, watching the Waiter walk away. Then--

LES WEXNER (CONT'D)

I hope you don't mind, I went ahead
and ordered us a beverage.

MIKE

No, that's fine, thank you. Always
thought that was a funny name.

(Wexner doesn't follow)

For doesn't calling something "Old
Fashioned" essentially acknowledge
that it's outdated and obsolete?

LES WEXNER

I guess it *is* an odd moniker.
Perhaps it's just a tip of the cap
to the old ways of doing things.

MIKE

Well, cheers. To "never changing."

They giggle and clink, both taking a sip. Mike can't stand
whiskey, but hides his displeasure well.

LES WEXNER

So listen, I have a laundry list of
companies I've acquired and am
trying to revive - rebuild from the
ground up. Tell me: Have you ever
heard of Abercrombie and Fitch?

Wexner produces a worn, ancient CATALOGUE from a satchel. On
the cover: **A&F. New York. Est. 1892.** Mike takes it, opening
it ever-so-gently, like he's handling the Dead Sea scrolls.

MIKE

Sure. Sporting goods, leather wear,
all-weather clothing, and...

(turning the page)

Guns, apparently. Lots of 'em.

LES WEXNER

Yes. Sadly it seems *some* traditions
take a very long time to die.

MIKE

Pinwale corduroy. Thorn-Tweed
Breeches. And some - wow - quite
cumbersome overcoats.

Wexner chuckles. Mike smiles back, and flips it closed.

MIKE (CONT'D)

Dense. Defining. Roosevelt's Rough Riders. Hemingway's Gabardine Coat. Amelia Earhart's flying jacket. Tradition. Heritage. Legacy.

LES WEXNER

Sounds good, doesn't it? Well, unfortunately - these days? *Clothes for fuddy-duddies*. On the fiscal? \$25 Million in the red, projections abysmal. Needless to say, it needs a new direction. And I'd like to hear your pitch on it.

Mike fidgets. Not expecting that.

MIKE

Oh, well... To be completely honest, not much of an outdoorsman. No calluses on these fingers.

LES WEXNER

Even better. Look, what they're doing over there isn't working. I want a total rebrand. A sea change. My only caveat being that I want to go younger. Much younger.

MIKE

So, not the "seventy-to-death" market I'm used to, huh?

The all-too-true joke dies with an awkward chuckle.

MIKE (CONT'D)

Listen, I love fashion, I do... But the business side of it - the constant lobbying, the endless approval cycle, and Bureaucratic hand-holding...

LES WEXNER

Well, I'm not interested in that shit either. I'm not just looking for someone who can... Satisfy department heads, delegate workflow, and satiate a cranky board, *no*... I need someone who understands fashion.

Mike nods, realizing this invitation alone is a compliment.

LES WEXNER (CONT'D)
So tell me, why do you think Alcott
went under?

Avoiding the truth, Mike cracks a joke.

MIKE
They were too old-fashioned.

But Wexner doesn't laugh...

LES WEXNER
What's the real answer?

Challenged, Mike drops his guard.

MIKE
Because they didn't listen to me.

Wexner grins, as if that's precisely what he wanted to hear.

LES WEXNER
See - I don't need a boss, I have
plenty. I need a *ring leader*, a
visionary. Someone insatiable.
Someone who never backs down. For
my motto is simple: Sell the flock.
And do whatever it takes to do so.
Abercrombie and Fitch? Is just the
name of two dead guys in top hats.
What I want to know is - where you
think we can take it. The potential
is there, as is the real estate.
What's missing... is the *idea*.

Mike glances down, nodding.

MIKE
Again, I... I think I'm done. I'm
looking for something different.

But Wexner persists, a knowing smile never leaving his face.

LES WEXNER
I know you, Mike. We're the same.
And this *spindle* inside of us? It
doesn't turn off, it will never
stop spinning. So I won't beg
you... I'll only say - when you get
home tonight, really ask yourself:
Do you want something different?
Or do you want another chance?

Mike searches Wexner's eyes, back and forth, back and forth.

INT. LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Searching for inspiration, Mike clicks through channels. He stops on a NEWS STORY -- the latest Royal Family drama (*it's always something*), featuring stagnant footage of PRINCESS DIANA and THE QUEEN. Tapping a pencil... he talks it out.

MIKE

Alright. Basics. What is it?
Fashion is... Masquerading.
The art of imitation. Copying...

Mike eyes Diana, perform her civic duty: Waving.

MIKE (CONT'D)

Yep. Everybody wants to be King.
Posterizing for the peasants.
(waving back at Diana)
"Hey, look at me, look at all my
expendable income and copious free
time..."

Mike looks at a NOTEPAD, where he's only written down two things: **A&F**, and **younger, much younger**. Blows out a sigh.

MIKE (CONT'D)

But if I'm a kid - Diana's not *cool*
anymore. Too old. Too unattainable.

Changing channels... Mike finds an episode of "Saved By the Bell" -- where Zach, Kelly, Slater and the gang, hang out in the high school hallway dressed in obscenely bright outfits.

Mike stares at them like aliens.

MIKE (CONT'D)

So what do kids want these days?

As Zach Morris offers his iconic smile, we **FREEZE ON HIM**.

THE BRIT (V.O.)

*But Mike had no idea... He'd never
sold to that demographic before.
So, he did what a lot of people do
when they're having a mid-life
crisis and don't know what to do
next -- he went to the mall.*

MUSIC: "ALL THAT SHE WANTS" by ACE OF BASE bops in, as--

EXT. EASTLAND MALL PARKING LOT - DAY - 1992

An off-blue FORD TAURUS pulls into the lot (*which were SUPER COOL in 1992 for whatever reason*). Mike parks and hops out. Same outfit. Same shoes. No sunglasses. On a mission, into--

INT. EASTLAND MALL PROMENADE - DAY - 1992

A run-of-the-mill, Middle-American MALL: Dirty skylights and drab tile floors. Un-exotic plants and uncomfortable benches. Mike strolls the main floor, doing field research.

A YOUNG MAN in a crew-neck passes, "G-A-P" across his chest.

MIKE
(muttering to himself)
Preppy. But *bad* preppy. *Unspecific*.

Mike jots down a note: **Distinguish. Create loyalty.**

Passing by STRUCTURE, Mike eyes several white MANNEQUINS wearing sharp-collared, bright-colored dress shirts.

MIKE (CONT'D)
Yeesh. Looks like a meeting of the
date rape planning committee.

He jots down: **No formalwear.**

Arriving at BANANA REPUBLIC -- baggy white tees with animal graphics hang off homely-looking mannequins. The whole store is Safari-themed: Rope decor, fake trees, even a pith helmet.

MIKE (CONT'D)
What does the fucking rainforest
have to do with anything? Where are
we? Is that a fucking plastic fern?

He writes: **ATMOSPHERE**. Crosses it out, and writes: **ATTITUDE**.

At last, Mike arrives at the task at hand:

INT. ABERCROMBIE & FITCH - EASTLAND MALL - DAY - 1992

Grotesquely lit like your local Walmart, Mike takes in the room. Wide, open floor plan, check-out registers dead center. Croquet mallet decor. Union Jack Flag. Mounted dog sled.

MIKE
Christ. It smells like talc and
retirement in here.

He writes: Environment. Is. Everything.

FOH employee BEVERLY (57, pleasant and confident) arrives.

BEVERLY
Finding everything okay, Sir?

Mike flinches dramatically, unprepared for human contact.

MIKE
Hi there, yes. I'm wondering--
(making something up)
Is that barber chair for sale?
I really love a good spin.

BEVERLY
Oh no that's just our decor, Sir.
Part of our overall aesthetic.

MIKE
Ah, a nod to the glory days of the
personalized grooming experience.

Beverly moves closer, truly excited for this teaching moment.

BEVERLY
It's a reminder of a more simpler
time. I think that when we feel our
culture has stopped moving forward -
we all get a little nostalgic.

MIKE
Or perhaps maybe - it's *being*
nostalgic that stops us from moving
forward in the first place.

Mike WINKS AT HER and walks out, leaving Beverly to ponder.

COMING OUT OF THE STORE -- Mike catches a glimpse of his own
reflection in the glass doors. He messes his hair to fix it,
but doesn't like the result, and quickly jots down: **NO GLASS.**

INT. MACY'S DEPARTMENT STORE - EASTLAND MALL - DAY - 1992

Crossing through the various departments en route to MENSWEAR
(Formalwear, Beachwear, Perfume), Mike mutters to himself...

MIKE
When you try to appeal to everyone,
you end up appealing to no one.

Then his eyes LOCK on something -- **A B&W CALVIN KLEIN POSTER:**
Two hot MODELS (20s, white) intertwined in matching undies.

MIKE (CONT'D)
Wow. Shit that's hot. *Dude.*

Mike chuckles at his new vernacular.

MIKE (CONT'D)
Ha. Dude.

He giggles again. And fuck -- *there's something undeniable about this photo...* Glancing around, the coast is clear, so Mike slides the poster out of the metal frame, and steals it.

BACK ON THE PROMENADE

Mike walks on, the stolen poster tucked (poorly) inside his blazer. He walks by a MOM shopping with a YOUNG TEEN (10). Then passes several older TEENS, walking in packs together.

MIKE
*Kids shop with parents. But
teenagers - shop with each other.*

Mike starts scribbling something, closely noting their outfits: Baggy shirts, fishnets, Birkenstocks, chain belts. STÜSSY, NO FEAR, prominently displayed on graphic tees.

MIKE (CONT'D)
But what are they after?

Looking around, Mike's eyes suddenly lock on something:

Two **HOT GIRLS** (18) approaching, drinking to-go cups and carrying VICTORIA'S SECRET bags. Cropped tanks, flared jeans, flannels around their waists. These two are fucking cool.

And not wasting this chance...

MIKE (CONT'D)
Hey, hi, excuse me. Can I ask you
guys something real quick?

HOT GIRL
(understandably skeptical)
Um. Sure?

MIKE
Where do you guys shop? The - the
flannels - where are those from?

HOT
I don't know. It's my boyfriend's.

MIKE

(fumbling nervously)
Oh okay, but you're like, young,
yeah? Like, who do you admire? Er,
look up to? Like, who is your King?

BOTH GIRLS

Eww! / Get outta here. / Creeper.

SPLASH! -- Orange Julius covers Mike's face. EVERYONE in the vicinity looks over at him. He darts for the EXIT, mortified.

EXT. EASTLAND MALL PARKING LOT - DAY - 1992

Back inside his fucking awesome Ford Taurus (I don't make the rules), Mike wipes his dripping face.

THE BRIT (V.O.)

*He just about threw in the towel
right then and there...*

Suddenly, Mike spies the TWO HOT GIRLS exiting the mall.

THE BRIT (V.O.)

*But seeing those two girls,
something occurred to him...*

INT. MIKE'S APARTMENT - LATER THAT NIGHT - 1992

Mike scribbles furiously. Papers and sticky notes everywhere.

THE BRIT (V.O.)

*He barely slept all weekend,
perfecting his pitch. For he knew--*

Gesturing wildly, Mike paces, talking it all out...

THE BRIT (V.O.)

He would only get one shot at this.

INT. STALE OFFICE WAITING ROOM - DAY - 1992

Focused and relaxed, Mike waits patiently. He's ditched his blazer and loafers for a white button-up, jeans & flip-flops.

A BEEP at the desk -- and a SECRETARY peeks up.

SECRETARY

Mr. Jeffries? He's ready for you.

Mike takes a breath. *Everything has led to this moment.*

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Les Wexner welcomes Mike inside, offering him the floor. Left-behind remnants of prior pitches litter the room. They run the gamut -- from COON-SKIN CAPS to 3-PIECE SUITS.

LES WEXNER

So glad you decided to come.

Wexner takes his seat behind a large table. He's alone.

MIKE

Wow, just me and you, huh?

LES WEXNER

What can I say? *I know what I like.*
The floor's all yours. Entice me.

MIKE

If you don't mind, I'm just gonna--

Mike CHUCKS someone else's renderings off an easel, opens his travel portfolio, and places a POSTER of his own: One of the first crops of the **Victoria's Secret "Angels"** (Peřtová, Mulder, Seymour, Goodacre), all 'winged' and scantily clad.

MIKE (CONT'D)

Let's start with what we already know. You have a big fucking hit on your hands. So what'd you do right?

LES WEXNER

Well--

MIKE

I'll tell you: Sex sells. We all care *desperately* how we look. And You have - without them knowing, told every American female - what a beautiful woman looks like. That if they could *just* find the right bra and panties - that *they* could be beautiful too. And I think we can mine that even further.

Wexner smiles, excited to see where this is headed, as --

Mike CHUCKS THE ANGELS to the floor, placing a BLANK POSTER-BOARD in its place. He pops a Sharpie, and writes two words:

EMOTIONS, and **DESIRES**. And as he continues -- links (bolded) words together, creating an ever-expanding BUBBLE CHART.

MIKE (CONT'D)

The consumption of every product is directly related to two things: Emotions, and desires. More specifically? There's two reasons anyone buys anything, right? We buy things out of **FEAR**, and we buy things out of **LOVE**. What do we fear? That we won't belong. That we won't be accepted. Won't be cool. Because what happens - the worst thing possible, right? We're **ALONE**.

Mike allows that to land, but never loses steam.

MIKE (CONT'D)

Now, what do we mean by desires? What do we mean by love? We mean **FRIENDS**, sure, we all want to belong, we covered that... But with young people, they're *surrounded* by friends, classmates, summer camps, sports teams... Social life at this age is a particle accelerator, crashing groups of them together on the regular. And during this, comes a major complication, intensifying all these emotions and desires exponentially: **PUBERTY**. Which brings *what* to the surface? What then does the main desire become?

A pause, until Wexner realizes that wasn't hypothetical.

LES WEXNER

Sex.

MIKE

Yup. In your proposed demographic, it's something they're thinking about all the time -- so we need to be thinking about it too. It's simple: Young people wanna fuck.

Wexner about SPITS his coffee, so Mike barrels forward--

MIKE (CONT'D)

On their own terms. In their own spaces. Privately. It's a very new, daunting, secretive, *embarrassing* thing at that age. They don't know how to go about it -- but they sure as hell know they want it.

LES WEXNER

Okay... So *hormones*. Go on.

MIKE

Now the "cool kids", what are they talking about on the first day back at school? Their summer vacation, right? Now think back, what would be your *dream* teenage summer? I'm asking.

LES WEXNER

I don't know, a beach. Sunshine. Cabin on a lake. Maybe a boat.

MIKE

Exactly. Now, if you're a teenager, what would make that trip *perfect*? The *ideal Summer fantasy* to come home and brag about?

LES WEXNER

That you *met* someone.

MIKE

Yes - a romantic connection. The cute girl in the hot tub, the hot guy at the rental dock. You smiled, you flirted, and god willing - you had a moment *alone* together. To touch, to kiss, or to-

LES WEXNER

But not every kid that age is--

MIKE

No, I'm not saying every kid is having - you're absolutely right...

LES WEXNER

Just tell me, what the hell does this have to do with Abercrombie?

Mike's derailed, but far from giving up.

MIKE

Here: Roosevelt, Hemingway, Earhart - the "former pillars of A&F..." What do they all have in common?

LES WEXNER

Well--

MIKE

They're fucking dead, that's what they have in common.

Wexner sours.

LES WEXNER

Yes, but there has to be a *link*. It all needs to *fit*. We can't just ignore 100 years of history and tradition. Abercrombie & Fitch *used* to be the masculine ideal.

MIKE

(re-invigorated)

Yes. Exactly. And it can be again. Hilfiger, Nautica, they're *trying* to do this, but they *stink* of foreign influence. Kids in American don't play fucking *Polo*. They don't race *Yachts*. You want the masculine ideal? Then we redefine it:

Mike CHUCKS DOWN his bubble chart -- and pulls three sizable B&W PHOTOS from his portfolio, displaying them one by one:

1ST: a handsome young man swimming, spitting lake water.

MIKE (CONT'D)

Natural.

2ND: the sexy B&W CK poster that Mike stole from the Mall.

MIKE (CONT'D)

American.

3RD: a handsome man wearing a Golden Retriever as a backpack.

MIKE (CONT'D)

Classic.

[*notably, though never stated, the models are all White.*]

MIKE (CONT'D)

Americans are Jeeps, not Sedans. We play Football. Baseball. And Lacrosse. Not fucking *croquet*. We hang out with *girls*. Not *horses*.

Wexner's listening, freshly intrigued.

LES WEXNER

Say more.

Mike points to an old **1959 A&F CATALOGUE** on Wexner's desk.

MIKE

That old-time-y New England Summer fantasy? It's alive and well. But it's not "preppy" - it's *fun*. Privileged, yes, absolutely. But *attainable*. We're not selling sex, no... We're selling the possibility of sex.

Wexner's nodding. *Maybe Mike's onto something.*

LES WEXNER

I like that... But how does it manifest? We can't put "the possibility of sex" on a hanger.

MIKE

The hell we can't. By recruiting.

LES WEXNER

Recruiting?

MIKE

We hire the hottest fucking people this country has ever seen.

Wexner sits back, trying to wrap his head around it all...

MIKE (CONT'D)

The other day I was at the Mall, and I ran into these two girls: A-listers, smoking hot, obviously popular. And I followed them home.

LES WEXNER

You did what?

MUSIC: "I WANT TO KNOW WHAT LOVE IS" by FOREIGNER begins, as--

WE FLASH TO MIKE'S EASTLAND MALL VISIT:

- Mike follows the Hot Girl's Red Jeep Wrangler out of the mall parking lot...

- Mike finishes a foot-long sub in his Taurus while casing a fancy SUBURBAN HOUSE, the Wrangler parked out front.

- Hours later, the Hot Girls finally emerge in skimpy party dresses, load into the Wrangler and rip away. Mike follows.

MIKE (V.O.)
*It was a Friday night... I wanted
 to see what they did for fun.*

EXT. FRAT ROW - COLLEGE CAMPUS - NIGHT - 1992

Strutting, the two HOT GIRLS join a HUGE LINE OF CO-EDS --
 all gravitating towards a dumpy motel-looking complex
 surrounded by a 7-foot wall bearing the Greek letters "**AZT**."

MUSIC: C&C MUSIC FACTORY'S "GONNA MAKE YOU SWEAT" (Everybody
 Dance Now!) blares from inside.

MIKE (V.O.)
*This wasn't just a party. It was
 the epicenter. Bacchus' playpen...*

A Dodgers Cap pulled low, Mike stands in the street, watching--
 Every MALE get carded at the front gate, paying cash to a
 "SECURITY GUARD" for a SOLO CUP, while every FEMALE walks in
 unchecked, and free of charge (*thus, increasing the odds.*)

MIKE (V.O.)
*This is where they went to frolic.
 Where they went to be seen. The
 cool kids. And then I saw him.*

A fearless BRO WITH A **MOHAWK** (22) climbs out the upstairs
 window out onto the roof. Barefoot. Jeans. Rugby polo. Raises
 a MEGAPHONE and BLASTS A SIREN into the air.

The crowd and music SCREECH to a halt, all heads turning...

MOHAWK
 Are you ready to party
 motherfuckers?!

A HUGE CHEER from below. *How easily we conform.*

Buzzing with adrenaline, Mohawk CHUCKS the megaphone down,
 tears off his polo -- flexes, screams -- then JUMPS OFF THE
 ROOF into what is (hopefully) a swimming pool down below.

The CROWD ROARS and the MUSIC RESUMES full tilt.

In the street -- Mike slowly removes his hat, awestruck.

MIKE (V.O.)
*And all at once it made sense.
 Because there he was...*

BACK TO THE PITCH:

MIKE

The King of the Freshman. Every guy there wanted to be him. And every girl there wanted to be *with* him.

Mike's buzzing. Electric. *Contagious*.

MIKE (CONT'D)

You want to know how we put the possibility of sex on a hanger? We infiltrate the Greek system. We covet what we see, right? Fashion is merely mimicry. So we go to every major college campus - find the best looking, most popular kids, and we blanket them in our shit. *That's* our way in. We make Abercrombie synonymous with being attractive. With being cool. With *being chosen*. You want to know who's getting laid on campus? The ones wearing Abercrombie and Fitch.

Wexner sits back, crossing his arms, ruminating.

LES WEXNER

I dunno, Mike. Frat Boys and Sorority girls...

MIKE

The 'bullies and sluts' right? But think about it, why did we really hate them? Because deep down, we all wanted to be them. They had all the parties. They had all the friends...

LES WEXNER

They had all the sex.

Mike smiles. *Bingo.*

MIKE

And whether they admit it or not? Everyone wants that life. But only a few actually get to *live it*. I certainly didn't. But I wanted to. And now is the time to strike: Mall culture is blowing up. With the popularity of MTV and the like, trends are moving faster than ever.

(MORE)

MIKE (CONT'D)

These kids know what's hot, and
they want it now.

FLASH TO: -Mike strolling the PROMENADE, PASSING the various
teenage aesthetics: CYBERPUNK. RETROSPORT. GOTHCORE.

MIKE (V.O.)

*I've seen them, roaming the malls
with longing eyes. Desperate.*

-More TEENS: ATHLETES. SKATERS. BARBIECORE. GRUNGE.

MIKE (V.O.)

Searching for an identity.

-The **UNDEFINED ONES**, wearing unmarked tees, sweatpants, and
double-striped athletic socks that their mom bought for them.

MIKE (V.O.)

*Looking for that one specialty
store to define them. To belong.*

BACK TO THE PITCH:

LES WEXNER

This is a big fucking swing, Mike.

MIKE

It is. But there is a void in the
market. A blindspot *begging* to be
filled. You said you wanted
different, you said you wanted a
sea change. And to appeal to those
mall kids as strong as humanly
possible - you have to *feed* them.

LES WEXNER

Feed them? Feed them what?

MIKE

Emotions. Desires.

Mike picks up the 1959 Catalogue and shows Wexner the cover:
A 40-something Man dressed in Tweed, puffing a hefty cigar.

MIKE (CONT'D)

Thoreau had it nailed 100 years
ago: "All men want: is not
something to do *with*, but something
to do -- rather, something to be."

LES WEXNER

Meaning...

MIKE

Times change. But people don't.

Nodding with a solid poker face, Wexner rises and moves around the table, eyeing the bubble chart on the floor.

Mike hands over the catalog to Wexner, rather ceremoniously. Wexner rubs his hand across the cover, a decision imminent.

LES WEXNER

Can you do all that? Because I don't want just a passing fad. I want another *hit*. I want an *empire*.

MIKE

Dude, if you hand me the reigns to this company? I promise you: *I will build you a motherfucking legacy.*

Wexner smiles. And Mike does too. He has him. As -- **FREEZE.**

THE BRIT (V.O.)

Now, I don't know if he actually said that - but whatever it was, it sure hooked Wexner. There was more to it, obviously - hiring the right merchants, developing the cross-over strategy, apparel design...

A FEMALE VOICE chimes in -- one we haven't heard before.

A FEMALE'S VOICE (V.O.)

So then - when did you guys meet?

THE BRIT (V.O.)

Well funnily enough - it was at that same stupid little mall.

PUSH IN ON the banal, concrete façade of the EASTLAND MALL...

MIKE (PRE-LAP)

Hi there.

INT. CLASSY MALL SALON - EASTLAND MALL - DAY - 1993

Mike arrives below a MAN ATOP A LADDER inspecting a freshly painted wall. Not looking over, his familiar voice responds.

THE BRIT

Does this look Blue to you? I asked for like an Ash-y Spanish Grey, and this feels way too Blue and dreary.

MIKE

I'd say... Slate. Nickel. Almost
Cadet Gray. Or Smokey-Steel.

Glancing over, impressed, we finally meet **THE BRIT** (28).
Fassbender looks with Hugh Grant charm. Easy going, but snark
to spare. And clearly, twenty years younger than Mike.

THE BRIT

I should've had you talk to the
paint man. You know your colors.

Mike just stands there, grinning awkwardly.

THE BRIT (CONT'D)

Who the hell are you?

MIKE

I was just looking to get a
haircut.

THE BRIT

We have a receptionist for that.

MIKE

Yeah, I talked to him.

THE BRIT

Then, what are you doing?

MIKE

I was hoping you could do it.

THE BRIT

I'm not a stylist.

MIKE

You don't cut hair?

THE BRIT

No, I cut hair fine. I just said
I'm not a stylist.

MIKE

Then what are you doing here?

THE BRIT

What am I doing here?
I own the bloody place.

MIKE

I'll pay you \$500 dollars.

THE BRIT scoffs. But intrigued, cracks a smile.

THE BRIT
I'm not for sale.

MIKE
How about a Thousand?
Everyone has a price.

THE BRIT
Creeping up on an indecent
proposal, are we not?

But Mike doesn't budge, giving an earnest, innocent stare.

THE BRIT (CONT'D)
Pick a chair.

MOMENTS LATER -- Mike's caped up in a BARBER CHAIR holding a LAMINATED MENU, depicting eight different Men's haircuts.

MIKE
Does it have to be one of these?

THE BRIT
Well, I'm sure not going to let you
walk out of here looking an arse.

The Brit messes with Mike's hair, and under the fluff -- on the back of Mike's head -- finds a nasty SCAR from long ago.

THE BRIT (CONT'D)
What is this back here? Ouch.

MIKE
I used to dance on top of coffee
tables as a kid. A dozen stitches.
And sadly, thus ended my
professional table dancing career.

THE BRIT
Tragedy. Denying the world of that.

They share a look. Immediate chemistry.

MIKE
Your accent, I feel like I'm
getting my hair done by a King.

THE BRIT
Oh, don't I know it. *Wouldst thou
like a little off the top my liege?*

Mike attempts his own British Accent. It's horrible.

MIKE

*Aye, what d'ya think would lookest
the best upon me pate, me lord?*

THE BRIT

(dry as a desert)

Please don't do that ever again.
So - about this hair of yours.

MIKE

Open to suggestion. I'm thinking
about making a change. Feel like I
might need a new, you know - *me*.

THE BRIT

Could have Melody just trim it up
real quick, cost you a lot less.

MIKE

I'm right where I want to be.

The Brit eyes Mike in the mirror. *Intrigued.*

THE BRIT

How do you feel about color? I
think I'd like to see you blonde.

MIKE

I think I'd like that too.

ONE HAIRCUT LATER, the Brit peels the last of Mike's
treatment: Bleach blonde. Doesn't match his 48-year-old face.

Nonetheless, Mike smiles - maybe at the hair, maybe at the
man behind him in the mirror.

MIKE (CONT'D)

I like what I see.

THE BRIT

Good. For "a girl should be two
things: Who and what she wants."

MIKE

Coco Chanel.

THE BRIT

Oh, you know that one...

MIKE

I do indeed.

They lock eyes in the mirror. *Game on.*

CHECKING OUT

The Brit waves off the handsome RECEPTIONIST to ring up Mike.

THE BRIT

Do me a favor and sweep up? I'll
ring up this one. He's *needy*.

They both watch the Receptionist walk away, sharing a mutual admiration for the young man's denim-clad butt. Smith grins.

THE BRIT (CONT'D)

(re: the cute butt)

I interviewed quite a few people.

Mike chuckles at this. Then as he pulls his wallet -- notices a small sign posted behind the register: "**NO OLD PEOPLE.**"

MIKE

Oh yeah? Them's the rules?

THE BRIT

I guess I can make an exception.
Just this once.

(a flirty smile, then)

And I'll make you a deal. You do
something for me, and we'll call it
even -- pretend your hair did that
by itself, a little blonde miracle.

MIKE

What do I have to do?

THE BRIT

Take me to dinner. Or heck, lunch.
I know a killer food court nearby.

MIKE

I don't even know your name.

The Brit points to a business card on display: **MATTHEW SMITH.**

THE BRIT/SMITH

Friends call me "Smith."
So. You coming or not?

MIKE

You shouldn't ask questions you
already know the answer to.

Smith warms into a blushing smile, carefully smitten.

SMITH (PRE-LAP)
*And almost instantly, the
conversation became about work...*

INT. EASTLAND MALL - LATER THAT DAY

Mike and Smith stroll together through the promenade.

SMITH (V.O.)
*I told him I'd been a consulting
advisor, a "fixer for hire" before
branching out on my own.*

AT THE FOOD COURT

Mike and Smith munch on egg rolls.

SMITH (V.O.)
*I'm not a big truster of people.
And a bit of a control freak, so -
we had that in common. Anyways...*

BACK ON THE PROMENADE

Mike and Smith slow, arriving back at the Salon. A PORTLY WOMAN PASSES THEM, and Mike chuckles at something.

SMITH
What?

MIKE
No, nothing. It's just funny to me.
Those ballet flats... When bigger
women wear them? It just looks like
they crushed their shoes.

Smith scoffs, laughing against his better judgement.

Then in the quiet -- Mike smiles at Smith and looks down, venerable, as if he somehow already instinctually understands the weight of this budding relationship.

MIKE (CONT'D)
I do want to say... right up front:
I can be a mean motherfucker.

SMITH
So can I.

Mike grins, delighted with the response. Off this--

SMITH (V.O.)
*I think it's safe to say that I
 liked him immediately. He was
 unique. And peculiar...*

-In a **FANCY HOTEL ROOM**, Mike pulls on some Jeans and a button
 up shirt, making odd faces at himself in the mirror.

SMITH (V.O.)
*Bombastic one moment, and
 reserved the next...*

-Like a kid in Drama class, Mike makes "big-growling-lion
 face" in the MIRROR, then "scrunched-up-tiny-mouse face".

SMITH (V.O.)
He was obsessive. And tireless...

-With a pair of FLIP-FLOPS, Mike has one chase the other on
 the bed like they're dogs. Emerging behind -- is Smith, wet
 hair and wearing a bathrobe, giggling at Mike's display.

SMITH (V.O.)
Eccentric. And different...

-A new day on the **EASTLAND PROMENADE**, Mike greets Smith
 outside the Salon, as they depart on another walk.

SMITH (V.O.)
*Right away -- it felt like we were
 both estranged puzzle pieces from
 the same box. He was older, sure,
 but that's what I wanted: Someone
 to look out for me. And that's when
 he told me about his new job...*

REVEALED BEHIND THEM -- stenciled on a temporary plywood
 construction wall is: **"Abercrombie & Fitch. COMING SOON."**

SMITH (V.O.)
*He was flying to New York for a
 meeting. Said it was urgent. Said
 he had to find "the right look."*

INT. MANHATTAN HIGH-RISE LUXURY CONDO - DAY - 1993

Mike KNOCKS on a door, wearing jeans, a white button-up and a
 BACKPACK. Several DOGS BARK from inside. A WOMAN'S VOICE
 barks back -- as the door opens to an unexpected face.

MIKE
 Oh, I'm sorry, I--

NAN BUSH (45, all piss and vinegar) wedges herself in the doorway, holding off **SEVEN GIDDY GOLDEN RETRIEVERS**.

NAN
Who in the fat hell are you?

MIKE
Umm...

Mike double-checks the apartment number.

NAN
Too old to be one of those Mormons.

BRUCE (O.S.)
Nan-y? Nan-y honey, that's for me.

A marginally taller, rounder man appears. A rosy-cheeked Santa-Claus looking fellow in a flannel and scarf, with a cushy FEZ balanced atop his head. This is **BRUCE WEBER** (46).

Mike can't help but stare at his bizarre hat.

NAN
(to Bruce)
Oldest grad student I ever saw.
(then to the dogs)
Come on you buggers, into the
playroom. Go. Go go go.

Nan goes, ushering the many dogs down the hall.

BRUCE
Thank you, Love.

Bruce offers a warm smile, kind and soft-spoken.

BRUCE (CONT'D)
Hi. Apologies for the icy greeting.
She's the real guard dog in the
house. Please, come in.

Walking into the **LIVING ROOM** -- Mike takes in the floor-to-ceiling bookshelves, overflowing with PHOTOGRAPHY BOOKS, VINTAGE CAMERAS and worldly TRINKETS. A true artist's palace.

MIKE
You um, you must love dogs.

BRUCE
Oh, the Goldens? Truly the best.
The way they look at you - it's
like they absolve you of your sins.
(then)
(MORE)

BRUCE (CONT'D)

I hope you didn't travel all this way just for me. As I said on the phone, my slate is pretty full up. But perhaps I can recommend--

MIKE

I don't think I was clear on the phone as to the full extent of what I'd like to do with you.

BRUCE

What you'd like to do with me?

MIKE

Here.

Mike unzips his backpack. Underneath some flip-flops and an extra shirt, he pulls out a large book with a B&W photo of a cloudy sky on the cover: **"BEAR POND" (by Bruce Weber)**.

BRUCE

You brought that from Ohio?
Could've loaned you a few.

Bruce points to an ENTIRE SHELF of the same book.

MIKE

Oh I don't mind one bit. I studied it the whole plane ride here.

BRUCE

(dismissive)
Studied it?

MIKE

In my opinion it's some of the finest photography known to man.

Surprised, Bruce blushes, and sits. An intrinsic sadness in his eyes. Mike pulls up his chair, matching Bruce's level.

MIKE (CONT'D)

I want you to be the central inspiration of our entire rebrand. I want to put your work in every one of my stores, on the walls, in every ad, in every magazine, and on every shopping bag, World-wide.

Nan re-enters, interrupting.

NAN

Shopping bags? Buddy, I'm not sure that's the sell you think it is.

(MORE)

NAN (CONT'D)

We've got four billboards in
Manhattan alone right now.

BRUCE

Nan, honey, please?

Nan exits into the kitchen. Bruce shrugs.

BRUCE (CONT'D)

She's also my agent. And not to cut
to the chase, but I don't take jobs
for the money anymore. It needs to
be more. I have to be inspired.

Taking this as a challenge, Mike lowers to the floor, opening
Bear Pond to a particular PHOTO, but not showing it just yet.

MIKE

When I was 16, I went on vacation
with my family. Little cabin by the
lake. It was pretty late in the
season, so most of the families had
already gone. I made a few friends
early in the week, and even
developed a little crush. But alas,
the Summer ended, and by mid-week,
everyone my age had headed home.

Mike reveals the photo: **A NAKED YOUNG MAN ON A DOCK**, dipping
his toe in the water. Bruce nods, obviously familiar with it.

MIKE (CONT'D)

I think the man who took this
understands something. I think you
understand loneliness. And I think
you understand shame.

BRUCE

Well, like all art, the meaning
resides in the beholder. So,
whatever that photo says to you...

MIKE

You also understand joy.

Mike flips to another bookmarked page: **A NAKED MAN FALLING
THROUGH THE SKY**, all four limbs facing skyward, uninhibited.

MIKE (CONT'D)

But most of all...

Mike flips to: **A NAKED MAN EXPLODING OUT OF A BODY OF WATER.**

MIKE (CONT'D)

You understand desire. To be free.
To be touched. To be *noticed*.
You're somehow able to capture a
moment like no one I've ever seen.
A thought. A longing. A daydream.
You can make two people simply
laying together into something
irreproachable. Fucking *molten*.

Thee words clearly affect Bruce, his sad eyes glistening. But then he gets up, distancing himself.

BRUCE

That's all very nice, truly. But
what I said on the phone stands. My
quote is non-negotiable. Perhaps
later on, when you have the capital-

MIKE

Then let me have one. Let me
license one - single - photo. And
I'll make it the centerpiece. The
cornerstone of everything.

Mike moves closer, laying it all on the line.

MIKE (CONT'D)

And when we hit, and we *will* hit -
I'll transport you to paradise for
weeks at a time, surrounded by the
sexiest, most beautiful people on
the planet -- with total artistic
freedom. Final edit. Carte blanche.
Drown you in stock options.
Now tell me that's not inspiring.

Off Bruce, trying hard to hold onto his poker face.

INT. BRUCE'S HOME STUDIO - MOMENTS LATER

Mike flips through Bruce's (sizable) portfolio of poster-sized prints, on a mission. No. No... Then he stops on one.

MIKE

This. This is the one.

Mike lifts it up, never taking his eyes off the print.

BRUCE

You sure? You don't want something
with, you know, more clothes?

MIKE

I'm not trying to sell clothes. I'm selling possibility. I'm selling potential. I'm selling a *dream*.

Mike basks in the photo. *It's everything.*

SMITH (V.O.)

He took that one single photo, and put it in every store. Mandated it.

INSERT - A photo scanner FLASHES, copying Bruce's print, as a large-scale printer SPRINGS to life...

SMITH (V.O.)

Smack dab in the middle of the entrance. It was non-negotiable.

INSERT - Mike and Les Wexner review a table COVERED in blueprints, design renderings and construction details.

SMITH (V.O.)

And once Wexner gave his blessing? Mike took absolute control.

MUSIC: "LIPS LIKE SUGAR" by ECHO AND THE BUNNYMEN" erupts.

As we **PUSH RIGHT THROUGH** the A&F construction wall into:

INT. ABERCROMBIE AND FITCH - EASTLAND MALL - DAY - 1993

Absolute construction mayhem: CONTRACTORS assemble and polish Dark Rosewood shelves. ELECTRICIANS install intricate outlets and tiny bulbs. Ebony floorboards. Stained oak tables.

At the center of it all -- is Mike, directing traffic. A small team of CREATIVES hover close, taking notes of his every wish, including bright-eyed **ALLISON XIAO** (25).

MIKE

And take out the front windows on both sides. I don't want to be able to see in from the outside.

ALLISON

Roger that.

Allison jots down a note with excited compliance, as -- MILTON STUCKY (45, a stuffy Wexner holdover) pushes back.

STUCKY

What do you mean you don't...
What about the display windows?

MIKE

We aren't gonna have display windows. We're gonna have shutters. You wanna see what's in my store? You have to come inside.

STUCKY

That's not really how--

MIKE

Whatever you were doing before? Wasn't working. That's precisely why I'm here. *Take 'em out.*

Stucky huffs -- as Mike locks eyes with Smith across the room, who's directing TWO PAINTERS on the far wall. They share a brief but meaningful glance, before Mike continues...

MIKE (CONT'D)

From there? I want the entrance passage split into two: Men to the left and Women to the right. So the new wall will go right here.

STUCKY

You're splitting the whole floor?

MIKE

No, only at first. To about *here*. But initially, as we walk in...

WE DISSOLVE INTO MIKE'S FANTASY: His ideal vision of what a (completely finished) A&F Store will look like:

MIKE (V.O.)

I want a private experience...

GIRL'S POV: *Turning right into the GIRLS SECTION -- extremely dim lighting. Perfectly stacked tanks. Not a speck of dust or stray spaghetti strap. We reach out, touching the fabric.*

MIKE (V.O.)

Moody, tactile discovery...

BOY'S POV: *Turning LEFT into the BOYS SECTION -- stacked Rugby Polos. Thick, high-quality sweatshirts with Abercrombie down the sleeve. And yes, glorious fucking cargo shorts.*

MIKE (V.O.)

Then, further in-- where the music is even louder: The boys and girls will collide on the main floor...

Our BOY (an aspiring Jock) emerges onto the main floor -- immediately locking eyes with a YOUNG GORGEOUS FEMALE emerging from the Girl's section. Immediate tension.

MIKE (V.O.)
And there, Boys and Girls will come together, coyly spotting each other for the first time. Aware and hungry. Primed for connection...

They circle each other. Entranced. This is some Baz-Luhrmann-Romeo-and-Juliet-through-the-fish-tank shit right here.

MIKE (V.O.)
The lights will be soft and the scent will be strong...

The boy & girl TOUCH, and right as they're about to KISS, a PNEUMATIC DRILL BUZZES -- **throttling us back to REALITY:**

STUCKY
 It seems to me like the parents of your shoppers are gonna want to get the hell outta here, fast.

MIKE
Good. It's not for them.

STUCKY
 These are bold moves, Mr. Jeffries.

Mike points to team member -- RYAN (a late-40s dorky Dad).

MIKE
 Ryan, you said you have kids, right? Two teenage girls? What's the fastest and easiest way to get them to leave a store?

RYAN
 Easy: Buy them something.

MIKE
 And top of that - when you're a teenager? If your parents really don't like something?

RYAN
It makes it even cooler.

Allison smiles. It's a great point. Stucky, however...

STUCKY
 But it's a store, not a night club.

MIKE

No, this will not be just a store,
it will be an *experience*. And
they're gonna remember what it
feels like-- so they'll want to
come back. To see what's new. To
see who's here. To be seen in here.
The hallway out there? The
promenade? That's for Mom and
Grandpa. But in here? This is *their*
space. Their time. Their clothes.

Allison and Ryan smile, totally inspired.

MIKE (CONT'D)

Somebody is gonna have their first
kiss in an Abercrombie and Fitch.

Ryan's smile drops away, suddenly considering his daughters.

SMITH (V.O.)

And Mike was right:

EXT. A&F EASTLAND - NIGHT/DAY - 1993

A "**GRAND OPENING**" BANNER raises up over the locked entrance.
The lights click on inside, and the security gate RISES.

SMITH (V.O.)

The kids LOVED it...

BARRAGES of teenagers FLOCK INSIDE, obscuring the entrance.

SMITH (V.O.)

And the parents hated it.

THREE MOMS stop in front of the store, watching as --

Two SHIRTLESS MALE MODELS (24, White, abs to spare) flank the
entrance, greeting MORE AND MORE TEENS as they flood inside.

TWO OF THE MOMS share an aghast look, but when they check in
with the THIRD MOM -- she's flush, thinking it's kinda hot.

SMITH (V.O.)

*Sales tripled almost immediately.
Instant verification, that Mike
knew exactly what he was doing.*

Stucky stands alone outside the store, flabbergasted by the
reception, when Les Wexner walks up behind him, smiling away.

LES WEXNER
Told you so.

And as the flock of teens finally disperse, we finally get a glimpse at the featured artwork in the entryway -- the single photo Mike licensed from Bruce:

A PHOTO OF A GORGEOUS YOUNG MAN, naked from the waist up:
Who looks very much like DAVID from the opening commercial.

And we STAY on it. Staring at David. Making it crystal clear:

This photo means something.

Finally, PUSHING RIGHT THROUGH HIS FACE...

We're **INSIDE THE STORE** after hours, as the "BACK OF HOUSE" TEAM (20s) resets the floor for the next day: One BOH EMPLOYEE begins by restocking the FIERCE COLOGNE display.

SMITH (V.O.)
The thing people always seem to remember was the smell. Mike had it tailor-made: Cedar-wood, Cardamom, Jasmine... Poor bastards had to make like 100 different concoctions before he finally chose one.

BOH EMPLOYEES fold jeans. Dust shelves. Polish wood.

SMITH (V.O.)
I've inhaled so much of it over the years I think I have Vetiver permanently burned into my nostrils. And whether you found it offensive or not...

Having followed several BOH TEAM MEMBERS by this point, it's apparent **they're all people of color**: Black. Asian. Hispanic.

SMITH (V.O.)
You remembered it didn't you?

INT. A&F - EASTLAND MALL - DAY - 1993 (A NEW DAY)

Alone, Mike SPRAYS FIERCE all over the store: Into the air...

SMITH (V.O.)
Seems so trivial, but Mike knew--

Onto the clothes...

SMITH (V.O.)
*He knew that smell is the sense
 most strongly connected to memory.*

Even into the Air-Conditioning vents.

SMITH (V.O.)
*He made those kids remember the
 store experience, chemically.*

Satisfied, Mike breathes it in, so proud of his store.

SMITH (V.O.)
*But the store - as genius as it
 was, was only step one. The real
 secret sauce, was his little on-
 campus Blitzkrieg...*

MUSIC: "ZIP-LOCK BAG" by LIT rumbles in, as--

EXT. MAJOR COLLEGE CAMPUS - DAY - 1993

A U-HAUL GATE FLIES UP, and THREE HOT A&F GIRLS (early-20s) jump out, wearing skin-tight A&F tanks and teensy cut-offs.

Across the QUAD -- wide-eyed, hormone-stuffed BOYS watch as the Hot A&F Girls hand out A&F MERCH to good looking SENIOR GIRLS, who don the apparel immediately, honored to be chosen.

SMITH (V.O.)
*There was nothing accidental about
 it. Mike simply anointed the "cool
 kids." And everyone followed suit.*

APPLICATIONS change hands, smiles all around.

SMITH (V.O.)
*Mike didn't accept employment
 applications. He gave them out.
 You had to be selected.*

ELSEWHERE -- two JACKED BROS walk through the QUAD, proudly sporting striped A&F polos. They rendezvous with some GIRLS (also clad in A&F), all laughing and flirting.

A pair of dorkier MALE STUDENTS pause their frisbee throwing to watch this exchange - *longing, wishing it were them*.

SMITH (V.O.)
*Shakespeare wrote "Apparel oft
 proclaims the man." For even he
 knew: Nobody wants to be left out.*

EXT. ABERCROMBIE & FITCH STOREFRONT - DAY - 1993

One of those same dorky frisbee guys walks out of the store holding two full bags of A&F clothes, ready to fit in.

SMITH (V.O.)
And once A&F hit campus...

EXT. MAJOR COLLEGE CAMPUS - DAY - 1993

Mike walks across campus, looking for signs of his influence. A goofy smile on his face, he's even wearing a BACKPACK.

SMITH (V.O.)
It spread like a wildfire.

Merging into the fray of COLLEGE KIDS heading to class, Mike's smile would imply that he's fitting right in... But some kids are staring. Mike looks wildly out of place.

SMITH (V.O.)
*Mike adored campus life. I think
 it's what gave him the idea for
 headquarters - first of its kind.*

EXT. A&F CAMPUS HEADQUARTERS - DAY - 1995

A MASSIVE SPRAWLING COMPLEX: A steel snake hiding in the Ohio trees -- like a giant metal barn designed by Frank Lloyd Wright. A frisbee flies by. Distant LAUGHTER.

SMITH (V.O.)
*He said "he wanted to banish the
 cynicism of the real world," and
 create a little world unto itself.*

YOUNG CREATIVES stroll the grounds, resembling college life.

SMITH (V.O.)
*He encouraged long hours, even
 overnights. "Work hard, play hard."
 Which allowed him to keep the
 creative team centralized...*

INT. THE "CRAFT-E-TERIA" - A&F HQ - DAY - 1995

A HUGE main floor, where HUNDREDS of empty drafting tables and cubicles sit unmanned as far as the eye can see.

Mike sits alone in an OFFICE, circling photos in a packet.

SMITH (V.O.)
*...And have final say on every
 single employee that he hired.*

TIMELAPSE: HUNDREDS of A&F EMPLOYEES (all 22-35) suddenly materialize, crawling everywhere -- the place suddenly raging with manic energy. Renderings. Swatches. Busy busy busy.

SMITH (V.O.)
*He built an exact replica of the
 store to serve as the ideal model.*

INSERT - the "MODEL" A&F STORE: It looks precisely like Mike's fantasy that he had during construction, (complete with Bruce's PHOTO of the guy who looks just like David.)

SMITH (V.O.)
*He trained all new managers on
 site, showing them exactly how it
 was suppose to look, and how all
 employees were expected to comply.*

INT. CAMPUS TRAINING LOUNGE - DAY - 1995

Mike delivers an impassioned, caffeinated Ted-Talk-like address to a group of STORE MANAGERS (24-35, mostly White).

MIKE
*Now, customer service: This may
 sounds strange, but customer
 service? Is not a thing. Employees
 are there to arrange clothes, clean
 the space, and look good while
 doing it. They do not under any
 circumstances, *help* customers
 unless approached.*

Smith stands in the far back, listening in. An attractive male ASSISTANT (23, wearing all A&F) kindly hands him a TEA.

MIKE (CONT'D)
*They are simply there to hang out,
 like it's their fucking treehouse.
 There should be the sense that yes,
 our employees are, in fact -- too
 cool to be bothered.*

One of the FEMALE MANAGERS (26) raises her hand.

FEMALE MANAGER
What about like 'greet's' and stuff?

MIKE

Good question. We don't have 'em.
It's not a fucking mystery, let 'em
figure it out. If it's awkward? Who
cares - so is Prom. Let 'em
explore. It should feel like they
just walked into a strangers house.
Well, a stranger's house full of
ridiculously attractive people.

Everyone laughs. There's no denying Mike's charisma.

MIKE (CONT'D)

Under no goddamn circumstances do I
ever want to ever hear shit like
"are you finding everything okay?"
Ever. The *only* acceptable greet
will be from our models out front,
who are allowed to say "Hey how's
it goin'?" That's it. My secret
shoppers will be all over you. I
want *those* 4 words, nothing else.
We are stylish. We are careless. We
are *Sprezzatura*. Y'all got it?

The inspired crowd nods in affirmation, totally onboard.

MOMENTS LATER, the group now mingling -- Mike and Smith are
interrupted by a female STAFFER handing Mike a small FOLDER.

STAFFER

Mr. Jeffries? The latest apps.

MIKE

Thank you, thank you. *Wait* -- why
aren't there headshots on these?

STAFFER

I don't know, they just came in.

MIKE

Send 'em back. All hires get their
picture taken, no exceptions. Yeah?

Mike hands it back and she scurries off. Mike turns to Smith.

MIKE (CONT'D)

God forbid we have standards.

Smith nods immediately, affirming Mike's every move.

SMITH (V.O.)

The actual clothes were the easy part. He just hired a bunch of 20-somethings to tell him what's cool.

INT. CRAFT-E-TERIA - DAY - 1995

Mike listens to a table of MERCH EXECS -- including **CHRIS** and **JESSICA** (both mid-20s, white) as they spout ideas. Allison Xiao (whom we met during construction) records the minutes.

CHRIS

How about a lifeguard shirt?
"Expert in mouth to mouth."

A spattering of laughs.

MIKE

Let's do some more of those summertime ones too. The "two-in-a-canoë" sort of thing. Loved that.

CHRIS

What about a camping one? "Pack a tent, pick a girl, pitch a tent."

MIKE

Pitch a tent?

CHRIS

You know--

Chris puts his finger under his tee-shirt and makes his crotch "grow", thus -- *pitching a tent*. More LAUGHS.

JESSICA

How about "I had a nightmare I was a brunette."

Allison looks at Smith (the only other brunette in the room), but Smith only giggles along with the group.

JESSICA (CONT'D)

"Will spoon for poon."

CHRIS

Or another Buddha one that's like --
"Get your Buddha on the floor."

JESSICA

"Blondes are adored, Brunettes are ignored."

More laughter as Mike smiles. But as Allison jots it down...

ALLISON
Aren't we like, afraid of offending
someone?

MIKE
Hey, as long as we're making fun of
everyone, it's all in good fun.

ALLISON
But no one's making fun of *blondes*.

JESSICA
Then we do that too. Like, "*Who
needs brains when you got these.*"

Grabbing her tits, Jessica sparks more giggles.

MIKE
Look, the margins on these tees is
among the best we got. We had to do
six reprints of "tug you the right
way" - pushing the envelope is what
sells. They're just jokes. Cool?

Allison nods, not wanting to be the only objector.

SMITH (V.O.)
*He had his hands on everything.
Nothing was out of his purview.*

INT. CAMPUS TRAINING LOUNGE - DAY - 1995

Mike towers over two-dozen STORE MANAGERS-in-training.

MIKE
You, and every one of your in-house
employees are to wear A&F clothing
every minute that you are on the
clock. Top and bottom. Shoes too.
Undergarments. Everything. And
nothing that is on sale, or from an
expired season. Now: The guidebook.

Mike holds up a THICK, 40-PAGE MANUAL.

MIKE (CONT'D)
The guidebook outlines - in detail -
the A&F "look." Read it. Learn it.
For you will be responsible for
aligning-with, as well as enforcing
all company policies.
(MORE)

MIKE (CONT'D)

It outlines acceptable Jewelry,
acceptable hairstyles, fingernails,
color combinations, hem & cuff
lengths...

Mike's voice fades away, as--

SMITH (V.O.)

And by the end of '95?...

TIMELAPSE: Ground-up construction of a BRAND NEW A&F STORE.

SMITH (V.O.)

*Mike had set both margin rate and
profitability records, and was
already nearing 100 locations...*

INT. ABERCROMBIE & FITCH - VARIOUS LOCATIONS - DAY - 1995

VARIOUS DESIGNERS change out the seasonal wall artwork,
rotating older Bruce photos into new ones, featuring: The
CARLSON TWINS. The infamous "Armpit guy," and some familiar
faces: **MICHELLE TRACHTENBERG. LINDSEY LOHAN. CHANNING TATUM.**

SMITH (V.O.)

*It wasn't just timing - or design,
or popularity. With Abercrombie?...*

INSERT - VARIOUS AUDITION TAPES

*-On shaky VHS CAMCORDER FOOTAGE -- VARIOUS MALE MODELS (18-
26) walk into frame and begin to field questions from the
(unknown) auditors offscreen, following their every request.*

SMITH (V.O.)

*Mike altered the Zeitgeist. "A Man"
was no longer defined as a suit-
toting, whiskey guzzling Ad-Man on
the last breath of his 30s, no...*

-The VARIOUS MODELS smile. Laugh. Toss their hair.

SMITH (V.O.)

*"A Man" was now a gym-rat
Homecoming King Quarterback with a
fake-ID, single & ready to mingle.*

*-Upon request, each model removes their shirt, and when
instructed to do so, they all start to dance.*

SMITH (V.O.)

*Sure, Calvin Klein and a few others
had the same inkling...*

-Some of the Models dance very self-consciously.

SMITH (V.O.)
But Mike and Bruce distilled it...

-And some of them get downright freaky.

SMITH (V.O.)
*Perfected it. Purified it.
 And created a whole new world.*

EXT. A&F BASE CAMP - RIO DE JANEIRO - DAY - 1995

SPLASH! -- a MALE MODEL CANNONBALLS into a pool, attempting to impress a slew of gorgeous FEMALE MODELS on the pool deck. Spanning this paradisiacal beachfront...

MUSIC: "KEEP IT ON THE DOWN LOW" by R. KELLY drones along as--
 DOZENS of GORGEOUS YOUNG PEOPLE climb trees, play volleyball and meander about wielding random props (Boxing gloves, helmets, etc.), all shamelessly flirting.

An undeniable sexual energy in the air.

Wandering amongst the models -- *CLICK* -- Bruce snaps a photo, weaving through camp, SNAPPING CANDIDS of whatever he likes.

BRUCE
 James! Come put your arm around
 Chelsea. She looks incredible.

Models JAMES (19) and CHELSEA (18) excitedly join the fray.

BRUCE (CONT'D)
 Nice. Chelsea give him a peck. Hand
 through the hair. Mina! join us.

MINA (20) joins them, a flannel hanging over her bikini.

BRUCE (CONT'D)
 Flank James. Gimme some leg. James,
 hands up. And girls, run your hands
 down his chest. Keep going. Yep.

They giggle and flirt, posing however he asks. *CLICK*.

BRUCE (CONT'D)
 Okay now -- James, do you have a
 tan line? Good, just pull your
 shorts down, and girls you laugh at
 his butt. Ha. Great. Now spank him.

The models do everything willingly, never batting an eye.

BRUCE (CONT'D)

Now James just drop those, and grab
yourself and girls, you tickle him.

Getting attacked, James barely conceals his manhood. *CLICK.*

BRUCE (CONT'D)

Ha. Great. This is great.

Bruce peeks out from behind the lens, as he spots -- **A NEW ARRIVAL** (19, a British Tom Brady look-a-like) emerging from a makeshift TENT up the hill, looking a little overwhelmed.

Mike and Smith emerge from behind him, glowing in approval.

BRUCE (CONT'D)

Ladies, come meet the new guy.

Chelsea and Mina run up the hill, leaving James alone to pull up his pants, a tinge jealous.

Bruce joins Mike and Smith, all admiring 'British Tom Brady.'

BRUCE (CONT'D)

Good Christ. Where'd you find him?

MIKE

London, baby.

SMITH

You'd be amazed what you can find
overseas.

Mike and Smith share a smile, then turn their gaze out over the emerald grass, mountain skyline, and crystal water. Impeccable, barely-clothed bodies everywhere. Paradise.

SMITH (V.O.)

Kids came from all over...

INSERT - A THIN MALE MODEL enters the tent, greeted by Mike, Bruce and Smith. They all sit, and an interview begins.

SMITH (V.O.)

*Many of them hadn't even left their
home state before, or been on a
place. Let alone seen the Ocean.*

INSERT - A RIPPED MALE MODEL (20) emerges from the tent, looking around, flustered and a bit overwhelmed by it all.

SMITH (V.O.)
*And for a good while? Being an
 Abercrombie model was about the
 coolest thing you could be.*

INSERT - *A seemingly-endless line of PROSPECTIVE MALE MODELS
 (15-25) stand on the sidewalk, all waiting to audition.*

SMITH (V.O.)
*The company was the hottest thing
 in the fucking world.*

INSERT - *Mike cannonballs into the pool himself, what fun!*

SMITH (V.O.)
*Everything was selling. We could
 have written "Abercrombie" in dog
 shit across the front of a hat and
 sold it for forty bucks.*

INSERT -- *CLOTHES, COLOGNE and MAGAZINES fly off the racks.*

SMITH (V.O.)
*And what started with 36 stores,
 became ten times that. Mike
 rocketed up the Fortune 500.*

The **NYSE STOCK TICKER** appears, as "**ANF**" climbs from **4.3...**

SMITH (V.O.)
Past Nike. Past Halliburton.

*...to **32.2**.*

SMITH (V.O.)
New York. Milan. London. Shanghai.

INSERT - *FIFTY MALE MODELS in Times Square, clad only in
 matching A&F SWEATPANTS, wave proudly at an adoring crowd.*

SMITH (V.O.)
*And in less than five years from
 the day Mike was hired?
 Abercrombie went public. And
Les Wexner got his motherfucking
legacy.*

INT. A&F CAMPUS COURTYARD - NIGHT - 1996

POP! -- Champagne explodes, filling a crystal flute. A knife
 cuts into a cake that reads: **BILLIONAIRE CLUB.**

MUSIC: "SUMMER GIRLS" BY LFO blasts from a LIVE DJ

(you know, the one with the lyric "I like girls who wear Abercrombie & Fitch" -- a truly dreadful song.)

Across the courtyard -- a HUGE and familiar PARTY rages: HUNDREDS of A&F employees (un-ironically) wielding RED SOLO CUPS and singing along to LFO with religious dedication.

ON THE BALCONY ABOVE, Familiar flip-flops walk outside, as two men take their place at the railing. We've seen this before: Mike and Smith, their backs to us, peering down over the party below. Gold glitter falling like rain.

And as Mike raises his arm to wrap it around Smith--

LES WEXNER (O.S.)
Gentlemen.

Wexner waltzes over, a bit over-served.

LES WEXNER (CONT'D)
You know I had a feeling about you,
Mike. From day one. And you did it.
All of it. Made it to the Summit.

MIKE
Just trying to 'sell the frock.'
(Wexner chuckles, then)
And thank you for believing in me.

LES WEXNER
Oh please, I never doubted you for
a second. As I said - We can tell
our own, Mike. You didn't need me
before and you don't need me now.
That said, you ever need anything,
you know where you can find me.
(a hug)
And listen, my Assistant Jeffrey,
he owns a little island off the
coast of Saint Thomas. You two
should come on down sometime.

MIKE
That sounds lovely.

A gorgeous YOUNG LADY (20) in a cocktail gown arrives with two glasses of champagne, hands one to Wexner.

LES WEXNER
You're at the top now, Michael. And
the view is truly something up
here. So... Make sure you enjoy it.

Wexner locks elbows with the Young Lady, and they walk off.

Mike looks over at Smith, sharing a smile, as--

INT. LUXURY APARTMENT BUILDING HALLWAY - NIGHT - 1993

DING! Elevator doors open, and Mike and Smith step inside. Smith swipes a card and hits "P".

MIKE

Ooo. Penthouse. Fancy.

SMITH

What can I say? I like nice things.

Standing apart, their "friendship" is clearly still budding at this point. As they steal a glance, the doors close...

INT. SMITH'S PENTHOUSE APARTMENT - MOMENTS LATER

Walking inside, Smith closes the door behind them, and proceeds to lock two deadbolts and a chain lock.

MIKE

Not a big truster of people are you?

SMITH

Maybe I'm locking you in.

INT. LIVING ROOM - SMITH'S PENTHOUSE - LATER THAT NIGHT

Sharing a nightcap, Mike and Smith sit on the couch watching Freddy Mercury and Monserrat Caballé (the Opera Diva) sing "BARCELONA" on TV, a fabulously over-the-top duet.

SMITH

It's funny - Freddy's the greatest rock singer there ever was, and yet - the way he looks at her, he'd trade places with her in a second. Grass is always greener I guess.

But Mike's mind is completely elsewhere, and he MUTES the TV.

MIKE

Sell the Salon.

SMITH

Sell the - *what?* That's my baby.

MIKE
And it's lovely.

SMITH
You can't just expect me to stop working.

MIKE
Come work for me. I'm serious.
I'll take care of you.

SMITH
Are you implying you need a fixer?

Mike rolls his eyes, as a palpable lull follows, both men toying with their empty wine glasses.

Then ever so gently, Smith reaches over and runs his fingers into Mike's hair... But Mike recoils, seemingly disgusted.

SMITH (CONT'D)
Sorry, I thought...
(slumps back)
What are we doing, then?

MIKE
No, it's fine. It's me. I'm. I liked that. We can do that.

SMITH
Are you sure?

MIKE
Yeah.

He takes Smith's hand, and places it on the back of his head.

MIKE (CONT'D)
Just give me time.

Smith nods, with patient understanding.

INT. MASTER BATH - SMITH'S PENTHOUSE - LATER THAT NIGHT

Smith soaps his armpits in the shower. Through translucent glass, he can see Mike at the sink. Then taking a chance...

SMITH
You're welcome to join me...
If you like...

No answer. Until finally...

MIKE (O.S.)
What do know about plastic surgery?

As Smith ponders the unexpected question, we DISSOLVE TO:

INT. THE SET OF AN INTERVIEW - DAY

Smith's face -- SOME YEARS LATER -- staring off in thought...

FEMALE VOICE (O.S.)
Mister Smith? You still with us?

SNAPPING OUT OF IT -- Smith refocuses, shifting in his seat, his eyes finally settling on something across from him:

The intrepid face of **KATONYA JACKSON** (33, Black). Mahogany leather jacket. Killer boots. She's perched in a Director's chair next to an ARRI ALEXA CAMERA rig helmed by a FEMALE IN A BEANIE we can't quite see yet.

SUPER: LONG ISLAND CITY, NEW YORK. 2014

SMITH
 Yeah, sorry. I was just...
 Remembering something.

KATONYA
 You were at the party, the golden
 glitter... And then you kinda
 trailed off. Something you want to
 share with the rest of us?

Smith looks RIGHT INTO THE CAMERA LENS, suddenly very aware of his environment and the 3-POINT SOFT-BOX LIGHTING surrounding him. THIS IS A DOCUMENTARY IN PROGRESS.

SMITH
 Right. No. Yeah. The party...

Off Smith's hesitant, conflicted face -- we DISSOLVE BACK TO:

EXT. COURTYARD - A&F HQ - NIGHT - 1996 (AS BEFORE)

The courtyard party already in progress, where, several Jell-o shots later, DRUNK EMPLOYEES SING ALONG to "We Are the Champions", waving their arms in the air, no one remotely hitting the correct notes.

A&F EMPLOYEES
*And weeeeeee'll keep on fiiiighting,
 til the eeeeeend... We are the
 champions, WE ARE THE CHAMPIONS...*

Mike has joined them, singing along with a Red Solo cup.

MIKE/A&F EMPLOYEES (O.C.)
*No time for looooooosers,
 'Cause weeee are the champions...*

Mike laughs and gives a CACKLING BRO (25) a high-five, before peeling off and walking towards the OUTSKIRTS of the party.

He passes several more DRUNK BROS AND GALS (all shirtless), gathered around a ping-pong table playing "strip-flip-cup."

FARTHER OUT -- Mike spies a "couple" making out, unzipping and shedding their clothing. Mike nods in absolute approval.

Then passes a GIRL VOMITING in the bushes while a GOOD FRIEND holds her hair back. And finally...

Mike takes a seat on a park bench next to two EXTREMELY HANDSOME MALE CATERERS (20s), now off-the-clock and sharing a joint. They pass the blunt to Mike -- who closes his eyes, taking an incredibly long, *fuck-me-up-til-Thursday* hit.

SMITH (V.O.)
*1,000 stores in 19 Countries. 52
 straight Quarters of growth, 52--
 that's 13 years of constant growth.*

As Mike BLOWS OUT THE SMOKE, his hazy face DISSOLVES INTO:

INSERT - *Fresh Bruce Weber artwork being hung in the stores, including photos of: **Kellen Lutz. Olivia Wilde. Ashton Kutcher. Jennifer Lawrence.** Even a young **Taylor Swift.***

SMITH (V.O.)
*...unheard of in any industry. Mike
 Jeffries set a new standard. And
 I don't think it's hyperbole to
 say, that not only did he single-
 handedly usher in the 90's...*

INSERT - *One last Bruce photo: A giant, landscaped wide-shot hung above the registers featuring a DOZEN WET MALE MODELS standing in the Ocean wearing nothing but tighty-whities.*

*Dead center -- is '**British Tom Brady**', a huge smile on his face. Frozen in this moment, at the center of the universe.*

SMITH (V.O.)
*He redefined masculinity to an
 entire generation.*

BACK TO:

INT. THE INTERVIEW - DAY - 2014

Smith beams, proud to have played a part, however small.

Katonya nods at all this, a highly intuitive empath.

But shifting in her chair, something feels left undone. She leans over and WHISPERS something to her DP **JAHLIN LI** (28, cute beanie, Tattoo sleeves). Jahlin whispers back.

A moment to reset -- Smith glances around the room:

They're in some sort of **INDUSTRIAL-CHIC MANSION**: High ceilings. Stained wood. Polar bear rug. C-STANDS, APPLE BOXES, and several silent PA's lurk in the shadows off-set.

The whispering intensifies, before Katonya has the last word, and returns her attention to Smith.

KATONYA

Can I ask you - when I first asked you to do this you very vehemently declined. So, why the change of heart? Why come and talk to me?

SMITH

Well, Nobody knows Mike the way I do, and... I think it's important to get the story straight.

Katonya nods, hiding her opinions well.

SMITH (CONT'D)

So yeah. What else?

KATONYA

What *else*? We've been talking for what, an hour now? And we haven't... I maybe thought by now we'd have heard some names: Carla Baronets. Jason Boyce. Anthony--

SMITH

I figured we'd get to that stuff.

KATONYA

That *stuff*.

SMITH

Every company has their problems.

KATONYA

You're barely telling half the story.

SMITH

You asked me to start at the beginning, and so I did.

KATONYA

Right, but you're really skirtin' around some pretty important--

SMITH

Look, Mike's company was not without problems, no one would argue otherwise.

KATONYA

Problems? Come on now. You're no dummy. We played you our news-clips, you know why we're here, what we're after... You haven't even touched on one lawsuit, one accusation, one single--

SMITH

Miss Jackson, if there's something you'd like me to address *why not just ask*. I'm here, aren't I?

Katonya leans forward, challenge accepted.

KATONYA

Okay. Tell me about the protests.

Smith nods, unaffected.

SMITH

He didn't set out to hurt anyone, he really didn't. But... America's sense of humor was different back then. It just was.

INT. A&F CLOTHING FACTORY - UNKNOWN LOCATION - DAY - 1996

STAMP! -- An industrial T-SHIRT PRESS CRUSHES DOWN, as a myriad of (actual) A&F graphic TEES come hot off the line. The first one reads: ***"West Virginia, it's all relative"***

STAMP - *"Blue Bengal Massage - we'll tug you the right way"*

SMITH (V.O.)

What was acceptable or "politically correct" in the 90s - even into the 2000s, shifted quite dramatically.

STAMP - *"Do I make you look fat?"*

A tired **BENGALI WOMAN** (late 20s) takes the shirts and stacks them, wiping her brow, as --

STAMP! -- another shirt: Two cartoon Asian stereotypes in bamboo rice-hats (a fake ad for a laundry service) that reads: "**Wong Brothers Laundry: Two Wongs Can Make it White**"

The confused Bengali Woman takes a long look, as we hear:

PROTESTERS (PRE-LAP)
*MAKING IT WHITE,
 DOESN'T MAKE IT ALL RIGHT!*

EXT. CITY SIDEWALK - OUTSIDE A&F - DAY - 1996

A large crowd of STUDENT PROTESTERS chant in unison.

SUPER: **SAN FRANCISCO, 1996.**

PROTESTERS
*MAKING IT WHITE,
 DOESN'T MAKE IT ALL RIGHT!*

INSIDE THE STORE WINDOW -- a concerned A&F STORE MANAGER, phone to her ear, reports on the mayhem outside.

PUSHING INTO THE CROWD -- a FEMALE PROTESTER (25, Chinese) waves the WONG SHIRT high, a red "X" taped over it.

MATCHING TO:

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - A&F HQ - DAY - 1996

THE SAME SHIRT in Mike's hands. He takes it in... Then looks to a very nervous Allison. Several anxious CREATIVES, as well as Smith, stand at attention awaiting Mike's instructions.

MIKE
 They didn't think it was funny?

ALLISON
 It seems not.

MIKE
 How many were there?

ALLISON
 The call came from San Francisco, but I guess there were two other s in Irvine as well. It started with this blogpost, that blew up on this message board, and so... Um. Yeah.

Mike scans the faces of his team, then cracks a smile.

MIKE
I've got an idea.

MUSIC: "FOLLOW YOU DOWN" by THE GIN BLOSSOMS jangles in, as--

INT/EXT. LOADING DOCK - A&F HEADQUARTERS - DAY - 1996

EMPLOYEES back away, tossing aside empty boxes, as they've just created a heaping MOUND OF WONG BROTHERS T-SHIRTS. Standing beside the mountain -- is Mike and Allison.

MIKE
Wanna do the honors?

Allison nods. Mike wraps one of the tees around a piece of torn cardboard. Smith flicks on a LIGHTER -- Torch lit -- he hands it to Allison, who adds it to the mountain. And *WHOOSH*.

MIKE (CONT'D)
Better?

ALLISON
Better.

As the flames flicker across Allison's satisfied face...

SMITH (PRE-LAP)
A bit overdramatic, perhaps.

INT. THE INTERVIEW - DAY - 2014

Smith appears satisfied too, apparently fond of this memory.

SMITH
...But he really did that.

KATONYA
And did he implement any new policies at that point?

SMITH
Mike was on the side of 'no press is bad press.' So no. Mike didn't mind a little controversy.

KATONYA
So, the protests did nothing...

SMITH

Well, no. The whole fiasco actually made the shirts even more popular.

INT. A&F FACTORY FLOOR - SOMEWHERE - DAY

STAMP - More new T-SHIRTS come fresh off the line:

STAMP - *"The Hot Spot (a bar), Ladies love to hit it"*

STAMP - (A male gymnast in an "L" shape) *"L is for LOSER"*

STAMP - (A buck-toothed Donkey in a Sombrero holding a taco) that reads: *"Juan more for the road"*

That same **BENGALI WOMAN** takes the "Juan" shirt and folds it.

WIDER OUT -- she's just one of several dozen exhausted BENGALI WOMEN doing the same job, mere cogs in the machine.

SMITH (PRE-LAP)

Remember all those dead baby jokes?

INT. THE INTERVIEW - DAY - 2014

Smith dabs a tiny droplet of sweat from his forehead.

SMITH

As long as it didn't involve the Holocaust? Nothing was off limits. A low bar, sure, but those were the jokes circulating the dorms at the time. You know, 'locker room talk.'

Katonya makes a face. *She knows it well.*

KATONYA

Did the company ever apologize?

SMITH

He recalled tens-of-thousands of tee-shirts, that was his apology. Yes, he was intentionally pushing the envelope - but they were *just* jokes. Stupid, ironic jokes.

KATONYA

Ironic? What makes them ironic?

SMITH

You know, self-aware. Tongue in cheek.

KATONYA

Right, but for those jokes to be deemed 'acceptable' and come off as truly ironic, that would imply that Abercrombie - and society as a whole - thought that racism, sexism and prejudice were a thing of the past, and no longer an issue.

SMITH

(shrugs)
You're not wrong.

KATONYA

So then... Do you still think that they are? A thing of the past?

SMITH

Only time will tell.

No immediate solution, Katonya moves on.

KATONYA

And what can you tell me about these?

She TOSSES him something. And as Smith unfolds it...

MIKE (PRE-LAP)

Hey Duder, what's up?

INT. MIKE'S OFFICE - A&F HEADQUARTERS - DAY - 1996

Mike looks up to find (Merch Exec) Jessica in his doorway.

JESSICA

Hey, so um. I was over at quality check, and these new ones, the...

She pulls something from her pocket: **TWO YOUTH-SIZED THONGS.**

MIKE

What about 'em?

JESSICA

So, when I was throwing out all those Vagina jokes? You know, "*Wink wink*" and "*eye candy*?" I didn't know it was for like, little girls.

MIKE

It's a *joke*. And it's underwear.
Not like anyone's gonna read it.
Good fabric, right? Comfortable?

JESSICA

But like, *Dad's* are gonna see them.

MIKE

Why would Dad's be sifting through
the girls' thongs? If guys are
gonna go around being creepy pervs
that's not really our problem.

JESSICA

Yeah, okay. I guess.

Unsatisfied, Jessica looks to Smith, who's standing in the corner. He only shrugs, not his fight. And Jessica walks out.

MIKE

Right? Am I crazy here? I mean, can
kids even read at that age?

SMITH

There is a limit.

Mike waves him off, walking out and ignoring Smith's opinion.

SMITH (PRE-LAP) (CONT'D)

And, not surprisingly...

BACK TO:

INT. THE INTERVIEW - DAY - 2014

Smith holds the child-sized "eye-candy" THONG in his hand.

SMITH

Parents were pissed.

Smith holds out his arm, as an off-set PA grabs the thong from him, then he wipes his hand on his pants. *Eww, cooties.*

KATONYA

Where did the Board stand on all
this? Surely someone had oversight.

SMITH

The Board? They didn't give a shit.

INSERT - *The A&F HQ Board Room. A DOZEN (FACELESS) SUITS sit practically hypnotized, as Mike delivers a grandiose address.*

SMITH (V.O.)
*Corporate Boards are just wallets
 with shoes. They're pacifiers.
 Unless a problem registers on Wall
 Street it barely makes the rundown.*

A DIGITAL SALES CHART APPEARS: "Annual Revenue" (in Billions)
 growing from: **\$1.013B...** to **\$2.785B...** to **\$3.318B...**

SMITH (V.O.)
*ANF Stock was skyrocketing, the
 board was in his pocket. The tee-
 shirts? The protests? Those were
 the least of Mike's problems.*

INT. CRAFT-E-TERIA - A&F HEADQUARTERS - DAY - 1997

MARK FROM GRAPHICS (25, a Buddy-Holly-lookalike) sits wide-eyed at his computer.

MARK FROM GRAPHICS
*Uhhmmmm... Did you guys just get
 the new Maga-log spread?*

The rest of the nearby GRAPHICS TEAM lean into their computers. Eyebrows raise. A gasp. Then Smith walks by.

SMITH
 What is it?

BLUSHING GRAPHICS GAL
 Yo. That is seriously hot.

Smith peeks at the monitor, as Mark looks up at him.

MARK FROM GRAPHICS
How on Earth is that gonna fly?

INT. ABERCROMBIE AND FITCH STORE - DAY - 1997

EURO-DANCE ELECTRONICA POUNDS like a desperate heartbeat, as a STORE MANAGER (30, Hispanic) gives Mike a live store tour. Smith gravitates towards the registers, giving it a look.

Nearby, a SNOOTY MOM (40) waits impatiently for her DAUGHTER and BESTIE to finish shopping. Mom sniffs the air, disgusted, then snags the latest MAGALOG off the register to kill time:

A&F QUARTERLY, WINTER HOLIDAY EDITION. She flips it open, immediately appalled by:

A PHOTO OF A MALE MODEL under a blanket, two Lassie-like-Collies perched on his lap. Beside him, two striking blonde models caress his bare chest -- both completely topless.

The Bro-y CHECK OUT GUY (25) arrives.

CHECK OUT GUY
Did you wanna buy one of those?

The Snooty Mom SCOFFS, slamming the Magalog down.

A MAN'S VOICE (PRE-LAP)
Frontal nudity?...

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - A&F HEADQUARTERS - DAY - 1997

Mike and Smith sit scolded, as A&F's humorless corporate Lawyer **BLAKE CARMER** (50) paces, garishly dressed in Brioni.

CARMER
...Honestly Mike.

MIKE
We've been doing naked butts for years, what's suddenly the problem?

CARMER
Tits, mainly. And obscenity laws.

MIKE
Oh what's the big deal, America needs to loosen up about sexuality.

CARMER
I tend to agree. But do you think supplying porn to *teenagers* is the right path to do that?

MIKE
It's four nipples! Big fucking whoop! They're not even B-cups for chrissakes. Not to mention you have to be eighteen to buy it anyhow. Now if 'Bodie the check out guy' doesn't enforce that, that's not--

CARMER
You're pissing people off.

MIKE
Am I doing something illegal?

CARMER
You're pissing people off.

MIKE
 For green-lighting someone else's
 photograph? This too shall pass.

Carmer swipes something off the table, reading a LIST:

CARMER
 Concerned Christians. Focus on the
 Family. The Catholic League...

MIKE
*Of course, the religious sect -
 always rebelling full-force against
 the thing they desperately want.*

CARMER
 Illinois' Lieutenant Governor,
 Michigan's Attorney General, West
 Virginia's --

MIKE
 Hey, you see that? *Proof* of our
 reach outside the Mid-West!

CARMER
 This is not a joke, Mike.

MIKE
 The kids love it! If you can't
 stand to look at a picture of two
 young, beautiful people then here's
 an idea: *Don't fucking look at it!*

CARMER
 The International Labor Rights
 Forum, The National Organization
 For Women, the Mexican --

MIKE
 So what - I should just reach over
 and grab my ankles because we
 pissed off some fringe groups?

CARMER
Mothers Against Drunk Drivers.

Mike freezes. *He's heard of that one.*

CARMER (CONT'D)
 You published a cocktail recipe
 called the "brain hemorrhage."

MIKE

Okay that was a bad call.

CARMER

It's just *not necessary*, none of it is. You have a huge slice of the market, it'd be so easy to appease every single person on this list.

MIKE

Oh please, as if that's even remotely possible. You can't do anything without offending *someone*.

CARMER

It's gonna start to cost you.

MIKE

Oh whatever. The company covers my legal fees, it's in my contract.

CARMER

Nothing could be more clear.
Look, the Board loves you, but the second this stuff starts to affect--

MIKE

I get it. I get it.

Silence spreads across the room...

SMITH

What if we just scrap the nudity?
The Quarterly sells without it.

Mike turns and gives Smith a long, icy stare.

MIKE

No. On second thought? I'm killing the Quarterly. I'm bored with it.

Mike stands (revealing he's wearing SHORTS), and storms out.

CARMER

You need to wrangle him, okay?
Or it's gonna get bad. Real bad.

Smith nods, warning noted.

INT. A&F HEADQUARTERS - MOMENTS LATER

Parting ways with Carmer, Smith arrives at Mike's office.

SMITH

Hey.

MIKE

Don't ever do that again.

SMITH

Excuse me?

MIKE

I love your ideas. And I want your ideas. But don't you dare usurp me like that ever again.

SMITH

Wait, you're mad at me because I attempted to merely soften the room with the bloody lawyer?

MIKE

I'm nobody's puppet.

SMITH

Are you sure? Cause you've got *something* up your arse. And put on some fucking pants -- you look bloody ridiculous!

Smith huffs off, leaving Mike to reflect on his cargo shorts.

KATONYA (PRE-LAP)

I don't think you've ever specified...

INT. THE INTERVIEW - DAY - 2014

Yanking a loose thread on his sweater until it's taught, Smith snips it off with some pocket knife scissors.

KATONYA (O.S.)

What was your actual relationship?

SMITH

With the company? I never worked for the company. I was "Head of the Family Office" -- I ran Mike's estate, managed his properties.

KATONYA

I didn't actually mean with the company.

SMITH

You mean were we in a relationship?

As Smith stares at her, giving nothing -- a **MEMORY FLASHES:**

*-Mike emerges from the **FANCY HOTEL ROOM** bathroom, freshly showered and wearing a towel. Smith's on the bed in a silk robe. Seeing Mike in the doorway, Smith smiles...*

SMITH (V.O.)

I think it was pretty clear to everyone that we were partners.

KATONYA (V.O.)

Partners?

-As Smith gets off the bed, taking Mike's head in his hands, cradling Mike's scar, a kiss imminent -- we SMASH BACK TO:

INT. THE INTERVIEW - DAY - 2014

SMITH

Partners. *Strictly professional.*

Katonya knows there's more to the story, but leaves it there.

KATONYA

You know what's crazy? We scoured the internet, the microfiche, damn near everywhere -- and we could only find one photo of the two of you together. Hopping in a car.

Smith looks down, nodding, cooking up a response...

SMITH

You know what I find crazy? That in this new age of the internet and social media and whatnot -- people think that simply because you're a recognizable name in any way shape or form, that my life and what I do is anyone's fucking business.

KATONYA

Oh, I wasn't--

SMITH

Not to be prickly. But Mike's a very private person. We both are. And it's nobody's damn business.

KATONYA
I can respect that.

Katonya looks at Jahlin. And when she looks back at Smith -- he's staring straight into the lens again, purpose unclear.

SMITH
Sorry, can we cut a moment?

KATONYA
Sure, yeah. Let's do a ten.

JAHLIN (O.S.)
Cutting.

KATONYA
Feel free to-- move about the cabin. Callie, check his Mic?

CALLIE (26, their Sound Designer), checks his lav batteries.
Make-up artist TYRA (31) arrives, touching up his face.

TYRA
Hey, let me just, there. Gorgeous.

SMITH
Thank you. I'll be right over here.

Katonya keeps a close eye, watching intently as -- Smith moves off of the set and into the shadows, where...

SYDNEY (O.S.)
Mr. Smith, you good?

SYDNEY HALESTON (52, the doc EP, a former dancer and model) confidently arrives in a cute designer onesie with pockets.

SYDNEY (CONT'D)
Can I get you anything?
Water? Coffee? Cantaloupe?

SMITH
Oh no, I'm easy. But thank you.

SYDNEY
I can't thank you enough for doing this. Again. Truly grateful.

Sydney lets him be, then joins Katonya and Jahlin across the room. Smith watches them a moment -- noticing that Katonya's doing most of the talking, pretty animated.

But turning away -- Smith pulls out his PHONE and checks his messages: *NONE*. He seems disappointed by this. Then glances across the room at something, or someone...

Before turning his back, and privately fidgeting with A RING on his right hand... Hearing his own words echo:

SMITH (V.O.)
Partners. Strictly professional...

SPARKING A SERIES OF BRIEF MEMORIES:

- ***SPRING:*** A garage door rises revealing a RED PORSCHE 911. Pulling forward, the top folds back. Smith riding shotgun, Mike PEELS OUT. Smith throws up his hands, laughing.

- ***SUMMER:*** Two MOJITO'S clink together, as Mike and Smith relax on poolside recliners, atop a pristine Adobe pool deck. Mike has a surgical BANDAGE over his nose. They watch a PAIR of handsome 20-somethings splash beneath them. *Paradise*.

- ***FALL:*** Shopping, Mike holds up a heavy-knit, crimson sweater over Smith's chest. They share a smile. Approved, Mike hands the sweater to a CUTE YOUNG MAN (22, apparently some sort of assistant), who's already carrying a sizable "yes pile."

- ***WINTER:*** In a luxurious CABIN, Mike and Smith sit by a fire with a fully grown Sammy, dwarfed by a MASSIVE CHRISTMAS TREE. Sammy is very excited by the PRESENT Mike is tearing open -- because it's a new GOLDEN RETRIEVER PUPPY!

MIKE
Stop iiiittt. Oh my gosh oh my gosh.

The two dogs go crazy, licking and playing.

SMITH
What should we name her?

MIKE
Aww. A her. How about, "*Dorothy*."

SMITH
Dear God, no.

MIKE
Come on. *No place like home*.

Mike makes a pouty face, and Smith can't resist.

SMITH
Fine. How about - "*Ruby*."

MIKE
I love it. And I promise,
if we ever get another one?
I'll name it after you.

Smith grins, smitten, as Mike abruptly calls out--

MIKE (CONT'D)
Dmitri?

DMITRI (23, gorgeous) walks in, wearing only snug jeans.

MIKE (CONT'D)
Show this new nugget the play room.
And take her outside to pee.

DMITRI
No problem.

Dmitri leads the dogs out.

MIKE
Okay wait. One more, one more.

Giddy, Mike pulls a small, not-wrapped present from his pocket -- a RING BOX. Smith eyes it suspiciously.

SMITH
No - we said we - no.

But Mike insists. Smith opens it to find -- a KEYRING.

SMITH (CONT'D)
...I don't get it.

MIKE
They're keys.

SMITH
No, I *know* they're keys.

MIKE
For here. For this. I know how much
you adore this place, so I got it
for you. It's yours. Forever.

SMITH
Are you pulling my leg right now?

MIKE
Am I in the habit of doing that?

Blushing, Smith leans forward and KISSES Mike, hard -- as...

KATONYA (PRE-LAP)
Mister Smith? You good?

INT. THE INTERVIEW - DAY - 2014

SNAPPING OUT OF IT, Smith finds himself in the corner, alone.

SMITH
 Sorry, what? Sorry.

KATONYA
 Are you ready? We're back.

SMITH
 Right. Yeah. Ready.

One last look at his phone, Smith returns to set.

KATONYA
 Callie? Jah? We ready?

CALLIE (O.S.)
Sound speed.

JAHLIN (O.S.)
Rolling.

Katonya climbs back in her chair, but before she starts--

KATONYA
 (whispering)
Jah, keep me in line, okay?

JAHLIN
 You got it.

Settling, Katonya returns to the task at hand.

KATONYA
 So you mentioned you were partners.
Were. So - what came between you?

SMITH
 Well... it was a lot of little
 things. That escalated over time.

A GULFSTREAM G550 JET rockets into the air, as we hear--

MUSIC: The horrifying outro of CROCODILE ROCK by ELTON JOHN.

INT. GULFSTREAM G550 - FLYING - DAY - 2001

Mike bops his head along to the song, reading the latest Wall Street Journal. Private steward JOE (23, stupidly handsome) comes down the aisle dressed in an A&F Polo and Jeans.

MIKE

Dude, can I get another V-8? Cans this size are so fucking pointless.

Joe takes the empty can with a WHITE-GLOVED hand.

JOE

Of course, very good Sir.

MIKE

(slaps his paper down)

Hey. Hey. Excuse me? "Very good Sir?" "Very-fucking-good Sir?"

JOE

I'm sorry, I'm sorry, I meant "no problem. No problem at all."

MIKE

I give you the guidebook for a reason, okay? Dude? So that you fucking read it. You like this job?

JOE

Yes. Yessir.

MIKE

Then read that shit again, Dude. And don't ever let me hear you say "very good" ever a-fucking-gain.

JOE

No problem, Sir. Thank you Sir.

Joe retreats, as Mike looks across the aisle to -- Smith, who has Sammy and Ruby next to him, perched in custom dog-seats.

MIKE

I mean, how fucking hard is it?

Tight-lipped, Smith lets the dust settle. But as Mike returns to his paper -- "Crocodile Rock" fades out -- giving way to the deliberate percussion of PHIL COLLINS' "TAKE ME HOME."

MIKE (CONT'D)

HEY, that is ONLY for the flights home! Change that shit right now.

A VOICE FROM THE REAR (O.S.)

No problem!

MIKE

FUCK. It's like you get looks or brains - but never both.

Smith stays mum, letting the storm pass, as the song STOPS.

MIKE (CONT'D)

Remind me to change out this crew
when we get home. They're getting
too old anyhow. And what's-his-face
is fucking covered in pimples.

SMITH

No problem.

As Mike turns away, Smith looks to Sammy, rubbing his head.

SMITH (CONT'D)

Such a good boy. Yes you are.

Looking back across the aisle, Smith finds -- Mike examining
his face in a small COMPACT MIRROR -- MATCHING:

INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE - DAY - 1999

A MIRROR on the desk of DR. HAMISH MEHTA (55, wrinkle-free),
who gestures around Mike's face with a red marker.

DR. MEHTA

Now with the brow lift, and the
dermal filler, we also have the
option to do the eyelids. Taut this
guy up right about here, then do
another laser resurfacing.

Mike turns around for a second opinion -- where Smith stands
by the exit, holding both of their coats.

SMITH

You know what I'm going to say.

DR. MEHTA

Think of it like playing dress-up.
You get to be who you want.

SMITH

Yeah, only here - you can't take it
off when you're done.

Mike ignores all of this, examining himself the mirror. As--

SMITH (PRE-LAP) (CONT'D)

*Mike never did anything half-way.
Never quit. Never stopped working.*

INT. SURGERY - HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY - 1999

A SCALPEL lowers to Mike's face. Surgery time.

SMITH (V.O.)

*We were traveling constantly. And
not just to New York every weekend.
We'd do unannounced store visits...*

INT. BATHROOM MIRROR - DAY - 1999

Mike peels off BANDAGES, taking stock of his updated face.

SMITH

*World-wide, to make sure everything
was just the way he wanted.*

INT. ABERCROMBIE AND FITCH - IRVINE, CALIFORNIA - DAY - 2001

Mike (a newly-healed face) surveys the space with Regional Manager GABE (29, curvy and effeminate). Trailing behind is nervous Store Manager MELINDA (20s, White, blonde).

FOH EMPLOYEES pretend to look busy, all stealing rare glances at Mike -- who halts in front of a prominent MANNEQUIN.

MIKE

*See? Here, these jeans are way too
big. Gabe, Dude. Grab me the 31's?
And a fucking belt, please? Christ.*

Mike tears the jeans off the mannequin.

MIKE (CONT'D)

*He can't be sagging that much. Dude
needs to look more like a Dude.*

Mike snags the new jeans from Gabe, and pulls them onto the plastic legs, meticulously fixing the crotch.

MIKE (CONT'D)

*There. See that? CAN EVERYONE SEE
WHAT THAT LOOKS LIKE!? You must
consider your audience here.
This isn't *Dykes on Trikes*.*

Smith looks up from his clipboard to roll his eyes.

MIKE (CONT'D)

Otherwise? Floor looks pretty good.

Melinda exhales. Phew...

MIKE (CONT'D)

Now let me see your roster.

Melinda hands over a binder. Mike flips through HEADSHOTS.

After a moment he slows, peeking up at the current **FOH STAFF:**
A HISPANIC MALE, two ASIANS, and a BLACK GIRL, all smiling awkwardly, trying to make a good impression. Not smiling back, Mike whispers something to Gabe...

Who moves to Melinda privately with the verdict.

GABE

You're gonna need to hire some more people.

MELINDA

I *just* hired six new people.
They're really good, no issues.

GABE

It's more about the *look*. You don't have the look we're going for.

MELINDA

What do you mean? What are they suppose to look like?

Gabe mulls the best way to say this, before pointing to the **photo (by Bruce) of a WHITE MALE MODEL** above the registers.

GABE

They should look more like that.

MELINDA

I can't just... fire them.

GABE

Of course not. Just leave them off the schedule.

Done playing the messenger, Gabe returns to Mike's side.

MIKE

Thank you, Gabey. Always a trooper.
(grabbing Gabe's tummy)
And you're so cute, too. You could do without all this extra fluff.

Smith intervenes, leading Mike away, leaving Gabe with that.

SMITH (PRE-LAP)

And after a few years of that...

INT. THE INTERVIEW - DAY - 2014

Smith scuffs at an uneven fingernail.

SMITH

People *talk*. 17 employees came forward, claiming they were discriminated against -- either not hired or not scheduled, allegedly due to the way they looked. They sued for \$50 Million.

KATONYA

Bet the board cared about that.

SMITH

They just wanted it done with. Hired a diversity officer, and moved right along.

KATONYA

Did anyone admit wrongdoing?

Smith takes a moment. *How to phrase this...*

SMITH

In advertising, all over the planet - in every country, companies hire models and actors based on the way they look all the time. Every single company has a "look."

KATONYA

Right...

SMITH

Standards, policies, dress codes.

KATONYA

Sure, I get that.

JAHLIN

(from behind her camera)
...*Shh.*

SMITH

It's entirely purposeful.

KATONYA

Right. But do you--

JAHLIN

Katonya.

KATONYA

What, girl?

JAHLIN

*Don't talk over him, you'll fuck
the edit.*

Katonya recognizes her mistake, mouthing "my bad."

KATONYA

*So then, after the settlement, what
changed going forward? If anything?*

SMITH

Well, again... I tried to tell him.

INT. MIKE'S OFFICE - A&F HEADQUARTERS - DAY - 2002

About to knock, Smith finds Mike wearing headphones, doing more "roster selection." Smith watches Mike write "**BOH ONLY**" next to a BLACK GIRL -- and yanks off his headphones.

SMITH

*You can't keep doing this,
They're watching you now.*

But without even looking at Smith, Mike simply restores his headphones, and continues. Much to Smith's dismay...

SMITH (PRE-LAP) (CONT'D)

*The answer is nothing. Nothing
changed. Mike stuck to his guns...*

MUSIC: "FIRESTARTER" by PRODIGY explodes, as--

EXT. CAMPUS HQ - DAY - 2005

Mike walks into the courtyard. Tanned. Sunglasses. Strutting.

SMITH (V.O.)

*Even going so far as to try to
explain himself publicly. He never
did interviews. I begged him not to
do it. You never know what's going
to come out of his damn mouth...*

Mike waves to several A&F EMPLOYEES (20s) on break, playing frisbee. Skateboarding. Even a Hacky Sack circle.

KATONYA (V.O.)

*And the things he said on record...
Do you think he went too far?*

SMITH (V.O.)
*I guess that depends on whether or
 not you agree with him.*

At a secluded **PICNIC TABLE**, Mike preaches to a preppy and earnest male REPORTER (33, White) over Cobb Salads.

MIKE
 What we represent - is healthy.
 It's not dark or degrading, it's
 celebratory. It's not gay, it's not
 straight. Not black, not white.
 It's not about labels. That would
 be cynical, and we're not cynical.

REPORTER
 But still, it does seem - *limiting*.

MIKE
 Look, we hire good-looking people
 because they attract other good-
 looking people. We don't market to
 anyone other than that. Are we
 exclusionary? *Absolutely*. But
 frankly, I don't give a shit about
 what anyone thinks other than our
 target customer - I really don't.

The Reporter scribbles furiously, trying to keep up.

MIKE (CONT'D)
 Because honestly? A lot of people
 don't belong in our clothes. If
 you're overweight, that's fine -
shop somewhere else. And let's not
 pretend this isn't happening all
 the time. You ever go into a Zara
 and try to find a "double-X"? Ever
 try to slide *fat feet* into a some
 Manolo Blahnik's? No fucking way.

On the table between them -- a CASSETTE RECORDER spins...

INT. MIKE'S OFFICE - A&F HEADQUARTERS - DAY - 1999

And continues to spin -- as Smith LISTENS TO THE RECORDING.

MIKE (ON THE RECORDER)
*Or take me to the "obese section"
 of Bergdorf Goodman. You can't,
 because it doesn't fucking exist.*

Smith STOPS THE TAPE, knowing that this is a problem.

SMITH

Fuck.

KATONYA (PRE-LAP)

Did Mike recant anything he said?

INT. THE INTERVIEW - DAY - 2014

Smith rolls up a sleeve, careful and deliberate.

SMITH

Why would he? He didn't say anything he didn't believe.

KATONYA

And what about you? Do you think Mike implying that he was only designing clothes for white people was, maybe - a little bit racist?

Smith rolls up his other sleeve, taking his sweet time.

SMITH

Lauren Hill once said - that if she knew White people were going to buy her album, she never would have made it in the first place.

KATONYA

Okay...

SMITH

Think of it like this -- are you attracted to white men? Just humor me for a second, I'm simply asking about your *type*.

KATONYA

Not usually, no.

SMITH

Then, there you are - that's not racist, that's taste. Mike's *taste* is not a *social* issue, it's merely his opinion.

KATONYA

Right, but there are *laws* that state that you cannot hire and fire people based on the way they look.

SMITH

But what is fashion if not *design*? Fashion is - quite literally - how things look. When the court said he could no longer select employees based on looks - Mike said *fine*, and hired "models" instead, because in the fashion industry -- you're free to delineate.

KATONYA

I think you mean "discriminate."

SMITH

Over 53% of the Abercrombie work force were people of color...

KATONYA

Who were *systematically delegated to the stock rooms!* I mean...

Sydney steps to the side of the set, making her presence known, and reminding Katonya to play ball here.

KATONYA (CONT'D)

How many of people of color were in upper management? Or on the Board?

SMITH

Listen, I know where you're headed, but the CEO doesn't *choose* the board - it's the other way around. They kept Mike around because he made them a shit ton of *money*. You're no dummy, you know that's all they care about. And look, as a wealthy White Male I'm probably not the chosen demographic you want to hear this from - but I agree with you: Fashion is an industry chock full of underrepresentation and double standards. *But, it's complicated.* Branding is - by its very nature - exclusionary. For to define something properly, you not only have to say what it *is*, but also define exactly what it *is not*.

Impassioned, Smith sits forward to drive it home.

SMITH (CONT'D)

Mike wasn't hiding derivatives. He wasn't paying women and minorities less, or employing children illegally -- he's not *Apple*, or *Nike*, or *Coca-Cola* - or any number of *thieving financial institutions*. He didn't eradicate anyone's 401K or foreclose on anyone's property. He just. Enjoyed. The aesthetic.

Katonya nods, keeping it in, calculating her next move. When--

SMITH (CONT'D)

Sorry, can I lose this?

SYDNEY

(stepping in)

Yeah, totally. Keep rolling.

Walking onto the set -- Sydney helps Smith pull off his crimson sweater, revealing a solid plain tee. Callie resets his mic, and as Smith resets, Katonya leans in, pivoting...

KATONYA

You didn't come here just to play defense, I know you didn't. So what was it that brought you here? Something made you crack - what?

Sydney cracks a smile. *Well played, girl*. And surprisingly -- Smith shrugs, appearing game to answer.

SMITH

He wouldn't listen to me. He refused to lower prices, even when the recession hit. Even when everyone else was doing it. But no - "upscale brand, upscale prices." Stock fell 80%. Lost three-and-a-half Billion in a matter of months. *Just like I warned him it would.*

KATONYA

So the rift was... money then?

SMITH

(bitterly honest)

Go no. He made \$70 Million one year and had another nine digits in stock. Money was never a problem. He was just *So. Fucking. Stubborn.*

MIKE (PRE-LAP)
Baby, I don't fucking like it!

EXT. ROSE GARDEN, OUTSIDE LUXURY CABIN - HAMPTONS, NY - 2008

Now 64 -- Mike is a very different man: Several plastic surgeries later, his face is starting to more like a mask than a person. Standing before an ENDLESS GARDEN OF WHITE ROSES, Mike and Smith are at each other's throats.

SMITH
 First of all, "Baby?" Fuck right off with that. And second? It's half-a-bloody acre, Michael. This took weeks! And 40 goddamn grand.

MIKE
 I don't give a shit! Against the new paint you chose - it makes the yard look like a fucking cemetery.

SMITH
 It's my fucking yard!

MIKE
 Oh, so what I think doesn't matter now? Fine. Do whatever the fuck you want. Go roll in your fucking death garden, I have to get back to work.

Mike storms off. In his wake -- a shirtless HOUSEMAN (27, White, gorgeous) walks up to Smith holding a RAKE.

HOUSEMAN
 So... What should I tell Enrique?

Smith looks out over the immaculately curated garden, caving.

SMITH
 Raze it. All of it. He wants to redo the entire thing in Yellow.

Even the Houseman thinks that's an insane request.

SMITH (V.O.)
Mike got so used to getting every damn thing he wanted... That he started to expect it.

INT. MIKE'S OFFICE - A&F HEADQUARTERS - DAY - 2008

Mike barks into his office phone, severely agitated.

MIKE (ON THE PHONE)
 No, I only said "no black" because
 I thought she'd turn us down... No,
 I don't want her to wear another
 color, I want her not to wear it at
 all!... I don't care if it's a
 religious exemption, I don't care
 if it's sewn onto her fucking scalp
 -- *she cannot wear it on the floor!*

Mike SLAMS DOWN the phone. Beside it -- a POLAROID PHOTO:
 A smiling young Muslim woman (17) in a black headscarf,
 labeled "**Samantha Elauf (17). Tulsa, OK.**"

Smith steps in, trying to salvage the situation.

SMITH
 What is the big deal?

MIKE
 It's the same as any other fucking
 hat! You can't hock jewelry at
 Tiffany's with a Mets cap on.

SMITH
 Right, but the Mets aren't a
 religious affiliation.

MIKE
They are to some people!

SMITH
 Michael, come on. This is trouble.

MIKE
 You're fucking trouble. No. She's
 welcome to practice whatever church
 hoodoo she wants at home - but she
 doesn't get to wear a fucking hood
 to work in my store! Tell Carmer I
 am not giving in on this bullshit.
 She can take me to the goddamn
 Supreme Court if she wants to.

Smith throws up his hands, increasingly futile...

SMITH (V.O.)
And wouldn't you know it, she did.

INSERT - *Samantha Elauf, sporting her black headscarf, walks
 victoriously down the steps of the SUPREME COURT.*

SMITH (V.O.)
*They voted 8-to-1. I mean, has the
 Supreme Court ever agreed on
 anything?*

INT. THE INTERVIEW - DAY - 2014

Smith rubs his hands together, feeling a bit clammy.

SMITH
*They paid her off, and that was
 that. Moved on, water under the
 bridge. Only one thing ever really
 got to him... The thing with Bruce.*

INT. BRUCE WEBER'S MANHATTAN CONDO - DAY - 2008

Incensed, Mike interrogates a seated Bruce, no sign of Nan.

BRUCE
I'm telling you, nothing happened.

MIKE
They're saying you touched them.

BRUCE	MIKE (CONT'D)
<i>You've been there, you know</i>	<i>Did you touch them?...</i>
<i>how I work. To get them to</i>	
<i>act natural. To relax...</i>	<i>But did you touch them?...</i>

MIKE (CONT'D)
WHAT DID YOU DO TO MY BOYS!?

BRUCE
Mike, come on! You know me!

Mike lowers, flames in his eyes.

MIKE
Listen to me you fat blushing fuck--

BRUCE
(blurting it out)
*I never did anything I wasn't
 invited to do first! Never.*

Mike closes his eyes in disgust, his worst fears coming to fruition. Clenching his fists, as if preparing for violence --

SMITH (PRE-LAP)
Twenty-One accusations:

INT. THE INTERVIEW - DAY - 2014

Smith swallows, a sick taste in his mouth.

SMITH
Inappropriate touching. Abuse.
Forced masturbation. Mike was...
Very protective of his boys.

Smith looks off, a very odd and removed look.

Katonya watches this, fascinated by Smith's reaction.

Then finally, a breath and a swallow later, Smith continues.

SMITH (CONT'D)
This - feeling had begun to spread
throughout the company, that...
Maybe we'd overstayed our welcome.

The SOUND OF *PEOPLE SCREAMING* -- **SMASHES TO:**

INT. A&F HEADQUARTERS - OFFICE - DAY - 2013

Where Allison (now well into her 30s) hits MUTE, horrified as she watches: **News coverage of the collapse of RANA PLAZA:**

What used to be an 8-story concrete factory, now a flaming pile of rubble. BENGALI CITIZENS scream and hug, as the Bengali Men search the dusty wreckage for survivors.

Tears streak down Allison's face, as Smith passes by...

SMITH
Hey.

On her laptop screen: Two men carry a bloody, likely deceased **Bengali Woman** -- the one we saw folding shirts.

Allison can barely speak.

ALLISON
They make Fifty Dollars. *Fifty dollars a month.* Most were Mothers.
Doing extra work for extra money.

SMITH
It was an accident, Allison.
A horrible, horrible accident.

ALLISON

They're saying that the buildings weren't up to code. That we declined the last safety update.

Smith gently closes her laptop. *As if that will help.*

ALLISON (CONT'D)

Do you know what the students were calling Columbine - even before the shooting? They were calling it "Abercrombie High." I mean... What are we even doing here?

Smith only nods, knowing no answer will suffice.

Allison gets up, looks around one last time, and walks out.

SMITH (PRE-LAP)

Allison had been there since the beginning. So when she up and quit... something had to be said.

INT. LIVING ROOM - MIKE'S COLUMBUS ESTATE - DAY - 2013

Circling, Smith does his best to get through to Mike.

SMITH

You're *grasping* desperately to retain relevance in an industry that is bobsledding into oblivion! The mall's are empty, Michael.

MIKE

Anything that burns that hot is bound to cool off eventually. It's a hiccup. It will ebb, flow. We've been around 100 years, and with what I've done -- 100 more.

SMITH

Oh come on, you're not Steve fucking Jobs. You're not a technological revolution.

MIKE

But I'm a *cultural* one. And I will decide when I'm no longer relevant.

SMITH

Are you fucking serious? You're not *Pissarro*, you're making cotton jerseys for prepubescents.

(MORE)

SMITH (CONT'D)

So come down off your high horse,
I'd like to talk about the future
please.

MIKE

Oh what have you ever built?
You have no idea what it's like.

SMITH

Well for starters - none of my
companies ever got sued...

MIKE

Because they were never big enough
for anyone to notice!

Smith lets out an exacerbad sign. *Mike is impossible.*

SMITH

Look. There is a new generation
ushering itself in - and you're
going to need to either bend to
their expectations or get out of
the game. They *talk* different, they
organize different, and *every damn*
one of them is on the internet. All
of these loose ends you're leaving?

MIKE

Oh please. Just watch what happens.
Times change. But people don't.

SMITH

But people *talk*. And it's gonna end
up biting you. Biting us both.

Mike's twitchy, agitated, refusing eye contact.

MIKE

We're gonna be late.

SMITH

You refuse to even look - to even
consider what you're doing.

MIKE

WHAT? WHAT AM I DOING? What is so
fucking bad? I gave you cars, a
home, a life -- what the fuck am I
doing that is so goddamn bad?

Smith frowns. The truth is gonna have to come out...

SMITH

Your stubbornness? Ruins.
Everything. *You don't know when to stop*, and you never have. And it'll be your downfall if you let it.

Mike gives him a long, unforgiving look. Never backing down.

MIKE

I pluck you out of a shitty mall salon and give you the life that most... Slippers. Robes. Accessories...

SMITH (CONT'D)

...Oh fuck you...
I never asked for any of that...

MIKE (CONT'D)

Puppy dogs. Waitstaff. *Pool boys*...

SMITH (CONT'D)

...For you! Everything was for you! What YOU wanted!

MIKE (CONT'D)

I should have left you in the fucking salon - you'd still be painting the wall, not knowing which fucking color to use.

Smith shuts up. That one hurts.

MIKE (CONT'D)

"Don't know when to stop..."
You don't know a thing about me, you fucking useless hanger-on.

Smith only nods, expecting that.

SMITH

It's not me, Michael...
It's not me that you hate.

MIKE

What the fuck are you even--

SMITH

Your face, Love. Look at your face.

For the first time - Mike stops, genuinely hurt by something.

SMITH (CONT'D)

Somewhere in there - is a man that I love. So do me a favor and tell him: *He doesn't need all this anymore*. It's time to go. Time to be done. Time to be just us.

Mike swallows. Maybe understanding. Maybe not.

MIKE

We need to get going.

SMITH

You're not hearing me - I can't do it anymore. You're either here, or you're there. You have to choose.

Mike finally looks at Smith.

MIKE

Really? An ultimatum?

SMITH

So what's it gonna be?

Smith reaches out his hand, venerable, confident he'll prevail. But after a long moment -- Mike simply shrugs.

MIKE

You shouldn't ask questions you already know the answer to.

Mike heads for the door, but not before --

SMITH

Every brand has an expiration date, Michael. You know they do.

MIKE

So do you.

With that, Mike walks out, leaving Smith devastated.

SMITH (PRE-LAP)

Two decades together...

INT. THE INTERVIEW - DAY - 2014

Smith searches the floor, his eyes tired of the hot lights.

SMITH

I'd given up my business.
My apartment. My whole life.

Katonya attempts to sympathize. Or empathize. One of the two.

KATONYA

What was left for him prove?
That he could beat a dwindling
market? Why not just... cash out?

Smith sits on this a while, deep in thought...

SMITH

I don't think it has much to do with business, actually. See - Mike has a deep, unescapable dislike for himself. Something you can really only deal with if you're willing.

KATONYA

Correct me if I'm wrong, but... It seems to me that, creating Abercrombie sort of allowed Mike to kind of - 'relive' his lost youth in a way... "Be one of the cool kids." What would you say to that?

SMITH

I'd say... I have a theory too.

As Smith holds his gaze, his sullen face DISSOLVES INTO:

The face of 16-year-old MIKE JEFFIES. We're in...

INT. MIKE'S CHILDHOOD HOME - DAY (BLACK & WHITE FLASHBACK)

It's 1950. YOUNG MIKE (16, dirty blonde) scrubs dishes in the sink, wearing an apron -- as MIKE'S FATHER (43, athletic, buzz cut) walks in and removes his jacket, seemingly kind.

MIKE'S FATHER

Hey Bubba. How was day two?
Did they post it? The team?

Young Mike stops scrubbing, no good news.

MIKE'S FATHER (CONT'D)

What about B-squad? Sure they...
Well shit, that's too bad.

His Father opens the fridge, cracks a beer.

MIKE'S FATHER (CONT'D)

Thought I mighta passed on the good genes, but... Huh. Never for a second did it cross my mind my son'd be a pansy. Ah, well.

Without another thought, Mike's Father walks out. Young Mike looks down at the bubbles on his hands. Crushed.

EXT. FREEWAY, MOVING - DAY - 1950 (BLACK & WHITE)

Summer road trip. Mike's father drives, as his MOTHER rests her eyes. Young Mike's in the back beside a distant GIRL (presumably a Sister).

His father catches his eyes in the rearview - a cold stare, then looks back at the road. Young Mike looks back outside.

INT. LOG CABIN - DAY - 1950 (BLACK & WHITE)

As the rest of the family reads comfortably in the living room, Young Mike enters with a bathing suit and towel.

YOUNG MIKE

I'm going down to the Lake again.

MIKE'S MOTHER

Okay Dear. We'll be down in a bit.

EXT. LAKE - DAY - 1950 (BLACK & WHITE)

Once outside, Young Mike smiles, the world is his oyster.

And as he descends the dusty trail towards a glistening LAKE ahead -- a familiar scene unfolds on the dock:

-A TINY AMERICAN FLAG, waving, fastened to post. Where -- DAVID runs out onto the dock. The perfect human specimen.

-And as David turns, smiling at the approaching boy -- we realize this isn't an A&F PROMO at all -- and that the OTHER BOY -- is Young Mike Jeffries. And seeing David's face...

Mike's BLACK & WHITE world fills with COLOR, as -- SPLOOSH -- they're in the WATER. Both agile mermen. Freedom. Bliss.

EXT. GRASSY MARSH FIELD - DAY - 1950 (COLOR RESTORED)

Young Mike CHASES David through a field (their clothes restored), only now -- a YOUNG GIRL has joined them:

ROSE (17), a truly ethereal beauty. The kind of skinny that one day will be (regretfully) coined as "heroin chic".

The three of them giggle, tag, frolic and flirt. Collapsing into the grass, they lay there, intertwined -- a budding, hormone-filled cuddle.

Rose gently rubs both of them: One hand on David's chest, one cupping Mike's cheek. The boys share a look. Both in heaven.

Appreciating the friendship, Young Mike takes a gentle hand and places it on top of David's head -- but David *PULLS AWAY* unexpectedly -- gets up and tags Rose, restarting their game.

Rose *CHASES* him off, leaving Young Mike behind, alone.

After a moment of confusion -- Young Mike chases after them.

EXT. LAKESIDE - NIGHT - 1950

Around a campfire, Young Mike sits alone on a log, watching Rose and David MAKE OUT across from him. It's getting heavy, and in the midst of it, David catches Mike staring...

So David picks up Rose and throws her over his shoulder. She giggles, as David carries her off into the night.

An OLDER BOY (22) walks out of the darkness, and offers Mike a open bottle of BEER. Young Mike shrugs. Why the fuck not?

EXT. DIRT ROAD - LATER THAT NIGHT - 1950

Drunk for the first time, Young Mike stumbles home, as -- *HEADLIGHTS FLASH* across his back: A FORD F-150. Three Young Men get out of the cab -- David, flanked by TWO BUDDIES.

DAVID

Hey man. You heading home?

YOUNG MIKE

Yeah. I, uh. Yeah.

Young Mike keeps his distance, embarrassed by his obvious intoxication, but also -- he senses something off here.

DAVID

That's a shame. Thought we'd have sore drinks. Why don't you come back? Rose's got a couple friends.

As Young Mike considers the offer, he notices something:

David's buddies have something behind their backs.

YOUNG MIKE

You know actually, I should just-

DAVID

Nah, come on over here. Come on.

Mike steps back. But they only walk closer.

YOUNG MIKE

What are you doing? What is this?

All charm gone, David offers a menacing chuckle.

DAVID

*You know exactly what this is,
don't you? You fucking faggot.*

David's friends reveal a pair of fresh cut 2 x 4's.

*Mike swallows, frozen in fear -- then MAKES A RUN FOR IT. But
he's not the athlete they are -- and they catch him easily,
and CRACK -- a 2 x 4 CAREENS OFF THE BACK OF MIKE'S HEAD --*

CRASHING Mike the ground, unconscious. Blood pooling.

SMITH (V.O.)

We all have our scars...

David and his Buddies SPRINT back to the truck, laughing.

SMITH (V.O.)

*Visible or not. And without going
into too much detail, let's just
say that perhaps it is ironic, that
the toxic masculinity often
purported to Abercrombie & Fitch...*

-- The F150 PEELS AWAY, SPRAYING Young Mike with dirt.

SMITH (V.O.)

*...might have been the very thing
that created it in the first place.*

INT. THE INTERVIEW - DAY - 2014

Smith kneads his hands together, uncomfortable here.

SMITH

*Let's just say - things happen to
us. Often at an early age. Make us
hide. Make us blind. Make us mean.
And without help, and nurture...
Those wounds don't heal themselves.*

Despite her immense compassion, Katonya still needs answers.

KATONYA

*So - you think that whatever trauma
or abuse Mike may or may not have
encountered, gives him the right to
run his company the way he did?*

Smith shrugs, pre-hedging his bets.

SMITH

That's sort of the "American Dream", is it not? Find your passion? Go all in? Rise to the top? That's all aspirational brands are really trying to do, right? To show you "what you could be" one day, *if* you work hard enough? You tell me, *you're* the American.

KATONYA

Well no, that idea - our National Ethos is *suppose* to be: Opportunity for everyone. Let me repeat that: An opportunity. For everyone.

SMITH

Okay. So, was Abercrombie and Fitch discriminatory? 100%. And for what it's worth? My apologies for any role I played in that respect.

Katonya nods. *That's not nothing.* However, Smith goes on...

SMITH (CONT'D)

But if you think there is a way for the industry of fashion, hell - *all* of advertising - to exist free from the grasps of vanity, pageantry and omission you are sadly mistaken.

KATONYA

You don't think we can do better?

SMITH

From its inception, centuries ago - until many centuries from now, fashion is - and always will be, psychological motivation born of jealousy, self-disparagement, and good 'ol human insecurities. Three things that even the best fucking therapists will never cure.

Katonya clenches, shaking her head. *Refusing to go backwards.*

SMITH (CONT'D)

Did Mike go too far? Probably. But what he did? *Fucking worked.*

(MORE)

SMITH (CONT'D)

He's one of the highest paid CEO's of all time and his business successes are irrefutable - solidifying Abercrombie & Fitch in the pantheon of American History. How and what he did will be studied, and copied, and eventually someone else--

KATONYA

But we learn, we adapt, we grow--

SMITH

It's cyclical, like anything else. Every generation laughs at the old fashion, and then like clockwork - follows religiously the new. We're moths to the flame, darling, we simply can't help it. We all want the same things: *Emotions. Desires.*

Katonya's buzzing, about ready to implode. Finally--

KATONYA

Hey Jah, leave it rolling a sec okay? I'll be right back. Sorry.

As she walks off the set -- Sydney meets her halfway... But as their private conversation ESCALATES, Smith can hear them:

SYDNEY

It's not, it's not that at all.

KATONYA

I will not let this turn into some vilifying epic celebrating some White Man's decadence. Especially one who just walks off into the rich-ass sunset with impunity! You have to let me ask him abo--

SYDNEY

NO. Absolutely not.

JAHLIN

(getting off her rig)
Guys?

SYDNEY (CONT'D)

That is unsubstantiated. We cannot--

JAHLIN (CONT'D)

GUYS! We can fucking hear you, yo.

Sydney PULLS Katonya into the shadows, vehemently having the last word in a more private setting.

Meanwhile, Smith looks over to Jahlin -- who offers a "nothing to see here" smile.

Finally Katonya returns, as if none of that even transpired.

KATONYA

Sorry about that. Still rolling.

Smith looks at Sydney...

Then at the camera...

Then to Katonya...

SMITH

Again, if there's something we need to address...

KATONYA

You know - here's what's got me all ruffled: Like, put race aside all together. These are *kids* we're talking about. Still in school, or just out of school - often working their first jobs. Now, imagine one of them being told she can't work in a store because she doesn't 'look' right. So now she's getting ready to go back to school the next day - or to another job - but she has to look in the mirror first: *Taking stock*. Wondering why her god-given worth is being questioned. Something she had *no control* over. And that's a stain. Self-esteem, man... Is a fragile thing. It can be a career killer. And it can derail a person. Make 'em cynical.

Katonya wipes an errant tear, trying hard to stay on target.

KATONYA (CONT'D)

My problem with what y'all did - is that our country has one promise, and that promise is that anyone and everyone will get the opportunity to prove who they are. But Mike Jeffries *denied* them that chance entirely. Wanna fire someone on merit? Fine. Short on resume? Fine. But you can't say to someone -- "nah, sorry, you don't look right."

Katonya's powering through, but this part stings.

KATONYA (CONT'D)

Nobody gets to say that to a kid.
Ever. Never ever. *Especially* not to
sell motherfucking shirts.

Smith nods, appearing to truly hear her. And yet...

SMITH

He wanted kids to feel good about
themselves.

Katonya drops her head. *He still doesn't get it.*

KATONYA

It's like it was a *game* to you. And
we were your playthings. You
bottled up all our insecurities -
and through classicism, racism, and
exploitation, wore it as a badge of
honor. And while that probably made
y'all feel great? You made everyone
else feel like shit. You may have
started out as the "cool kids..."
But y'all ended up the bullies.

Smith nods, rubbing his hands into his thighs.

SMITH

There's a paradox in there
somewhere. Because in America,
don't we get to be whoever we want?

KATONYA

No. *You don't get to be an asshole.*
Not anymore.

Noncommittal, Smith nods.

SMITH

Okay.

KATONYA

Okay?

SMITH

Okay. A dandy soapbox moment. So is
that it? Did you get what you want?

KATONYA

How do you mean?

SMITH

That's the moral of your story
ain't it? So are we done?

Sitting back, Katonya's perplexed by this abrupt denouement.
She looks to Sydney -- who shrugs, offering no guidance...
But as she looks back at Smith, something clicks in her mind.

KATONYA

One last question: Why are you
here? Why come and talk to me?

SMITH

I told you, to shed a little light
on things.

KATONYA

But *why*?

SMITH

No one knows him like I do.

KATONYA

To get the story straight, right?

SMITH

Correct. To tell my side of it.

Katonya nods, salivating. *She's onto something.*

KATONYA

Nah. I don't buy it. You may have a
chip on your shoulder, but you're
not out for revenge... What were
you afraid I was gonna ask?

SMITH

I'm here on my own accord. And can
leave anytime. So why would I--

KATONYA

You're here because you want to
know what we know...

SYDNEY

(objecting)
Tonya?

KATONYA

I got it, I got it.

Katonya stays on Smith -- referencing a nearby list.

KATONYA (CONT'D)

Tell me, do you know any these
names?...

KATONYA (CONT'D) Brandon Ellison? Kenny Shepherd? Dmitri Markov?	SYDNEY <i>(louder)</i> <i>Katonya? No.</i> <i>You don't have to answer</i> <i>that.</i>
--	---

Jahlin SHUSHES Sydney, as Katonya leans in for a response.

SMITH
(completely unfazed)
Doesn't ring a bell.

KATONYA
You ever been to Marrakesh?

SMITH
Several times.

KATONYA
What did you do there?

SMITH
Vacationed.

KATONYA
You ever stay at La Mamounia?

SMITH
World-class hospitality. And a
wonderful Adobe pool deck.

Katonya reads a few more details.

KATONYA
Eight town cars... Two vans...
Seventeen guest rooms...

Smith shifts in his chair, carefully mulling his response.

SMITH
We held events there. Parties.

KATONYA
Did you hire models?

SMITH
Course we did.

KATONYA
And did you pay them?

SMITH
I find it's good business practice
to pay the people who work for you.

They hold each other's stare, each challenging the other...

On the edge of the shadows, Sydney's nervous...

Jahlin doublechecks that she's recording...

And sensing Katonya wants more, Smith expands. *Slightly*...

SMITH (CONT'D)

They were *invited*. Traveled First Class, on their own free will. Everyone there knew exactly what they were getting themselves into. For... like everything else, Mike just wanted to have fun.

Katonya's done behaving. *It's her turn.*

KATONYA

You know who else had fun? *The Nazi's*. And that got pretty outta hand too.

Smith chuckles. But he's clearly stung. *And darkens*...

SMITH

You fucking... Your generation loves nothing more than moving the goalposts. So goddamn sensitive. Your obsessive mission of post-facto-justice... Unearthing old mouthy posts and ancient Halloween costumes deemed "no longer appropriate..." Well guess what? You don't get to police the past with different rules, Child - that's not how it bloody works.

KATONYA

It is, though. See - times change, Mr. Smith. And people do too.

Still for a moment, Smith calmly unclips his lav mic.

SMITH

Syd, I think we're done here.

And walks right off the set.

KATONYA

Smith? Jah, leave it rolling...

Katonya gets up, trying to salvage things -- but stops as she sees -- Sydney crouched on the ground, her head in her hands.

KATONYA (CONT'D)
 Syd? What is it?

SYDNEY
 You fucked it, girl.

KATONYA
 What are talking about?
 Jah, we got all that, right?

Jahlin nods yes, not understanding the problem here. Katonya looks over at Smith, who has rendezvoused with a **MAN IN THE SHADOWS**, sipping a bottle of water by the craftie table.

KATONYA (CONT'D)
 Somebody wanna explain to me what's going on?

SMITH
 My apologies, I think I've had a change of heart. So we're gonna move along. Go ahead and wipe it.

KATONYA
 Wipe it?

SMITH
 Oh you didn't know? We own this.
 Audio, video, check the contract.

KATONYA
 Nuh-uh, I didn't sign shit.

SMITH
Your producer did.

Katonya looks at Sydney...

SMITH (CONT'D)
 Yeah. *Consent's a tricky bitch.* So I'd wipe that if I were you. For - if any of that sees the light of day? In any form, anywhere? Carmer?

The MAN IN THE SHADOWS walks up: It's **Carmer. A&F's lawyer.**

CARMER
 We'll sue the shit outta you.

With one last communal shrug, the two men start off.

TRACKING BACKWARDS WITH THE MEN as they move towards the exit, an argument erupts behind them among the creative team--

KATONYA
Syd, what the fuck!?

SYDNEY
I told you to stop!

KATONYA
How could you fucking give them that?!

SYDNEY
How do you think I fucking got him here in the first place!?

KATONYA
Fuck!

SYDNEY
Why didn't you just back off? You don't know when to fucking stop!

A C-STAND crashes to the ground, Katonya's furious. Jahlin pulls off her beanie, crushed, and STOPS RECORDING.

KATONYA
Fuck! They always fucking win.

Wearing smug smiles, the two men arrive at the EXIT.

KATONYA (CONT'D)
*Your time will come, y'all.
Your time will fucking come.*

As the EXIT DOORS fly open...

SMITH
(to himself)
Not today, Sweetheart.

And SLAM -- the doors close behind them.

EXT/INT. BLACK CADILLAC ESCALADE, MOVING - DUSK - 2014

Shiny, Armor-All'd TIRES rip through puddles, carelessly splashing water onto the Long Island City sidewalks.

IN THE BACKSEAT, Smith and Carmer stare out tinted windows.

MUSIC: "LET HER GO" by PASSENGER plays softly on the radio.

SMITH
Did I say too much?

CARMER

Nah. Nothing too alarming.
Although... Marrakesh.
Anything I need to know?

Smith doesn't look over, as...

EURODANCE ELECTRONICA MUSIC fades in -- and we FLASH TO:

SMITH'S MEMORIES OF MARRAKESH:

--WALKING THE ADOBE POOL DECK, MALE MODELS swim in the pool.
Smith flips through an envelope, full of **THOUSANDS IN CASH.**

--Walking down a hall, a SUITED-MALE HOST opens a door to a dark room. Mike and Smith are greeted at the door by a **SHIRTLESS MODEL wearing a mask,** who escorts them inside.

--Smith stands against the wall, as Mike hands a shirtless BRUNETTE MAN (23) a flute of Champagne, a **PILL FIZZING INSIDE THE GLASS.** The Brunette doesn't want it, but Mike insists.

--DANCING begins: Several males silhouetted by candlelight. Some men only dance, while others come together. Touching. Removing. Fondling. **Clothing hurled to the side.**

--WATCHING ALL OF THIS from the side -- are several MASKED MEN. Shirtless. Hands behind their backs. **Like guards.**

--THAT SAME BRUNETTE is now gripped by the hair -- someone's THRUSTING HIS HEAD UP AND DOWN, rather VIOLENTLY...

--The MUSIC INTENSIFIES. As does some AGGRAVATED MOANING.
It's confusing and unsettling and what the fucking fuck...

--And during it all -- SMITH remains in the corner, unmasked, candles flickering off his staring eyes. **Never looking away.**

BACK IN THE ESCALADE:

Smith BLINKS the memories away. Then turns to Carmer.

SMITH

Nah. Wouldn't worry about it.

Carmer nods, then flips open a folder, reviewing a contract.

CARMER

So... What exactly were you trying to do back there?

SMITH

Oh I don't know. Hurt him back?

CARMER
I was surprised when you called.

SMITH
It's... nice to have someone that
takes care of you.

CARMER
That's what a good lawyer does.
Covers your ass, however large.

SMITH
I didn't mean you, Darling.

Carmer's embarrassed, as much as one can be in a \$500 tie.

Smith's gaze moves higher, suddenly hearing the radio.

SMITH (CONT'D)
What the fuck is this song?
(to the driver)
Can you turn that shit off, please?

The Passenger song CLICKS OFF, and they ride in SILENCE...

CARMER
When was the last time you talked
to him?

SMITH
I don't even know where he is.

Looking out the window, all Smith can see in the foggy, rain-soaked window -- is the reflection of this own face. And seeing it, he takes a good long look. Taking stock.

THIS DISSOLVES TO:

INT. LUXURY BATHROOM - MIKE'S ESTATE - DAY - 2014

MIKE'S FACE in the mirror, tighter and shinier than ever.

And for the first time -- we have left Smith's POV.

Mike's CELL BUZZES on the sink. Glancing down -- we hear:

MIKE (V.O.)
*When the lawyer calls on Sunday
that's never a good sign.*

CARMER (V.O.)
*Nah, good news this time: The Board
wants you back. So. See you Monday?*

Mike looks back to the mirror, unsure how he feels. Then slowly -- a smile forms, cracking through the mask.

INT. UPSCALE CLOTHING BOUTIQUE - MIRROR GALLERY - DAY

Mike tries on a stylish, hot-right-now Mustard Houndstooth BLAZER. He poses, trying to make it work. But *hates* it.

MIKE

What in the hell are they thinking?

INT. UPSCALE HAIR SALON - DAY - 2014

Caped-up in a barber chair, hair-stylist DENIS (25, White, effeminate and Gorgeous) spins Mike towards the mirror.

DENIS

What are we thinking, Babe?

Playfully, Denis ruffles his hair, causing Mike to RIP AWAY.

MIKE

Don't fucking-- Sorry, just. Don't.

DENIS

Sorry. I'll get the color chart.

Denis shrinks away, leaving Mike alone with the mirror. From Mike's perspective -- there's no one standing behind him in the mirror. Reaching his hand back, he gently rubs his scar.

INT. CRAFT-E-TERIA - A&F HQ - DAY - 2014

DING! -- Mike walks out of the elevator holding a brand new GOLDEN RETRIEVER PUPPY. It's Sunday, the office is empty.

Mike sets down the pup and takes a solo tour, taking in the unmanned desks, abandoned swaths and crowded clothing racks.

On a DESK -- he notices a bottle of FIERCE COLOGNE. He picks it up. Admires it. Then sprays it, taking a huge whiff...

MATCHING TO:

INT. LOG CABIN BATHROOM - DAY - 1950

Young Mike (16, as before) SNIFFING a brown, tube-shaped STICK OF DEODORANT. Carefully, as if he's doing something he shouldn't be. Eyes closed, he's reveling in it, when--

DAVID (O.S.)
Dude, are you ready? Let's go!

EXT. CABIN - LAKESIDE CAMPSITE - DAY - 1950

Young Mike barrels outside with a beach towel slung on his shoulder, joining perfect-looking **DAVID**, who's been waiting.

DAVID
Dude, did you stink up my bathroom?
What took you so damn long?

MIKE
Nothing, nothing. Let's go.

They start walking. David smiles at his new Summer bestie.

DAVID
Dude, feel that sun, Man. This is
the best fucking Summer ever.

Young Mike smiles in agreement, as--

DAVID (CONT'D)
Race you!

David **BOLTS AHEAD** -- leaving Young Mike in the dust, who runs as fast as he can, trying to keep up.

INT. LOG CABIN BATHROOM - DAY - 1950

BACK IN THE BATHROOM -- David's **DEODORANT** sits idle on the counter. Closer in, we get a better glimpse of the label -- listing its ingredients: **CEDAR-WOOD. LEMONGRASS. VETIVER.**

INT. CRAFT-E-TERIA - A&F HQ - DAY - 2014

His **DOG BARKING** snaps Mike out of the memory.

MIKE
Okay okay. Com-mere you.

Lifting the puppy, Mike gives him a snuggle. But as he looks the puppy in the face -- we get a glimpse of the name on the **DOG TAG: "TROUBLE."** And Mike's smile fades.

Taking one last look around room -- Mike looks conflicted...

Then **MOVING AWAY FROM HIM**, down the empty HQ hallway, **DOZENS OF BUSY A&F EMPLOYEES** suddenly materialize. Life goes on. **LEAVING MIKE FAR BEHIND, WE TURN, ENTERING INTO:**

INT. BOARDROOM - A&F HQ - DAY - 2014

Where it's a new day. A dozen BOARD MEMBERS have assembled, irritably waiting in silence. Among them -- Carmer checks his watch, and looks to the chair at the head of the table:

Mike's chair. He's not coming.

EXT. LUXURY CABIN - THE HAMPTONS - DAY - 2014

Worn leather loafers step onto the porch. It's Mike, about to try to the door. But he stops, and opts for the DOORBELL. It rings. But no one answers. So Mike tries the knob. Unlocked.

INSIDE -- Smith's asleep on a bench, as if he's been there all night. Or for weeks. He stirs, as Mike clears his throat.

Staying in the doorway, Mike looks weaker and older than ever. Opening his palms, offering of himself, he's about to--

SMITH

Don't.

Mike tries again, but--

SMITH (CONT'D)

DON'T. I don't need to hear it.
I understand. I always have.

Mike cracks a smile, tearing up. *He's desired.*

SMITH (CONT'D)

Now close the damn door, it's
bloody frigid.

Startled into action -- Mike shuts the door, noticing a familiar sign hanging on the back of the door: **"NO OLD PEOPLE."** Mike turns to Smith, who smirks back...

SMITH (CONT'D)

Oh alright. Just this once.

Off Mike's delighted face -- we abruptly **CUT TO BLACK.**

Then **THROUGH THE DARKNESS** -- comes a voice.

KATONYA (V.O.)

How would you define "fashion?"

INSERT - A SERIES OF VIDEO CLIPS: TALKING HEAD INTERVIEWS.

- **JOSEPH** (a well-dressed Black Man, 50s) answers the prompt.

JOSEPH

It's... The way things look. From an outside perspective. An appearance of - what's popular at the time. Or what 'catches on,' culturally speaking. And like the tide, it moves in and out. Things that *used* to be in, often move out.

- **TERESA** (a kind, Filipino Female of 40) remembers.

TERESA

I loved working there. Everyone was super nice. I wanted more shifts, but... They just stopped calling.

- **HEATHER** (42, blonde, curvy and adorable) pulls no punches.

HEATHER

I was a plus-size model who worked all the time. But - they literally didn't carry my size, so I couldn't work there even if I wanted to.

- **AMBER** (31) gestures proudly with her prosthetic arm.

AMBER

He said I had to put a sweatshirt on, or long sleeves. In the *Summer*. That I couldn't *not* have it covered on the floor. And I was like, fuck that, I don't need this job that bad. Like, screw you. *I'm me*.

- **BRIAN** (46, a proud Chinese-American) has thoughts.

BRIAN

They would never gotten away with that shit now. In this day and age? They'd have been cancelled like, day one. I mean even at 22, I probably didn't even know what the word meant yet - but I knew: This was a fascist organization.

- **PETER** (34, White, former model) is particularly vulnerable.

PETER

I wanted so badly to be involved. I wanted to send money home, support my family, prove that I'd "made it." Cause if I didn't? I'd be a failure. And I'd have to move home.

- Then one last familiar face: The British Tom Brady look-a-like. Older now. His once-chiseled face now weary. **LUCAS.**

LUCAS

They had me sign an 'NDA.' Offered me booze, pills... But I didn't take any of it. But What could I do? They had my phone, my passport. I couldn't fucking... Call a cab. So I stayed. They had me... shave me whole body. And go into that room. It was humiliating. And...

(then, breaking down)

That night ruined my life. Or, it almost did. No one should ever be put in that position. No one.

FREEZING ON LUCAS' FACE -- we're in:

INT. DIGITAL EDITING STUDIO - DAY - 2016

Where Katonya and Sydney sit in front of a large monitor, watching their documentary taking shape.

SYDNEY

How many more do we have?

KATONYA

14. Not including the 50-or-so emails that just responded to our post. And still no word from Mike?

SYDNEY

"Declined to comment."

KATONYA

Shocker.

Jahlin walks in, wearing a new beanie and holding her phone.

JAHLIN

Yo, check it out. You guys see the new Abercrombie hashtag?

She shows them her phone -- Sydney reads it.

SYDNEY

"Hashtag-Abercrombie-Today."

KATONYA

Hmph. Sure seems to imply *they had a yesterday they'd like to forget.*

They all share in that, proud of the work they're doing.
Jahlin takes back her phone and joins them.

Katonya clicks off the monitor, and slumps back with a sigh.

SYDNEY

What is it?

KATONYA

I don't know. I just can't help but
think - they're still out there.
Going about their day. All *this*?
Two years? Sweat and tears? Is it
gonna make one lick of difference?

Sydney nods, understanding of the concern. But she's unfazed.

SYDNEY

All we can do is the work.
The rest isn't up to us.

Katonya nods. Resilient. Ever hungry. Maybe even hopeful.

CRASH TO BLACK.

CLOSING SCROLL:

On December 9th 2014, Abercrombie CEO Mike Jeffries
didn't show up for work. He quit cold turkey,
not even a resignation letter.

Allegedly, he's living out his days in private,
alongside his partner Matthew Smith.

During Mike's tenure as CEO, Abercrombie & Fitch was involved
in over two-dozen lawsuits, costing the company over
\$140 Million dollars in settlements.

All of that fades.

Maybe it's over.

Nope:

In November of 2023, several files in the Jeffrey Epstein
Child Trafficking case were unsealed. One of the names
implicated for their explicit involvement in illegally
trafficking young girls... was Les Wexner.

A month later, a new lawsuit alleging *male* sex trafficking was filed. Over 100 Men joined the class-action lawsuit, alleging sexual abuse by two men: Mike Jeffries and Matthew Smith.

They are currently under investigation by the FBI.

FADE UP ON:

The only known photo of Mike Jeffries and Matthew Smith:

