

TICKET TO RIDE

By

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FADE IN:

INT. OFFICE - DAY

A drab, unventilated office. Florescent lights buzz overhead.

RYDEN MALBY (22) eyes a DEAD FLY lying stiff on the desk, then returns her attention to the INTERVIEWER (60's).

He loosens his collar and clears away some phlegm.

INTERVIEWER

Contrary to what many people think, an escalator is actually a very dangerous, sometimes even deadly machine. People get on it, they think they're at Disneyland, they start monkeying around, they sit on the moving hand rails, they try to go up an escalator that's clearly going down.

RYDEN

(concerned)
Mmm.

He places his pencil carefully down on his legal pad, and leans in from across the desk.

INTERVIEWER

What the public doesn't know is that there are approximately thirty-five escalator fatalities every year.

RYDEN

(even more concerned)
Mmmm.

INTERVIEWER

We here at *Weisenkrupp Elevator* take very seriously the risks of vertical and diagonal transportation, and only employ the most intensively trained professionals in the field.

He turns her resume face down on his desk.

INTERVIEWER

Now, can you tell me a little bit about your experience with elevators and escalators?

He leans back in his chair, folding his arms across his chest.

RYDEN

Um, yeah. Yes. Of course.

She uncrosses and recrosses her legs, pulling at the hem of her skirt.

RYDEN

I've, well, I've - ridden quite a lot of elevators. I mean, I know that a lot of people ride elevators, but I personally ride them a lot. I mean, you know, at the mall for instance, and they actually just put one in at my bank. They're really in a lot of buildings now-a-days, I mean stairs are just, they're just sort of out of style, people don't really build stairs as much anymore.

She's not sure where she's going with this.

RYDEN

And, also, when I'm in a building and there's a choice between taking the stairs or the escalator, I always, always, take the escalator. Because I - honestly - I enjoy them. I do, I think they're fascinating little mechanisms - machines. Deadly machines as you've said. Not that I'm fascinated by the deadly part, I mean, that's very tragic and my heart goes out to the families of those who...you know.

The interviewer isn't enthused.

RYDEN

But over all, I'm confident that my elevator experience, as well as my genuine passion for their - their - the way they sort of - move - up and down - would make me a tremendous asset to your company.

ROLL CREDITS

INT. RYDEN'S BEDROOM - SATURDAY NIGHT

Chris Isaac's "Wicked Games" floats out of a dusty stereo.

We drift past candles burning gently, an open bottle of wine, a trail of tangled clothing leading toward the bed.

Something is whispered. Then a WOMAN'S GIGGLE, a MOAN.

We creep slowly across the floor, then up over the edge of the bed, finally REVEALING:

Ryden with her face against the window screen, watching the people next door get it on.

A strip of mustache bleach goes to work on her upper lip. She eats Fruitloops from the box.

Through the vertical blinds, we can vaguely make out the inside of DAVID WEST's (41) bedroom.

A shirtless David moves in and out of view.

He says something flirty but indiscernible to someone off screen. The lights go out.

Show over, Ryden leans her head back to receive a few more fruitloops, careful not to screw up the bleach job. A bright green morsel gets stuck in the goop anyway.

She moves to the mirror to excavate the loop, but instead stops and stares curiously at her reflection.

Then, reaching into the cereal box, she pulls out a red fruitloop and glues it next to the green one. She does the same with another loop, then another, and then another. Until her upper lip looks like it could advertise the Olympics.

She cocks her head, squinting at her bizarre work of art.

Suddenly, a KNOCK at the door.

RYDEN

Hold on.

The door swings open and CARMELLA MALBY (48) pops in.

Ryden quickly wipes her lip.

CARMELLA

You won't believe what your idiot father bought.

WALTER (O.S.)
(from down the hall)
Tell her to close her eyes!

Carmella clenches her teeth.

CARMELLA
Lesson number one: If you screwed
up in a former life, it *will* bite
you in the ass. Sometimes in the
form of a big, stupid husband.

WALTER (O.S.)
Are they closed?

She resigns.

CARMELLA
Humor the guy?

Ryden plays along.

In saunters WALTER MALBY (56) wearing a full SUIT OF MEDIEVAL
ARMOR - which looks only a tad more authentic than something
one might rent for Halloween.

Ryden opens her eyes.

Walter flips open the face guard and assumes a gallant pose.

WALTER
So?

She searches for something to say.

WALTER
It's a 16th century stainless steel
replica.

He knocks on his chest.

WALTER
Guy liked me so much, sold it to me
for less than half of what its
worth.

CARMELLA
Another random act of kindness.

Walter senses her sarcasm.

WALTER
I'm wearing a nine *hundred* dollar
sparring harness, Carmella.

The FACE GUARD falls off and swings by a broken hinge.

He fumbles with the broken piece, trying fruitlessly to put it back.

WALTER
Jesus Christ!

Walter goes from zero to TOTALLY FUCKING PISSED with absolutely no transition.

He pushes past Ryden to get a look in the mirror.

WALTER
GOD DAMMIT!!!

The thing's totally busted.

WALTER
Where's the warranty?!

CARMELLA
There is no warranty.

WALTER
What kind of goddamn sparring
harness doesn't come with a goddamn
warranty?!!

INT. MALBY FAMILY DINING ROOM - LATER

The Malby family eats at the dinner table, Walter still sporting his medieval armor, the helmet sitting upright beside his plate, face guard duct-taped in place.

UNCLE GLEN
And then last week he showed us how
to paralyze a guy for life with two
fingers -

UNCLE GLEN (51) fake-jabs two fingers at Walter's neck.

UNCLE GLEN
Bah! And then bah! bah! That little
maneuver and bang! He's got a
parking space right up front at the
grocery store.

WALTER

Two fingers. See that, Ryden?!

RYDEN

Yeah, that's...neat.

She stabs at a boring lump of mash potatoes.

WALTER

Hey, wait a minute. Ryden's been looking for a job, maybe you could, you know, pull some strings with Master Bob?

UNCLE GLEN

Hey, I'll see what I can do.

Like he's cutting a deal on a Dodge.

WALTER

What do you think, Ryden, you could get a job working down at Uncle Glen's dojo?

RYDEN

I don't know anything about karate.

WALTER

Well I guess now that you've graduated, you're done learning anything new.

GRANDMA MAUREEN

A hundred thousand dollars on USC and you want her to run around play-fighting with a bunch of orientals.

GRANDMA MAUREEN eyes herself in a compact mirror, touching up her penciled brows.

WALTER

I was suggesting it as an option. She might meet people, Glen's made a real name for himself down at the dojo.

Uncle Glen picks a piece of chicken out of his teeth with a prong of his fork. Briefly examines it.

UNCLE GLEN

So I hear you wanna work in publishing, eh? Find the next *great American novel*, eh?

He elbows her.

RYDEN

Sort of.

She forces a smile.

WALTER

Never mind the fact that no one
gives a rat's ass about books. When
was the last time you read a
"book," Glen?

He says "book" like it smells bad.

Glen tries for a moment to recall.

UNCLE GLEN

I do not know.

Walter throws up his hands, his point now eternally proven.

WALTER

What have I been telling you?
Movies, now *there's* your money.

GRANDMA MAUREEN

Oh splendid, maybe we'll have
another career waitress in the
family.

Grandma lights a Virginia Slim. On reflex, Walter coughs and
gags, swatting at the smoke.

UNCLE GLEN

You know, I had an idea for a movie
once. These two people, they're
riding in one of those sky buckets,
you know - those things they've got
at amusement parks where you're up
on a wire, and suddenly the thing
jams, the power goes out, who
knows, and so get this - the whole
movie takes place inside the sky
bucket. That's the twist. That's
the, you know, the thing.

Dead silence. Silent enough to hear plants growing.

Ryden clears her throat.

UNCLE GLEN

You can use that, by the way, I won't mind. Just buy me a box of doughnuts or something when you win the Grammy.

RYDEN

The Oscar?

UNCLE GLEN

Sure, that one too. Oh, hey! I forgot to tell you guys - I'm starting a new precious stone company. It's called "Glenstones". Get it, like gemstones? Nairobi guy gonna ship me the jewels and crap all the way from the Congo. Probably make a million dollars this year. Anyway, I'm a little low on cash, so do mind if I stay here a day or two?

WALTER

Sure, Glen.

UNCLE GLEN

Maybe a week.

WALTER

Fine.

UNCLE GLEN

More like a month - a couple of months.

Glen and Carmella exchange an uncomfortable look.

CARMELLA

What about your apartment?

UNCLE GLEN

Moved out.

WALTER

You don't have a lease?

UNCLE GLEN

Broke it.

CARMELLA

Glen, I--

UNCLE GLEN
Just until I get on my feet.

WALTER
I'm sorry Glen, there just isn't
any room.

CARMELLA
And we have that foreign exchange
student coming in August.

RYDEN
What foreign exchange student?

CARMELLA
Don't know yet. Hopefully a nice
quiet Chinese boy with lawn-mowing
skills.

WALTER
Plus, now that Ryden has moved ba--

HUNTER
There's gum under the table.

Walter waves Ryden's eight-year-old brother, HUNTER, quiet.

WALTER
(continuing)
Ryden has moved -

A homemade SOCK PUPPET with slanty drawn-on eyes and an evil
goatee, peeks its head out from under the table next to
Hunter. The puppet turns its head and lifts an ink eyebrow,
surveying the room.

HUNTER
(in a high-pitched puppet voice)
There's gum under your table,
Walter.

Walter is visibly perturbed, but purposely ignores it.

WALTER
(continuing again)
She's moved back home, we don't -

HUNTER (AS PUPPET)
Walter, there's gum under -

WALTER
Stop it! No there isn't!

HUNTER (AS PUPPET)
Yes there is!

Ryden is sandwiched between them, right in the crossfire.

WALTER
(through clenched teeth)
Put that puppet away!

RYDEN
It's fine, Glen can stay here, I'm
getting a job, I'll be out of here
in a couple weeks anyway.

WALTER
That's not the -

HUNTER (AS PUPPET)
There's gum under -

WALTER
GODAMMIT!!! TAKE THAT SOCK OFF YOUR
GODDAMN ARM OR I'LL SNAP IT IN TWO
PIECES!!!

Grandma Maureen sucks in her breath.

GRANDMA MAUREEN
Jesus, Walter, he's a child for
Christ's sake!

Grandma leans sympathetically across the table.

GRANDMA MAUREEN
Hunter, it's not normal to talk
with socks on your hands. Do you
see Grandma with a sock on her
hand?

She waves her bare fingers in front of him to demonstrate
their sock-freeness.

The puppet spits a GIANT OLD HAIRY PIECE OF CHEWING GUM down
on the table next to Ryden.

Everyone gasps. Carmella drops her fork.

Walter shoots out of his seat, armor screeching.

The family cringes awaiting his reaction. But instead,
calmly, methodically -

WALTER
One. Two. Thr-

A SPOON flies out of nowhere and bounces off Walter's steel chest.

Everyone looks around to determine the culprit.

HUNTER
(pointing to the puppet)
It was Fred!

WALTER
Give me that sock!!!!!!

Walter charges towards Hunter to seize the puppet, but can't squeeze between the wall and Ryden's seat in full body armor.

HUNTER
I'm sorry!

Walter's armor knocks off wall hangings and knickknacks.

WALTER
I'm going to tear that goddamn
puppet into a million pieces! Do
you hear me?! I am going to kill
Fred! Deaddddddd!!!

Hunter shrieks.

GRANDMA MAUREEN
Walter!

WALTER
(whining)
He could've taken my eye out,
mother!

He thrusts a massive finger at Hunter.

WALTER
IS THAT WHAT YOU WANT?! A CYCLOPS
FOR A FATHER?!!

INT. SUPERMARKET FREEZER ISLE - 3AM SAME NIGHT

A wall of FROZEN FOOD sits neatly behind the glass.

Ryden runs her eyes along the options.

Pull out to reveal: She's sitting in a beach chair in the middle of the aisle.

ADAM DAVIES (24) buzzes around the corner on a motorized shopping cart. He's not typically handsome, but his off-beat charm grows on you.

ADAM
(patting the hood)
Daddy does love his jag...

He hops off and settles into the chair next to her, breaks open a box of popsicles.

RYDEN
Amazing your dad's okay with this.

ADAM
Oh, he's not.

RYDEN
He's not?

ADAM
Of course not, but come on, it's my dad, he has the balls of a field mouse.

RYDEN
A field mouse, huh?

ADAM
Uh huh.

Adam picks up his GUITAR, plays a chord.

RYDEN
Sorry, I must've missed when you turned seventy and a farmer.

ADAM
I work the day shift at the supermarket, alright. There's a lingo.

He strums a quick blue-grass bit.

RYDEN
Hey, any word from Columbia?

ADAM
Big envelope.

RYDEN

Nice!

He shrugs.

ADAM

Eh.

RYDEN

What do you mean, I thought you liked their music program.

ADAM

I don't know. Grad school's a lot of money, you've got to be really talented. You know me, I'm broke and mediocre.

RYDEN

What about becoming a pimpafied musical baddass?

ADAM

Quote me more often, I like the feel of that.

He tears open a BOX OF KLONDIKE BARS and tosses her one.

RYDEN

That's okay.

ADAM

That's okay? Are you turning down a Klondike Bar?

RYDEN

I don't think I like these.

ADAM

You don't *think* you like them?

RYDEN

I've never had one.

ADAM

You're kidding me. I've known you how long and I didn't know this about you?

RYDEN

Maybe I'll try it.

ADAM

Oh, you're gonna try it. You don't understand. Every evil terrible thing in the world is directly counteracted by the joy of biting into a Klondike Bar. It's the only reason for any sort of balance in the universe.

RYDEN

Does anyone ever say no to you?

ADAM

Take a bite.

He waits as she bites into it.

RYDEN

Mmm.

He shakes his head. Weak.

RYDEN

(for his benefit)
Mmm! Oooohh!! Yeahh!! It's like -
like God's giving birth in my
mouth!!

He claps.

ADAM

That's the girl I fell in love
with....who had nothing but
platonic feelings for me.

She gives him a look.

ADAM

What, I can't joke about that?
Don't worry, the crush is over,
you're not the slightest bit
attractive anymore.

RYDEN

Thanks.

ADAM

Especially in those pajamas. What
are those, Hammer pants?

EXT. MALBY DRIVEWAY - DAY

Ryden gazes into the back of a U-HAUL at the oddball belongings stuffed inside:

A neon pink FLAMINGO STATUE, a SNOW CONE MACHINE, a poster-size KNOTT'S BERRY FARM PORTRAIT of Uncle Glen dressed like he's from the Wild Wild West.

Walter and Glen sweat and puff as they wrestle a CHEST OF DRAWERS up the driveway.

WALTER

Hold it from the bottom! You want to break the goddamn thing?!

UNCLE GLEN

I'm trying to, I can't -

Walter maneuvers backwards up the driveway, just as the NEIGHBOR'S CAT finishes depositing a STEAMING LITTLE PILE right in his path.

He looks down just in time to see the surprise squish out from under his boot.

WALTER

Jesus Christ!!!

He drops his end of the dresser -

UNCLE GLEN

Ahhhhh!!!

- on Glen's fingers.

Walter looks up just in time to see the cat hop up over the fence and squeeze through a hole the neighbor's window screen.

WALTER

His goddamn cat did it again!

Just then, neighbor David West walks out his front door, deeply engaged in a book.

WALTER

(calling to David) Hey! Yoo hoo, buddy? This is the third time your cat's crap -

Without so much as glancing up from his reading, David flips Walter the finger, turns off his sprinklers, and heads back towards the front door.

Ryden braces herself.

WALTER
You son of a bitch!

Walter peels off his work gloves and hurls them against the concrete.

Ryden hides her face behind the flamingo.

WALTER
(to David)
You listen to me, you pretentious
dick-faced Brit -

Glen tries to calm him down.

WALTER
- I swear to god, that cat craps on
my driveway one more time I'll run
the son of a bitch over, I'll
flatten the little fucker, I swear
to god!

David closes his front door behind him without ever having offered a single word or look.

Walter straightens his shirt and scrapes his boot across a patch of grass.

He notices the ELDERLY COUPLE across the street who have stopped gardening to observe the drama.

WALTER
(softening)
What kind of cat doesn't crap in a
litter box, huh?

INT. RYDEN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Ryden reads under a small light, her room transformed, its seams bursting with junk.

She glances over at Glen who finishes his last set of crunches. He crawls weakly towards his mattress, collapsing melodramatically onto it.

Letting out an exaggerated sigh, he quickly props himself up on one elbow.

UNCLE GLEN
Hey Roomie.

As if it just now occurred to him.

He does a happy little eyebrow-dance.

It all becomes painfully clear: *This* is her life.

CUT TO:

JOB SEARCH MONTAGE:

Weezer's "Hash Pipe" slams us into the scene.

INT. KINKOS COPIES - DAY

Ryden stands over a giant rumbling copy machine clutching a Grande Americano, watching intensely as copy after copy of her resume fly into the document sorter.

EXT. STARBUCKS - DAY

Ryden hangs up her cell phone, crossing out yet another posting on an already fully circled and highlighted LA Times Classifieds.

She rises to receive another Grande Americano over the counter from a PIMPLY COFFEE-JOCKEY, who tosses her a googly-eyed wink.

INT. MALBY LIVING ROOM - DAY

Ryden speaks to an employer on her cell. A sea of clippings, and print-outs spread out all around her.

In the B.G, Uncle Glen skips by in his karate suit.

He fake-kicks a CERAMIC GNOME before disappearing out the front door.

INT. LIBRARY - DAY

Ryden scrolls through endless monstertrak.com listings. Print. Print. Print. Print. Hundreds of listings pile up on the printer.

A DISGRUNTLED LIBRARIAN points, annoyed, to the "TEN PAGES PER PERSON" sign taped to the printer.

INT. KINKOS COPIES - DAY

Ryden hunches over a fax machine, finally finished faxing the very last of a giant stack of resumes and cover letters.

She lays her head down on the fax machine, exhausted.

Looking down, she notices the first line of her resume:

"WROK EXPERIENCE"

INT. KINKOS COPIES - DAY

Ryden slumps over the copy machine, printing all new resumes.

EXT. DOWNTOWN LOS ANGELES - DAY

Ryden exits one high-rise building into the festering, exhaust-filled streets of downtown LA, takes a deep breath, and enters another.

INT. STARBUCKS - DAY

The same pimply coffee jockey hands Ryden her usual caffeine boost.

He flashes her a genuine smile, and then politely points to the "help wanted" sign taped to the register.

INT. OFFICE BUILDING - DAY

A gum-snapping RECEPTIONIST reluctantly accepts Ryden's resume, and then continues her game of computer solitaire.

INT. KINKOS COPIES - DAY

Ryden, near comatose, feeds another resume into the fax machine.

She highlights the last line on a long list, and wipes the drool from her lip.

INT. KINKOS COPIES - DAY

Ryden approaches the register, exhausted, handing her "kinkos key" to the CLERK.

The clerk plugs the key into her register.

CLERK

\$237.07

RYDEN

What?

CLERK

Two thirty-

RYDEN

I know, I heard you. That's impossible. It's 20 cents a fax.

CLERK

Yes ma'am, but that doesn't include long distance charges. You dialed ninety seven 310 numbers. We're 818.

END MONTAGE

INT. MALBY LIVING ROOM - TWO WEEKS LATER

Ryden lays in her pajamas eating barbecue beans from the can and watching RODGER LODGE sum up another episode of BLIND DATE.

The cell phone sits perched on her chest. It hasn't made a peep in two weeks.

She reaches lazily for the remote, but accidentally knocks it off the couch.

As she leans down to get it, something outside catches her attention: Next door, perfectly framed by his kitchen window, David West stands at his sink, loading dishes into the dishwasher.

There is nothing overtly attractive about him - just a confidence, a mysteriousness, that makes him inexplicably fascinating.

She slips quietly off the couch and crawls up to the window.

She watches him enchanted - the simple but exquisite way his body bends and moves, the wet hand running through his salt and pepper hair.

Just then, Uncle Glen pops through the front door with a stack of mail.

She jumps up to her feet.

UNCLE GLEN
(sifting through envelopes)
No. No. No. Bingo! South Africa!
"We're in the money, we're in
the..." Oh, and one for you, too.

He tosses her an envelope and hops upstairs.

Ryden turns back to the window, but David's gone.

Recognizing the envelope as her Cell Phone bill, she lets out a groan and tears it open to find out the damages:

\$316.61

RYDEN
What?!

Suddenly, her cell phone RINGS.

She moves to answer it, but then looks at the bill. She can't afford another minute. But what if it's an employer? A job? A ticket out of here?

RYDEN
Hello, this is Ryden Malby.

ADAM (V.O.)
What kind of voice is that? Where
are you trying to get a job,
Moviephone?

Intercut with Adam in SUPERMARKET BREAKROOM---

RYDEN
I have to get off the phone.

ADAM
Okay bye.

She hangs up.

It RINGS again. She picks it up.

ADAM
Kay, that's where you were supposed
to say "no, wait."

RYDEN
I've really gotta go.

ADAM
Let's get lunch.

She eyes the can of beans.

RYDEN
I just got back from lunch.

ADAM
I'm hungry.

RYDEN
You work at a grocery store.

ADAM
I wanna sit down someplace.

RYDEN
There aren't any chairs there?

ADAM
You're in a shitty mood.

She considers the accusation.

RYDEN
Yes.

ROY DAVIES, Adam's dad, shuffles nervously into the break
room.

ROY DAVIES (B.G.)
Adam, Val's gone home sick, I'm
going to need you another half
hour, if that's -

ADAM
Sorry. Tied up.

He points to his cell phone.

ROY DAVIES
Adam, I really-

ADAM
(cutting him off)
You've gotta get somebody else.

Roy wants to put his foot down, but can't muster the confidence.

ADAM
(into the phone)
Alright, see you in fifteen.

INT. PHO RESTAURANT - DAY

A crusty, run-down hole in the wall restaurant that screams C-rating. Just Adam's type of place.

Every surface is plastered with 8x10 photos of giant bowls of "pho" (pronounced "fuh") - a Vietnamese soup consisting of boiled tendons floating in broth.

RYDEN
Why were you so mean to your dad?

ADAM
I wasn't mean.

RYDEN
You were mean.

ADAM
No, see, this is how we work. My dad needs that - he needs someone to be the boss. It makes him feel secure.

RYDEN
It makes you look like an ass.

ADAM
I am an ass, that's my thing.

He raises his hand for the waiter's attention.

WAITER
Ready?

ADAM
Yeah, the Pho Ga.

He points to a picture of a steaming soup.

RYDEN
And I'm fine, thanks.

ADAM
She'll have the Tai.

The waiter nods and scurries off submissively.

RYDEN
I have six dollars to my name. It's
bad karma to spend your last penny
on boiled cow.

ADAM
Not a problem, I got you the yak.
What's up with your hair?

RYDEN
What do you mean?

Ryden touches her ponytail self-consciously.

ADAM
Have you washed it lately?

RYDEN
Screw you.

ADAM
I'm just kidding. It's darker, I
like it.

It's his backwards way of expressing affection.

RYDEN
Thanks, it's called grow-out.

ADAM
It's nice.

His eyes linger on her a little too long.

An awkward beat.

She searches for a way to change the subject.

RYDEN
So I ate a hotdog for breakfast
this morning.

ADAM
Eww.

RYDEN

No, it wasn't so bad. I got up and I thought to myself what am I going to eat? Eggs, cereal, toast? No, I'm having a hot dog. What's so wrong with a hot dog, ya know?

ADAM

Not a thing.

RYDEN

You know what else I was thinking?

ADAM

(amused)
What?

She points to a mole on her arm.

ADAM

Your mole?

RYDEN

Regular normal skin and then bam, this ludicrous brown bump pops up out of nowhere. Why is it there, why? There's no good reason, there's no purpose. It's disgusting. Why aren't more people disgusted by moles, that's what I want to know.

ADAM

Oh, I'm completely disgusted. My aunt has one the size of a ritz cracker on her neck, I can't bear to look at the woman.

The waiter slams down two bowls of pho in front of them.

RYDEN

You're kidding, a ritz cracker?

ADAM

You're depressed about being unemployed - you could have a quarter pound of mole growing out your neck.

Ryden laughs. In his own strange, twisted way, he's almost attractive.

Just then, her cell phone RINGS. She freezes, it might be an employer.

RYDEN
Hello? ...Yeah, this is Ryden.

Her eyes light up.

RYDEN
Yes, great.

She scribbles something down on her napkin.

RYDEN
Absolutely. 4:30, thank you.

She hangs up the phone.

RYDEN
I can't believe this. I have an
interview at Harper Collins.

Adam raises his bowl of pho and toasts her with it.

ADAM
Nice!

INT. RYDEN'S 1990 BEATER CAR - DAY

The car is a sauna on wheels.

Ryden talks on her cell phone to Walter, who speaks on his headset, standing in front of his mirror in what appears to be a 17TH CENTURY FRIAR'S OUTFIT.

He pulls at the crotch of his tights.

WALTER
And do not under any circumstances
falsify any information.

Ryden wrestles with the air conditioning knobs and fans.

RYDEN
I know, I won't.

WALTER
They've got people whose only job
is to scour applications all day
long for even the tiniest little
inconsistency -

She lifts up her arms - sweat rings forming on her black shirt.

WALTER
- and if they find anything even a little fishy, there it goes, right through the shredding machine.

RYDEN
I know, I know. I really need to go, dad.

Walter pulls his sword out of his sheath, and speaks gallantly to himself in the mirror, the way someone over-acting Shakespeare would.

WALTER
Not only that, it's against the law.

RYDEN
Okay.

WALTER
They'll throw you behind bars.

RYDEN
Okay.

WALTER
And try getting a job when you've got LA County Jail on your res -

RYDEN
Okay! I'm not going to lie, okay?! Not about anything. Nothing. I will never, ever lie about anything ever!

A beat of silence.

A pang of guilt for flying off the handle.

WALTER
Well you've got to stretch the truth a little, you don't want them to think you're *completely* incompetent.

Ryden gives up.

RYDEN

I'm going, gotta go, hanging up,
thanks -

Ryden tosses down her cell phone.

The car is just getting hotter and hotter. Giving up on the A/C, she rolls down all four windows, letting the wind rip through it.

She settles into her seat. A wave of calm slips over her.

She glances down at the crisp, white resume on the seat next to her.

Ryden N. Malby.

We can feel the potential.

A tiny smile blows across her face. This is the moment she's been waiting for.

She glances over at the GOOD-LOOKING GUY driving the jaguar next to her. He glances back, smiles at her.

She leans back and closes her eyes to take it all in. Her eyes snap back open as it occurs to her she's on the freeway.

She shakes her head and laughs at the thought of crashing on the way to the interview. Ha. Wouldn't that suck.

Suddenly the wind barreling through the windows sweeps her resume up off the seat.

It whips through the air, flying this way and that. Ryden reaches for it, but it soars into the back seat, heading straight out the back window.

She twists around to grab it before it flies out of the car.

Traffic suddenly stops. She plows straight into the car in front of her.

EXT. MALBY HOUSE - DAY

The Malby family stands silently in a line along the curb as the tow truck drives up, dragging Ryden's mangled car behind it.

The entire front is mashed up like an accordion.

Glen screws his face up painfully, Walter hits himself in the head.

Ryden looks like somebody just handed her a 500 lb. barbell.

CARMELLA
Oh buck up. It could be worse.

RYDEN
How?

Just then, Grandma Maureen's CADILLAC screeches up to the curb.

The door flies open and Grandma falls dramatically to her knees.

GRANDMA MAUREEN
I'm dying!!!

INT. MALBY LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The family gathers close around an emotional Maureen.

GRANDMA MAUREEN
Not so close, I need air.

She takes a deep breath, and then coughs and chokes like someone about to utter their last words.

Then finally -

GRANDMA MAUREEN
I went to the doctor today, and...

She pauses dramatically, allowing the suspense to build.

A visible wave of horror comes over Walter.

GRANDMA MAUREEN
...and...after running some tests,
he told me that I...I...I have
emphysema.

UNCLE GLEN
What?!

WALTER
Nooooooooo!

Walter leaps up to throw his arms around his dying mother.

GRANDMA MAUREEN

No touching, I'm fragile goddammit!

Walter stops just short and carefully hugs her without actually touching, patting the air above her back.

The phone in the kitchen RINGS. Carmella rises to answer it.

Ryden stares off in a daze, too much to take in one day. Grandma pats her knee.

GRANDMA MAUREEN

It's fine, everything will be fine.
(looking off tragically) Every
living thing must perish...

WALTER

No! Don't say that!

Glen looks like he's been hit by a Mac truck.

UNCLE GLEN

How could this happen? How? How?!

MAUREEN

I've smoked for 40 years, you fool!
That kills people.

Carmella returns to the living room and clears her throat.

CARMELLA

Well folks, there's more news.

WALTER

Oh Christ.

Walter can't handle much more of this.

Neither can Ryden.

CARMELLA

It's official, I'm a failure as a
mother.

MAUREEN

That's it? I thought you said news.

Grandma chuckles at her acerbic little slam.

CARMELLA

That was Hunter's teacher. He's
been suspended from school.

UNCLE GLEN

What?!

RYDEN

You're kidding.

WALTER

Oh Christ.

UNCLE GLEN

Why?!

Carmella considers how best to explain.

CARMELLA

Well, occasionally Hunter can be a little, um, a tad...(cutting to the chase) Boy's a whack-job.

Grandma visibly gives up.

CARMELLA

(trying to be fair)
Alright, alright, he's not exactly "mainstream", and apparently the staff has picked up on that.

CUT TO:

EXT. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PLAYGROUND - DAY

Hunter runs his tongue up the side of a puzzled boy's head.

A woman with a whistle runs up.

P.E. TEACHER

Hunter! What did I tell you about licking William's head?

Hunter thinks for a second.

HUNTER

Don't do it?

P.E. TEACHER

That's right, ever.

Confident she's handled the situation, the teacher turns to leave.

Hunter pauses for a moment, and then begins licking the boy's arm instead.

The P.E. Teacher turns around just in time to see it.

P.E. TEACHER
(blowing her whistle)
Come with me Mr. Malby!

BACK TO:

INT. MALBY LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Walter's a train-wreck.

WALTER
That's it, I'm calling a therapist.

GRANDMA MAUREEN
Oh no, no no, my grandson is not
going to any shrink.

WALTER
Who said anything about your
grandson? I'm talking about Ryden.

Ryden?

RYDEN
Me?

WALTER
You're a bad influence.

RYDEN
What?!

WALTER
He was fine until you moved back
in.

RYDEN
You're kidding me! Mom?!

Carmella throws up her hands.

CARMELLA
Don't ask me, I'm the big screw-up.

WALTER
Therapy's not a bad thing, Ryden.
Lots of people do it, how about
that Anne Hesché woman? She's
famous and she went.

RYDEN
Because she thought she was the
messiah!

Walter shrugs.

INT. RYDEN'S ROOM - NIGHT

Ryden speaks into her cell phone.

RYDEN
...yes, I realize that, but if I
could possibly reschedule...then
maybe we could set up a phone
interview or... well, if something
else becomes -

Click.

Ryden listens, defeated, as the dial tone takes over.

She glances up at Glen, who stares fascinated at the
television:

"The Crocodile Hunter" presses his face next to a skinny red
snake wrapped around a branch.

THE CROCODILE HUNTER
Woaahhhhhh, isn't she a beauty?!

UNCLE GLEN
Ryden! Ryden! Look at this snake!

He points enthusiastically at the TV.

Ryden lifts herself up and silently leaves the room.

EXT. MALBY HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

The front yard is still and dark.

Ryden drifts zombie-like down the front steps, across the
driveway, and up to her sad, mangled car. She surveys its
crunched shell, running her fingers along the bent hood.

Then, opening the driver's side door, she slides in, clicks
her seat-belt into place, and then lets the seat crash into
the lying-down position.

After a long moment, one eye peels itself open. It searches the sky weakly through the dusty windshield, finally placing the cool, white moon. A quiet calm trickles over her.

Then something catches her attention -

Next door, David slips out his front door. He speaks on his cell phone.

Ryden carefully lifts her head and peeks out the car window, trying not to be seen.

He paces back and forth, obviously frustrated.

Ryden watches him transfixed.

He lights a cigarette and leans against the porch with an air of resignation. Ending the call, he breathes a long, lonely stream of smoke into the night air.

Then - something in the distance catches his attention.

Ryden snaps her head out of view, praying she wasn't seen.

She lies stiff and motionless in the seat.

A moment passes.

Slowly, she raises her head to get a look out the window. He's gone.

She breathes with relief.

Then suddenly: a large finger TAPPING on her window.

A wave of panic rushes over her.

David's large figure bends down, his face level with hers on the other side of the glass.

With no other choice, she sits up, and as nonchalantly as possible - rolls down the window.

RYDEN

Hi.

As if this isn't the slightest bit unusual.

He sizes her up.

DAVID

You staking the place out or what?

Ryden searches for something. Anything.

RYDEN
My room's being fumigated.

It was the best she could come up with.

DAVID
That right?

She's obviously full of it.

DAVID
What sort of bugs you got?

RYDEN
Oh, you know - about five foot five
with a comb-over.

David smiles.

DAVID
Well, I hope they don't make it
over to my house then.

RYDEN
I'd keep your doors locked.

DAVID
Right.

RYDEN
Right.

An awkward beat.

Ryden clears her throat.

RYDEN
Well. Okay.

She moves to roll up the window.

DAVID
You're welcome to come by if you
get bored or -

RYDEN
Oh no, that's okay. I'm fine. I'll
be plenty busy here with the - the
radio, and, um, all this reading
material (nodding towards The
Thomas Guide).

He's clearly amused by her.

DAVID
Right then.

He smiles, then turns and walks away.

Taking a deep breath, she closes her eyes and collapses into the seat.

INT. AUTO BODY SHOP - DAY

WALTER
Forty five hundred dollars?!

Walter and Ryden sit at a grease-smudged table across from the MECHANIC.

He wipes his nose with a blackened finger, clearly accustomed to this sort of reaction.

WALTER
That's ridiculous, the car isn't even worth 3 grand!

MECHANIC
I don't know what to tell you sir, the frame is bent, the radiator was cracked, and the hood is completely buckled.

WALTER
Uh huh. Uh huh. And the turfenschpriel broke in half when the dinglehopper exploded. I gotcha. Thank you very much--

Walter gets up and tosses the estimate in the trash can.

WALTER
- but I ripped my head out of my ass a long time ago.

EXT. MECHANIC SHOP - CONTINUOUS

Walter stomps across the parking lot to his Suburban.

RYDEN
We're just going to leave?

WALTER

Your father doesn't deal with morons, Ryden.

He slams shut his door, and a high-pitched version of "La Cucaracha" sings from Walter's pocket.

He picks it up.

WALTER (ON THE PHONE)

Hello? Oh, hi Doctor Bernstein.
Yeah, I just called inquiring about
a um, you know, a shrink
appointment session thing.

Ryden shakes her head.

WALTER (ON THE PHONE)

Right, and what are your rates? Two
hundred a month, okay. An hour. An
hour? Huh. What's that you're
driving these days, Doc?

Walter laughs.

Ryden shrivels.

INT. GRANDMA'S CADILLAC - DAY

Grandma addresses Carmella and Glen in her rear-view mirror.

GRANDMA MAUREEN

He just needs some quality time
with the family, that's all.

She smiles encouragingly at Hunter.

INT. FUNERAL HOME - DAY

The four of them - plus a MORTICIAN - stand near a series of elaborately displayed CASKETS, in a room full of burial items.

GRANDMA MAUREEN

Oooh, this mahogany is so elegant.

She runs her fingers along the casket's polished wood.

UNCLE GLEN

Mother, I really can't do this.

Glen looks like he could vomit.

GRANDMA MAUREEN
Hunter, what do you think of
Grandma spending her eternal
slumber in this one here?

She poses next to the casket.

EXT. MALBY DRIVEWAY - DAY

Walter guides a TOW TRUCK as it attempts to deposit Ryden's
crunched car into their garage.

WALTER
(to driver)
That's right, keep 'er comin'...

RYDEN
But dad, you've never fixed a car
before.

WALTER
(whispering)
Quick, hide the sparring harness!

Ryden gives him a confused look.

WALTER
The armor, hurry!

Walter nods towards the SUIT OF ARMOR laid out neatly on his
work bench next to a bottle of polish.

WALTER
These tow truck drivers are a bunch
of scum bags.

He smiles at the driver.

WALTER
That's right, ease 'er in...that a
boy.

RYDEN
What do you want me -

WALTER
At least save the helmet!

INT. FUNERAL HOME - DAY

Grandma lays lifeless inside an ORNATE BRASS CASKET.

Her eyes snap open.

GRANDMA MAUREEN

This is definitely the one. They'll
take it.

MORTICIAN

Very good choice. I'll just be back
with the paperwork.

ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE ROOM:

Glen tip-toes around, peering nervously at each of the huge,
creepy coffins.

He stops and peeks down inside one of them, at the morbidly
bright, shiny linens and endless ruffles.

The wood is rich and glossy. He knocks on it, as if testing
the craftsmanship.

Off in the corner, something catches his attention: THE ONLY
CASKET IN THE ROOM WITH ITS LID CLOSED.

He studies it nervously.

INT. MALBY DRIVEWAY - DAY

Ryden and Walter watch the TOW TRUCK drive off, then turn to
her wrecked car now backed into the garage.

RYDEN

Are you really sure you want to do
this?

WALTER

Ryden, one thing about your father:
He knows cars. Maybe I'm not a
(finger-quoting) "mechanic", but
goddammit if there's one thing on
earth that I do know, it's cars.

He runs his hand along the bumper.

WALTER

You know, for a Civic, it really
held together.

RYDEN
It's an Escort.

WALTER
Well, we'll get to it in the
morning. (tapping his watch)
Therapy at four.

INT. FUNERAL HOME - CONTINUOUS

At the MORTICIAN'S DESK---

MORTICIAN
If you just sign on the X...

He hands Carmella an ESTIMATE.

CARMELLA
Whoa. Wait a minute. This is eight
thousand dollars.

MORTICIAN
Well, it is entirely hand-crafted.

CARMELLA
By who, the Pope?

MORTICIAN
Our carpenters are world renowned.

She's not buying it.

MORTICIAN
And as I said, the linens are eight
hundred thread count - nothing is
softer on the skin.

Carmella leans in and lowers her voice.

CARMELLA
Are we maybe forgetting a key part
of the equation here?

Grandma snatches the estimate out of Carmella's hand.

GRANDMA MAUREEN
She's absolutely right. Why pay all
that money when there's probably a
local ditch they can toss me in for
free?

Maureen crumples it up and begins to gather her things.

CARMELLA

You're being ridiculous, Maureen.
There are no ditches in our
neighborhood.

ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE ROOM---

Glen, now just a few feet away from the CLOSED CASKET, with
it locked in his stare.

He gathers himself and then inches slowly up to it. Ever so
carefully he leans towards it, his fingers grazing the
handle just as -

The lid flies open! Hunter roars and springs out!

Glen screams and goes tumbling backwards into another DISPLAY
CASKET.

Carmella, Grandma and the mortician coming flying over to see
what the commotion is.

The casket sways perilously on its stand.

Glen jumps to his feet to save it.

But then - as if an act of God - the swaying just stops.

A wave of relief pours over everyone.

Then - a soft, but distinct CRACKLING. It grows louder. The
legs of the casket-stand are giving out. It starts to go
over.

Uncle Glen claws helplessly at the shiny box.

It CRASHES THUNDEROUSLY to the floor.

He dives to the ground, searching it up and down for damage.

UNCLE GLEN

Would you believe it - not a
scratch on it!

Just then, THREE GIANT CRACKS splinter up the side.

Glen looks up at the mortician, who stands over him, arms
crossed.

UNCLE GLEN

That can be sanded out.

EXT. BURBANK BLVD - DAY

A group of GANG-MEMBERS pull up to a red light in a LOWERED CHEVY.

As Grandma's Cadillac crawls up in the next lane, their heads turn in unison to observe the GIANT BROKEN CASKET tied to her roof.

INT. GRANDMA'S CADILLAC - CONTINUOUS

No one says a word.

Glen tries to lighten the mood.

UNCLE GLEN
(Spotting a Jack in the Box)
Hey, 2.99 Philly Cheese Steak on
Tuesdays.

Grandma shoots him a disgusted look.

INT. OFFICE - DAY

Ryden lies on a couch.

RYDEN
So I guess I just thought things
would be easier. It's been a really
big adjustment - moving back in,
and I'm still getting used to it.

THERAPIST (O.S.)
Do jou fill ass eef jour zoul wants
to commit awn auct auf spiritual
homicide?

Ryden thinks a second, then sits up.

RYDEN
What kind of question is that? And
why do you have to talk in that
voice?

WHIP PAN TO REVEAL:

WALTER, sitting behind a large oak desk, dressed as a traditional psychotherapist, in a three piece suit and tiny, round glasses.

In front of him is a psycho analysis print-out from the Internet.

WALTER
(still with accent)
Answer zee question, please.

RYDEN
Dad, this isn't working. If I have
to talk to a shrink, for god's
sake, at least get me an actual
shrink.

Walter takes his glasses off.

WALTER
I'm not paying hundreds of dollars
for some jackass' kid's Bar
Mitzvah! I'm not!

RYDEN
Fine, but I'm not doing this.

WALTER
Ryden.

She walks out of the room.

WALTER
Ryden!

He's about to go after her, but catches a glimpse of himself
in a mirror. He likes what he sees. He puts the glasses back
on, strikes a scholarly pose.

INT. RYDEN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Ryden reads at her bed.

The door swings open and Glen pops inside.

UNCLE GLEN
Can you keep a secret?

She doesn't know if she wants to.

RYDEN
Okay?

Glen dangles a small velvet bag in front of her teasingly. He
turns it over, dropping THREE BLUE STONES into Ryden's palm.

UNCLE GLEN
Got an early shipment. Paid a grand
each for these suckers. They're
worth ten times that.

She turns the stones over in her palm.

RYDEN
Nice.

UNCLE GLEN
Going on Ebay next week. Don't tell
your dad, I'm gonna surprise him.

He rubs his hands together, excited.

UNCLE GLEN
Hey, put them someplace safe for
me?

RYDEN
I don't really-

UNCLE GLEN
Just don't forget where, eh?

He giggles like a school girl and leaves the room just as
Adam approaches.

ADAM
What's up, boss?

He high-fives Glen.

UNCLE GLEN
Top secret, brother-man.

Glen pretends to seal his lips and then scampers off.

ADAM
Right on. Okay.

He looks to Ryden for an explanation. She shrugs.

ADAM
Got something for you.

He steps into the light and Ryden is taken aback a moment.
He's all cleaned up - collared shirt, shaved. He looks good.
Surprisingly good.

RYDEN
Oh yeah?

She fixes her hair, sits up a little straighter.

ADAM
What's that?

She turns the book over.

RYDEN
Nothing. What's going on?

He flips it back over: "God Loves You, Do *YOU* Love you?"

RYDEN
It's been a long day.

ADAM
Something told me that when I drove
up.

He peels back her curtain to reveal the front yard - the
CASKET perched in the middle of the lawn.

RYDEN
I'll explain later.

ADAM
I love this fucking family.

Ryden rolls her eyes.

ADAM
So, a job.

He sits down on the edge of her bed and pulls a FLYER out of
his bag, hands it to her.

ADAM
I don't know if it's good or
shitty, but it says thirty bucks an
hour and the best part - you don't
need a car, you can work from home.

She's clearly touched.

RYDEN
Oh, thanks.

She stares at him a moment. With his sharp, pressed collar,
he looks more savvy stockbroker than misunderstood artist.

RYDEN
You look nice tonight.

ADAM

Sure I'll sleep with you.

She shoves him with the ball of her foot.

RYDEN

I was trying to be sincere.

ADAM

Your feet are freezing. It's ninety degrees out and your feet are freezing.

RYDEN

My feet are always cold, I have the feet of an 80-year-old man.

He cups his hands around them, rubbing his palms over them vigorously.

RYDEN

Oh yeah, more of that.

Scooping them onto his lap, he presses his thumbs into the soft bottoms of her feet.

RYDEN

Oh god, that's...that's...

She tilts her back, closing her eyes.

His fingers work carefully through the arches, the balls, rubbing the length of each toe.

RYDEN

...so good.

They glide slowly across the long, fine bones in the tops of her feet.

Ryden sighs gently, her body loosening into dead weight.

Adam glances up at her --

Her delicate collar bone rising and falling with each breath, the soft strands of hair tucked behind her tiny pink ear.

She is beautiful.

Frustratingly beautiful. He looks back down at her feet.

Mapping the joints of her ankles, he reads the intricate bones like braille.

He runs his eyes along the smooth, buttery length of her legs.

After a moment's hesitation, his hands begin to trail her calves.

Ryden's eyes drift slightly open and follow his fingertips lightly tracing her muscles up and down.

She swallows deeply.

He grazes the knee, and a chill runs over her.

For several moments he draws circles on the round, flat bone - threatening to cross the threshold from knee to thigh.

Ryden closes her eyes again, her heart pounding hard.

Just then, a Adam's cell phone RINGS.

They move quickly apart, avoiding each other's eyes.

He picks up the phone.

ADAM
I'm on my way.

He checks his watch.

ADAM
I know, okay. I'm on my way.

He ends the call.

ADAM
My dad. I'm working tonight.

RYDEN
Oh. What time?

ADAM
Nine.

Ryden glances at the clock: 9:17.

RYDEN
You better get going.

ADAM
Yeah.

He nods his head but doesn't move.

Their gears turn hard, both struggling to crank out a sentence.

RYDEN
Alright.

ADAM
Okay.

He gets up, heads for the door.

ADAM
Oh, I've got that gig Friday if you
wanna go.

RYDEN
Yeah. Yeah, of course.

ADAM
Cool. I'll pick you up at eight.

RYDEN
Okay.

He nods.

ADAM
Okay.

She nods.

RYDEN
Okay.

He nods.

ADAM
'Kay.

Ryden watches the door close behind him. She lets out a breath, not sure what just took place.

Picking up the little bag of jewels, she thinks for a second, then nestles it in her underwear drawer.

The door suddenly swings back open.

ADAM
Almost forgot.

He pulls something out of his bag, tosses it to her.

Ryden catches it: A HALF-MELTED KLONDIKE BAR.

She smiles, the gesture not lost.

He winks and disappears out the door again.

INT. MALBY GARAGE - DAY

Ryden looks on anxiously as Glen pops the hood of her car.

In toddles Walter, donning a brand new pair of authentic MECHANIC COVER-ALLS and matching cap.

He rubs his hands together.

WALTER

Let's get this baby on the road,
huh?

He smiles, slipping his fingers under the hood to raise it.

But it won't budge.

Walter pulls harder.

He shakes it a little. Then a little more.

Nothing.

He jerks it violently up and down, yanking with all his might.

Still no luck.

He clears his throat.

Ryden and Glen look on nervously.

WALTER

Well give me a goddamn hand, will
you?

Glen and Ryden rush to his side. The three of them kneel in front of the car, staring dumbly into the inch-wide crack.

UNCLE GLEN

I think it's stuck.

WALTER

No shit, Sherlock.

Walter turns over, laying on his back to get a look underneath.

Reaching his hand up inside, he notices something absolutely horrifying.

WALTER

Oh No!!

RYDEN

What?

WALTER

Jesus Christ! Look at that!

RYDEN

What?!

He points to a big black smudge on his cover-all sleeve.

WALTER

My suit's all dirty.

Ryden clenches her teeth.

Hunter runs in carrying a FLYER.

HUNTER

Can we build a box car?! The
derby's next month.

WALTER

Not now.

HUNTER

Pretty please?

WALTER

Don't say pretty please, you sound
like a queer.

Just then Glen manages to lift the hood.

UNCLE GLEN

Bingo!

Walter jumps up and dusts himself off.

WALTER

Alright, I'm gonna to fire her up.
You let me know what happens.

Hunter slumps off, dejected.

Walter squeezes into the driver's seat and fires her right
up.

Glen and Ryden stare into a sea of automobile innards, looking for anything abnormal.

Out of the corner of her eye, Ryden notices DAVID'S CAT trotting across their driveway once again, sniffing around for the best place to do his business.

WALTER

Okay, I'm gonna give her some gas.

Glen nods and the engine roars, all the cogs pulsing.

Walter gives it another push.

The cat puckers, beginning to deposit its load.

WALTER

ANYTHING WEIRD?!

Glen and Ryden shrug.

Walter hits it again, this time hard, the engine howling.

Then suddenly: the unsettling sounds of GROANING GEARS and SCREECHING TIRES.

The car flies backwards out of the garage. It tears down the driveway, across the street, and up over the adjacent curb, where it finally grinds to a stop, a puff of smoke rising from the engine.

EXT. DRIVEWAY - MINUTES LATER

The entire Malby family stands silently around a SMEAR OF GRAY FUR.

A moment passes.

CARMELLA

Think that's gonna leave a stain?

Nobody laughs.

CARMELLA

Not funny. Okay.

GRANDMA MAUREEN

It's just not fair...

Grandma wipes away a tear.

GRANDMA MAUREEN

There you are, just this innocent
little thing who'd never even hurt
a fly...

Glen shakes his head mournfully.

GRANDMA MAUREEN

And then one day your own son turns
out to be a murderer.

WALTER

Oh come on, I didn't mean to do it!

GRANDMA MAUREEN

Could I have been a better mother?
I breast fed you 'til my nipples
bled...

WALTER

It was an accident!
(to Ryden)
Why didn't you tell me the cat was
behind me?

RYDEN

How is this my fault?

WALTER

You have to keep your eyes open.
Scanning, constantly scanning.

His eyeballs dart around to demonstrate.

RYDEN

You told me to look at the engine.

WALTER

I'm sorry you can't do two things
at once.

RYDEN

This is ridiculous, you hated that
cat!

WALTER

Keep your voice down.

UNCLE GLEN

You did say something about
flattening -

WALTER
It was a goddamn accident!

CARMELLA
Alright, either way, somebody needs
to go break the news.

The whole family looks at Walter.

He glances over at David's, his face growing pale at the
thought.

He takes a breath and then makes his way across the yard, the
family watching him anxiously.

CARMELLA
Ryden, why don't you go with him?

RYDEN
What? No.

CARMELLA
Look at him, come on.

Walter approaches the edge of David's driveway, his shoulders
hanging sadly.

RYDEN
No, I'm not going. No. There's no
way.

EXT. DAVID'S FRONT DOOR - CONTINUOUS

Ryden and Walter exchange a nervous look.

Walter takes a deep breath and then knocks a la "Dum da da
dum dum. Dum DUM!"

Ryden can't believe her ears.

RYDEN
(whispering)
Dad!

WALTER
(clueless)
What?

RYDEN
Why would you do that?

WALTER

Do what?

RYDEN

That knock!

WALTER

What?

RYDEN

Of all the knocks - *that one*, you think *that one* best says "We're sorry we killed your cat"?

WALTER

All the knocks? How many do you think there are? (then) No really, how many do you think there are?

Ryden resigns.

RYDEN

Let's just make this brief, okay?

WALTER

Fine.

The door creaks open and David's face appears in the crack, squinting at the harsh daylight.

Ryden's heart skips a beat.

DAVID

Hello?

WALTER

Your cat's dead.

Ryden cringes.

WALTER

I ran it over. On accident.

Walter smiles apologetically.

RYDEN

We're really sorry. We didn't mean for it to happen, we -

DAVID

Where is he?

EXT. DAVID'S BACKYARD - LATER

Funeral music pipes dramatically as we gaze into a GIANT DIRT HOLE.

The family stands over it. Ryden watches David out of the corner of her eye.

Walter enters carrying a LARGE PIZZA BOX.

The word DOMINO'S has been crossed out, "R.I.P. MR. TOODLES" scrawled above it.

Off Carmella's nod, he kneels to place the box in the hole.

But it's too big to fit.

He spins it around, trying various angles.

No luck.

He uses the HAND TROWEL to widen the hole.

The box still won't fit.

Giving up, he pounds the cardboard down with two hands, then uses his foot to stuff it in its final resting place.

Ryden winces with embarrassment.

Grandma sees a flash of her future and clutches her heart.

As Walter fills the hole, he notices a PIZZA COUPON stapled to the lid. He thinks twice, then quickly tears it off and shoves it in his shirt pocket.

Glen and Walter finish shoveling the dirt in silence.

WALTER

Well, that about does it. Call me
if you, uh, have any problems or...

He hands David his card, not sure how else to end such an exchange.

He signals the family to move out.

Ryden hesitates, and then begins to file out with the rest of the group.

She glances back at David.

He stands alone at the new grave.

She can't bear it. She heads back.

RYDEN

Listen, I'm really sorry.

David looks up.

RYDEN

I can't tell you how sorry I am. About everything. About your poor cat, about that horrendous thing that just took place, really about my lunatic father in general. I'm sorry about the time he chased you down the street with a weedwhacker, and the time my grandma called the police because your sprinklers sprayed her car. I'm sorry you had to move in next to a family of complete weirdos. I'm sorry I didn't say I'm sorry earlier. I don't know how you've put up with all of it. I mean, it's been almost a week and you haven't even complained about the coffin we have sitting in the middle of our front lawn.

David smiles.

DAVID

Well, the craftsmanship is quite nice.

Ryden laughs.

RYDEN

It was hand-made. By the pope, I hear.

He smiles.

A beat.

DAVID

You want some breakfast?

RYDEN

Right now?

It's almost dark out.

INT. DAVID'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

David stands over a hot frying pan with a cup of pancake batter in one hand.

DAVID
Now the key here is flipping at the exact right moment. It's a science, really.

Ryden watches intently as he gingerly flips the pancake.

RYDEN
Well done.

DAVID
Bullseye.

RYDEN
Bravo.

She's flirting it up.

DAVID
Let's play a game.

RYDEN
A game?

DAVID
You want to?

RYDEN
Okay.

He may be the sexiest man alive.

DAVID
Alright. I'm going to make a cake in the shape of something, you have to guess what it is. Pancake Pictionary. Are you ready?

RYDEN
I'm ready.

DAVID
Close your eyes.

RYDEN
Closed.

David artfully pours the batter into the pan.

DAVID
Right then. No cheating. Almost
ready. (then) Okay.

Ryden looks into the pot: a big squiggly blob.

RYDEN
Ummm? Do I get a hint.

DAVID
It's a living creature.

RYDEN
Hmm. Is it...is it...David
Hasslehoff?

DAVID
Not fair. You've played this game
before.

Ryden laughs.

DAVID
Okay, fine. It's a bunny rabbit.

Ryden looks at it again.

RYDEN
Where are its ears?

DAVID
Um. Tragic accident. Had to be
amputated.

RYDEN
Ah. And it's feet?

DAVID
Yeah. Born without them.

RYDEN
Oh no.

DAVID
Oh yes. Really quite sad.

RYDEN
And what's this long thing?

She points to a finger-like part coming off the side of the
pancake.

David smiles.

DAVID
When God closes a door, he always
opens a window.

Ryden smiles.

RYDEN
Then I suppose he's got a very
big...heart.

DAVID
Mmm. Enormous.

They exchange a smirk.

INT. DAVID'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

They sit silently chewing for a moment.

RYDEN
It's weird. You've lived here ten
years and this is the first time
I've seen the inside of your house.

DAVID
Yeah. Kind of a shit-hole, isn't
it?

RYDEN
It's got character. You have a lot
of...stuff. Like that, what's that?

She points to a BIG HEAP OF FLORAL-PRINT PLASTIC.

DAVID
That? A couch.

RYDEN
A couch?

David walks over and presses a button that begins inflating
the plastic.

DAVID
Inflate-a-couch is half the price
of a regular sofa, conveniently
stores in the closet or under the
bed, and can even be used as a
flotation device in case of a
flood.

He sits down on it and taps the spot next to him.

DAVID
Go ahead, try it.

Ryden sits down tentatively.

DAVID
What do you think?

RYDEN
It's...neat.

DAVID
It's a stinking heap of crap is
what it is.

Ryden laughs.

RYDEN
Why'd you buy it, then?

DAVID
I didn't. I directed the
infomercial.

RYDEN
Oh, wow. So that's what you do.
That sounds interesting.

DAVID
It is, it really is. No. No, come
to think of it, it's quite
miserable actually.

RYDEN
Really?

He scoops a clump of eggs on her plate.

DAVID
Mmm, horrendous. The devil. Wine?

He holds up a bottle of pinot. She raises her glass.

RYDEN
So why did you start doing it?

DAVID
Well, I was only fifteen, she was
older and quite a nasty little
whore. Oh, oh, the infomercials?
Right, right.

With the accent, even inappropriate comments come off charming.

DAVID

I dunno. Wanted to be a big famous movie director, needed a work visa, seemed like a good idea at the time.

RYDEN

Ah, I see.

DAVID

Then ten years later, I'm doing Bo-Flex and Winsor Pilates and can't walk away quite as easily.

RYDEN

I can see how that happens.

DAVID

But you.

He points his fork at her with mock suspicion.

RYDEN

But me.

DAVID

What is Ryden Malby doing with her life?

RYDEN

Well, it's all so exhilarating, David. You never really know what crazy thing I'll be up to.

She swirls her wine flirtatiously.

DAVID

Do enlighten me.

RYDEN

Tonight for instance, I might go for a few thrilling rounds of computer solitaire. Maybe clip my toenails. Oh yes, and of course there's the Xena Warrior Princess marathon at nine. I should probably tune in, my uncle is the fan club president.

He smirks.

DAVID

I didn't know I was living next to such a distinguished figure.

RYDEN

We try to keep it on the D-L.

They grin, their eyes fixed on each other for a long moment.

Ryden looks away, gulps down more wine to calm the nerves.

RYDEN

I guess the whole post-graduation thing just isn't exactly what I'd planned.

He looks at her curiously.

RYDEN

I was just so sure I'd be doing something incredible by now. Or at least doing something.

DAVID

Nothing is ever exactly how we plan. A few years ago I was absolutely sure I was going to hit it big and retire young. Absolutely certain of it. Made an offer on little condo right on the southern coast of Mexico. Everything.

RYDEN

What happened?

DAVID

A feature-length documentary on rare British coins was not the break-out hit I thought it would be.

Ryden laughs.

DAVID

I know right now isn't easy, but there is a bright side to all of this.

He places his hand delicately over hers. She's putty, complete putty.

RYDEN

Yeah, what's that?

DAVID

Well, to start, you've got
incredible ears.

RYDEN

Ears? My ears?

DAVID

Oh they're just brilliant. You know
how some people have that droop,
that sort of tragic dangling
earlobe thing? Yours, not so. No.
Not saggy or crusty or veiny or bat-
like. Not a single flaw. Just the
perfect, quintessential ears.

She stares at him. A moment of awe.

Then, as if suddenly possessed, she leans in and kisses him
passionately.

They begin groping ravenously, a mess of lips and hands and
more lips. Her hands slide up his shirt, then his up hers.

We stay on Ryden's face as he kisses down the length of her
chest to her belly button.

And then lower.

She is shy, unsure it should go this far.

RYDEN

(tentative) Oh, um...

But then...

RYDEN

(surprised) Ohhh.

...what he's doing is absolute heaven.

EXT. DAVID'S FRONT DOOR - CONTINUOUS

The Malby family comes up the driveway, Carmella carrying a
TRAY OF COOKIES.

WALTER

But why *those* cookies?

CARMELLA

I'll buy you more goddamn cookies.

WALTER

I just don't understand. I mean,
why not give him something I don't
eat?

CARMELLA

Walter. Shut the fuck up about the
fucking cookies. (to Hunter) Pardon
me.

HUNTER

(shrugging) I don't give a fuck.

Grandma rolls her eyes. It's beyond repair.

UNCLE GLEN

Where's Ryden?

GRANDMA MAUREEN

She's paying him her condolences.
That's what civilized people do.

INT. DAVID'S LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

ANGLE ON: Ryden's face, head cocked back, eyes closed and
mouth open.

RYDEN

Ahhh. Ooowwwaahhh.

She grips the inflatable sofa.

EXT. DAVID'S FRONT DOOR - CONTINUOUS

Walter raises his hand to knock, but stops just short,
hearing something strange coming from inside the house.

He listens closer.

WALTER

What in the hell!

He glances back at the family, then on instinct, busts
through the door.

A PG shot from the back of the Inflate-A-Couch: Ryden's head
cocked back in ecstasy. David's head jerks up from her lap.

DAVID

Oh, fuck me.

CARMELLA
I would, but it looks like my kid's
beat me to it.

INT. MALBY LIVING ROOM - LATER

Walter and Ryden sit silently across from one another.

Ryden searches for something to say. Nothing seems
appropriate.

RYDEN
Listen, dad, I know that was...
um...

WALTER
Tell me you used a goddamn rubber.

RYDEN
What?

WALTER
Tell me you used one.

RYDEN
What are you talking about? We
didn't - I didn't -

WALTER
Herpes is no picnic. And it's not a
river-rafting trip either, like
those commercials make you think.

RYDEN
(laughing) What?

She can't believe her ears.

WALTER
Oh that's funny, huh? Ha ha ha,
I've got a big oozing sore on my
private!

He claps his hands with mock joy.

WALTER
Isn't life great?! Aren't I a
success?!

RYDEN
Alright, okay.

WALTER
No more. That's it.

RYDEN
What do you mean 'no more, that's it'?

WALTER
I mean ix-nay on his oodle-day.

RYDEN
Oodle-day?

WALTER
Doodle. His pecker. His dangling
man-finger?

He wiggles his finger in front of his crotch.

Ryden cringes.

RYDEN
You've gone crazy. You've gone
completely crazy.

WALTER
You're not seeing that scum bag
again.

RYDEN
Where do you get off calling him
that? You don't even know him.

WALTER
I know enough. He's a weirdo.

RYDEN
That's interesting. Grandma's
casket is on our front lawn, and
he's the weirdo?

Walter considers the argument.

WALTER
It hasn't even been there a week.

RYDEN
Oh right, because a coffin in the
yard for six days - no problem. But
seven - and oh, the neighbors will
start talking!

WALTER

You're not seeing him again, and
that's it!

RYDEN

Or you're going to what? Ground me?
You're forgetting I'm 22 years old.

No one talks to Walter this way.

WALTER

And you're forgetting you live in
my goddamn house!

RYDEN

Trust me, I'm trying my best to
change that.

Ryden runs out the front door, slamming it behind her.

EXT. MALBY HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

She gets as far as the edge of the patio when she notices
it's kind of cold. And she has no where to go. And even if
she did, she has no way to get there.

INT. MALBY LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Ryden slams the front door again behind her, and runs
upstairs.

EXT. CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

Ryden checks the suite number above the door, and then
glances at the JOB AD FLYER Adam gave her earlier:

"Fortune 500 Company seeks creative, out-going grads. \$30/HR
to start."

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - CONTINUOUS

A podium set before several rows of folding chairs occupied
by various 20-SOMETHING JOB HOPEFULS, each appropriately
starched and groomed.

Ryden finds a seat just as the SPEAKER (55) steps up behind
the podium.

SPEAKER

Let's get right down to business folks. What would you say if I told you that with little or no experience, you could be making a hundred thousand dollars a year?

The interviewees offer up a tentatively positive response.

SPEAKER

Don't be shy - what would you think?

More people nod their heads. Ryden hesitates, then nods along with them.

SPEAKER

Sounds like a good deal, right? Well, what if I also told you that you'd be working for a company that more than quadruples its sales each year, meaning in two years, you would be making nearly half a million dollars, and that you could do your job from any single location in the world - your choice.

The audience likes the sound of this. Ryden's beginning to buy it, too.

SPEAKER

What I'm about to show you will change- your- life. Mark it on your calendars friends, today is the first day of your financial freedom.

Ryden glows. There is light at the end of the tunnel.

CUT TO:

C.U. on A GIANT KNIFE cutting through the tread of a BIG BLACK SNOW BOOT.

SPEAKER

It's this simple folks!

The SPEAKER, now sweaty and red in the face, stands behind a demo table full of CUTCO KNIVES and various seemingly uncuttable objects waiting to be enthusiastically sawed in two.

SPEAKER

Our knives even cut through steel!

He cuts a PENNY right it two.

Ryden observes tentatively. Not exactly what she imagined.

She glances over at two interviewees next to her who still appear genuinely enthused.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - LATER

People scatter about, anxiously filling out applications.

Ryden hands hers to the speaker.

SPEAKER

Fantastic. Welcome aboard! Did you get your demos?

RYDEN

My demos?

SPEAKER

Your demonstration knives?

RYDEN

Oh. No, I guess I'll need those, too.

He sets a wooden CASE OF KNIVES on the table, flashes a smarmy smile.

RYDEN

Thanks.

Ryden begins to walk away with the knives.

SPEAKER

How will you be paying for them?

RYDEN

Paying for them? I thought I was selling them.

He chuckles.

SPEAKER

You have to purchase your demo knives.

RYDEN
They're four hundred dollars.

SPEAKER
Three ninety five. Check or credit?

Ryden is a deer in the headlights.

A beat as she wonders if this is a big mistake.

RYDEN
Credit.

INT. CARMELLA'S ASTROVAN - DAY

Ryden sits in her mom's parked Astrovan, Adam on the cell phone.

Intercutting--

ADAM
Senior Account Executive, huh?
Nice!

RYDEN
Yeah. Thanks again for the flyer.

She eyes the case of knives on the passenger seat.

ADAM
Not necessary. I'll feel thanked enough when you rip off your underwear and fling it on stage tonight.

RYDEN
That's right, the show's tonight.

ADAM
You bet it is.

RYDEN
Well I gotta do laundry then -- unless you're cool with big beige mama-briefs hanging from the neck of your guitar.

A beat.

ADAM

Do you know how many perfectly good fantasies you just destroyed with that comment?

She laughs.

ADAM

Listen, I'll pick you up early, we'll celebrate your new job with a nice dinner. I mean nice, I'm talking multiple forks and everything. Wine, cheese, maybe even some of that tar tar bullshit.

RYDEN

That'll be nice.

ADAM

It'll be fan-fuckin-tastic is what it'll be.

She smiles.

RYDEN

I'll see you tonight.

ADAM

Bye.

RYDEN

Oh hey.

ADAM

Yeah?

A pause.

RYDEN

Wear that outfit you had on the other night.

She's out on a limb. And he knows it.

ADAM

Mmm, so she digs the collar.

She rolls her eyes, a little embarrassed.

ADAM

Don't be ashamed. Every girl's crazy 'bout a sharp dressed man --

She shakes her head, cutting him off -

RYDEN

Byyyye.

EXT. RESIDENTIAL STREET - CONTINUOUS

Ryden stares down a row of endless suburban tract homes, takes a deep breath and walks towards the first house.

EXT. FRONT DOOR #1 - DAY

She rings the doorbell.

A WOMAN IN A NIGHTGOWN opens the door.

RYDEN

(obviously rehearsed)
Hi, my name's Ryden and I'd like to introduce you to an exciting new product. If I can just come in for a moment, I'll give you a really terrific demonstration.

WOMAN IN NIGHTGOWN

Really?

The woman seems genuinely enthused. This is easier than she thought.

RYDEN

Yeah!

WOMAN IN NIGHTGOWN

No.

The door slams shut.

Ryden hangs there, high and dry.

EXT. FRONT DOOR #2 - DAY

Ryden knocks on the door, shifting her weight nervously.

An OLD MAN peaks through a crack in the door.

RYDEN

Hi, sorry to bother you, but my name's Ryden and if I can just...

He closes the door mid-sentence.

RYDEN

'kay.

She takes a deep breath, trying not to let her spirits down.

EXT. FRONT DOOR #3 - DAY

MAN

Not interested.

EXT. FRONT DOOR #4 - DAY

WOMAN

Nope.

EXT. FRONT DOOR #5 - DAY

MAN

Sorry.

EXT. FRONT DOOR #6

WOMAN

Uh-uh.

EXT. FRONT DOOR #7 - DAY

OLD MAN

Sure, come on in, honey...

An OLD CREEPY PERVERT stands in the doorway oggling Ryden.

It's the type of house looks like it has a cage in the basement.

RYDEN

Um. Gotta go.

Ryden runs away down the driveway.

INT. WOMAN'S KITCHEN - DAY

Ryden sits at a kitchen table, knives spread-out, finally giving a demonstration.

RYDEN

They'll never need to be sharpened,
they have a lifetime warranty, and
they even cut through metal!

She cuts a PENNY in half just the way the speaker did.

RYDEN

So? What do you think?

Pan over to reveal her first "client": A 120-YEAR-OLD WOMAN
in a wheelchair hooked up to an oxygen tank, practically
comatose.

She doesn't blink an eye. Just the sound of her lungs being
artificially pumped with air.

INT. RYDEN'S ROOM - NIGHT

Ryden sits on her bed, staring blankly at her case of knives.
What did she get herself into?

She pulls out one of the knives and runs the blade lightly
along her finger tip.

Her eyes turn red and fill up. She feels silly for crying,
but just can't hold it together.

DAVID

Psst.

David stands in the doorway. She lights up.

RYDEN

What are you doing here?

DAVID

Shhh.

He goes to her, touches her lips.

DAVID

Let's go.

RYDEN

Go?

DAVID

I've got sixteen hours of freedom
before it's back to close-ups of
automatic cheese graters. Help me
make it good.

INT. THEATRE - NIGHT

Ryden and David sit in a crowded theater watching ISN'T IT ROMANTIC as if they were the only two people in the whole place.

Ryden snuggles up to him, kisses his cheek.

INT. SUSHI BAR - NIGHT

David points to a WHOLE BABY CRAWFISH (legs, eyeballs, the whole shebang).

Ryden shakes her head adamantly. David laughs and signals the chef.

He hand-feeds the crawfish to Ryden. A look of glorious panic as she crunches down.

David laughs, pulling her close.

EXT. FLOWER SHOP - NIGHT

Adam walks out of a flower shop with a MYLAR BALLOON that reads "Congrats!"

He passes the store next door, and notices in the window a PAIR OF FUZZY SOCKS WITH THE INDIVIDUAL TOES CUT OUT, and a sign next to it that reads "*Cold Feet? Problem solved!*"

He smiles and goes in.

EXT. BRENNAN'S, VENICE (HOME OF THE TURTLE RACES) - NIGHT

David and Ryden jump up and down, cheering on their RACING TURTLE, who's being schooled by all the other turtles.

They commiserate their loss with a few rounds of shots, and a drunken rendition of "Billy Jean" on Karaoke.

EXT. SANTA MONICA BEACH - NIGHT

David finishes rolling up his jeans, and then *dives* fully clothed into the surf.

Ryden laughs at him from the edge. David chases her down the beach, picking her up fireman-style and tossing her into the ocean.

IN THE WATER

They splash, they sing, they even attempt the Dirty Dancing Swan-lift...and fail miserably.

Ryden falls laughing into David's arms.

As they kiss, we pull back across the sand to their pile of belongings, REVEALING:

RYDEN'S CELL PHONE. Adam's name blinks silently on the caller ID. 6 Missed Calls.

INT. THE GYPSY DEN - CONTINUOUS

Adam hangs up his cell phone and eyes his audience wearily:

One DRUNK ELDERLY COUPLE, a few TRUCK DRIVERS, and a table of IMMIGRANT WORKERS who came for the cheap beer.

MANAGER
You're on in five.

Adam nods, gulping down the last of his drink.

EXT. SANTA MONICA BEACH - NIGHT

They huddle under blankets, making out next to a ROARING BONFIRE.

RYDEN
You smell so good.

DAVID
Mmmm.

RYDEN
You smell like...dryer sheets.

DAVID
I do?

RYDEN
I love those things.

DAVID
Me too.

RYDEN
Yeah?

DAVID

Yeah.

Yet another thing that makes him perfect.

They gaze at each other adoringly.

RYDEN

I haven't had a night like this in
a long time.

DAVID

I haven't had a night like this.

Ryden smiles, rolling over on top of him.

EXT. DAVID'S DRIVEWAY - NIGHT

DAVID

Sure you can't come in?

RYDEN

My dad...

DAVID

Right. Well, I guess I'll see you
after the shoot then. I fly back
next week.

RYDEN

Can't wait.

He kisses her gently.

EXT. STREET - CONTINUOUS

Adam's car pulls up in front of the Malby's house.

From his P.O.V., two people finish an exquisite kiss.

The woman turns and waves goodbye, and Adam realizes it's
Ryden.

EXT. DAVID'S DRIVEWAY - CONTINUOUS

As she cuts across the grass, Ryden notices Adam's car.
Everything dawns on her.

She runs up to the window.

RYDEN

Oh my god, I'm such an idiot, I completely forgot!

ADAM

Whatever, it's cool.

Playing it off.

RYDEN

I'm so sorry. I can't believe it slipped my mind.

ADAM

It's fine.

RYDEN

How did it go?

ADAM

It went...it went really well. Great show, great turn out.

RYDEN

I'm so bummed I missed it. And our dinner, I missed our fancy dinner!

ADAM

Really, you're getting overly worked up about this, Ryden. It's cool, you were busy hanging out with your, um, middle-aged neighbor I guess? And by the way, were you ever going to mention you're fucking someone our parents' age, or do we not talk about things like, oh I don't know, our lives?

Ryden swallows. Stung.

RYDEN

I'm not...it isn't...this is very...

ADAM

You know, I love listening to you stumble through the English language, but I'm actually working the graveyard in -

Consulting his watch -

ADAM
Two minutes ago.

RYDEN
You're working at the store?

ADAM
No, the cemetery. I'm literally digging graves. Did I forget to tell you that? Sorry.

He starts the ignition.

RYDEN
Wait, hold on a second.

ADAM
I'm late. But thanks for the chat.
It was awesome.

RYDEN
Wait, Adam.

He drives off.

INT. WALTER AND CARMELLA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Ryden creeps by Walter who snores deeply, a pair of headphones on his ears.

A nearby cassette case reveals his book on tape: ULTIMATE NINJA SKILLS for DUMMIES. He cradles a pair of NUNCHUCKS.

Ryden grabs the CAR KEYS and heads for the door.

INT. WALTER'S SUBURBAN - NIGHT

Ryden drives along, trying to get Adam on his cell.

ADAM (VOICEMAIL)
It's Adam. Leave your name, number, a message, and some sort of inspirational quote. That'd be nice.

She hangs up and dials again.

ADAM (VOICEMAIL)
It's Adam. Leave your name, num-

She hangs up, turning the corner into:

EXT. VON'S PARKING LOT - CONTINUOUS

She spots Adam walking towards the front and throws it into park in the main aisle.

RYDEN

Adam.

ADAM

What are you doing here?

RYDEN

This is ridiculous.

ADAM

Yes, it is. Go home.

He begins to walk away.

RYDEN

Wait, stop!

ADAM

What? What do you want me to do?

RYDEN

You're acting like an asshole.

ADAM

Well I deeply apologize, okay?

RYDEN

What is your problem?

ADAM

I don't have a problem. The people waiting for me to scan their salad dressing do.

RYDEN

I'm very sorry that I forgot about the show.

ADAM

For the last time, I don't care about the stupid show!

He walks into the store, Ryden follows and we are:

INT. VON'S SUPERMARKET - CONTINUOUS

RYDEN

What is it then? What? My neighbor?
I'm sorry I didn't tell you, it all
happened really fast and it's all
very weird. Weird in a weirdly good
way.

He turns around.

ADAM

What's that supposed to mean?

RYDEN

I don't really know.

ADAM

You're in love with him now? What?

RYDEN

It's all really confusing.

ADAM

How old is this guy?

RYDEN

I don't know -

ADAM

How old is he?

RYDEN

I don't know, 40? 42?

ADAM

Jesus! What is this? Some sort of
sick Oedipus complex? Like you
secretly want to bang your dad so
now you're off blowing Mr. Rogers?

RYDEN

Fuck you!

The customers are starting to look.

ADAM

Apparently, I'm not old enough.

He exits into an "EMPLOYEES ONLY" DOOR, lets it slam behind
him.

Ryden stops, stares at the closed door a moment, then turns and walks away.

She gets a few steps, then turns back around and pushes through the door.

INT. VON'S BREAKROOM - CONTINUOUS

She stops short, overhearing Adam speaking with his dad.

ADAM
I know, I'm sorry, it won't happen again.

ROY
You've said that before.

ADAM
I mean it this time, I'm sorry.

ROY
It's not going to work out, Adam.

ADAM
What?

He doesn't believe what he's hearing.

ROY
I'm sorry, son. I'm letting you go.

ADAM
You're kidding me.

Adam waits for him to cave, but Roy stands his ground.

He walks off, passing Ryden on his way out.

RYDEN
Adam.

He keeps walking.

INT. RYDEN'S ROOM - NIGHT

Glen sleeps soundly.

In the adjacent twin, Ryden tosses and turns, her head spinning. A haze of buzzing thoughts.

Finally, she drifts off.

INT. RYDEN'S ROOM - MORNING

A faint THUMPING.

Ryden's eyelids twitch, deep in R.E.M. sleep.

Muffled VOICES, then FOOTSTEPS.

She stirs a bit.

Suddenly, the door busts open and THREE POLICE OFFICERS burst in, GUNS drawn.

POLICE OFFICER #1
GET YOUR HANDS ON YOUR HEAD!

Ryden rockets out of bed. Glen leaps up, scared to shit. They throw their hands in the air.

Glen realizes he's wearing just his TIGHTY WHITIES. He quickly covers his crotch.

POLICE OFFICER #2
(to Glen)
ON YOUR HEAD! HANDS ON YOUR HEAD!

He whimpers and puts them back.

More OFFICERS escort Walter and Carmella down the hall. Grandma and Hunter trail behind.

An officer is a little rough with Walter.

WALTER
Cool it, buster, or I'll have my
lawyer shove it up your ass! (then)
I don't mean that in the gay way.

POLICE OFFICER #1
Which one of you is Glen Malby?

Glen freezes. A tense beat.

Grandma steps forward.

GRANDMA MAUREEN
I'm the voice of this family,
whatever you have to say, you can
say to me.

POLICE OFFICER #1
Then you're under arrest.

GRANDMA MAUREEN
(immediately)
That's him. That's Glen right
there.

POLICE OFFICER #2
This man?

GRANDMA MAUREEN
The fat one with the overbite. He
never wore his retainer.

POLICE OFFICER #1
Cuff him.

Grandma sucks in her breath.

GRANDMA MAUREEN
But he was a good son! Sure, not
the brightest or most attractive,
but I always I loved him. (then)
Sometimes.

The officers handcuff him.

POLICE OFFICER #2
You're under arrest for trafficking
stolen property on the internet.

UNCLE GLEN
What?!

Glen nearly pees himself.

POLICE OFFICER #1
You wanna tell us where those
stones are?

Glen panics, looking to Ryden.

INT. POLICE STATION - LATER

The family sits slumped in the lobby.

WALTER
What the hell else do you have
hidden in your underpants?

RYDEN
He asked me to put it somewhere.

WALTER

Christ Ryden, you don't use your noodle sometimes.

RYDEN

How was I supposed to know this would happen?

WALTER

Maybe if you told me about in the first place.

RYDEN

He said it was a surprise!

WALTER

You lied to me! And now look what's happened. An innocent man is locked up in that - that - foul, semen-speckled hell hole!

Grandma turns up her oxygen tank.

GRANDMA MAUREEN

Walter, you know I can't breathe when you say "semen-speckled."

WALTER

Sorry, I forget.

Carmella walks out of the back room.

CARMELLA

Thirty thousand dollars bail.

WALTER

What?!

CARMELLA

Or he stays in the slammer until the trial.

WALTER

I don't have it, Carmella, I don't. What are we going to do?

CARMELLA

I don't know. Where on earth would we find a blood relative with a large sum of cash just lying around?

She shoots Grandma a look.

GRANDMA MAUREEN
What are you looking at?

CARMELLA
Glen needs an advance on his inheritance.

GRANDMA MAUREEN
Not going to happen.

WALTER
It's not really a choice, mom.

GRANDMA MAUREEN
I'm telling you, it's not going to happen. It's tied up in assets. Everything's tied up in assets. The only thing liquid is Ryden's inheritance and I've been saving that for twenty years.

Everyone looks at Ryden. A wave of horror washes over her.

WALTER
How much?

GRANDMA MAUREEN
None of your business.

WALTER
How much?!

GRANDMA MAUREEN
Thirty two thousand.

INT. WALTER'S SUBURBAN - LATER

The entire family, plus a newly freed Glen, ride along.

Ryden looks like she's been hit by a bus.

UNCLE GLEN
God, look at the sky! The trees!
This experience has changed my life forever. Old Glen is dead. And New Glen would like to say...I love and care about each of you so very much.

A collective "awww".

HUNTER

New Glen is kind of a pussy, isn't he?

WALTER

Hunter!

HUNTER

When are we gonna build my box car?! I've been asking you forever.

WALTER

Do I look like I have time? Why don't you ask one of your friends to help you?

HUNTER

I don't have friends.

WALTER

Neither did Ryden most her life, but do you hear her complaining?

RYDEN

I have friends, I've always had friends.

WALTER

You have a family. Who's very thankful, by the way, for your generous contribution this afternoon.

He pats her knee. She's going to be sick.

INT. MALBY BATHROOM - NIGHT

Ryden closes the door behind her and exhales, finally away from the chaos. She climbs into the empty bathtub and shuts the shower curtain around her.

She takes a breath and then dials the phone.

"You've reached Adam. Leave your name, num--"

She hangs up. Thinks a sec. Then dials again.

RYDEN

Hi Roy, it's Ryden. Fine, thanks. Um...is Adam around? When'll he be back?

Ryden freezes.

RYDEN
What do you mean?

Begin intercutting with ROY DAVIES, at home:

ROY
Got on the plane to New York about
an hour ago. Decided grad school
wasn't such a bad idea after all.

Ryden stays frozen.

ROY
Everything worked out, classes
start next week, he got the last
space in graduate housing.

RYDEN
Oh. (then) Good.

She stares off blankly as Roy keeps talking.

INT. RYDEN'S ROOM - NIGHT

She lays in her bed, a sea of spiraling thoughts.

She glances around at her room, at what her life has become.

After a moment, she picks up the cell phone again, and dials.

INT. STAGED KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

On the counter center stage: a GIGANTIC RED PLASTIC APPLIANCE
with a flaming chili pepper logo, and the words: *ROCKIN' GUAC*
3000 printed across it. A mountain of AVOCADOS next to it.

The host, A WHITE MAN in a SOMBRERO with a PRESS-ON MUSTACHE
shoves one avocado after another into the machine's giant
funnel.

A thick stream of GREEN GOOSH vomits from the spout.

HOST
(Thick Mexican accent)
It's as easy as uno, dos, tres!
Making guacamole for your family,
or just yourself, it's always a
fiesta with Rockin'Guac! And mira,
it even -

David stands near the camera watching, a little disgusted. An AD EXEC in a suit comes over and whispers something to him. He bites his lip and nods.

DAVID

Cut.

HOST

(losing the accent)
This mustache is crap. The hairs
get in my mouth, I know for
positive I ate a couple.

He gags, picking at his tongue.

David's at the end of his rope.

DAVID

Right. Well -

David's cell phone vibrates in his pocket. He checks it: Ryden.

DAVID

We'll deal with that in a sec,
everyone take five.

The ad exec looks at his watch, annoyed.

David picks up the phone.

DAVID

Hi.

Intercutting--

RYDEN

Hey. How are you?

DAVID

Great. You?

RYDEN

Great. (then) Not great.

DAVID

Yeah, I'm not great either. I don't
know why I said that.

The AD EXEC approaches.

AD EXEC

Don't start rolling again until you talk to me.

David nods and turns aside.

DAVID

Listen, I gotta go before this guy has my bollocks on a stick. What's going on?

RYDEN

Um, nothing. Go ahead. I'll talk to you later.

DAVID

Right. Miss you.

Ryden hangs up the phone and rolls over to see GLEN, sitting on the bed clipping his toenails.

UNCLE GLEN

(Struggling to clip the big toe)
It's like it's petrified.

INT. SOUND STUDIO - CONTINUOUS

AD EXEC

I'm telling you, I gotta have more Mexican. "Andale, arriba arriba!" You know, something that gets people excited about guacamole.

DAVID

Guacamole is by nature quite exciting, Robert.

The exec stares at him.

AD EXEC

Tell me, are the smart ass comments included in your fee, or do I pay extra for that?

David doesn't say anything.

AD EXEC

And second, your shots are boring. We're not selling panty hose, Rockin' Guac is the wave of the future. Spice it up, Jesus.

(MORE)

AD EXEC (cont'd)

Like that shot in The Matrix where Keanu jumps up and the camera does a three-sixty around him. *That's* exciting. I say we do that, but instead of Keanu, it's Rockin' Guac.

David ponders how to respond to the most retardedly idiotic suggestion ever.

DAVID

You know, that's a brilliant idea. And maybe while I'm at it, I could film Rockin' Guac flying around in a big red cape, or tossing the ring into the fires of Mount Doom, or maybe, *maybe* I could hoist it up on a cross and we could have "The Passion of the Guacamole."

A beat.

AD EXEC

Do you think that's funny?

DAVID

I think you're an idiot and I quit.

He yanks off his WALKIE-TALKIE and heads for the door.

The AD EXEC is left with his mouth open.

EXT. MALBY HOUSE - MORNING

A bright, early morning.

EXT. MALBY FRONT DOOR - CONTINUOUS

A hand reaches into frame, rings the doorbell.

INT. MALBY LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Walter toddles sleepily to the door in his bathrobe.

He opens it to find: a VERY TINY, VERY FURRY MIDDLE-AGED ARAB MAN, with a suitcase in each hand.

AHMAD

Hillo! I em Ahmad!

He grins widely.

WALTER

I just got my curb painted, thanks.

AHMAD

Nice-a to mit you, too!!

WALTER

Do you not speak Ingles? No painto
el curbo.

Ahmad puts his suit cases down, and reaches out his hand out to shake.

Walter looks at the cases.

WALTER

Listen, son. Get the fuck off my porch or I'll rip the dick off your immigrant ass and serve it up stir-fry.

Ahmad shifts uncomfortably.

AHMAD

I em estudent ofa exchange?

A beat.

WALTER

Ohhhhh, exchange student,
riiiiight! I forgot about you.
(then)
Must have been a mix up, I asked
for a nineteen-year-old Swedish
girl.

He slams the door.

Ahmed stares helplessly at the closed door. After a beat it swings open.

WALTER

Just kidding! A little American
humor there!

He puts his arm around Ahmad and leads him inside.

INT. RYDEN'S ROOM - LATER

Walter wheels a THIRD TWIN BED between Ryden and Glen's, leaving about five square feet of floor space.

WALTER

Well, it might be a little snug.

Ryden watches from the doorway, practically ill.

RYDEN

You don't think it would be better
to put Ahmad with Hunter?

WALTER

The shrink says Hunter needs his
space.

RYDEN

Hunter got to go to the shrink?

WALTER

We watch that fat, bald guy
everyday after Oprah. Hey Ay-madd,
you wanna play a fun American game
called "yard work"?

Ahmad nods enthusiastically.

EXT. MALBY FRONT YARD - LATE DAY

Ryden scoops leaves into a garbage can, miserable.

Walter shows Ahmad how to use the WEED WHACKER.

WALTER

...eyes scanning, constantly
scanning...

As Ryden crosses to the other side of the yard, she stops.
The lights in David's place are on.

Her eyes light up. She spots him through a window.

Making sure Walter's out of sight, she tosses down the broom,
quickly fixes her hair in the Suburban's side-view mirror,
and then runs next door.

EXT. DAVID'S FRONT DOOR - CONTINUOUS

Ryden knocks, full of nervous excitement.

David pulls open the door.

DAVID

Hi.

RYDEN

Hey! You're home earl--

She throws her arms around him just as a STUNNING BRUNETTE walks out of his bedroom.

She pulls back.

RYDEN

Oh. I'm sorry-- I didn't realize--

Ryden suddenly puts it together.

RYDEN

I'll just go.

She takes off out the door.

DAVID

Ryden.
(to brunette)
Hang on a second.

He grabs his shoes.

EXT. MALBY STREET - CONTINUOUS

Ryden runs down the driveway, cutting across the sidewalk, but instead of heading into her parents house, she sails right past it.

Tears stream down her face as she sprints past lawns and picket fences, all the way down the street.

David hops after her down the sidewalk, trying to run and lace his tennis shoes at the same time.

EXT. RESIDENTIAL STREET - CONTINUOUS

She turns onto another street, now sobbing as she flies past PEOPLE washing cars, NEIGHBORS pulling weeds, FIVE KIDS ON BIKES.

Each of them eye her and then watch curiously as David comes running not far behind, huffing and puffing like a man his age should.

DAVID

Ryden! Ryden!

EXT. ANOTHER RESIDENTIAL STREET - CONTINUOUS

Ryden peels around another corner--

An exhausted David comes next--

Then the FIVE KIDS ON BIKES behind him, now following too--

DAVID

Ryden!

FIVE KIDS ON BIKES

RYDEN!

DAVID

Stop, Ryden!!!

FIVE KIDS ON BIKES

STOP, RYDEN!!!

David starts to cramp up.

EXT. RESIDENTIAL STREET - CONTINUOUS

David rides on one of the kid's pegs. They cycle after her Goonies-style.

Ryden looks back to notice the pack catching up with her.

David finally gets neck and neck with her.

He dives off the bike and grabs her, sending the two of them rolling into a BED OF IVY.

Ryden sits up, wiping away tears.

DAVID

Ryden--

RYDEN

It doesn't matter, I don't care!

DAVID

Ryden, she's a real estate agent.

RYDEN

I get it, *she's* employed, *I'm* not.

DAVID

No, she's selling my house.

Ryden faces him.

RYDEN

What?

DAVID

I'm going back to London.

She freezes. Not again.

RYDEN

What.

He takes a deep breath.

DAVID

This is not what I came here for.
I'm forty-one-years-old...and my
life looks very little like I'd
hoped it would.

She lock eyes with him, a moment of deep understanding.

RYDEN

This is not how I hoped my life
would look, either. Trust me. I
was planning to have a job, my own
place - with a roommate without a
unibrow.

He laughs.

DAVID

The little hairy guy's living with
you now, too?

Ryden sighs.

RYDEN

When are you leaving?

DAVID

As soon as I can. The agent's
sorting everything out.

A beat.

DAVID

I want you to go with me.

She looks in his eyes to see if he's for real.

RYDEN
Really?

DAVID
Really.

The wheels in her head visibly turn. Then, finally -

RYDEN
Okay.

DAVID
Okay?

RYDEN
Yeah. Yeah, okay.

DAVID
Okay, alright. How soon can you go?

RYDEN
Is now good?

He laughs.

RYDEN
How about 10 minutes ago?

DAVID
How's tomorrow morning?

RYDEN
Deal.

She kisses him excitedly.

DAVID
Now, can we call an ambulance, I
think I broke a few dozen things.

INT. RYDEN'S ROOM - MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT

Ahmad and Glen, curled up in twin fetal positions, snore intermittently.

Ryden's eyes snap open. She tosses the covers off.

Sneaking into the closet, she carefully removes TWO LARGE SUITCASES.

She begins quietly pulling everything out of her dresser.

INT. MALBY KITCHEN - MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT

Ryden writes a note at the kitchen table, two PACKED SUITCASES next to her.

RYDEN (V.O.)
I know you're going to think this
is crazy. And maybe it is.

INT. SHUTTLE BUS - DAWN

Ryden stares out the window at the city she's leaving behind.

RYDEN (V.O.)
But I'm tired of sitting around
waiting for my life to start.

INT. LAX - EARLY MORNING

A FLIGHT ATTENDANT takes their tickets.

RYDEN (V.O.)
I'm taking things into my own
hands. I'm moving to London.

They disappear through the loading tube.

RYDEN (V.O.)
With David.

INT. MALBY KITCHEN - LATER

The family gathers around Walter, who finishes reading the note.

RYDEN (V.O.)
I love you. I'll call you when I
get there.

Walter sets the note down, uncharacteristically calm.

GLEN
Do you want to sit down?

GRANDMA
Do you need a glass of water? Some
fresh air?

Walter grins, nodding. His legs suddenly crumble beneath him and he hits the floor with a BOOMING THUD.

CARMELLA
How 'bout a good look at the
linoleum?

INT. AIRPLANE - CONTINUOUS

Most of the passengers asleep, David and Ryden stay up getting to know each other.

DAVID
Favorite color?

RYDEN
Green.

DAVID
Biggest phobia?

RYDEN
Spiders.

DAVID
Most embarrassing moment?

RYDEN
Shit my pants on Mr. Toad's Ride.

A beat.

DAVID
Huh. (then) Biggest obsession?

She stops.

RYDEN
That's a good question. I don't
think I have one.

DAVID
Not one?

RYDEN
Well, not like some people. I mean,
like my friend Adam, when he likes
something, he eats, breathes and
craps it. Our sophomore year in
college all the guy ate was pizza.
Every damn day he ordered pizza.
(MORE)

RYDEN (cont'd)
Same toppings, too. I'd tease him
about it constantly.

She laughs thinking of it.

RYDEN
One night he was out on a date with
this girl and I snuck out to his
car and hooked one of those Dominos
delivery signs to his roof just so
he'd have to explain it to her. He
wanted to kill me. Then a couple
weeks later I get home and open the
door, and on the other side is just
this wall of cardboard. He filled
my entire room, floor to ceiling,
with pizza boxes.

She laughs.

RYDEN
That asshole. God, what an asshole.

It's clear she's having a moment.

David lets her.

DAVID
Do you see him often?

RYDEN
Adam? Oh yeah, all the time. (then)
But, he just moved to New York, and
now I'm moving, so...

She trails off.

DAVID
So...you can get on without him?

Ryden pauses.

The Fasten Seat Belt Sign DINGS and the CAPTAIN comes over
the loud speaker.

CAPTAIN (V.O.)
We're beginning our initial descent
into La Guardia. If you're
continuing on to London Heathrow,
agents will be in the lobby to
assist you...

David and Ryden buckle up.

INT. WALTER'S SUBURBAN - CONTINUOUS

The Malby family packed in the car, Walter speeds like a maniac down the freeway, one hand pressing a GIANT, DRIPPING STEAK to his swollen forehead.

He zooms around a car.

WALTER
Eat my shit, Honda prick!

From the view of a passing car, we see Walter cussing and waving his steak.

GRANDMA MAUREEN
Do you wanna lose control of the car and kill us all?!

WALTER
Quick Carmella, hold my meat.

CARMELLA
I think that's a little much in front of the family?

Glen gets it and laughs hysterically.

UNCLE GLEN
Good one! That's a good one!

Walter flings the t-bone, hitting Glen in the face.

UNCLE GLEN
Oouuh. That has a bone in it.

INT. LA GUARDIA AIRPORT RESTAURANT - DAY

Ryden and David rise from a table of finished-off lunches.

RYDEN
Think I have time to get a magazine before the next flight?

He picks up the check.

DAVID
About five minutes 'til we board. I'll take care of this and meet you at the gate.

Ryden heads out as David gets in line at the cash register.

INT. AIRPORT CONVENIENT STORE - CONTINUOUS

Ryden cuts across the lobby into the store, weaving her way through racks and racks of New York TOURIST CRAP.

She pauses on a pile of folded COLUMBIA SWEATSHIRTS.

She takes one off the shelf, holds it up a moment, then folds it back up and continues to the magazine rack.

INT. AIRPORT RESTAURANT - CONTINUOUS

David gazes at the restaurant's wall of TVs as the CASHIER runs his credit card.

Something on screen catches his attention ---

A STAGED KITCHEN that looks similar to the one David was filming earlier - only with STROBE LIGHTING and TECHNO MUSIC.

The music swells, and suddenly what we clearly recognize as The Rockin' Guac flies up in the air.

TIME FREEZES and the camera circles swiftly around it, revealing all sides of the machine.

Just as suddenly TIME UNFREEZES and it lands gently back on the counter next to a basket of avocados.

The same HOST, now dressed exactly as Keanu in The Matrix, except for the addition of a GIANT SOMBRERO, approaches the counter.

He rips off his sunglasses melodramatically.

HOST
Ay, mi corazon...

David can't believe his eyes.

DAVID
Holy fuck.

INT. AIRPORT CONVENIENT STORE - CONTINUOUS

Magazine in hand, Ryden waits in a long line at the cash register.

She checks her watch, and then glances at the cashier - a BLUE HAIR taking her sweet time.

David waves at her from the lobby, motioning toward the gate.
She nods.

Ryden checks her watch again.

Just then, a MOTHER enters the store carrying a CRYING
TODDLER on her hip.

MOTHER

I know, you're tired, aren't you?

The toddler squeals.

MOTHER

Okay, we're getting something to
make it all better.

She opens the MINI FREEZER and pulls out a KLONDIKE BAR.

The boy grabs it and immediately stops crying.

Ryden watches intrigued as he tears open the package and
happily gums at the ice cream treat.

The boy looks up at her and smiles, ice cream dripping down
his chin. Ryden smiles back.

And that's where it hits her.

INT. LA GUARDIA AIRPORT - CONTINUOUS

Ryden flies out of the convenient store into the over-crowded
terminal, scouring the sea of moving people.

She finally spots David way up ahead.

She weaves through the crowd.

RYDEN

David!

She stands on her toes, calling after him.

RYDEN

David!!!

He still can't hear her.

A MOTORIZED CART makes its way down the isle, the DRIVER
asking people over it's loud speaker to step aside.

Ryden gets an idea and jumps up onto the cart.

RYDEN
Can I borrow this?

She grabs the microphone from the driver.

DRIVER
Absolutely not.

RYDEN
(yelling into it)
DAVID! DAVID WEST!

David finally turns around.

RYDEN
I CAN'T.

He looks at her confused.

RYDEN
GET ON WITHOUT HIM. I DON'T WANT
TO.

His eyes are locked with hers, streams of people rushing by them both.

The DRIVER wrestles to get the microphone away from Ryden.
She manages to avert him, and continues speaking.

RYDEN
THANK YOU. FOR EVERYTHING.

After a beat David nods, smiles, then disappears into the crowd.

Two SECURITY GUARDS fly over to regulate, pulling Ryden off the cart.

INT. LA GUARDIA AIRPORT, NEW YORK - CONTINUOUS

Ryden sprints through the airport.

She follows an EXIT ARROW and peels around the corner.

The TWO SECURITY GUARDS come flying around the corner next.

EXT. LA GUARDIA AIRPORT, NEW YORK - CONTINUOUS

She runs out the sliding doors, down the sidewalk, diving just in time into a:

INT. TAXI CAB - CONTINUOUS

RYDEN
Columbia University!

The cab screeches off.

EXT. COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY - LATER

Ryden stands at the entrance of a giant, sprawling campus.

It's getting dark and cold.

She shivers and starts on her way.

STUDENT CENTER ---

Ryden approaches a kiosk with a sign that reads "MAPS".

Closed.

HUMANITIES CENTER ---

She stops a PASSING STUDENT.

RYDEN
Excuse me, do you know where
graduate housing is?

ENGINEERING BUILDING ---

Still lost, she stops another STUDENT.

RYDEN
Sorry, but can you tell me -

POLITICAL SCIENCE LECTURE HALL ---

RYDEN
Hi, do you know where -

CHEMISTRY LABS ---

More lost, she taps a student on the shoulder.

RYDEN
Excuse me, can -

A BUM WITH NO TEETH AND AN OOZING EYE whips around.

RYDEN

Can...I give you this banana?

She throws the banana at him and runs off.

EXT. GRADUATE HOUSING - LATER

Ryden stands at the bottom of a tall brick building, finally there.

She sighs with relief.

Until she realizes: it's locked.

She bangs her head against the glass.

RYDEN

Shiiiiit!!

GUY VOICE

Don't worry, I got you covered.

She turns around to see Adam coming up the steps.

He glances up and sees Ryden.

ADAM

Whoa!

He drops his keys.

She runs down the steps towards him.

RYDEN

Hi!

He's suddenly not sure what planet he's on.

ADAM

No, not hi. Confused, need more.

She tries to figure out how best to explain.

RYDEN

Okay, um...long story short, Glen went to jail, I lost my inheritance, an Arab midget moved in, thought David cheated on me, sprinted three miles, decided to move to London, had a layover in New York, saw a kid sucking on a Klondike Bar and realized I really, really like you. In my life. I like having you in my life. I love it.

Her eyes are locked with his, a moment of glory and risk.

A beat.

ADAM

No way, you had a layover?

Ryden throws her arms around him.

RYDEN

And I've looked for your smart ass for hours, and now you're gonna kiss me.

ADAM

I think you're gonna kiss me.

RYDEN

I don't think so.

ADAM

(immediately)
Okay I'll do it.

He goes in for the kill.

INT. ADAM'S EMPTY APARTMENT - MIDNIGHT

A bare, candlelit apartment.

Ryden and Adam sit indian-style on the floor eating TAKE-OUT VIETNAMESE.

Bright Eyes' "First Day of My Life" sings from the stereo, and all is right in the universe.

RYDEN

Think I'll find a job in New York?

He smirks.

ADAM

Well, we do have a lot of elevators
in this city...

Ryden rolls her eyes.

He pulls her close, kisses her forehead.

ADAM

I think you'll be fine.

She smiles, settling into him.

RYDEN

It's weird, I keep calling my
family, but I can't get through to
anyone.

EXT. LONDON STREET - DAY

The Signature RED TOUR BUS pulls up to a stop.

The whole MALBY FAMILY equipped with cameras and fanny packs
sits on the open roof.

The TOUR GUIDE gestures at various sights.

GUIDE

And to your left, our proud English
Guard.

Walter's face lights up.

INT. ENGLISH PUB - NIGHT

The family talks and laughs at dinner. Pan over to reveal:
Walter, dressed in a full ENGLISH GUARD COSTUME, FURRY HAT
upright beside his plate.

He raises his beer mug and off the clinking glasses, we:

ROLL CREDITS

EXT. BOX CAR DERBY - DAY

A series of make-shift BOX CARS fly down the ramp.

Ryden, Adam, and the Malby family cheer from the stands.

WALTER
Glad you could visit.

Ryden smiles.

RYDEN
Yeah. Me too.

Grandma shushes them.

GRANDMA MAUREEN
There he is! There's my grandson!

Hunter pulls up to the starting line in GRANDMA'S GIANT BLACK COFFIN - now on wheels, florescent flames painted up the sides.

He waves to the crowd, then flips them all the finger and plunges down the ramp.

THE END