

MALE PATTERN BALDNESS

By

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Rewrite

By

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FADE IN:

INT. A KITCHEN - A SUBURBAN HOME - MORNING

In Cleveland Heights, Ohio, a middle-class suburb.

Decorating the walls of the kitchen, we see framed pencil-drawings of various animals in heart-warming poses.

FRANK JESSUP, 46, is an attractive, strong guy, who is wearing a TWA airline mechanic uniform. He's on the phone.

His wife, CONNIE, 38, is at the stove making breakfast. She is a good-looking woman. She wears a Save The Spotted Owl T-shirt. There is a soft and unfocused sexiness about her.

Their son, FRANKIE, 13, sits at the kitchen table going over last-minute homework, eating cereal, and watching rap videos all at the same time. He wears very baggy hip-hop clothing and a woolen cap with a skull on it. He is a gawky kid.

FRANK

(on the phone, upset)

Jesus Christ -- where the fuck was Miguel?

FRANKIE

Dad's spazzin', mom.

FRANK

(On the phone)

He what? ...

(The phone beeps)

Hold on Rick. I'm getting another call.

(Clicks the phone)

Hello. ...

(Aggravated)

Oh look, she can't talk right now. I'm on the other line.

CONNIE

Find out who it is.

FRANK

(Covering the phone)

It's one of your animal wacko's calling about a squirrel.

CONNIE

They're not wacko's Frank. It's my animal hotline. Someone might need my help. Get a number.

FRANK

Get a number? Shit, I can handle this.

(Nicely to the caller)

Alright ma'am, sorry about that. You say the squirrel's back legs are broken?

(more)

FRANK (cont'd)

Well here's what you do. Slowly approach the squirrel, talk softly, and let it know how much you love it. Then take a ball peen hammer and bash it's friggin' head in.

CONNIE

Dammit Frank!

Mortified, Connie goes to grab the phone. Frank clicks back to the other call and stretches the phone away from her.

FRANK

It's just a damn squirrel, honey. I'm on the other line, with a real emergency. It's my work.

CONNIE

But that's my -

Upset, Connie angrily goes back to making eggs.

FRANK

(On the phone)

Sorry about that Rick. Now what happened? ... Aww for the love of God! Alright, shut her down. I'll be there in ...

(Glances at watch)

twenty minutes.

(He hangs up)

You see? Now **this** is a problem. You know Miguel? My little wetback friend?

CONNIE

Frank -

FRANK

(Smiling)

It's just us honey. You know I love the guy, but Miguel's standing there with his finger up his ass while he's overloading the hydraulic system and chewing on a Frito.

CONNIE

(Irritated)

You should really hear yourself talk.

FRANK

How can I hear myself with that T.V. blasting so loud? Frankie, could you turn that down please? How the hell can you watch that crap anyway? You can't understand one word they're saying.

FRANKIE
You can if you're one of the brothers. I'm
down with this shit.

FRANK
Hey, watch your mouth.

FRANKIE
Chill, dude.

Frankie doesn't even look at him.

FRANK
Dad. Chill, dad. Dad. That's me.
(to Connie)
Are you sure this black kid's mine?

FRANKIE
It's African American.
(Shakes his head)
You're a racist, dad. You're a suck role
model.

Frankie smiles, grabs his books and gets up to go to school.
He gives his dad the black power fist and exits.

CONNIE
Honey, I've got your eggs.

FRANK
I can't, Con. I have to get to work.

He pulls a very old well-worn CLEVELAND INDIANS BASEBALL CAP
off of a hook and puts it on his head. It seems like it is a
part of his body. Frank grabs his jacket.

CONNIE
Well, here. I'll just put them on a piece
of toast and you can take them with you -

FRANK
It's okay. They're probably overdone as
usual. I love you.

He smiles and gives her a quick kiss on the cheek and exits.

She looks at the eggs a long beat and dumps them in the
trash... as she does, we see tears well in her eyes.

INT. CLEVELAND AIRPORT TWA HANGER - DAY

Frank walks onto the tarmac of TWA. A group of men are
gathered around a MD80 airplane. RICK MATHIS is one of them.
He is in his mid 30's and is Frank's co-worker and best
friend.

RICK
(to Frank)
The hydraulic valve and hose busted and --
they're flying in the parts from Chicago.
Five hours.

FRANK
(upset)
Five hours? This plane is going to be out
of service for the day?

JOHN HARDMAN, 50's, supervisor of maintenance, is there.

JOHN
The suits are gonna have my ass for this!

FRANK
(upset)
Where the fuck is Miguel? If he would have
checked the system before turning the pumps
on this wouldn't have happened.

He looks around. He sees MIGUEL, a heavy Hispanic man in his
30's, standing nearby. He is eating from a bag of Fritos.

FRANK
(to Miguel, hard)
Hey Senor, what's with the brain fart?
You're chewing on a Frito instead of paying
attention to the gauges.

MIGUEL
I'm sorry boss, I didn't notice it.

FRANK
Hell yes you didn't notice it! You got your
eyes in your belly, Miguel, they're watching
the Fritos! Get out of here! Go take a
lunch break or a siesta!

Several other TWA MECHANICS look on, as Miguel sadly walks
away, still eating from the bag of Fritos.

JOHN
That was a little harsh, wasn't it?

FRANK
When the suits chew your ass, John, that's
gonna be harsh.

JOHN
(worried)
I just hope nobody reports that statement to
the rep--

RICK

He didn't call him a Frito. He said he was eatin' Fritos.

FRANK

Yeah. Jesus, John. Miguel's my buddy. I'm the guy who hired him. Everyone knows I'm just joshin' him.

INT. THE HANGER - NIGHT

Frank and Rick are underneath the belly of the plane. They both look very tired, oily, and dirty. Frank strains to get the valve and hose in. It's brutal work.

FRANK

I can't get it into this damn slot.

RICK

You sound like my ex-wife. Just shove it on in there. She'll like it.

Frank shoves hard on the valve and we hear it clunk in. They get out and signal to an ENGINEER to start up the plane. They do and the engines roar to life.

RICK

(grins)

Told you. She's coming like Niagara Falls.

Frank walks away, clearly exhausted. Rick catches up with him.

RICK

Buy you a brewski?

FRANK

Can't do it.

RICK

Are you pussy whipped or are you pussy-shipped?

FRANK

The Tribe's on. Yankee game.

RICK

We'll watch it at the bar.

FRANK

I'll watch it in my Lazy-Boy in my living room with my boots off and a cold one in my hand.

RICK
(after a beat)
I used to be pussy-whipped, too. Sometimes
I miss it.

INT. HIS PICKUP TRUCK - NIGHT

Frank pulls into the driveway of his house. His face is dirty and oily. The house is completely dark.

INT. HIS HOUSE - NIGHT

He steps inside the dark house, turns the lights on. He stares. The walls are bare. Almost all the furniture is gone. In the living room, only the Lazy Boy is left facing the television set.

He walks around, dazed... He looks like he is in shock.

He wanders into the kitchen, looks at the bare walls. All the animal drawings are gone. On the counter, which is otherwise completely bare, he sees a dozen eggs, a pan, and a memo button flashing on the message machine.

On it is a smiley face that says: "Play me". He touches the recorder, looks frightened. A beat, and he hits a button.

CONNIE (V.O.)
I've left you Frank. Frankie chose to come with me. My lawyer told me to notify you of Frankie's whereabouts. Frankie and I are at 2371 Welbourne Avenue, Apartment 7. If you try to see me, I'll call the police. You have now been notified. Enjoy your eggs.

He stands there and stares a long and endless beat. He shakes his head like he's been hit, then shakes it again. He hits play again, his hand shaking.

CONNIE (V.O.)
I've left you Frank. Frankie chose to come with me --

He shakes his head again, dazed, and goes tearing toward his front door as the tape keeps playing in the background.

EXT. THE PICKUP TRUCK - NIGHT

The truck screeches out of the driveway and roars down the street.

INT. THE PICKUP TRUCK - NIGHT

He is in front of a middle-class apartment complex -- he sees the address, finds 2371, stops the truck dead in the street.

EXT. THE APARTMENT COMPLEX - NIGHT

He's looking at the numbers on doors, in a zombie-like daze. He finds the apartment and it's dark.

FRANK

Connie?

(Stands there dazed;
then louder)

Connie? Open up.

A light goes on inside.

FRANK

(very loud)

Open the fucking door, Connie!

CONNIE (O.S.)

Go away! I don't want to see you!

FRANK

You don't want to see me? I go to work --
I fix a major problem -- I come home to
watch the game --

CONNIE (O.S.)

And now you have another problem. I'm
calling the police, Frank!

He suddenly, viciously kicks the door in. It splinters... and he is inside the small apartment, which is piled with boxes, furniture from the house. The animal drawings are all over the walls.

INT. THE APARTMENT - NIGHT

He stands there, staring, in absolute paralysis. Connie is standing there in a little nightgown. Next to her is ...

JEREMY HUDSON, 40's, wearing only boxer shorts and a Save the Pandas T-shirt. His hair is longest on the sides but balding on top. Jeremy is an ultra liberal minded, passive, fun-loving guy, who finds goodness in everybody.

FRANK

What the fuck is going on Connie?

CONNIE

(upset)

I've called the police, Frank. They're on the way.

JEREMY

(to Frank)

Personally, I think she's over-reacting, but her experience with you is first-hand. So, I have to let her run with this.

FRANK

(Long beat)

Who in the fuck is he?

JEREMY

I'm sorry. Jeremy Hudson. I've heard a lot about you, big guy.

He naively puts his hand out. Frank stares at it.

CONNIE

Don't Jeremy! He'll break it.

JEREMY

Are you sure you're not vilifying him? I'm telling you, if we all open our minds here and be responsible, I think Frank and I can become friends.

FRANK

Responsible?

(in a rage)

You're fucking my wife!!!

He slams Jeremy against a wall. Connie screams behind him.

JEREMY

Frank, what are you doing? Get a hold of yourself. How dare you accuse me of something so rude and insensitive. You don't even know me.

FRANK

So, you're telling me you're not fucking her?

JEREMY

(Innocently sincere)

That's right Frank. Now I don't want to lie to you, we are making love, but I would never fuck her.

FRANK

I'M GONNA KILL YOU!!!

He slams Jeremy up against the wall again. Connie jumps on Frank's back, trying to stop him.

CONNIE
(screams)
Leave him alone!

Frank hits him in the stomach. Jeremy crumples.

JEREMY
(gasping)
It's nature Connie. It's just like the Serengetti Lion. He's come to claim his mate and mark his territory.

FRANK
That's right pal, I'm gonna bite your head off and take a big ol' piss in it.

Frank hits him in the face. Blood gushes from Jeremy's nose.
We hear sirens outside.

Connie jumps off Frank to hold Jeremy.

CONNIE
Oh my God, you're bleeding, you're bleeding.

JEREMY
(Scared)
Don't let him piss on me.

Connie lets out an endless, shrieking scream. She covers Jeremy -- both of them are on the floor now, cowering against the wall. The scream finally ends.

Frank looks at them. There are tears in his eyes.

FRANK
(Quietly to Connie)
What is this? Will you just tell me -- what is this? I'm dreamin this! I gotta be dreamin this! I want to wake up! I want to wake up, Connie!

JEREMY
(Ever helpful)
You're in denial, but you're wide awake.

FRANK
SHUT UP!!!

A long beat.

CONNIE
(crying)
I want out!

FRANK
(after a beat)
Just like that? Fourteen years? Fourteen years and... he's wearin' your panda shirt? I never even wore that shirt!

CONNIE
You never wanted to!

JEREMY
It's not that simple. I know. I've been there.

Frank stares at him for a beat.

FRANK
Tell him to shut up, Connie. Please. I'm gonna kill him. I don't wanna kill him. NO, I do want to kill him. BUT I DON'T WANT TO KILL HIM. Tell him, Connie.

CONNIE
Shut up, Jeremy.

A beat... and Jeremy nods.

FRANK
Where's my son?

CONNIE
He's at Tommy's house. They're going to a rave.

JEREMY
He's in a loving, nurturing environment.

Frank suddenly picks him up and holds him high against the wall, squeezing his throat.

FRANK
(screaming)
Dead! You're dead!

As Connie screams -- trying to fight Frank off -- TWO COPS come in with guns drawn.

A COP
Put him down, sir.

Frank looks at the cops. He still holds Jeremy up against the wall by his throat -- Jeremy is gasping for air.

ANOTHER COP

Now, sir.

They aim their guns at Frank.

CONNIE

(crying)

Just go home, Frank. Go home.

FRANK

Home? What do I got at home?

CONNIE

(crying)

You've got your Lazy-Boy and your TV, Frank.
What more do you need?

A beat... as he looks at her -- they are both crying -- and he drops Jeremy to the ground. The cops put Frank against the wall and handcuff him.

A COP

(to Jeremy)

You want us to charge him?

JEREMY

(Bleeding like crazy)

I want to say no ... but I'm gonna say yes.
I'm sorry Frank, but we have to take
responsibility for our actions.

The cops turn Frank, handcuffed, to face them. Jeremy has a protective arm around Connie, who is crying.

JEREMY

(to Frank, earnestly)

I'm sorry. I truly am. When this happened to me, I was mad too, but I didn't resort to violence. I mean, this was nutty.

The cops march Frank out.

INT. THE POLICE CAR - NIGHT

The two cops sit in front, Frank in the back.

COP #1

Did you know she was banging that guy?

COP #2

(correcting him)

Having sexual relations with him.

COP #1

Did you know she was sexually relating to him?

FRANK

(broken up)

No. I had no idea.

COP #1

Well, then I can see why you'd lose it.

COP #2

(correcting him)

He didn't lose it. He became aggressive and hostile.

Cop #1 gives Cop #2 and ugly look. Frank just stares ahead.

INT. THE HOLDING AREA, A JAIL - EARLY MORNING

SAM JESSUP stands there. He is in his mid 70's, Frank's father. He is a big, burly, mostly bald man. He waits there nervously and then Frank comes out. He looks terrible --

FRANK

Thanks, Pop.

INT. SAM'S CAR - MOMENTS LATER

Sam drives his 1962 Cheverolet with plastic seat covers. It is in impeccable shape. The radio, plays Tommy Dorsey and Harry James big band. There is a plastic statue of the Blessed Virgin Mary on the dash.

SAM

You look like shit -- What'd you do? Fall in a hole?

FRANK

I was at work.

SAM

They come and got you at work? Don't tell me you lost your job, too.

FRANK

I didn't lose my job, Pop.

(Difficult)

I lost my wife.

SAM

What do you mean you lost her?

FRANK

She's with another guy. Connie left me for some new-aged freak.

Sam looks at him a beat.

SAM

Alright, who were you bangin'?

Frank looks at him in utter disbelief.

FRANK

I wasn't bangin' anybody.

SAM

Come on. This is your old man here -

FRANK

Dad, I'm telling you. I'm completely in the dark. Frankie went with 'em.

SAM

You mean to tell me your wife has left you for another guy and my grandson's gone with the other guy too and didn't even stay with his own father?

FRANK

(Beat, then sadly)

Yeah.

SAM

(Almost joyous)

Well, now you know how I felt when you and your mother left me.

FRANK

Dad please.

SAM

How could you leave me back then?

FRANK

Dad, that was a long time ago. I was just a kid. Please, let's not dig up the past.

SAM

(Catching himself)

No. You're right. What good is it?

(Beat)

You know, I always thought there was something kinda hippy-dippy about Connie.

Sam's Chevrolet accidentally swerves into another lane and almost hits another car. Sam honks the horn at an OLD ASIAN WOMAN whom he nearly hits.

SAM
Whoa!! Dammit!!
(To the Asian woman)
Open up them slit eyes and learn how to
drive, you old Godzilla watchin' gook!
(To Frank)
Jeez, there ought to be a law against old,
chink women driving.

Frank stares at his angry father.

FRANK
Dad, that was your fault.

SAM
(Defensive)
Ah hell, everything's my fault. I guess
you're going to blame me for your failed
marriage too.

That crossed the line for Frank.

FRANK
Listen! First of all, my marriage isn't
over yet. And second of all -

Sam affectionately puts his large hand on his son's shoulder.

SAM
Hey, hey, hey, hey. Look. I'm on your
side. I know exactly what you're going
through. Trust me. We're gonna get through
this.

Frank starts to calm down. After a really long beat.

SAM
Are you sure you weren't bangin' somebody?

FRANK
No! Okay? No! I wasn't bangin' nobody!

The car turns a corner and goes out of sight.

EXT. SAM'S CAR - MOMENTS LATER

Sam's car pulls into Frank's driveway.

INT. FRANK'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Frank and Sam enter the house. Sam looks around and sees
that everything has been taken.

SAM

Damn, this place looks like a Korean market
after a blackout in the ghetto.

Sam notices the "Play Me" sign on the message machine and the
eggs on the counter.

SAM

What the hell is this?

Sam pushes the play button.

CONNIE (V.O.)

I've left you Frank. Frankie chose to come
with...

Frank rushes over and angrily turns off the machine.

FRANK

Turn that damn thing off!

(beat)

Look, dad. You can go home now. I just
need to be alone so I can think things out.
It doesn't seem real right now.

Frank is quiet and Sam realizes his son is hurting.

SAM

Hey, it's probably for the best. You and me
will be out chasin' tail before you know it.

FRANK

Oh sure dad. My life is falling apart in
front of me and I'm supposed to think about
double dating with you!

SAM

I was just tryin' to help.

Sam looks at him a long beat, then away.

SAM

(sadly)

Did you remember her birthdays?

FRANK

I got her a dozen red and a box of Fanny
Farmer assorted every year.

SAM

Did you remember your anniversary?

FRANK

Drinks at the Ritz-Carlton and dinner at
Morton's every year.

A long beat as Sam considers it.

SAM

Did you open the car doors for her?

FRANK

You taught me that. I didn't forget.

SAM

(after a long beat)

Your lower back -- did it affect...

FRANK

What?

SAM

You know.

FRANK

No.

SAM

You sure? When I hurt my lower back, your mom and I --

FRANK

I don't want to hear it, Pop! Don't tell me!
We were fine. Connie and I were fine!

Sam notices the eggs.

SAM

Did you tell her she was a good cook? I
always told your mother she made the perfect
eggs.

Frank stares at him. He remembers what he said to his wife.
Realizing, Frank grabs his truck keys and heads out the door.

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - LATE

Frank pulls up and parks his truck in front of the apartment
building. He gets out and starts toward the apartment.

Frank attempts to be calm. He knocks on the newly replaced
door.

FRANK

Connie. Connie. Can I please talk to you?
I promise I won't get mad like last night.
I was wrong. Connie. I know you hear me.
I just want to talk. That's all. Just five
minutes.

After a moment, Frankie comes out the door.

FRANKIE

Yo' dude. So you bitch slapped this door, huh? That's Shaft type shit. Cool.

FRANK

No it wasn't cool and watch your mouth. Now would you march your butt in there and tell your mother to come out here and talk to me.

FRANKIE

Sorry, dog. Not gonna happen. See what I'm sayin'?

FRANK

No, I don't see what you're sayin'. Just tell her I want to talk this out.

FRANKIE

Not gonna happen on account of you dough popping Jeremy last night and Jeremy knows a lawyer who knows a judge who put a fence up around him and mom. By the way, you got him good dude.

FRANK

What the hell are you talking about? AS HARD AS IT MIGHT BE, please speak English.

FRANKIE

A restraining order, dad. You can't set foot on this property or you'll end up back in the pokey.

FRANK

You've got to be shitting me.

Frankie takes Frank by the arm and starts leading him back to the truck.

FRANKIE

So what was it like in the joint? Anybody try to screw you?

Frank is in total shock as Frankie leads him to the street. Just as Frank arrives at the truck, Jeremy steps out of the front door of the apartment.

JEREMY

(yelling)

Frank, I'm sorry about the restraining order, but after a couple of cooling off days I'm sure we can all sit down and talk.

Frank turns and starts back but Frankie restrains him.

FRANK
You son of a bitch!!!

FRANKIE
Whoa, whoa, whoa. Chill, chill. I don't need to be like the rest of the brothers and have an old man in prison.

Frank stops and composes himself.

FRANKIE
Let me go tell him to get his ass back in the house and I'll be right back.

Frankie starts running across the yard to Jeremy. After a moment, Frank can't help himself.

FRANK
(to Jeremy; yelling)
Step out into the street, you pussy!

SEVERAL NEIGHBORS come out to see what the commotion is about.

Frankie reaches Jeremy at the front door.

FRANKIE
Yo' dog. I think you ought to do a 180 and retreat.

JEREMY
No, that's just what he wants and it's not healthy. You go tell him he needs to go ahead and vent. Release the negative energy.

Frankie runs back to Frank.

FRANKIE
Jeremy says you need to blow off steam so you don't pop a vein.

FRANK
You tell him I'll blow his fucking head off.

SEVERAL MORE NEIGHBORS come out.

Frankie runs back to Jeremy.

FRANKIE
He says he's gonna pop a cap in your white ass.

JEREMY
You go tell him that violence never solved anything.

Frankie runs back to Frank, somewhat out of breath.

FRANKIE

He said smoking the peace pipe beats gang bangin' anyday.

FRANK

Oh yeah? Well you tell him I'll ram his peace pipe up...

FRANKIE

(Out of breath)

Whoa, whoa. Time out. I'm not trying out for the track team. And I'm not gonna get caught in the middle of this B.S. It's not fair.

FRANK

(yelling to Jeremy)

This ain't over! I will talk to my wife and there's not gonna be a damn thing you can do about it!!

JEREMY

(yelling)

And I'm rooting for you big guy. Once you cool off, I won't stand in your way!

FRANK

I'll cool your ass off in a deep freeze you fuckin' prick!

By now a small CROWD has gathered. Frankie is thoroughly embarrassed.

FRANKIE

Dad, dad! Please!!! Please stop! I think he's right. Just go home and chill, bro. I mean check yourself out. You're causin' a scene. I mean shit, these are gonna be my new neighbors, dig? First impressions, dog.

Jeremy goes back into the apartment. Frank reluctantly goes back to his truck.

From the APARTMENT WINDOW, Connie tearfully looks on. After a beat she sadly moves away.

Back at Frank's truck. It's awkward. No one knows what to say.

FRANKIE

(finally)

Indians won, five to four last night. Thome hit a homer.

Frankie looks at him with a wry smile, then looks away.

FRANK
 (after a beat, with
 feeling)
 You okay?

FRANKIE
 (after a beat)
 I'm hangin. You, dude?

They look at each other a beat. Frank nods.

FRANK
 (with difficulty)
 Did you know about this?

FRANKIE
 (guarded)
 Say what?

FRANK
 About this asshole she's moved in with.

FRANKIE
 (after a beat)
 He's not an asshole, dude.

He avoids his father's eyes when he says it.

FRANK
 (a forced smile)
 He's not, huh?

FRANKIE
 (guarded)
 I'm not sure he's cool, but he ain't no
 fool. He talks. He listens.
 (a beat)
 You know, he's not a... dad.

He looks away from Frank again.

FRANK
 (Difficult beat)
 Frankie, how come you want to stay with them
 and not at the house with me?

FRANKIE
 Sometimes I'll hang with them. Sometimes
 I'll hang at your crib. Catch a Tribe game
 or something.

FRANK
 Is he going to stay there all the time or -

FRANKIE

(Angry)

Ain't gonna snitch, dude. You can't turn me out to snitch. I mean -- I'm not gonna snitch on you, either, dad. You know what I mean? If you have some chick over at the crib, I'm not gonna tell mom about it.

FRANK

Oh, gee thanks.

(A stunned beat)

Aren't you bothered by this?

FRANKIE

(Looks away again)

All my homeboys have gone through this, dad. It's cool. I can handle it. I just want you and mom to be happy. Hangin, you know? Both of you.

FRANK

(after a beat)

What if I'm not happy without mom?

A beat, then Frankie looks at him.

FRANKIE

Don't know. What are you asking me this shit for, dad? I'm just a homeboy. I'm a kid.

Frank sadly looks at his son. It's as though he sees himself 30 years ago.

FRANKIE

Listen dude, I gotta book. Tommy and me are goin' cruisin'. Don't worry bro. You and me are cool.

Frank helplessly watches his boy go into his new home. A tear wells up in his eye. He leaves.

INT. FRANK'S HOUSE - LATE AT NIGHT

In a zombie-like state, Franks sits alone in his Lazy boy and drinks beer. He is sadly watching "Leave It To Beaver", a seemingly "normal" family on T.V.. We SLOWLY PULL BACK and see how empty his life is.

INT. AIRLINE HANGER - NEXT DAY

Frank and his friend Rick are working on a jet. Frank looks like he hasn't slept.

FRANK

Look at me. Dad always said he didn't understand me and now I don't understand my kid. I have the same job. The same failed marriage. Shit. I'm no different.

RICK

Come on. Give it some time. Maybe everything will work out.

FRANK

I really don't know. I must have screwed up bad -

John Hardman, the assistant plant manger, walks up to Frank and Rick.

JOHN

Frank, Mr. Vail wants to see us upstairs.

FRANK

What for? I got work to do, John.

JOHN

Fritos.

Frank looks at him a beat, rolls his eyes.

INT. RUSS VAIL'S OFFICE - DAY

The office is big and tastefully furnished. RUSS VAIL, the assistant vice president, sits behind his big desk. He wears an expensively tailored suit. He is in his late 30's, thin.

Sitting in front of him are Frank, Miguel, and ART SLATER, in his early 60's, the union rep -- who wears slacks and an open-necked white shirt.

ART

This union does not allow its members to be victims of racial slurs.

FRANK

All I said was that he was eating chips instead of watching --

ART

You didn't say "chips" -- you said Fritos.

FRANK

Chips, Fritos, Pringles, Cheezits, whatever. Jesus! Miguel, tell them. We're friends.

MIGUEL

This wasn't my call Frank. I wouldn't have said a word.

FRANK

Then if he's not offended, why are we here?

RUSS VAIL

Because your supervisor, unlike you, goes by the rulebook. He knew it was his obligation to report you.

FRANK

John? That S.O.B. Why isn't he here?

RUSS VAIL

He's doing his job.

FRANK

No, that's not it. He doesn't have the balls to be here to face me.

ART

Is that a threat?

Frank sits and stews. After a beat...

FRANK

(Quietly)

No.

ART

This incident is only one in a long list of complaints we've had about you. Just last week you asked a flight attendant if she was gay.

FRANK

I thought that was her name!!!

ART

Well, I got news for you, it wasn't. Then two months ago you told Maureen Hagen in catering that she had, and I quote, "a great rack".

FRANK

So what? She does. She paid a lot of money for those babies. I told her she made a good investment.

RUSS VAIL

So you did make these references?

FRANK
 (after a beat)
 Well, yes -- but I didn't mean anything by them.

ART
 (accusingly)
 Would you have said Fritos if Miguel wasn't Hispanic?

FRANK
 (upset)
 The guy had Fritos in his hand!

They stare at him.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. RUSS VAIL'S OFFICE - LATE

He sits there in front of Vail's desk. Only he and Russ Vail are in the room. A long beat as Vail thinks about it... he keeps tapping an expensive pen onto the table.

FRANK
 (after a beat)
 I do my job. I keep this airline humping. The planes are going out on time and turning around on time.

VAIL
 (after a long beat)
 You say you get the job done but I think you like pushing people around to get it done. Bottom line: I think you're a great worker but a macho asshole.

FRANK
 (angry)
 You think I am an asshole?
 (he forces a smile)
 Okay, why not? Suddenly everybody thinks I'm an asshole.
 (a beat)
 You want to know what I think? I think you...

He stops suddenly. It is like he is forcing himself to stop.

VAIL
 (smiles)
 Go ahead. Say it. Say it. I could let you go without a severance.

Frank stares at him like he is going to hit him.

VAIL

I've had to weigh my alternatives Frank, and now, with the union getting involved, my hands are tied. You're suspended without pay for the next three months.

FRANK

Three months?!

VAIL

- AND you're required by the company to attend sensitivity classes.

FRANK

Aww shit - Fuck - Cock suck! Come on Russ. I don't need sensitivity classes. I need my job back. How am I gonna eat?

VAIL

I don't know, but you should have thought about that before you opened that loose trap of yours.

FRANK

What about the Union protecting me? A regular guy doing his job better than anyone else every day. Don't you see how ludicrous this is? At least tell me you see that.

VAIL

It's three months and classes or you get fired. It's that simple. I'm sorry Frank. The world has changed ... asshole.

Frank stares at him in shock.

EXT. PARKING LOT - DAY

Frank is walking to his truck, in utter oblivion.

A MAN, BRAD ANDREWS, 40's, in a suit, gets out of the car, asks another worker in the parking lot something, and then starts walking toward Frank.

BRAD

Excuse me. Are you Frank Jessup?

FRANK

Who wants to know?

BRAD

I'm Brad Andrews. I'm an attorney. I'm here to help you.

FRANK

Thank god I don't want to lose my job.

BRAD

No, no. I'm a divorce lawyer. I was sent here to help you through your legal separation from Connie.

FRANK

What the hell are you talking about? And how do you know so much about me and Connie?

BRAD

I'm a friend of Jeremy's.

(Off of Frank's
befuddled look)

He sent me to help you. I worked for him when he went through his divorce.

Frank rubs his face in frustration.

FRANK

So he's trying to stack the deck against me, huh?

BRAD

No. He really wants to help you. That's just the kind of guy he is. He said he's a friend of yours.

FRANK

A friend? That prick is living with my wife! He got me put in jail! He ain't no fucking friend of mine, pal!

BRAD

He'd like to be.

FRANK

I'd like to kill him.

BRAD

There's probably a better way.

FRANK

What's that?

BRAD

Talk to your wife.

FRANK

She won't talk to me. If she would, I'm sure we, as in she and me, could work this all out. But everybody else has filled her head with a bunch of bullshit!

BRAD
(smiles)
I can get her to talk to you.

FRANK
How?

BRAD
Trust me.

INT. FRANK'S HOUSE - NIGHT

He steps inside his empty house. He looks at the place a long beat, then closes the door and goes in. He sees the KITCHEN -- the eggs on the counter next to the tape machine. A long beat as he stands there staring.

He opens the egg carton, gets a pan, and puts three eggs in it. He stands there a beat staring at the eggs frying.

Feeling emotionally stripped, Frank undresses as he walks to the BEDROOM. He looks at his uniform that he proudly wore for all those years and angrily tosses it in the corner.

Frank takes a long overdue SHOWER. CU of his sad, then angry face.

In the KITCHEN, eggs are sizzling in the pan.

Frank gets out of the shower and wraps a towel around his mid-section. He hears the phone ringing and runs to pick it up in hopes that it is Connie.

FRANK
Hello.

V.O.S
Hey big guy, how's it going?

FRANK
Who is this?

INTERCUT phone sequence.

JEREMY
It's Jeremy. You know, Connie's guy?

FRANK
(In a rage)
What the fuck do you want?

JEREMY
Now is that anyway to talk to a guy who just got you a first rate attorney?
(more)

JEREMY (cont'd)

Jeez, big guy. I just called to see if Brad was working out for you.

FRANK

Listen, you fuck. You think I'm stupid? You think I don't know what you're up to? If I ever see you anyplace, you're dead. You hear me? Dead!

JEREMY

That's good. Vent Frank. Vent. You can vent on me whenever you need to. My ex -- her new lover ... wouldn't let me vent. And she was a woman. Talk about an ouchie to the ego. Man, that hurt.

FRANK

I want to talk to my wife, asshole.

JEREMY

You're going to talk to her as soon as Brad sets up the meeting.

FRANK

(Seething)

I want to talk to her now! Is she there?

JEREMY

Of course she's here Frank. I wouldn't leave her alone during this time of stress. Just a minute. Connie dear. Frank's on the phone. Do you want to talk to him?

CONNIE

(Smiles)

Ask him if he enjoyed his eggs.

She keeps drawing, doesn't miss a beat.

FRANK

(In a rage)

I heard that! I heard that! Tell her I heard that!

JEREMY

Overlook it, Frank. Come on. She was venting too.

(To Connie)

That wasn't appropriate.

(To Frank)

It was inappropriate, Frank. I'm sorry.

Frank is so apoplectic that no words come out of his mouth.

JEREMY

Frank?

(To Connie)

Ooh this is good. Progress. He's listening.

CONNIE

He's not listening, he's too angry to talk.

JEREMY

You're too hard on him. Frank, are you listening or are you too angry to talk? Connie says you're too angry to talk.

FRANK

(This is killing him)

May I please speak with my wife. Please.

JEREMY

That was sweet.

(To Connie)

You should hear how sweet he is. Come on. Talk to him.

CONNIE

God, you don't know him. Tell him I'm busy drawing.

JEREMY

She's busy drawing, Frank. You should see this cute little muskrat. Man, is that gonna look good on the wall.

(He starts singing the
Muskrat song from
Captain and Tenille)

Frank bangs the phone against his head several times. Suddenly, there's another call coming in. Frank takes it.

FRANK

Hello.

SAM

Hey. Are you sure you didn't bang anybody?

FRANK

Dad, I can't talk right now.

SAM

Well, you don't have to get snippy with me. Shit I was just tryin' to help.

Suddenly, the smoke alarm goes off.

FRANK

Oh shit. Just a minute.

Frank takes the portable phone and runs into the KITCHEN to find it filled with smoke. The eggs are black.

SAM

What's goin' on there?

FRANK

(Totally distracted)

Dad hold on, my house is up in smoke.

Frank sets the phone down on the counter and hurries to the stove. He grabs the pan, but it's so hot he gets burned.

On the counter is the phone where Sam is still rambling.

Frank grabs a pot holder and then the pan and starts trying to wave the smoke away from the alarm. The eggs go flying. Not working, he finally takes the pan and WHACKS the alarm into pieces.

SAM (V.O.)

... Hello. Hello. Fine. Stay snippy.

Frank picks up the phone but it's too late. He then accidentally presses the play button on the answering machine.

CONNIE (V.O.)

I've left you Frank. Frankie chose to come with me. My lawyer told me to notify you...

Frank looks frozen a long beat... and then he starts to move his head jerkily to the left and the right as though he's being hit. A long beat... and then a voice, behind him.

THE VOICE

Frank, are you okay?

He turns. PATTI EVANS, Connie's best friend, stands there. She is a beautiful woman. She wears a little sundress.

Frank stares at her, numb, with only a towel on.

PATTI

I didn't mean to startle you. The door was open.

He just stares at her.

PATTI

I'll buy you a drink. Come on, let's get out of here. This place is like a crypt -- What happened to the wall?

We see the remnants of the eggs all over it.

FRANK
Naw, it's okay, Patti.

PATTI
Come on. You need some nourishment. When did you eat last?

He grins, shakes his head and points to the wall.

FRANK
That was dinner.

PATTI
(Smiles)
Put some clothes on. I'll drive.

He looks at her with affection.

INT. A RESTAURANT - NIGHT

It is an upscale suburban-type steak house filled with people. They sit across from each other. There is a candle in the middle of the table. They are eating, keeping their voices down so others can't hear them.

FRANK
You know, the only thing I can think, Patti, is that she found out about us.

PATTI
You think a woman would leave her husband of fourteen years just because he slept with her best friend one drunken night after a Christmas party?

FRANK
Well, yeah.

PATTI
Bullshit. That wouldn't be enough for any woman I know. Don't worry, she doesn't know about us. I'd know it if she did. We're close. We have no secrets.

(Beat)
Besides, she told me years ago she was unhappy. This shouldn't come as such a big surprise to you.

FRANK
How come she was unhappy? I was happy. I was very happy.

PATTI
That's why you put me over the back of the couch in Room 1729?

FRANK

I don't want to talk about that! Alright.
What we did was wrong! I don't even want to
think about it!

That stings her a little.

PATTI

You'll have to ask Connie why she was
unhappy. That's none of my business.

He stares at her a long beat in disbelief.

FRANK

Oh, but it's your business to ...

She is eating. He stares at her.

FRANK

Jesus fucking Christ. I don't understand
anything anymore, I swear to God!

He slams the table with his fist. She is badly startled --
Everyone stares. Patti looks around nervously and fakes a
half-smile for the people staring.

INT. PATTI'S VOLVO - NIGHT

She drives. He's slumped down in the front seat, staring out.

PATTI

If it'll give you any comfort, he's a nice
guy.

FRANK

(warily)

Who?

PATTI

Jeremy -- he's not an asshole. He's very
supportive. He'd never embarrass anyone
like you embarrassed me back there.

FRANK

(a forced smile)

Maybe I am an asshole.

PATTI

Maybe you are, Frank.

FRANK

Wait a minute! You know this fucking guy?

PATTI
(hesitant)
I... had coffee with them once.

FRANK
You had coffee with them? Some guy's
banging my wife and you have coffee with
them?

PATTI
What did you want me to do -- tell you about
him?

FRANK
Yeah!

PATTI
I couldn't betray my best friend that way.
Frank looks at her and starts to laugh.

FRANK
I like that.

PATTI
I was not going to blow my friend's marriage
up. The decision to blow it up was hers.
I had no right to make that choice. Telling
you would have been just as bad as telling
her about that couch in room 1729. Don't
you think?

Frank knows she's right.

She pulls the Volvo into Frank's driveway. She stops the
car. They sit there a long beat. He looks sad, even
confused, then --

PATTI
(Affectionately)
Look, you and I have always gotten along. I
care about you. I felt the same guilt you
did. Believe me. But now that you and
Connie are over we don't have to feel that
guilt anymore.

She gently grabs his hand.

PATTI
We can feel and be who we really are.

He looks at Patti. Her cleavage is prominent. She's sexy as
hell. He smiles.

FRANK

You know what, Patti? You are a beautiful, beautiful woman. And man, I'd really like nothing more than to touch your chest right about now.

PATTI

(Flirtatiously)

Oooh. And why is that you nasty, nasty boy?

FRANK

To see if you got a fuckin' heart beat.

(He gets out of the car)

Get out of here. I don't ever want to see you again.

PATTI

(Pissed and rejected)

Oh-kay. You want to be like that? Fine.

INT. HIS HOUSE - NIGHT

Frankie sits in the living room on the floor. He sits next to the Lazy-Boy, in front of the TV. His blaster is blasting an EMINEM hit, and the TV is on loud, tuned in to a cartoon. Frankie wears his hip-hop uniform.

Frank enters and as soon as he sees his son he lights up.

FRANK

Hey guy. Am I glad to see you.

Frankie turns all the noise down.

FRANKIE

(Teasing)

Big date for you tonight, huh?

FRANK

(Uncomfortable beat)

No ... I didn't have a date.

FRANKIE

Come on dad, I won't tell anyone. Did you getcha some stinky pinky?

FRANK

(Shocked)

What? No I ... Watch your mouth. Where did you learn to talk like that? Stop it okay. Believe me, women hate talk like that.

FRANKIE

Whatever. Got you some Big Macs and some beer, dude!

FRANK
(Excited)
All right!
(Realizing)
Wait a minute. You're not old enough to buy beer.

FRANKIE
Tommy's got a fake I.D.. You can sit in your Lazy-Boy and we can watch the Tribe -- just like old times, huh? Crib times, dude, good times!

FRANK
How'd Tommy get his fake I.D.?

FRANKIE
What are you a narc, fool?

Frank sits down in his Lazy-Boy. Walking a tight-rope with his son, he switches the subject.

FRANK
How's mom?

FRANKIE
She's cool.

FRANK
I'm going to meet with her.

FRANKIE
I know. She told me.

FRANK
What do you think about that?

FRANKIE
It'll be cool. Don't worry. Like Jeremy says -- communication, dad, dig it.

FRANK
Of course. Words of wisdom from THE GREAT AND POWERFUL Jeremy.

FRANKIE
Could we not talk about Jeremy, dog? I came over to see you.

FRANK
I'm sorry. You're right. Put the game on.

FRANKIE
I'll pop you a beer -- I already had a couple.

(more)

FRANKIE (cont'd)
(Off of Frank's look)
That's cool, isn't it? Hey, dad, I've got
a J, you want a hit? I gave Jeremy a hit.

FRANK
You what?!

FRANKIE
Chill.

FRANK
NO, I WON'T CHILL. I'M YOUR FATHER. Does
your mother know you're doin' this?

FRANKIE
Say what, bitch? I'm not doin' nothin'.

Frank stares at him a beat, then gets out of the Lazy-Boy.

FRANK
Don't call me that.

FRANKIE
(after a beat)
Don't tweak, dad. I call all my friends
bitch. That's Word. Aren't you down with
that?

FRANK
Oh, so that's cool, huh? Hey, bitch.
What's going on, bitch? How 'bout the
Tribe, bitch?

FRANKIE
Now you got it, bitch. Word.

FRANK
I have no idea what I'm talking about.
(Looks at him a beat)
Does your mother know you're doin' drugs?

FRANKIE
(upset)
Drugs? I'm not doin' drugs, bitch. It's a
joint, dad! It's great for stress.

FRANK
(upset)
I taught you not to do drugs, didn't I?

FRANKIE
(upset)
Now you're pissed, right, bitch?

FRANK
(loud, hard)
Don't call me "bitch."

FRANKIE
(upset)
I told you -- I call all my friends bitch!
We see tears welling in the boy's eyes.

FRANK
I'm not your friend, I'm your dad!

FRANKIE
(loud, crying)
That's for damn sure! You've got that down,
don't you?

Frank roughly grabs Frankie by the arm.

FRANK
Dammit! You will do as I say!

Frankie bursts into tears.

FRANKIE
To hell with this. I'll just go where I'm
treated like an adult.

Frankie turns suddenly and runs out of the house.

FRANK
But you're not an adult. You're my son!
(To himself)
Shit!

It is like a muted cry to the gods.

INT. SENSITIVITY CLASS - DAY

Frank is seated in a room filled with PEOPLE of all different nationalities. It's Archie Bunker's worst nightmare. The teacher, COLLEEN, a sexy woman, with enormous breasts, enters. She's dressed seductively with a short mini-skirt.

COLLEEN
Good morning class. We have two new people who have joined us today. Frank Jessup and Betty Phaff. Betty - Frank - why don't you tell us why you're here. Betty we'll start with you.

BETTY PHAFF is in her 50's. If her name wasn't Betty you would think she was a guy. She's overweight, wears tight slacks, glasses, and has a very short and spikey hair cut ...

in fact, by the way she looks, all signs would point that she might be a "dyke." (Whoops! We mean lesbian)

BETTY

It's men. I hate them all. They're constantly looking at me. Undressing me with their eyes. I have a recurring nightmare that all these men want to get on top of me and have their way with me.

Frank looks at her as if to say "are you serious?" This whole thing is humorous to him.

COLLEEN

(Very nice)

Okay. Okay. That's something we can help you with. Because not all men are bad. Right Frank?

FRANK

(Smiling)

I don't think so. No.

COLLEEN

You don't want to lay on top of Betty do you Frank?

FRANK

(Easy answer)

No.

COLLEEN

Of course not. See?

Betty looks at Frank as if to say, "yeah, right."

COLLEEN

Now why don't you tell the class why you are here, Frank?

FRANK

Hell if I know.

COLLEEN

Excuse me.

FRANK

(Sincere)

I don't know. All I know is that my work is making me come here. So ... here I am.

COLLEEN

Well, unfortunately Frank you may have a bigger problem than Betty.

FRANK
(Laughing)
Yeah right.
(Catching himself)
I mean ... Are you serious?

COLLEEN
Yes. Because she knows what the problem is
and that's half the battle. Class, I think
Frank needs our support.

The entire CLASS gets up and walks towards him.

FRANK
What the ... What's going on?

COLLEEN
It's a group hug Frank. Everyone would like
you to feel safe.

The class begins hugging him and we see Frank's body stiffen.
He's so uncomfortable. Betty is hugging another WOMAN
excessively long time.

INT. UNITED AIRLINES OFFICE - DAY

Frank is talking with a MAN from human resources at United.

FRANK
I need a job. I'm damn good at what I do,
and as you can tell by my resume I'm
extremely loyal ... to - to my company.

UNITED AIRLINES BOSS
I can see that.
(Beat)
We did a background check on you Mr. Jessup
and have to ask you a question. Did you
call a man a Frito?

FRANK
Well, I didn't call him a Frito. I just
said he was eating Fritos.

UNITED AIRLINES BOSS
(Shocked)
And they suspended you for that?

FRANK
Yeah. Can you believe it?

UNITED AIRLINES BOSS
Was he Hispanic?

FRANK

Yeah.

UNITED AIRLINES BOSS

Then I can believe it. I'm sorry Mr. Jessup. We can't afford that type of controversy at our airline.

INT. SENSITIVITY CLASS - ANOTHER DAY

Frank walks in and sees Colleen, alone, and wearing another provocative outfit. She's in a short, short, mini-skirt and her blouse couldn't be unbuttoned any lower.

COLLEEN

Oh Frank, I'm so glad you're here.

(Flirtatiously)

Will you come with me?

He looks at her and blinks.

FRANK

I'm sorry.

COLLEEN

(Seductively)

Since you're early and no one else is around I was hoping we could take advantage of the time together ... privately. I could use your big muscles and maybe I could help you with your problem.

Frank nervously swallows.

CUT TO:

INT. STORAGE UNIT - MOMENTS LATER

Colleen and Frank walk into a small storage area. Colleen locks the door and leans up against the wall.

COLLEEN

We're not supposed to be in here, but, oh well.

(She fans herself)

It's hot, isn't it?

Frank nods yes, but looks confused by her behavior. There is a lot of sexual tension in the air. At least from a healthy man's perspective.

FRANK

(After a moment)

So, what's going on?

COLLEEN

I need you to help me find my box.

FRANK

I beg your pardon?

COLLEEN

My box. It might be wet because of the dampness in here, but I know if we look hard enough we could find it.

She winks at him and looks at several boxes around her.

COLLEEN

It's kind of heavy and has "sexual disorders" written on the outside, but I desperately need it. I'll look up here.

She climbs up a small eight foot built-in wooden ladder. He can't help, but look up at her with her short mini-skirt on.

COLLEEN

(Making light)

I have a male client that's been suffering from what I like to call ... "the hornies" ... it's common in men and I think I can help him.

Frank is being teased to the max.

COLLEEN

Have you figured out what your problem is yet?

FRANK

Huh?

COLLEEN

Your problem?

FRANK

Yeah, I'm still ... I'm still working on it.

She's busy looking around up there. He's looking up there too.

COLLEEN

That's wonderful. Well, just let me know if there's anything I can do.

Frank is all but drooling.

COLLEEN

Any luck yet? Have you seen my box?

FRANK
(Mesmerized and quietly)

Yeah.

COLLEEN
You have? Great.

She starts climbing down the ladder.

Frank quickly snaps out of it and realizes that he hasn't seen the box that she was referring to. He scrambles to find it.

COLLEEN
Where is it?

He doesn't know how to respond. He's stumped. She looks down at his feet and by lucky circumstance she sees the box marked "sexual disorders".

COLLEEN
(Excited)
You did find it.

He looks relieved. Colleen leans over in front of Frank. Her breasts are practically falling out of her outfit. He looks and she catches him.

COLLEEN
Eyes above the neck Frank.

FRANK
What?

COLLEEN
I saw what you were looking at. Eyes above the neck. That's aprt of your training. It's disrespectful to look at a woman's breasts and not her eyes.

FRANK
Well what are you puttin' them out there for if you don't want someone to look at them? I mean, hell Evil Knieval would be afraid to jump a canyon that deep.

COLLEEN
(Highly insulted)
Mr. Jessup that is inappropriate talk and you obviously have a long way to go. Please take my box and let's go.

She leaves and he's left extremely confused.

EXT. COURTHOUSE - ANOTHER DAY

Frank hurries up the steps, runs inside. He wears his suit, which is rumpled. He looks very nervous.

INT. COURTHOUSE - DAY

As soon as he steps inside, his attorney, Brad Andrews, is there. He looks at his watch.

BRAD

You're seven minutes late!

They start walking quickly.

FRANK

(upset)

She took the alarm clock! It's her fault
I'm late!

BRAD

Do you want it back?

FRANK

Yeah I want it back. I want everything
back. Is she here?

BRAD

Yeah. She's already inside.

Frank takes a deep nervous breath.

BRAD

(Calming)

Now remember it's just a hearing for a legal
separation, Frank. No big deal. In fact in
my experience, these things often have a
reverse effect and scare people into getting
back together again.

FRANK

Well, let's hope that's what happens.

Brad pats his client on the back and opens the door to the
hearing room.

INT. THE HEARING ROOM - DAY

Frank sees, sitting there, waiting: Connie, wearing a suit;
her attorney, LESLIE STEVENSON, in her 40's, wearing glasses;
Jeremy Hudson, wearing an Armani suit; AND Frankie. They are
all sitting on Connie's side of the courtroom.

BRAD

(gets up)

My client apologizes for being late, ma'am, but the truth is that Mrs. Jessup took his alarm clock when she unlawfully removed Mr. Jessup's property from his home during the day of --

MRS. KAMINSKI

All right. Stop right there, Mr. Andrews, this isn't a trial. You don't need to sneak the first blow in. You're wasting your high-priced efforts.

Across the aisle, Leslie Stevenson smiles.

MRS. KAMINSKI

This is an informal hearing to set the boundaries for a legal separation. The aim here is to achieve some kind of communication that could avert the divorce process. Ms. Stevenson, what are the grounds Mrs. Jessup is filing on?

LESLIE

Extreme mental cruelty, your honor. We have a preliminary list of particulars -- Mr. Jessup is a sexist. He continually referred to Mrs. Jessup's intimate areas as "Cherry Pie," as "smiley" --

FRANK

(gets up)

Wait, Wait! What the hell is this? Frankie's here. My boy's here.

(to Connie)

You bring this stuff up when Frankie's here? You want him to hear this "smiley" stuff?

CONNIE

You said it, didn't you? He's old enough to understand what you're like. I don't want him to be like you!

Embarrassed, Frank looks at his son. Frankie shakes his finger at him. Then irate --

FRANK

You want him to be like him?

(he points to Jeremy)

We raise him for thirteen years and then you want to turn him into a fuckin' freak?

MRS. KAMINSKI

Mr. Jessup! I will not tolerate that kind of language in this room -- do you hear me?

Sam is the lone person sitting on Frank's side right across the aisle from Frankie.

Frank stares at everyone. He closes the door to the hearing room and backs away from it.

INT. THE CORRIDOR - DAY

FRANK

(in shock)

What are they -- What's Frankie? -- What's my dad?!

BRAD

She had no objection to them being here.

FRANK

Well I do!

BRAD

Why? She's the one who left.

FRANK

But I -

BRAD

Look, if I ask to remove them, you're going to look like you've got something to hide? Do you want that?

FRANK

No. But ... I thought I was gonna talk to her!

BRAD

You are going to talk to her. She'll talk through her attorney, you'll talk through me. That's how people do it these days.

A beat... and Brad opens the hearing room door again. Frank walks in like a man walking the plank.

INT. THE HEARING ROOM - DAY

Frank sits down next to Brad -- Connie sits next to her lawyer, Leslie Stevenson.

Sitting at the front of the room at an informal kind of bench is the referee, STEPHANIE KAMINSKI, a bird-like, efficient, attractive woman in her early 60's.

BRAD

We apologize, your honor.

MRS. KAMINSKI

I give lots of leeway in these hearings but I will not tolerate obscene or violent outbursts. Your son is in this room, Mr. Jessup. Please keep that in mind.

FRANK

What about her keeping it in mind when she starts talking about "smiley" and --

MRS. KAMINSKI

Mr. Jessup.

BRAD

(to Frank, whispering)

Sit down you're committing suicide here.

FRANK

(upset)

By trying to protect my son?

BRAD

Sit... Please.

Frank looks at Brad and sits down.

MRS. KAMINSKI

Thank you. Continue, Ms. Stevenson.

LESLIE

Mr. Jessup would not allow my client to work and pursue her love of animals.

FRANK

Not allow it? She gets to stay home and watch "Animal Planet" all day long! How rough is that? While she's watchin' that zany Crocodile Hunter, I'm out in the real world gettin' my ass bit by more snakes than she or that Aussie asshole will ever see.

LESLIE

May I continue?

The judge nods in agreement.

LESLIE

He humiliated and degraded her daily by criticizing her cooking.

SAM

I knew it!

(To Frank)

I warned you about that.

FRANK

(muted)

Oh, Jesus.

CONNIE

(starts to cry)

You did. You know you did!

LESLIE

He is an alcoholic --

FRANK

What?

LESLIE

He drinks six beers a day.

FRANK

Oh, Jesus.

Sam looks at Frankie.

SAM

That's like being on the wagon.

FRANKIE

I love suds, bitch.

Sam stares at him.

LESLIE

Although he is now an alleged reformed smoker, for many years he purposefully blew second-hand smoke directly at Mrs. Jessup, an action nearly homicidal in intent --

FRANK

Homicidal!

BRAD

(whispering)

We can't win this one. It's a smoking issue.

Frank stares at him.

LESLIE

-- especially the smoke rings he purposefully blew directly at her after sex, when the lung and heart capacity --

FRANK

(gets up, to Connie)

You asked me to blow 'em. You liked it when I blew 'em. I practiced just cause you liked it!

Sam gets up.

SAM

Your honor, I'd like to testify on my son's behalf. I taught him to blow smoke rings when he was in high school. Girls like it. Believe me.

MRS. KAMINSKI

Please sit down Mr. Jessup.

Sam sits.

SAM

(Under his breath)

Bitch.

Frank puts his head into his hands and starts shaking it.

FRANKIE

Hey Grandpa. Will you teach me?

SAM

(accusingly)

You don't smoke, do you?

FRANKIE

(warily)

No.

SAM

(after a beat)

Sure. I'll teach you.

MRS. KAMINSKI

Will you continue with the particulars, Ms. Stevenson?

LESLIE

(reading)

In reference to the custody of the minor, Frank Jessup, Jr., Mr. Jessup insisted that the minor watch boxing matches with him, infecting him with a mentality of violence. He insisted that the minor eat T-bone steaks with him, endangering his arterial health. And he used obscenities and violent blasphemous terms constantly in the minor's presence, especially when they were watching baseball games together.

Frank just keeps his head in his hands.

FRANKIE

Wait a minute, I gotta defend the homie on that last one. The other night when my war daddy and I was drinkin' brewski's and watchin' the Tribe ... his mouth was cleaner than a fresh wiped baby's ass.

Everyone -- especially Mrs. Kaminski -- stares at him.

FRANKIE

Ain't that right, bitch?

MRS. KAMINSKI

What did you call me?

FRANKIE

I wasn't talkin to you. I was talkin to my dad.

MRS. KAMINSKI

You call your father.. that... word?

FRANKIE

He's my friend. He even called me that. Right, bitch?

Frank looks at him a beat... then looks at Mrs. Kaminski who is glaring at him.

FRANK

I was just going along with him. Trying to ... you know ... relate.

MRS. KAMINSKI

Is that right, Mr. Jessup... you call your son... bitch?

FRANK

Yeah, okay, I did but...

FRANKIE

Hell yeah, dad! Down! Word up, bitch!

Brad puts his head in his hands.

MRS. KAMINSKI

Is there anything else, Ms. Stevenson?

Leslie looks at Connie a long beat. Connie won't look at her... and then she does and nods. A beat -- Leslie smiles.

LESLIE

We have one more particular, Mrs. Kaminski.

A long beat... as everyone stares at her.

LESLIE

On the night of December 23, 1999, at a Christmas party held by Mr. Jessup's employer at the Marriot downtown --

As she speaks, we see Frank's eyes getting bigger and bigger.

FRANK

(gets up quietly)

Connie, don't do this. You can have anything you want, I'm sorry, I, please, Connie, I don't want anyone to... Frankie... my pop's here.

He stands there looking at her. She won't look at him.

LESLIE

(to Connie)

Shall I continue?

A long beat... Connie looks at Frank, her face a mask, and she nods. Frank sits down.

LESLIE

Mr. Jessup and Mrs. Jessup's best friend, Patricia Allen, had sexual relations in Room 1729, while Mrs. Jessup was at home caring for their son, who was ill.

There is stone silence in the room.

SAM

I knew you were bangin' somebody!

FRANKIE

(admiringly)

Patti? That's dope! That's pimp!

Frank keeps his eyes on Connie. Mrs. Kaminski looks at Frank with utter loathing. Jeremy is shaking his head in regret. Sam Jessup makes the sign of the cross.

LESLIE

Patricia Allen has agreed to testify in the event of a trial.

FRANKIE

(to Frank, smiles)

Dude, you were busy with "Auntie" Patti?

He says it loud enough so everyone can hear it.

Frank turns and sees the boy smiling at him. Frank looks stricken. There is a long silence.

MRS. KAMINSKI

Mr. Jessup, it is a wonder your marriage lasted half as long as it did. I would recommend you seek a good therapist.

Jeremy stands up.

JEREMY

Your honor, I have a very good therapist that I could recommend for Mr. Jessup.

FRANK

I'm not going to some crack pot therapist.

JEREMY

Well, you are if you want me to drop the assault and battery charges.

FRANK

Dear God.

Frank drops his head to the table with a loud clunk.

JEREMY

In fact, I'm willing to cancel all my therapy sessions and give them to Mr. Jessup so that he can start his healing ASAP.

MRS. KAMINSKI

That's very commendable, sir.

JEREMY

(Proudly modest)

Well ... he's a friend.

MRS. KAMINSKI

Mr. Jessup, I believe it would be in your best interest to take your friend up on his generous offer.

FRANK

(Exasperated)

He's not my ... I just got suspended from my job. I've been taking sensitivity classes. I can't afford counseling.

MRS. KAMINSKI

Can you afford losing your wife? Your family? In my experience, I would say you're at the crossroads of life Mr. Jessup.

(Beat)

The way I see it, you have a choice: The road to recovery -- or the road to hell.

INT. THE COURTHOUSE - CORRIDOR - LATE

Frank walks with Brad down a corridor. They speak quietly so they can't be overhead.

BRAD

We're between a rock and a hard place, Frank. The sexism, the alcoholism, the humiliation, the steaks, the second-hand smoke rings, smiley, that's all par for the course. I could handle those issues. We're all guilty of things like that. Most guys have those problems.

FRANK

You're a guy. Have you got my problems?

BRAD

Most of them, sure.

FRANK

What are you doin' about it?

BRAD

I'm helping other guys with the same problems. I'm making the world a better place.

FRANK

(Under his breath)

Oh, you're a real knight in shining armor, aren't you?

They walk for a moment.

FRANK

So what do I do now?

BRAD

We're dead meat in a trial.

FRANK

I thought you said you could handle the issues.

BRAD

I did. But the best friend is lethal. Your wife would get everything.

FRANK

What do we do?

BRAD

First off, you will be seeing the therapist immediately, as in this afternoon. It's a strong show of good faith.

FRANK

But how am I going to afford -- Shit. Fine. Whatever.

BRAD

Second, we give her the house. Now. You'll move out.

FRANK

Where am I supposed to go?

BRAD

It doesn't matter.

FRANK

(nearly desperate)

It doesn't matter? Where am I gonna live?

BRAD

It doesn't matter.

FRANK

It does to me. Please. Do something. For the love of God. I made one mistake. Please. You have to believe me.

(he looks like he is
going to cry)

I love Connie.

BRAD

(Icy)

You back couched your wife's best friend.

Frank looks physically stunned by him.

EXT. COURTHOUSE - DAY

Connie is walking out of the courthouse with Jeremy, Leslie and Frankie. Frank goes up to them. They stop, but Connie looks away from him.

FRANK

(broken)

I'm sorry, Connie. I'm sorry. If we could just talk, one on one, without all these...

CONNIE

(cutting him off)

I can't believe you did this to us.

FRANKIE

Vent, mom. Vent.

JEREMY

Very good, Frankie. Your mother needs support.

FRANK

But Connie, if you'd just...

LESLIE

I'm sorry Mr. Jessup, it is inappropriate for you to be talking to my client at this time.

CONNIE

(Crying)

You're such a jerk, Frank.

FRANKIE

Vent, babe.

Connie walks away with Frankie and Leslie. Frank stares after them. Jeremy puts his arm on Frank's shoulder affectionately.

JEREMY

(Regretfully)

Ahh, does this bring back memories. I'm so sorry Frank. If you need to vent, I'm here.

(Frank doesn't respond)

Come on, big guy. I know, it must tear at your guts to hold so much emotion inside. If you're not careful, you'll give yourself an ulcer. Vent, babe. Vent.

Frank angrily looks at him.

FRANK

Listen asshole -

JEREMY

That's good ... but let's not start with the potty mouth.

FRANK

I could kill you. You know that? You're the first person I've met in my whole life I could just kill, dump you in the river outside, and not even think about it ever again.

JEREMY

No guilt. That's good, big guy. That's the key.

FRANK

(louder, in a growl)

Not one fucking iota of it. I could choke you, stab you, chainsaw you, cut your head off --

JEREMY

That's what we've got to work on, you see? That violence, that hostility. That's what your counseling will cure. That way you won't lose your next wife.

Frank turns to him and smiles a killer smile. He begins to move toward Jeremy. Jeremy quickly retreats.

JEREMY

Now Frank. Let's not do something we'll regret.

FRANK

We? We shit and I wiped. I'm not going to regret anything.

Jeremy runs away.

JEREMY

Frank, I gotta run. I'll give Frankie a hug for you.

Sam Jessup walks up behind Frank.

SAM

There's no way that guy could be bangin' your wife. He's queer as a three dollar bill.

FRANK

Dad, please.

They look at each other a beat in pain.

SAM

You want to go down to the ballpark? I can get tickets.

FRANK

(after a beat)

I can't think about baseball at a time like this. Besides, I've got to go meet with the damn therapist.

SAM

Screw the therapist! It's the Indians, Frank! It's not just baseball. We're goin' to church.

FRANK

Dad, I can't. I'm trying to go with this.
 Lord knows I ain't doin' so well doin' it my
 way.

SAM

Aww, Jesus. A shrink ain't gonna do
 anything but tell you it's 'cause you wanted
 to screw your mother or something.

Frank rolls his eyes and starts to walk away and goes to his
 truck.

He looks back to see Sam checking out a hot girl's ass as she
 walks by him. Sam says something to her and it obviously
 offends her. Frank shakes his head and gets into his truck.

INT. DR. JOHNSON'S OFFICE - DAY

Frank sits alone. In nervous anticipation he looks around
 the room and sees ...

Blown-up photographs of boxers like: Mike Tyson, Roberto
 Duran, Hearns, Hagler, etc ... all at moments of vicious and
 bloody knockouts.

Behind the desk is a wall-sized blow-up of Muhammad Ali
 smiling. These words are across the blow-up: "I wish people
 would love each other the way they love me. It would be a
 better world -- Muhammad Ali".

Frank sees a framed picture of a pretty blonde woman on the
 doctor's desk. Most likely the wife.

Suddenly, the door opens and DR. JOHNSON enters. He is in
 his 50's -- a big, distinguished-looking, very imposing black
 man. His head is shaved; he wears a goatee.

Frank stares, surprised that the Doctor's black.

Dr. Johnson looks him over a long beat from head to toe as if
 he doesn't like what he is seeing. After an uncomfortable
 beat, Frank tries to lighten things up ...

FRANK

(Referring to the boxing
 pictures in his office)
 So ... you like boxing?

JOHNSON

(Defensive)
 Is that a challenge?

FRANK
(Taken aback)
No, it just --

JOHNSON
Here. Help me move this desk.

Unsure what the hell is going on, Frank gets up to help Dr. Johnson move the desk to the corner.

JOHNSON
Now we got us some room here. Put these on.
Dr. Johnson hands Frank a pair of boxing gloves.

FRANK
What is this for?

JOHNSON
You like pushing people around, don't you?
Well, let's see if you can push me around
motherfucker.

FRANK
(Getting spooked)
Now hold on a second.

JOHNSON
(He's putting on his
gloves)
I read your file. You think you're the cock
of the walk? The bull of the woods? Well,
let's lock horns and see who the real "alpha
male" is.

Dr. Johnson actually rings a fight bell that he has on his desk and moves in angrily on Frank.

FRANK
(Really spooked)
WAIT A SECOND! Can't we just ... talk?
You know ... reason?

Johnson suddenly smiles.

JOHNSON
Ahhh, so there is hope for you. Sit down
Mr. Jessup.

Frank looks relieved and sits down. They both take off their gloves. After a moment, Dr. Johnson starts rubbing his hands through Frank's hair.

FRANK
(Humiliated)
You know this is ... this is getting weird.

JOHNSON

Do you know what male pattern baldness is,
Frank?

FRANK

(after a beat)

I ... I think so.

JOHNSON

Do you think you have it?

FRANK

No, I -

JOHNSON

You've got it.

FRANK

I do?

JOHNSON

You're damn right you do.

Dr. Johnson walks around and points a big finger in Frank's face.

JOHNSON

(intensely, explosively)

I'm going to cure it! You have male pattern baldness of the spirit: in your bones and in your soul! Your heart has rigidified! Your sensitivity has atrophied! Your nerve endings have hardened! Your penis has turned to bone and can't feel a thing! Your eyes have been blinded by fantasies of pubic hair! You are a typical, middle-aged, American male who grew up on John Wayne, Wonder Bread, the Playboy centerfold, cheeseburgers, nicotine, Budweiser, Elvis, and cap guns. You are a tragedy waiting to happen, a shoot-out ready to erupt, a war ready to start.

A long beat... as he turns away... and then turns back almost violently.

JOHNSON

(loud, hard)

Do you understand what I am saying to you,
Frank?

FRANK

(after a beat)

Yeah, I think --

JOHNSON
(loud, hard)
You do not!

FRANK
I ... I don't?

JOHNSON
(loud, hard)
You don't!
(a beat; he smiles, then
quietly)
But you will.
(a beat)
Because I will cure you, Frank. Do you know
how I will cure you?

FRANK
(warily)
No.

JOHNSON
Rogaine. Figurative Rogaine.

FRANK
(after a beat)
Rogaine?

JOHNSON
(loud, hard)
I will figuratively pump you full of
intravenous Rogaine! I will reach your
bones and your soul! I will soften your
heart and enrich your sensitivity and tickle
your nerve endings. I will soften your
penis and get the pubic hair out of your
eyes.

Frank stares at him.

JOHNSON
Aren't you happy now that you chose
counseling?

Frank stares at him. Johnson starts to laugh.

JOHNSON
(hard, slow)
You -- will -- be -- reborn -- Frank!

Dr. Johnson rings his fight bell.

INT. THE PICKUP TRUCK - NIGHT

Frank pulls up to his house -- lights are on everywhere -- he hears laughter in the house. A big Ryder truck is parked in the driveway.

He gets out of the truck warily, goes up to the front door -- which is open. He steps inside.

INT. THE HOUSE - NIGHT

Boxes and furniture are everywhere, haphazard. Frankie is in the kitchen, a beer bottle in his hand. Two of Frankie's friends are also there. They are TOMMY, a 14 YEAR OLD ASIAN BOY and CLYDE, a 14 YEAR OLD WHITE BOY. They are dressed in the same hip-hop fashion as Frankie.

Tommy is playing Nintendo with Jeremy.

JEREMY

Yo' Tommy. You iced my ass, bitch!

Tommy and Clyde high five each other.

Frankie notices Frank in the doorway.

FRANKIE

(smiles)

Dad!

(to the living room)

Yo, crew; check out the drive-by!

Frank steps into the living room; he sees Connie, Jeremy, and Patti moving furniture back and forth, opening boxes.

PATTI

(sees him)

Oh God, there goes the party atmosphere!

JEREMY

Come on in, Frank, sit down, make yourself at home.

FRANK

(after a beat)

I am at home.

CONNIE

No you're not. It's my home, Frank, and it's Frankie's home.

FRANKIE

And my crew's hang.

FRANK

You couldn't wait a couple of days and let me get my things?

CONNIE

They're packed in the bedroom, ready to go.

FRANKIE

(to Connie)

He can crash the crib anytime he wants, though, right, bitch? This is his hood!

PATTI

He can visit you if he calls your mother first.

FRANK

You're like a fucking bunch of vultures and I'm roadkill.

CONNIE

That language Frank. You sound just like your father.

That stings Frank.

JEREMY

Come on, Frank, sit right down here in your Lazy-Boy, I'll get a piece of pizza for you.

Frank looks at the big chair like it's poison.

FRANKIE

It's got tofu cheese on it, dad. You'll like it. It's pimp!

FRANK

(after a beat, to Jeremy)

You've got to be the only person I know that can ruin something as pure as pizza.

CONNIE

We're trying other things in life besides sausage Frank. People can change! I'm changing ... I've got a job. I'm going to be doing what I love ... working at the zoo and asserting my independence. And it sure feels good to finally have some control over my life.

FRANK

(Sad but sincere)

I'm happy for you Connie.

(Lost)

I got to go.

JEREMY

Don't be like that, Frank. You just got here. Hey, we were discussing that we might possibly knock out the wall between the kitchen and the living room and make it one large common area. Do a sort of a Middle Eastern-quasi Japanese temple thingie. What do you think?

TOMMY

Yo' you're up again Jeremy.

JEREMY

Sorry, gotta go get my butt kicked again.

Jeremy joins Tommy to play Nintendo.

Ignoring him, Frank sadly looks at Connie and his son. It's an awkward moment.

FRANK

(forlorn and beaten)

If you need me ... I guess I'll be at grandpa's.

He walks out.

Connie and Frankie share an uncomfortable look.

INT. PICKUP TRUCK - NIGHT

Frank gets in. He sits there for a long beat.

Frankie comes out dragging two big duffle bags full of Frank's clothes.

FRANKIE

Hold up, dad! Here's your shit.

(Puts it into the truck)

So, dad. Do you think you'll get busy with Patti again?

FRANK

Frankie, listen, about that....

FRANKIE

Hey, it's cool -- I'm not gonna jack you about it.

FRANK

(with difficulty)

Frankie, it's not cool. Take some advice from your old man. Keep it in your pants.

Frankie laughs. They both smile. After a moment...

FRANKIE

Truth, bitch? The fights on T.V.? Dope, bitch. The T-bone steaks? Dope, bitch. The F-word? Dope, bitch. Cigarettes? Dope, bitch. The smoke rings? Grandpa's gonna teach me.

FRANK

I don't want you smoking. That's not dope... bitch.

Frankie smiles and looks to the house.

FRANKIE

I better go back in, dad. The crew's here. And mom will think you kidnapped me.

FRANK

(Smiles)

Yeah, we wouldn't want that. Good night.

FRANKIE

This is Triple Wack City, yo.

FRANK

I couldn't have said it better.

Frankie takes off running for the house. Frank watches him go.

INT. SAM'S HOUSE - FRANK'S BEDROOM - LATER THAT NIGHT

Frank sadly walks into his childhood bedroom at his father's house. It hasn't been touched since he was a teenager. There are Little League baseball trophies, posters of past Cleveland Indians, a Farrah Fawcett poster and many various other things that are very telling about Frank's tastes as a testosterone filled teenage boy.

Frank wanders about the room looking at all of the various relics from his past. It is obvious he is filled with many conflicting emotions, the strongest being his confusion about how he has wound up living back in his father's house in his old room.

Sam pokes his head into the room. He watches as Frank looks around for a minute.

SAM

Your mother never had the heart to change a thing once you moved out. Of course, by the time wives two and three came along, I'd gotten used to it myself and it was the one room I wouldn't let them touch. It sort of became a little museum to you.

Frank walks over to his bed and sits down.

SAM

You okay?

Frank nods yes, but clearly he's not.

Sam walks over and sits down next to his son.

SAM

When I was a kid I used to look at my dad and wonder why he never hugged me. Why he never told me he loved me. I knew he did ... or at least I hoped he did, but I swore when I got older I would do it better. Different than him. Then when your mother and I got a divorce and I could only see you twice a week, I had a choice to make. Either be your friend or your father.

FRANK

(Smiling)

I know that pop. And I love you for it.

SAM

Yeah well whatever. Just keep doin' what you're doin'. It will pay off. Oh, and one more thing ... You know your son is turning black?

Frank smiles.

MONTAGE:

-Frank is on a tread mill, sweating at a full run, being lectured by a highly animated Dr. Johnson.

-At the ZOO we see an elephant taking a giant crap. A WORKER hands Connie a shovel. This isn't all she thought it would be.

-Frank is in SENSITIVITY CLASS playing the trust game. He nervously falls backwards into the arms of Betty, who naturally lets him drop. KA-BAM!

-Connie is in the petting ZOO holding a cute rabbit, which suddenly bites her.

-Frank is standing in a very long line at the unemployment office. It is obvious he is uncomfortable and that it is going to take forever.

-Connie is feeding dead skinned rats to alligators. She is repulsed.

-In the SENSITIVITY CLASS, Betty, (the woman in question) is holding court.

BETTY

(Distraught)

Last night ... I had this dream that I was shopping and I went to the parking lot ... and got into my car ... and this man tried to stick his thing in me.

Frank rolls his eyes.

COLLEEN

(Sympathetic)

Oh that's terrible. I'm so sorry Betty.

FRANK

Whoa, whoa. Time out here. May I interject?

COLLEEN

If you think you can help.

FRANK

I do. Betty, I know you don't like men and you're afraid they all want to pork you, but let me put your mind at ease and tell you ... you have nothing to worry about ... Believe me, a blind man wouldn't want to do you.

BETTY

(Shocked)

What?

COLLEEN

Frank!!!!

FRANK

What? Let's just be honest here and help this woman with her fears. Betty, you're completely safe. Trust me. A man could OD on Viagra and couldn't get it up with you.

COLLEEN

That is enough Mr. Jessup!!

Betty looks shocked and hurt.

FRANK

No it's not enough! What the hell's wrong with you people? Face it! Betty's a cock hater and our beloved teacher is a cock teaser.

COLLEEN

How dare you.

FRANK

No! How dare you. You turn on the sex when you want something, but if a guy reacts you tell him he's a pervert. Well, it's not natural sweetheart. Be lucky you're not a rabbit in the wilderness or you would be pulling a larger train than Amtrack. You have the fucking problem. Not me.

He angrily leaves.

CUT TO:

EXT. JACOBS FIELD - NIGHT

Sam and Frank are at the concession stand.

SAM

I can't believe you lost your job. I hope you don't think just because you're living with me you can become a free loader.

FRANK

(Pissed)

Dad, I'll move out. Is that what you want?

SAM

Jesus Christ can't we have a civil conversation without you turning everything around? You've got a real problem you know that?

PEOPLE that are around, look at the two. Embarrassed, Frank gets his hot dog and begins to walk away with his dad.

FRANK

Yeah. I know that. And that problem is a lot bigger than my damn job. It's my whole life.

Sam waves to the BEER MAN that walks by. Like this will solve the problem.

SAM

I know what we need.

(To beer man)

We'll take two beers here.

(To Frank)

Don't get too down on yourself. Everybody makes mistakes. Hell, that Patti is a hot chick. You're a man. Any guy would bend her over when it's right in his face.

FRANK

I swear to God, if I had to do it over again, I'd cut it off.

SAM

Like hell. No son of mine would cut it off.

FRANK

Easy for you to say, you didn't pop mom's best friend.

The beer man, who has heard the entire conversation, gives Frank a look.

BEER MAN

That'll be five dollars.

Sam pays for the beers and they walk away and head for their seats.

SAM

Whatsamatter with you? That damn brain drainer didn't get to you, did he? I swear, that shit is for wussies.

FRANK

How would you know, pop?

SAM

Hey, I watch T.V. I've seen that show "Frasier". All that faggot whining. They don't understand the real world. What you're going through boils down to this. The man ain't got a chance of winning. When a woman gets hurt, she cries and everyone feels sorry for her. But when a man gets hurt, he gets angry and nobody wants to be around him. Am I right? Am I right?

Frank can't disagree, but doesn't respond.

SAM

Shit, I got to take a wiz. I'll meet you and Frankie at the seats.

Frank arrives AT THE SEATS where Frankie is. They are up high, in the nose bleed section.

FRANK

How are we doing? Is Lofton up?

FRANKIE

No, it's Ramirez.

FRANK

Oh. Well, they all look alike from up here.

A BLACK FAMILY two rows in front of them look back. Frankie looks embarrassed and disgusted.

Frank tries to hand Frankie his hotdog.

FRANK
Here's your dog.

Frankie doesn't except it.

FRANK
(Innocently)
What?

FRANKIE
"They all look alike?" Dad, could you be any more racist?

FRANK
What? I didn't mean anything by it.

FRANKIE
Said Hitler to the Jews. You always say that. That you don't mean anything by it, but you hurt people all the time. And you embarrass me.

Frank is stunned.

FRANKIE
You know how you always ask me why I act black?

FRANK
Yeah. Why is that?

FRANKIE
Because I don't want to be like you.

Frankie gets up to leave.

FRANKIE
I'm outta here.

FRANK
Where are you going?

FRANKIE
I have some friends in section G which is a lot closer to the action than here in section KKK.

Frankie leaves just as Sam arrives. We hear the crack of the bat.

SAM
(yelling)
There it goes! There it goes!

The crowd roars. It's a home run.

SAM
Hot damn! That curve ball hung like a black
man's dick!

People around look at Sam in utter shock. Including the black family. Frank is embarrassed. ANGLE on Frank as we SLOWLY PUSH in on his face. He hears his son's words. Frank knows he must make a change or his fate will be just like his father's.

CUT TO:

INT. FRANK'S OLD HOUSE - NEXT MORNING

Jeremy is at the kitchen counter cooking eggs. Frankie is at the table watching his ever present rap videos.

JEREMY
(yelling off)
Hey, Con. Your eggs are almost done.

CONNIE (O.S.)
Be right there. I'm almost done with the packing.

JEREMY
How about you Frankie? Want some eggs?

FRANKIE
No, bitch. Cap'n Crunch is cool by me.

JEREMY
Cool. Cool.

There is a knock on the door. Jeremy crosses and opens it.

Frank is standing there holding a large bouquet of fresh flowers.

FRANK
Hey, big guy. How are you doing, my man?
Mind if I come in?

Frank enters and sets the flowers on the table. It's as though he has a whole new attitude.

FRANK
Just a little something to brighten up the place. Mmmm, something smells good.

Jeremy is a bit confused by the way Frank is acting. Connie enters and quickly puts her guard up. What is Frank up to?

JEREMY

(beat)

Uh... yes. We have breakfast going. Uh... would you like some?

FRANK

No, no. I just stopped by to see how everyone was doing.

(to Frankie)

How's it hanging, bitch?

FRANKIE

Low and long, dude. How 'bout you?

FRANK

Cool, cool.

CONNIE

What are you doing here?

FRANK

Don't get uptight, Con. I just wanted to drop these flowers by and let you know that I'm going to try to be cool from now on. I realized that anger wasn't doing any of us any good. Those sensitivity classes are well worth the money. Is this a new pelican drawing?

CONNIE

It's a platypus.

FRANK

Of course. What was I thinking? It's really very good.

CONNIE

Frank, I hope you don't think I'm buying this charade.

JEREMY

Hold on, Con. Don't judge him too fast. When I went through what Frank is going through, I reached my time of epiphany too. Let's give him a chance.

FRANK

Thank you, Jeremy. You know, in time, I think you and I might just turn out to be really good friends.

Jeremy looks at his arms and holds them out to Frank.

JEREMY

Look at that, Frank. Goose bumps.

(Beat)

Can I have a hug?

Stunned, Frank looks at him and does not move.

JEREMY

Come on, big guy. One little hug.

After a beat, Frank finally hugs Jeremy against his true feelings. Still, he tries to make it look good. As the hug continues, Frank begins to squeeze the breath out of Jeremy.

JEREMY

Frank... Frank... That's a little too tight.

Connie watches and finally Frank releases his hold. Jeremy gasps for breath.

JEREMY

Boy, that's some grip you've got there, big guy.

FRANK

I learned it in sensitivity class.

CONNIE

Frank, I think you should go now. We are trying to pack.

FRANK

Pack?... Where are you going?

CONNIE

None of your business.

JEREMY

That's not fair, Connie. We're going upstate, Frank. An environmental tragedy. There's been a horrible oil spill on Lake Erie and we're going to volunteer for the clean up. Thousands of water fowl need our help.

FRANK

Water fowl?

JEREMY

Ducks, Frank,... ducks. The poor little things are covered in crude oil and they can't live without our help.

CONNIE

But that wouldn't interest you, would it?

There is a beat.

FRANK

On the contrary. It might be the perfect thing for me to do with you. It would be good for my therapy.

CONNIE

Oh please. Give me a break.

FRANK

Come on Connie. I'm making an effort.

JEREMY

Yeah Connie. If he wants to go, he can go. He's making an effort. Let's not stunt his growth.

After a beat, Connie turns and leaves the room angrily.

EXT. LAKE ERIE - CLEAN UP SITE - DAY

We DOLLY past a long assembly line of people scrubbing oil-covered ducks with a cleaning solution. These people are very efficient at the task at hand.

As we PULL BACK, we SEE all varieties of PEOPLE. They are the nose-ring, multi-colored hair, hippy crowd. At the end of the row are Jeremy and Connie, vigorously scrubbing small ducks.

Frank, in a denim workshirt, jeans and his old Cleveland Indians baseball cap stands behind the line, not quite sure what to do.

JEREMY

Come on, Frank. Jump in. It's not that difficult.

FRANK

No, you guys seem to have everything well in hand.

CONNIE

Typical.

FRANK

No, seriously. I just am not sure what to do, you know? I really do admire your work though.

Just then a FEMALE MIDGET (let's be PC and call her a "LITTLE PERSON") with a long net runs up to them. She comes up to about Frank's chest. She is frantic.

FEMALE LITTLE PERSON

I need help! There is a group of drowners right off the end of the pier. I'm too vertically challenged to reach them.

(to Frank)

Come help me! You look tall enough.

JEREMY

Go, Frank! Go! Those ducks are depending on you!

FRANK

No, I can't... I can't...

JEREMY

Frank, I can't do it! I'm up to my armpits in cleaning solution. I can't introduce this stuff to the water.

FRANK

But there's 15,000 gallons of crude oil out there. How can you make it worse?

CONNIE

For the love of Pete, I'll go! Frank, I can't believe you!

FRANK

(Embarrassed)

But you know I can't...

JEREMY

No, Connie. I'll do it!

Jeremy begins cleaning his arms. Frank begrudgingly gives in.

FRANK

No, no. I'll go, dammit!

FEMALE LITTLE PERSON

Follow me!

FRANK

(Under his breath)

Yeah, down the yellow brick road.

She takes off running. Frank looks at Jeremy and Connie a moment and then takes off after her.

JEREMY

That's the spirit, Frank.

EXT. END OF THE PIER -- CONTINUOUS

Frank and the little person run to the end of a very long pier. It juts out very far into the lake. Frank stops at the end with some trepidation. There are a couple of small oil-covered ducks fighting for their lives in the water. The short girl shoves the long net into his hand.

FEMALE LITTLE PERSON

There they are! Reach out there and snag them!

Frank is obviously nervous. He makes a couple of feeble attempts at throwing the net at them.

FEMALE LITTLE PERSON

No! You have to reach out there! Like this!

As the little person goes to show Frank her technique, she inadvertently knocks him off of the pier and into the water. It is deep and it immediately becomes obvious that Frank cannot swim.

FRANK

HELP! HELP! I CAN'T SWIM! HELP!

FEMALE LITTLE PERSON

HELP! MAN IN THE WATER! HE CAN'T SWIM!

Connie and Jeremy hear this.

CONNIE

Oh my God!

Connie takes off running down the pier. Jeremy follows.

We SEE Frank still struggling.

His INDIANS hat slowly sinks to the bottom of the lake.

By the time Jeremy and Connie reach the end of the pier, a crowd has gathered.

CONNIE

Do something! He can't swim!

Immediately, Jeremy dives into the water. Frank is still violently struggling. Jeremy swims past Frank and snatches up the two struggling ducks and safely gets them back to the pier. He then turns and swims to Frank. He adeptly puts him in a lifeguard type hold and swims him back to the pier.

Frank is dragged out of the water and onto the pier. He is clearly struggling for his breath. Jeremy climbs out and crosses to Frank.

JEREMY

Everybody back!

Jeremy begins administering mouth to mouth resuscitation on Frank. After a moment, Frank coughs and pushes Jeremy away.

CONNIE

Are you okay, Frank?!

FRANK

I'm fine! I'm fine! Just give me a moment, okay? Go take care of the ducks!

The rest of the crowd begins congratulating Jeremy on the rescue. They all begin to walk back to the assembly line to see if the two ducks are okay, patting Jeremy on the back the whole way. Connie stays with Frank who is lying on the pier.

CONNIE

Are you sure you're okay?

FRANK

I'll be fine.

CONNIE

Where's your lucky hat?

FRANK

At the bottom of the lake, I think. It's gone ... with my dignity.

CONNIE

(After a sympathetic
beat)

I'm sorry.

FRANK

(Humbled)

Oh well, I'm startin' to believe it wasn't all that lucky anyway.

(a beat)

Are the ducks okay?

CONNIE

I'm sure they'll be fine.

FRANK

At least my stupidity wasn't for nothin'.

CONNIE

You weren't stupid, Frank. You were noble.

(a beat)

I'm so sorry, Frank. I knew you couldn't swim. I was just caught up in the moment. All those people with a common goal.

FRANK

They're really not all that bad. I was actually kind of enjoying myself... Well, until Jeremy kissed me.

Connie laughs out loud.

FRANK

Boy, I haven't seen that in a while. You're so beautiful when you laugh.

Connie is touched but embarrassed by this.

FRANK

This is the first time we've been alone since this whole mess started. I'm looking into your eyes and you're actually looking back into mine. And nobody's around to mess it up.

CONNIE

Yes, Frank. But I've been sitting across the room from you for the last five years and you weren't looking at me. We used to have fun together. You used to make me laugh. But now all I do is pop open beers for you and stare at the T.V. while you switch the channels. And the few times we do go out anymore, you wind up saying something that embarrasses me.

FRANK

Maybe I can change that. I want to. But I'm just a guy from Cleveland. I grew up on cheeseburgers. I grew up staring at the tits and ass on my wall. I played football and tackled hard. Getting from there to tofu isn't easy, Connie. But I'll try, swear to God, I'll try. Maybe the counseling will help.

CONNIE

I hope it does Frank. I really do.

FRANK

(Sincere)

I'm going to work harder. You'll see. Hey maybe you could come with me to therapy.

Connie thinks for a long beat. It's not yes and it's not no. She smiles. There's hope.

CONNIE

I'd better get back.

Connie looks away, but doesn't move. -- She seems reluctant to end the moment.

FRANK

Please don't tell dad and Frankie that
Jeremy and I were sucking face.

Connie laughs again, gets up and walks back to join the duck cleaners, a spring in her step.

EXT. SAM'S HOUSE - FRONT PORCH

Frank is looking through the want ads of the paper. Sam comes out and hands him a beer.

SAM

Find anything?

FRANK

No. It's a pain in my ass. I've only done one thing my whole life pop and it either makes me over qualified or else I don't have the right degree.

SAM

Well, something will turn up.

FRANK

(Uncertain)

Yeah, I guess.

EXT. A RESTAURANT PATIO - DAY

It is a vegetarian place. Frank and Jeremy are sitting across from each other. They have Perriers and tofu salads in front of them. The patio is full.

Frank is picking very gingerly at his tofu salad.

JEREMY

(smiles)

How's your Tofu?

FRANK

Terrible. A bowl of phlegm.

JEREMY

(smiles)

Your system will need some time to adjust. Imagine ridding yourself of 40 years of poisons. You'll feel like hell for a while -- weak, sweaty, you'll always be looking for a toilet. It's good for you.

FRANK

(after a beat)

Sounds great.

(Beat)

So what did you want to talk to me about?

A long beat.

JEREMY

Well, I've got some good news for you Frank. Since we got back from our crusade, it has become obvious to me that Connie still cares about you. I've told her she should consider going to counseling with you.

Frank looks at him, stunned.

JEREMY

I told her... until the two of you work this out... I'm going to take myself out of the equation.

A very long beat as Frank looks at him -- Jeremy avoids his eyes.

FRANK

How does Connie feel about that?

JEREMY

She seems to be taking it very well. I'm getting out of your way Frank so you can try to work things out with her. I'm feeling like it's my duty to try to preserve the nuclear family.

FRANK

(Confused)

Thanks. I think.

JEREMY

You're my friend Frank. You're welcome.

INT. SAM'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Frank is in the kitchen eating a grilled cheese sandwich with strawberry jam on it. Something from his childhood days.

Frankie walks in. Frank is surprised to see him.

FRANKIE

Yo, dog!

FRANK

Hey, buddy! How the hell are you?!

FRANKIE

Grilled cheese and strawberry jam, huh?
Bitchin'.

FRANK

The best.

They start to hug but it is something they don't usually do,
so they settle for an awkward high five.

FRANK

What brings you around?

FRANKIE

I was just cruising, dude. I knew you were
back in the area code.

FRANK

So talk to me. How are things going?

FRANKIE

Cool. Cool.

There is an awkward beat as they look at each other.

FRANKIE

So how was the pussy duck cleaning?

FRANK

It was okay.

FRANKIE

Mom said you were down.

FRANK

I wasn't down. I was fine.

FRANKIE

No. Down's a good thing. Mom was impressed.

FRANK

Really?

FRANKIE

Yeah. A bitch about sucking face with
Jeremy though.

FRANK

(Embarrassed)

That was just, uh... mistake. You know, I...

FRANKIE

Chill, bitch. It's cool.

(Beat)

Jeremy split, you know?

FRANK

Yeah, he told me he was going to. How's your mom taking it?

FRANKIE

She was pretty down.

FRANK

She was happy?

FRANKIE

No, she was pissed. Especially when she found out he's been bunking down with Patti.

FRANK

What?

FRANKIE

Yeah, he and Patti are doing the wild thing.

FRANK

That son of a bitch.

FRANKIE

You know, this could be a good thing, dog. I think you ought to play the hook. Mom may be biting. I think she might be down with you after the duck shit.

FRANK

Now is that "down" a good or a bad thing?

FRANKIE

It's a good thing.

Frank gets up and crosses to the door.

FRANK

I'll see you later Frankie.

FRANKIE

Where are you going?

FRANK

I got something to take care of.

Frank angrily leaves the house.

INT. A TRAVEL AGENCY - DOWNTOWN CLEVELAND - DAY

There are travel posters everywhere. Patti sits at a desk. Jeremy is behind her massaging her neck. This is a big agency -- her desk is one of many. Many workers cross back and forth.

Frank comes in and goes up to Patti's desk.

JEREMY
(Excited to see his
buddy)
Hey Frank!

FRANK
(Pissed)
Don't hey Frank me.

JEREMY
Ooooh. You look uptight, big guy. Why
don't you take a seat over there and I'll
rub you next.

FRANK
(Ignoring him and
addressing Patti)
What the hell are you doin'? Can I ask
that, Patti?

PATTI
(cold)
I'm working. Which is more than I can say
for you.

FRANK
The guy's using you! Don't you see that?
He was using Connie and now he's using you!
He probably wants free trips!

JEREMY
That would be nice ... but the truth of the
matter is we love each other.

Jeremy grabs Patti's hand.

PATTI
That's right Frank. We love each other.

FRANK
Yeah, and Captain Kirk was in love with all
them aliens he was boinkin'. Beam down here
to reality people. You have no right to
call yourself a friend because you don't
have a clue what that word means.

PATTI
I don't have to listen to this.

FRANK
Yes you do. What about Connie? Did anybody
think about her?

JEREMY

Of course we did, Frank. But some things are too powerful to ignore.

FRANK

Yeah, like your dick.

JEREMY

Now Frank...

FRANK

Who the hell do you think you are? You slept with my wife... and then you sleep with her best friend...

JEREMY

Wait a minute! You slept with your wife... and then you slept with her best friend.

Several people hear this and look on. There's a shameful pause. Frank composes himself.

FRANK

You're right. I'm no better. But where does it stop? Who's next? What other families should we break up just so we don't feel so alone.

Embarrassed, for the first time, Jeremy is at a loss for words. Frank walks to the door and turns.

FRANK

Congratulations! I'm happy you two are together. You are perfect for each other.

Frank exits.

EXT. CLEVELAND ZOO - DAY

Frank is walking through the zoo. Many people are there. He spots Connie who is walking around with a broom and a stand-up dust pan. She is sweeping up cigarette butts. Frank crosses to her.

FRANK

So this is what you do?

Connie sees Frank and is slightly embarrassed.

CONNIE

Don't start. This is just one of many things I do around here.

FRANK

(Attempting a joke)

If it doesn't work out here you could try
Six Flags.

CONNIE

Frank, that's not funny. At least I'm
working. And this has given me the courage
to look for other opportunities I think I'll
like even more.

FRANK

Like what?

CONNIE

As a matter of fact, I've been talking to
someone from GreenPeace in Seattle. They
may have something for me.

FRANK

Seattle? You mean the one in Washington?

CONNIE

Yes.

FRANK

You're not moving to Seattle.

CONNIE

(Angry)

Don't tell me what I can and can't do Frank!

FRANK

I'm sorry, Con. I didn't mean it like that.
I just ... I didn't come here to fight.

CONNIE

Then why are you here?

They continue to walk and end up in front of a pond with
ducks and two swans. Frank sees a bench.

FRANK

Can we sit down?

After a moment, Connie begrudgingly sits and Frank joins her.

FRANK

You're right. That was insensitive. What
I said about your job. It's just
frustrating. I've been so used to taking
care of you and Frankie all these years and
now I can't even find work. I can't even
take care of myself. I don't feel like a
man anymore.

(more)

FRANK (cont'd)

That's what a man is supposed to do. Take care of his family. It seems like everyday I fail at something new.

CONNIE

Things aren't the same as when you were Frankie's age. You have to move with the times Frank.

FRANK

Yeah but when did they come around and pass me?

There is a beat.

FRANK

I'm proud of you for going out and finding something that you love doing.

Connie doesn't answer.

FRANK

You do love it, don't you?

CONNIE

Well, I do and I don't. It's not the way I pictured it when I was home with you. To tell the truth, this job isn't quite what I thought it would be. I mean, I deal with a lot of crap here. Literally...

(Not convincingly)

But I'm proud of me too for tackling it.

FRANK

You should be.

They sit in silence for a moment.

FRANK

Anyway, the fact is, I just wanted to come by and say I'm sorry to hear about you and Jeremy. It pissed me off when I heard he dumped you.

CONNIE

That asshole. I left him because I realized I need time to myself. And I have to say I don't mind being alone one bit.

FRANK

Then you're doing better than I am. I hate being alone.

Connie says nothing. They sit in silence for a moment. Frank looks back and notices the swans. Frank points to the two swans.

FRANK

Did you know that swans mate for life? If one dies the other mate will never choose another. In fact, it's been said that the living mate will often die soon after of a broken heart.

CONNIE

(Impressed)

I didn't know that.

FRANK

Well, I've been watching the Discovery Channel.

She smiles. They sit in silence for a moment.

FRANK

(Very difficult)

You know, Jeremy is an asshole, but he said you might consider going to counseling with me. Is that a lie too?

A long beat.

CONNIE

To be honest Frank, I see the effort you've been making and it has made me think about things. I realize I've been pretty pig-headed.

FRANK

No, Con.

CONNIE

Yes, I have. I don't regret what has happened, or the choices I've made. It's made me stronger. But I do still have feelings for you. And I know we need to listen to each other regardless of where things may lead.

FRANK

I agree.

CONNIE

No guarantees Frank, but I'll go with you to the therapist.

Frank smiles.

CONNIE

After all, we owe it to the swans.

They both smile.

INT. A CLEVELAND INDIANS BAR - NIGHT

The place is filled with Cleveland Indians memorabilia. It is down in the Flats of the city -- we see the Cuyahoga River through the windows, big ore boats plodding by.

Frank, Sam and Rick are sitting having beers at a table in the bar. Frank is wearing a Save The Whales T-shirt.

RICK

I don't know. This counseling crap seems bogus to me.

SAM

That's just what I told him. I never went to counseling and look at me. I'm happy as a Chinaman in a Swedish whorehouse.

Just then, GLORIA, a well built sexy 50 year old waitress walks by them. Sam pinches her butt and checks her out.

SAM

Hey sexy. What are you doing after your shift? I'm as free as a Korean mail order bride.

She laughs like a school girl.

GLORIA

Sam, you kill me.

She walks away sexily.

SAM

Damn, I'll bet she's something in the sack. Well, I'd love to continue but I think she's making sure nature calls me.

Sam gets up and leaves Frank and Rick there.

FRANK

He hasn't changed in 70 years.

RICK

I'd say he doesn't want to.

FRANK

But he's never really been happy, and I'm not gonna end up like that.

RICK

Frank, aren't you going a little too far?
I mean, a Save The Whales shirt? That's
kind of pussyfied, ain't it? Hell, you
ain't even wearing your Indians hat.

FRANK

I lost it.

RICK

What?! We'll never win the pennant now.
What the hell happened?

FRANK

It sunk to the bottom of the lake while I
was trying to save a duck.

RICK

Who are you and what have you done with
Frank?

FRANK

Look, I was doing it for Connie, okay?

RICK

Damn, who's wearing the pants here?

FRANK

It's what she really cares about and if
it'll help me get her back, I have to give
it a try.

RICK

Well, good luck. But if this shit don't
work and she realizes she needs a real man,
let me know.

They share a slight smile with each other.

FRANK

I'm all she needs and you're a real asshole,
you know it?

They laugh and drink their beers. Frank is obviously in a
hopeful mood.

INT. DR. JOHNSON'S OFFICE - THE NEXT DAY

Frank and Connie are seated across the desk from Dr. Johnson.
He is seated and is cracking walnuts and eating them
throughout the scene.

JOHNSON

So, Connie. You are the beautiful woman that this man is presently married to. I must say I commend you for your open-mindedness and bravery at coming here today. Especially considering Frank's past trend of aggression.

CONNIE

Thank you, doctor.

FRANK

I've been trying to get a grip on...

Dr. Johnson rings the fight bell on his desk, cutting Frank off mid-sentence. There is a beat as Frank and Connie look at each other.

FRANK

What the hell was that for?

JOHNSON

I am speaking to Connie now Frank.

FRANK

But I just said...

Dr. Johnson hits the bell again. Frank stops, begins to say something else but then composes himself and sits quietly. He is slightly irritated but is not going to let it affect him in front of Connie.

JOHNSON

Okay, why don't you begin Connie? How would you assess your relationship with Frank?

CONNIE

(a beat)

Well... for quite a while now, I've been feeling under appreciated.

FRANK

And I've been trying to make some changes to fix that.

CONNIE

I know you have and that's why I'm here.

FRANK

Thank you, Con.

CONNIE

You're welcome, Frank.

JOHNSON

Well, that was very civil, but let's talk about the past. Connie, you were saying?

CONNIE

I was saying that, for the last few years, I have felt like I didn't exist. Like Frank has had control of me. Like I was a prisoner in my own house.

FRANK

A prisoner? It was a damn nice cell. Wall to wall carpeting, Ralph Lauren pillows. Remember what those cost? I said "fine".

CONNIE

You did not say "fine", you finally said "okay".

FRANK

You got them, didn't you?

CONNIE

I got them for us.

FRANK

I didn't want 'em!

CONNIE

See? See? See? That's what I'm saying.

FRANK

Oh for Christ's sake. What? See what?

Dr. Johnson hits the bell again. They stop. Both frustrated.

JOHNSON

Okay, back to your corners.

FRANK

I just don't get it.

JOHNSON

Well, I see it. Clearly.

FRANK

Oh, you would!

Dr. Johnson hits the bell. Frank is obviously getting annoyed with it.

JOHNSON

That's a warning Frank.

CONNIE

(after a long beat)

Look Frank, I'm not saying we didn't have some good times in fourteen years, but the last few have been hell. Most of that time I felt frustrated and exploited and oppressed.

FRANK

Because of pillows?

CONNIE

And then you go out and sleep with my best friend.

JOHNSON

Dear God, man!

FRANK

And I'll regret it forever but it didn't mean anything. It was stupid.

CONNIE

You're damn right, but that doesn't make it easier for me. How was I supposed to deal with that?

FRANK

Not by falling for that little limp dick Jeremy.

CONNIE

I didn't fall for him, Frank. We were friends. We liked to do things together. He let me live life so I didn't just sit around and watch the second hand tick by. And by the way, he doesn't have a limp dick.

FRANK

Now that hurts.

(To Johnson)

Ring the bell, will you.

JOHNSON

He's right. That was a low blow.

Johnson rings the bell.

CONNIE

Sorry. But leaving you has been an empowering experience. I feel stronger, Frank. Stronger than I've felt in my whole life.

FRANK

Well as long as you're happy I guess that's all that really matters.

CONNIE

Do you realize how many times you told me about your planes? I don't know anything about planes, but I would listen! Do you realize how many times you forced me to watch the Indians with you?

FRANK

Forced you? You love the Indians, you got your own T-shirt, your cap --

CONNIE

(hard)

You got me the T-shirt, you got me the cap!

FRANK

You wore 'em.

CONNIE

Because it made you happy.

(Beat)

Let me ask you something, Frank. How many ASPCA meetings did you come to with me?

He looks away, says nothing.

CONNIE

How many?

FRANK

(shamed)

Zip.

CONNIE

Why, Frank? You know how much the protection of animals means to me.

FRANK

I just don't get the big deal about all of them silly animal causes of yours.

CONNIE

It's my passion Frank. And passion is a remedy for boredom.

JOHNSON

Oooh. That's good. Let me write that down.

FRANK

Oh, so I'm boring. I'm trying to better myself as a person and you'd rather put your energy into things like the lemmings. Why should you care about lemmings? Hell, when things get tough for them they kill themselves by jumping off a cliff. And face it. That's not my kind of crowd.

CONNIE

They're nice people Frank.

FRANK

Like who? Like that midget bitch who tried to drown me?

CONNIE

Midget bitch?!!!

Connie reaches over and rings the bell.

FRANK

I'm sorry, the midget thing just slipped out.

CONNIE

It's in your blood, Frank. You can't stop yourself. I knew you were putting on a little act for me.

FRANK

What? I wasn't -

CONNIE

And to think I almost fell for it. God, you know how you hate it when I fake orgasms? Well, that's how I feel right now. Like a charity fuck.

Dr. Johnson starts to frantically sound the bell.

FRANK

Now wait a second. I wasn't putting on an act.

JOHNSON

Whoa. Round over. And a huge flurry at the end.

FRANK

Damn, I wish you'd stick that bell up your fat psycho-babbling ass. Where'd you get your degree? The Don King School of Bullshit?

JOHNSON

I should take a point away. That was
uncalled for.

CONNIE

Not for Frank. It's obvious he can't
change. This has been a waste of my time.
I'm going now.

JOHNSON

I think you're right Connie. I don't think
he has the will it takes to change.

FRANK

Hey, I'm in the room, asshole.

JOHNSON

I see no possible outcome to this
relationship but a divorce. Both of you
need to cut your losses. In fact, I'd take
it a step further Connie and go for a
complete annulment. If you feel like you
haven't existed for the last few years then
erase them from your past.

CONNIE

I'll consider it. Thank you for your time
Dr. Johnson.

Connie looks at him a long uncertain beat and starts to exit.

FRANK

Con, wait. Where are you going?

CONNIE

Home. I never should have agreed to this in
the first place.

FRANK

Wait a minute. Let's talk about this.

CONNIE

I've said everything that I have to say.

Connie exits.

FRANK

But what about the swans?

Frank sits there for a beat.

FRANK

Well, thank you Sigmund Fuckhead. That was
my last chance. I just watched her walk out
of my life, and you were supposed to help
us, not drive her over the edge.

JOHNSON

I was trying to, but you're too far gone.

FRANK

Don't give me that crap. I haven't understood a fucking word you've said to me since the first day I came here! Next thing you'll tell me I need to go run naked in the woods beating a drum, howling at the moon with a bunch of other flakes you call patients! You and your male pattern baldness shit. Well, here's what I say to that!

Frank hits Dr. Johnson's bell repeatedly.

FRANK

Here's to the pubic hair in my eyes!

(hits the bell)

To softening my dick!

(hits the bell)

To figurative Rogaine!

(hits the bell)

And to FUCKING TOFU!!!

Frank rings the bell repeatedly and the SOUND grows into a LOUD ROAR.

FRANK

(SCREAMS)

You can all KISS MY ASS!!!!!!

Frank walks out and SLAMS the door.

INT. RUSS VAIL'S OFFICE - LATER

BAM!!! The door flies open and Frank quickly and angrily enters Russ Vail's office. He crosses immediately to his ex-boss' desk. Russ is taken aback.

RUSS VAIL

What the hell!?

FRANK

I'm doing the talking in this office for the first and last time! I thought you and me had a good relationship Russ, but you stabbed me in the back because you turn out to be like all of the other asshole's in this world. Full of grade-A prime choice SHIT! All of you are walking around afraid to say what's on your mind anymore 'cause you live in fear of offending somebody. Jesus Christ!

(more)

FRANK (cont'd)

What happened to the Harry Truman's of this world who will fight for something even if it's not the so-called mainstream! How do you stand up straight with no backbone?

RUSS VAIL

Frank, calm down.

FRANK

Shut up. I'm not finished. You know me Russ. I'm the kind of guy who likes to settle things over a handshake and a beer, but I guess people can't do that anymore. So, fair warning. Instead of going postal, I've decided I'm going to have to play your game. I'm going to get me an excellent Jewish lawyer, not that his religion has anything to do with it, and he's going to take your "PC" ass to the Chinese cleaners for wrongful termination. Because Miguel was eating Fritos and there is a pretty little flight attendant in your wonderful organization who is named Gay. So, I'll see you in court. After you've cleaned the shit out of your drawers, take that and cram it up your ass!

Frank turns and walks out, slamming the door behind him. Russ sits there worried and shocked.

INT. BRAD'S OFFICE - LATER

BAM!!! Frank bursts through the door to Brad's office. He crosses to Brad's desk. Brad is taken aback.

BRAD

What the hell?!

FRANK

Don't get up! This won't take long! I've come here to say you're fired. You did nothing but make a bad situation worse. But you're a lawyer, you get paid to fuck things up.

BRAD

Frank, I have...

FRANK

You get paid to confuse people and to drag things out so your meter keeps running up the bill.

BRAD

Frank, listen...

FRANK

No, you listen. This world is fucked up because of guys like you! It's a crying shame when a man and woman can't sit down and talk to each other without some jerk-off watching over them to tell them what they're really saying.

BRAD

Frank, Connie is going through with the divorce.

Frank stops for a beat.

FRANK

Why wouldn't she? I'm sure there's a whole team of yahoos advising her on her choices in life.

BRAD

Frank, I think you should consider your options.

FRANK

Options? I don't have any options. I've tried it everyone else's way and look where it got me. I should have just stuck with my own gut from the beginning. If she wants the divorce she can have it. I'm worn down as thin as the ass of a bus driver's pants.

BRAD

But I think we can come out of this pretty well financially. I think I can stick it to her.

FRANK

I don't want to stick it to her. I want her, but that's not going to happen so you can kiss my ass good-bye as a client. I can lift a pen and sign my own name on the papers.

Frank turns and starts to leave. He stops at the door and turns.

FRANK

Are you, by any chance, Jewish?

BRAD

No.

FRANK
Then you're still fired.

INT. FRANK'S TRUCK - LATE

Frank is driving and he is obviously angry and distracted. He swerves and almost hits a female driver.

FRANK
(Yelling)
Dammit! Stay in your own lane bitch!!!

After a moment, he realizes that he was in the wrong and gets mad at himself for blowing up like his father would. He slams his hands on the steering wheel.

INT. SAM'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - LATER

Frank wearily enters to find Frankie sitting at the kitchen table eating a grilled cheese sandwich with strawberry jam on it.

FRANK
I remember the first time Grandpa made me one of those grilled cheese and strawberry jams. I thought he was nuts but I've been eating them ever since.

FRANKIE
I remember the first time you made me one too. They're the best.

FRANK
You'll make one for your son someday.

FRANKIE
Whoa, don't be gross, dude.

FRANK
There are times when I look at you and see myself. Like when you're taking a nap on the couch and you cross your legs and you have that knee pillow there and you put your left arm over your eyes just like me. But it scares the hell out of me that you're gonna do the dumb things I've done. I'm making the same mistakes as your grandpa and I don't know why.

FRANKIE
Genetics suck, huh?

FRANK
(a beat)
Your mom is going through with the divorce.

FRANKIE
I know. I came over cause I wanted to make sure you were smooth. Get rid of all the knives and shit.

FRANK
Thanks, buddy.

FRANKIE
It's cool. I heard mom talking to her lawyer.

FRANK
That frizzy haired bitch.
(catching himself)
See? I did it again.

FRANKIE
They were talking about some annulment thing.

FRANK
Unbelievable. Listen Frankie, no matter what happens I love you and I want you to know that. And I know that your mom loves you too. And we'll always be there for you.

FRANKIE
I know.

Frank hugs his son. After a moment Frankie hugs him back for dear life. They release each other a bit awkward in the moment.

FRANKIE
You still love mom don't you?

FRANK
It may be crazy but I do. I probably always will.

FRANKIE
I got to motor, dude.

FRANK
Where are you going?

FRANKIE
I just got some shit I got to take care of.
Later.

Frankie is out the door. Frank crosses and watches him go.

INT. ZOO - BREAK ROOM - EVENING

Frankie enters to find his mom sitting at the table. It appears that she is a little bit sad and lost in thought. She sees him. She's picking at a Chinese Chicken salad.

CONNIE

Hey, Frankie.

FRANKIE

Hey, mom.

(there is a beat)

Chinese chicken salad, huh? Healthy.

CONNIE

Yeah. Are you hungry? Want some?

FRANKIE

That stuff makes me want to Ralph. I just had a grilled cheese at grandpa's.

CONNIE

(Longingly)

With strawberry jam?

FRANKIE

Duh.

CONNIE

So, did you see your father?

FRANKIE

Yeah. He said if you're gonna get the divorce, he ain't gonna stop you. He just wants us all to get along. That Rodney King shit, you know?

CONNIE

Watch your mouth.

FRANKIE

You sound just like him.

There is a beat.

FRANKIE

You know mom, if you do that annulment thing, then it's like you and pop never were married. Am I right?

CONNIE

Technically, yes.

FRANKIE

Then what about me? Am I some kind of bastard child?

CONNIE
(Taken back)

No.

Connie is affected by this.

CONNIE
Oh Frankie, you know that's not true.
You're the most important thing in my life.
Unfortunately, stuff like this just happens.

FRANKIE
But I don't know why it has to. Look, dad
is just dad. Sure, sometimes he can be a
real doink but I think he's trying to be
cool to you. I mean, he went to clean ducks
didn't he? Think about how hard that must
have been for a guy like him.

CONNIE
But he did it for the wrong reasons.

FRANKIE
He did it because he loves you and me. He
told me that. Is that a bad reason?

Connie is teary-eyed. She looks away.

FRANKIE
Mom, dad has always said that the Jessup's
never quit. Well, until you get a divorce
and change that name, you're still a Jessup.

ANGLE on Connie.

INT. SAM HOUSE - KITCHEN - NEXT MORNING

Frank is in the kitchen fixing himself some eggs. He takes
them out of the frying pan and puts them on a plate. Just
then there is a knock at the door. It is Connie. She enters.

CONNIE
Mind if I come in?

FRANK
It depends on what you want. You didn't
come to stick the knife in deeper did you.

CONNIE
Frank, I can understand you're angry but I
came to... I just wanted... Oh hell, this is
for you.

Connie hands Frank a bag.

CONNIE

It's a peace offering.

Frank pulls out a new baseball cap. It has an Indian on it but the problem is that it is not a Cleveland Indian but, instead, it is an Atlanta Brave.

FRANK

What the hell is this?

CONNIE

I felt responsible for you losing your lucky hat. I know how much it meant to you. I thought you might like a new one. It's an Indian hat.

FRANK

That's not an Indian hat. It's an Atlanta Brave hat!

CONNIE

Well, how am I supposed to know? It has an Indian on it.

FRANK

But not a Cleveland Indian! There's a big difference between a Cleveland Indian and an Atlanta Brave! How dare you stereotype the Native Americans.

CONNIE

It was a simple mistake.

FRANK

There's no room in this world for mistakes. Don't you see? You bought me an Atlanta Braves hat. A team I hate with a burning passion. After all these years I would think you'd know how important the Indians are to me. Hell, I'm the biggest Cleveland Indian fan on earth outside of pop and Drew Carey. Don't you know that? Don't you listen to me?

CONNIE

Yes, I listen to you.

FRANK

Then what the hell happened? I learned about your fucking ducks. How come you haven't learned about my Indians after all these years?

CONNIE

I just...

FRANK

You just what? Made a mistake? I thought I'm the one who makes all the mistakes. I'm the racist, I'm the prison warden. Hell, I've even been told that I'm an asshole. Am I leaving anything out?!

CONNIE

Give me the hat. I'll take it back.

FRANK

It ain't about the hat. It's about the fact that I woke up one morning, said I love you going out the door, went to work and came home to find my world turned upside down. And since that damn moment, you and all these freaks that have invaded my life have treated me like a doormat. I just don't care anymore. You want your divorce or annulment or whatever, you got it. You want to move to Seattle, go. You win. 'Cause there ain't nothing I can do about it.

CONNIE

(Teary eyed)

That's not why I came over Frank. Once again you've missed the boat.

She exits.

Frank looks after her. After a beat, he slams the Braves cap on the kitchen counter.

FRANK

SHIT!

Frank paces back and forth. Just then, Sam enters.

SAM

Was that Connie I just saw pulling out of here?

FRANK

Yeah, pop.

SAM

What the hell did she want?

FRANK

I don't really know. I did all the yelling. How stupid.

Sam sees the Braves hat on the counter.

SAM

Jesus Christ! What is that piece of crap doing in my house?

FRANK

Connie gave it to me. She said it was a peace offering.

SAM

Typical woman. They never get it.

FRANK

(Regretfully)

Pop, I think I just put the final nail in the coffin with Connie.

SAM

Oh hell, once you get over the hump, divorce ain't so bad. Look at me. I've done it four times and I'm as happy as a pig in shit. I tell you what. I'll get us reservations for tonight. I'm gonna take you out for a big steak dinner.

FRANK

Pop, I don't really feel...

SAM

I won't take no for an answer. It'll do you some good to get out and get your mind off of your problems. 8:00 sharp. Be ready.

Sam exits.

SAM

(as he goes; referring
to the cap)

I want that damn thing out of my house.

Frank looks at his plate of eggs, picks them up and dumps them in the garbage.

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Frank and Sam are all dressed up and sitting at their table.

FRANK

Dad, you really didn't have to do this.

SAM

Don't be silly. I wanted to do it.

The WAITER approaches.

WAITER

Would you care for anything to drink or do you want to wait for the rest of your party.

FRANK

(Warily)

Party? What party?

SAM

We'll take two buds.

The waiter leaves to get the drinks.

FRANK

Dad, what rest of the party?

SAM

Oh, it's no big deal. You know Gloria? That little sweet cheeks that I've been seeing from the bar ... well, she and I have a little hotty that we want you to meet.

FRANK

(Gritting his teeth)

Dad -

SAM

And here they are now.

We see Gloria with a stunningly gorgeous 26 year old girl named KATIE approaching the table.

Sam gets up.

SAM

(Fatherly to Frank)

Get your ass up and show some fuckin' manners.

(To the girls)

Hi. Frank you know Gloria.

(They say hi)

And this is Katie.

They exchange hello's and then Frank looks at his father as if he could kill him.

DISSOLVE TO:

LATER IN THE EVENING

The dishes are cleared from the table. Frank looks miserable.

KATIE

I almost was a cheerleader for the Browns.

FRANK

(Interested)

Really? So, you like sports?

KATIE

No.

FRANK

(Confused beat)

Then why would you want to be a cheerleader?

KATIE

I don't know.

It's a long uncomfortable beat. No one says anything. It's obviously not going good.

FRANK

So, what do you do?

KATIE

I work at T.G.I. Fridays.

FRANK

As a waitress?

KATIE

No. I wanted to be, but they got like, all them fancy drinks that you have to memorize and I couldn't pass the test so I'm a hostess. But my friends are all like, you should be a model. And I'm like, I can't be a model. And they're like, yes you can. And I'm like, no I can't.

SAM

Hell, I think you could be. What do you think Frank?

FRANK

(Facetious)

Yeah. She's like ... unbelievable.

KATIE

(Tosses her hair)

Thank you.

(To Gloria)

Mom, do you want to go with me to the powder room?

GLORIA

Sure, honey. Will you excuse us?

The girls get up and leave.

FRANK

(In shock)

Mom?! Did she say mom?

SAM

That's right.

FRANK

Dad, you are a father. Gloria is a mother. You're not dog breeders. We are your kids for Christ sakes.

SAM

And we want our kids to be happy, what's wrong with that?

FRANK

Think about it. If you get married to that woman, and God knows there's a good chance of that, I'd be fucking my sister.

SAM

Boy, if you want to make it in this world you gotta adjust your way of thinking. You know, at times you're down right embarrassing to me. It's like ... we're nothing alike.

FRANK

(Smiles. Long beat)

You know dad ... believe it or not ... that might be the nicest thing I've heard in a long time.

Frank politely gets up.

SAM

Wait a minute. Where the hell are you going? We haven't had dessert yet.

FRANK

I think I'll pass. In my experience, I've come to learn that the dessert tray always looks good, but if you go for it, you'll always feel bad the next morning.

INT. GROCERY STORE - DAY

Connie is pushing a cart through the fresh fruit section. Frankie is tagging along. She stops and looks at a cantaloupe. A HANDSOME YOUNG MAN walks up to her. He starts hitting on her.

YOUNG MAN

Do you know anything about melons? I can't ever seem to get a good one.

CONNIE

You thump them like this.

She flicks it with her finger and it makes a sound.

CONNIE

Hear that? That means this one is fresh. Here take it.

YOUNG MAN

Thanks.

The man stands there and smiles at Connie.

CONNIE

You're welcome.

(After a moment)

Well, have a nice night.

Connie pushes her cart away.

YOUNG MAN

You too.

Frankie, who has seen this, catches up to Connie.

FRANKIE

Man, that dude was totally hitting on you.

CONNIE

He was not.

FRANKIE

Did you give him your number?

CONNIE

Of course not.

(A beat)

You think he was really hitting on me?

FRANKIE

Heck yeah. He may as well have had his tongue hangin' out.

Connie laughs.

FRANKIE

Man, it's weird to think your mom and dad may both be dating.

Connie stops.

CONNIE

What are you talking about?

FRANKIE

Ooops. Sorry mom. I didn't mean nothing.

CONNIE

Is your father dating someone?

FRANKIE

He didn't want to go. He was just set up with some pretty blonde -

(Catching himself)

I'm just makin' this worse, ain't I? Sorry. I shouldn't have said anything.

CONNIE

(Trying to cover her jealousy)

It's okay.

(A beat)

You know Frankie, I may take that job with GreenPeace. How do you feel about that?

FRANKIE

It would kind of suck. I mean, I've got my crew here. I don't want to have to form a new posse.

CONNIE

But you'd get to come back a lot.

FRANKIE

Yeah, but it's not the same as being here 24-7.

(A beat)

With both you and dad.

Frankie walks ahead and Connie watches him in thought.

INT. SAM'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Frank and Sam are sitting in the living room drinking a couple of beers and watching an afternoon baseball game. Frankie walks in carrying a couple of suitcases and a backpack.

FRANK

Hey Frankie.

SAM

What the hell?

FRANKIE

Looks like I'm gonna be bunkin' down with you guys for awhile.

FRANK

What's going on?

SAM

This'll be great. Just us guys batching it. It'll be like the Playboy Mansion.

FRANK

Is something wrong with your mom?

FRANKIE

No she's fine but she's going away for awhile. She dropped me off and headed for the airport.

FRANK

So she's going to take the job?

(Getting angry)

And just when did she plan on telling me about this?

FRANKIE

I don't think she did. She said she didn't want you to have the chance to talk her out of it. Man, what did you say to her?

FRANK

I got mad. I shouldn't have.

SAM

She brought a damn Braves hat in here.

FRANKIE

I think she just came over to try to tell you she's still got a fire in the bush for you.

FRANK

She said that?

FRANKIE

Well, not in those words but I know what I'm talking about. I may be a kid but I ain't dumb. Like when I told her about you having a date she sort of got all jealous like.

FRANK

You told her that?

FRANKIE

Sorry dog, it just slipped out on account of this dude was hitting on her.

FRANK

What "dude"? Who the hell was he?

FRANKIE

Just some cat in the grocery store. Don't worry, she blew him off...

FRANK

Thank God.

FRANKIE

See, you're getting jealous too.

FRANK

Maybe I am.

FRANKIE

You got to talk to her dad. Come on. Please. One more time. I don't want to be no bastard child going back and forth between here and Seattle Washington.

Frank looks at himself in a mirror hanging on the wall. He is torn. In the reflection, Frankie is on one side of him and Sam is on the other. Three generations of Jessup men.

After a long beat.

SAM

Frank, I'm 70 years old. I ain't gonna change. But you ... If you really still love her then go get her.

Frank is shocked by this. It is an extraordinary statement for Sam.

FRANK

I do love her but I ain't sure what she'll do.

SAM

Go find out son. You're a Jessup, and I didn't raise no quitter.

After a beat, Frank turns and hugs his father. It shocks Sam but he eventually hugs him back.

Frank crosses into the kitchen and re-enters wearing the Atlanta Braves cap that Connie gave him.

SAM

Aw hell. Do you have to wear that thing?

FRANK

Yes I do, pop. It covers my male pattern baldness.

Frank is out the front door. Sam puts his arm around Frankie's shoulder and they both proudly watch him go.

INT. AIRPORT - LATE

Frank is running through the very crowded airport, dodging in and out of the large crowd of people. He stops and looks at the monitors to check for the flight to Seattle.

He continues running to the gate only to see the jet pulling away. He is depressed but he thinks for a moment and refuses to give up. He exits.

INT. HANGAR - IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING

Frank walks into his old place of work. He is greeted by several of his old co-workers. Russ Vail enters and catches him.

RUSS VAIL

Frank, hold up. I heard you were here. I've been talking to the higher ups and we've decided to give you another chance.

FRANK

Let me think about it. I'll need a few days. I'm gonna be out of town.

RUSS VAIL

Take whatever time you want.

Frank walks away and runs into Miguel.

MIGUEL

Hey Frank. I heard what he said. I really hope you do come back.

FRANK

Thanks Amigo.

MIGUEL

No hard feelings, right? I had nothing to do with that crap.

FRANK

I know, pal. Have you seen Rick?

MIGUEL

Yeah, he's down tweaking that DC-10.

Frank continues walking with purpose through the hangar until he reaches Rick, who is hard at work.

FRANK

Rick. Rick.

RICK

What the hell is it? Can't you see I'm busy?

FRANK

I need a favor, buddy.

Rick jumps down and sees that it is Frank.

RICK

Frank, I'm sorry. I didn't know it was you.
What's up?

FRANK

I need one of your free passes. I need to
get on a plane to Seattle ASAP.

RICK

I don't know. Those are for friends and
family.

FRANK

Stop messing around Rick. I need it
yesterday.

RICK

God Frank, what do you need it for? Where's
the fire?

FRANK

Connie's on her way to Seattle. She may
take a job there. I've got to get there.

RICK

Jeez, are you gonna try to talk her out of
it?

FRANK

I don't know what the hell I'm gonna do but
I know I just have to go. Can you help me?

RICK

For that? No problem.

FRANK

Thanks buddy.

RICK

No problem. And Frank?... Good luck friend.

FRANK

I'll probably need it.

Frank and Rick smile at each other.

INT. JET PLANE - LATE

Frank is getting on the airplane. As he boards he passes a pretty young FLIGHT ATTENDANT who is greeting the passengers. He notices her name tag. It reads... GAY. He smiles.

FRANK
So, you're Gay?

GAY
Yes sir. And welcome aboard.

EXT. AIRPORT - LATE

We see the jet take off from the Cleveland runway.

INT. JET PLANE - LATE

We see Frank sitting in his seat, looking out the window. It is obvious that he is wondering what the hell he is going to do.

INT. SEATTLE AIRPORT - LATE

Frank is at a pay phone rifling through the yellow pages. He finds the address for GreenPeace and writes it down on his hand.

EXT. GREENPEACE OFFICE - LATE

A cab pulls up in front of the office building. Frank gets out of the cab and jogs to the door. He tries to open it but it is locked. He leans against the door frustrated. After a moment, he looks at the sign that tells the business hours and writes them on his hand. They open at 10:00 A.M.

EXT. STREETS OF SEATTLE - NIGHT

Frank is walking in the rain. He is not quite sure what to do. He has to wait until the office opens tomorrow morning.

INT. HOTEL - NIGHT

We SEE an OVERHEAD SHOT of Frank lying in a hotel bed awake.

EXT. GREENPEACE OFFICE - THE NEXT MORNING

Frank is standing with his back to the wall, his arms folded and his eyes closed. He is waiting for the office to open.

A MAN appears and begins unlocking the doors. He is a very nondescript normal looking guy.

FRANK

Finally!

MAN

Whoa. Calm down, dude. What can I do for you?

FRANK

I need to talk to your boss.

MAN

How about some cappuccino?

FRANK

Now! I need to talk to him now!

MAN

Fine. Fine. But she is a she.

FRANK

That's fine. I need to talk to... her.

Frank follows the man inside.

INT. GREENPEACE OFFICE - LATE

Frank is sitting in the office with a very MASCULINE LESBIAN SUPERVISOR.

SUPERVISOR

So would you like a muffin, Frank?

FRANK

No, I just want to know where Connie is right now.

SUPERVISOR

Well, that's difficult. We are not authorized to give out that information.

FRANK

Quite frankly, I don't give a royal shit what is authorized and what ain't. I'll be as nice as I can be, but I need to find her.

SUPERVISOR

It's very complicated, sir.

FRANK

Have you ever been in love? I mean, truly in love?

(more)

FRANK (cont'd)

To the point that nothing else in the world matters? You'd give away your job and your house and your life and you'd still find out that you loved that person?

SUPERVISOR

I feel as though I'm in a relationship like that right now.

FRANK

Then she's a very lucky woman you got.

The woman looks at him for a beat and then smiles.

SUPERVISOR

She's out on one of our boats today. They are going out to protest against and create a hindrance to a Japanese whaling ship. They left at 6:00 A.M.

FRANK

You mean out in the ocean?

SUPERVISOR

I don't know where else you'd find a whale.

FRANK

Just what in the hell are they doing out there?

SUPERVISOR

They need to divert the ship away from the whales in order to save their lives. The only way to do it is to get between the ship and the whales.

FRANK

Dear God! Isn't that dangerous?

SUPERVISOR

It can be.

It is obvious Frank is torn between his fear of the water and his need to find Connie. A true dilemma.

EXT. OCEAN - GREENPEACE BOAT - DAY

Connie is on the boat with a LARGE GROUP of PROTESTERS. The Japanese whaling ship, a mammoth of a vessel, is off in the distance.

A herd of whales are swimming close by.

CONNIE

Why aren't we getting between the whales and the ship?

PROTESTER

Because it's too dangerous.

CONNIE

But what about the whales?

PROTESTER

They probably don't stand much of a chance but at least we'll get great T.V. coverage on this.

Connie looks at the protester, shocked.

EXT. HARBOR - LATE

Frank is talking to a CRUSTY OLD BOAT CAPTAIN. He hands him a wad of cash. We SEE the captain pointing out to sea, giving Frank directions.

EXT. GREENPEACE BOAT - CONTINUOUS

Back on the boat, Connie has a look of concern on her face.

CONNIE

Oh my God! They're getting awfully close to the herd. Can't we do something?!

We SEE the Japanese whaling ship closing in on the herd of whales, peacefully swimming along.

PROTESTER (O.S.)

We've made our stand just being here. But that ship is just more than we can handle.

CONNIE

It's so wrong. I thought that was why we came out here.

PROTESTER

In a way it is. We're getting great coverage. People will know we care.

CONNIE

We?... So it's more about you than those poor animals.

Connie looks awakened yet disgusted. The protester looks offended.

PROTESTER

Hey, we did what we could do.

Just then, off in the distance, a small fishing boat comes driving onto the scene. It is traveling straight towards the whaling ship.

CONNIE

What the hell is that?

PROTESTER

Dear God. He's crazy. He'll get killed.

EXT. FISHING BOAT - CONTINUOUS

Frank is piloting the fishing boat. He is traveling directly between the whaling ship and the herd of swimming whales. It is obvious that he is scared to death but he is a man with a purpose.

EXT. OCEAN - CONTINUOUS

From Connie's P.O.V., we SEE Frank's boat pull in front of the whaling ship. LOUD HORNS start going off but Frank is relentless. He begins steering the boat back and forth, keeping himself between the whales and the ship.

EXT. GREENPEACE BOAT - CONTINUOUS

CONNIE

Oh my God! It's Frank! No! He'll be killed! He can't even swim!

We SEE Frank's boat getting perilously close to the ship.

SEVERAL SHOTS show the danger of Frank's situation. It is obvious that his boat could be overrun at any moment.

This is INTERCUT with SHOTS of Frank being tossed about. He is not wearing a life jacket. His face is riddled with fear.

News helicopters hover overhead, reporting the incident.

We SEE Connie, along with the other protesters, looking on with concern.

We SEE the GreenPeace supervisor watching on a T.V.

INT. SAM'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Frankie is sitting flipping through the T.V. channels. He comes to CNN.

CNN REPORTER

...Very dangerous situation off the coast of Seattle. Apparently he has taken the situation into his own hands as the GreenPeace boat is sitting just off to the west.

FRANKIE

Grandpa, I think you better get in here.

Sam immediately pops his head in from the kitchen.

CNN REPORTER

We have no information on just who the would be hero is at this time but we are tracking the story as it unfolds.

The news camera ZOOMS in on the T.V. and it becomes obvious that it is Frank.

SAM

(shocked)

Son of a bitch.

EXT. OCEAN - CONTINUOUS

The tension continues to build and build. Will Frank be run over and killed in this precarious situation?

INT. CLEVELAND SPORTS BAR - CONTINUOUS

Rick and Miguel are sitting in the bar watching the CNN report.

RICK

Look at that crazy bastard go, Miguel.

MIGUEL

I'd bet on him.

INT. PATTI'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Jeremy and Patti are having tantric sex. The T.V. is on in the background. They look up and see Frank's heroics. Jeremy holds out his arms.

JEREMY

What a guy. Look Patti. Goose bumps.

EXT. OCEAN - CONTINUOUS

Frank continues his attempts to divert the ship. Once again, he is both scared and determined at the same time.

Finally, after a long hard fought battle between David and Goliath if you will, the whaling ship veers off and begins to turn around. It is obvious that they are giving up to Frank's determination.

Everyone begins to cheer.

INT. SAM'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Frankie is jumping up and down on the couch. Sam is laughing and joins him, also jumping up and down on the couch.

FRANKIE
That's my old man!!!

SAM
And I'm his old man!!!

EXT. GREENPEACE BOAT - CONTINUOUS

People are cheering and hugging each other.

CONNIE
That stupid crazy beautiful sweet son of a bitch.

EXT. FISHING BOAT - CONTINUOUS

We SEE the ship sail away and the whales continue to swim in the other direction. Frank is exhausted from fear, yet he is smiling at his accomplishment. He steers the boat in the direction of the GreenPeace boat.

EXT. OCEAN - CONTINUOUS

We SEE a LONG SHOT of Frank's boat as it heads towards the GreenPeace boat. The whaling ship is in the background, sailing away as the whales head off in the other direction.

CNN REPORTER (V.O.)
...We are still trying to find out who this lone ranger is, if you will allow me to use the term. He put his life on the line and turned away the evil Hun. A true act of heroism. His compassion for his fellow beings must be immeasurable.

EXT. GREENPEACE BOAT - CONTINUOUS

Frank comes up, pulling his boat up next to the GreenPeace boat.

Connie runs down to greet him.

Everyone on the boat is cheering for Frank.

Frank has a huge smile on his face.

FRANK

I did it! Did you see that Connie?! I did it! I saved those whales!!

Connie jumps from the GreenPeace boat onto Frank's boat and runs to him. She starts hitting him.

CONNIE

(Teary eyed)

You big lug!!! You could have been killed!!!

Frank calms her down and pulls her into his arms. She hugs him.

FRANK

It's okay, Con. I'm okay.

CONNIE

Don't you ever do anything that stupid again.

FRANK

I did it for you, Connie. Don't you see? I found my passion. And my passion is you and the things that matter to you.

CONNIE

You crazy jerk.

FRANK

I'm serious. I'll do what it takes. I'll learn how to appreciate you more. I'll make you laugh again. Hell, if I can save a herd of whales, I ought to be able to save a damn muskrat or platypus or pelican or whatever.

CONNIE

Oh, Frank.

FRANK

Eating that tofu crap might be tough but I'll choke it down.

CONNIE

No, Frank, I don't want you to do stuff that isn't you. But that's the point. I want the old Frank back. I always did.

FRANK

And he's right in here. But I need your help pulling him out. We can do it together. I love you, Connie.

CONNIE

And I love you, Frank.

They hug each other.

CONNIE

Can we just go home?

FRANK

What do you think?

Connie hugs Frank as he pulls his boat away from the GreenPeace boat and heads home.

The protesters continue to celebrate in the background.

EXT. OCEAN - LATE

We SEE Frank captaining his boat across the ocean with Connie holding him at his side. They seem very happy to be in each other's arms.

INT. FRANK'S HOUSE - ONE MONTH LATER - MORNING

Frank is dressed in his airline uniform and is at the stove cooking eggs. Frank goes to the wall and straightens up a picture of two swans that Connie has drawn.

FRANK

Connie, your eggs are almost ready. Hurry up, you don't want to be late.

Connie enters. She is carrying home-made signs of protest against the fur industry. She kisses Frank and sits down as he serves her breakfast.

FRANK

So what's on the ASPCA agenda today?

CONNIE

We're organizing a protest against the local fur industry.

FRANK

I'm not gonna have to throw chicken blood on anyone am I?

They share a laugh.

CONNIE

Stop it.

Frankie enters dressed somewhat normally.

FRANK

Yo bitch. Want some eggs?

FRANKIE

Dad, bitch was so last month. Cap'n Crunch is cool by me.

FRANK

Cool. Cool.

We see the three of them sit down together and share breakfast. MUSIC COMES UP as they continue to talk and laugh and seem very happy.

THE END