

# queer asfolk

episode 201

written by  
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**COWLIP**  
PRODUCTIONS

**TONY JONAS**  
PRODUCTIONS

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cast list

brian kinney.....gale harold  
michael novotny.....hal sparks  
justin taylor.....randy harrison  
ted schmidt.....scott lowell  
emmett honeycutt.....peter paige  
lindsay peterson.....thea gill  
melanie marcus.....michelle clunie  
vic grassi.....jack wetherall  
jennifer taylor.....sherry miller  
daphne chanders.....makyla smith

and as

debbie novotny.....sharon gless

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quest cast

chris hobbs	nice guy
lynette	anchorman
mrs. peterson	first candidate
mr. peterson	second candidate
dr. ezrahi	third candidate
teri-ann	officer
judge russo	hunk

FADE IN:

1 INT. BABYLON - NIGHT 1

-- and we're back! Back in Babylon where the "gay thump-thump" is still thumping, where THE BOYS are still bumping -- and doing bumps -- and where Time, which is said, to stop for no man, has decided to take off its shirt, get out on the dance floor and stay awhile. Everyone is still young, still hot, still beautiful. We RAMP at dizzying speed, like a car chase through a mountain pass, past hard, naked torsos, coming to a screeching stop at:

THE BAR

Where TED and EMMETT stand, sightseeing.

EMMETT

I know some people would say the Grand Canyon or Big Sur -- but I think the finest vistas to be found anywhere in the United States are right here in Pittsburgh.

TED

(turning his back)  
Looks pretty barren to me.

EMMETT

Come on! There's got to be someone in that vast panorama of hot, sweaty men who you're just dying to have reject you.

He gives a passing hunk a smile.

TED

It's not them -- it's me. It's too soon. I'm still in mourning.

EMMETT

Well, it's time you took off the widow's weeds. After all, even Jackie managed to pull herself up off all fours, marry some rich, ugly old man and go shopping again.

He spins Ted back.

EMMETT (CONT'D)

Now at least try.

(CONTINUED)

1 CONTINUED:

Ted unwillingly eyes the crowd for a beat, then, unexpectedly:

TED

Him.

EMMETT

Who?

TED

Over there -- in the red shirt. The one with the black hair and the big button eyes and the cute little turned-up nose.

EMMETT

He's adorable.

TED

He's hot.

EMMETT

He's --

The camera RAMPS across the room to:

MICHAEL

TED/EMMETT

MICHAEL!

They push through the crowd, screaming his name:

TED

Michael --!

EMMETT

Michael --!

Finally, they reach him. The three of them throw themselves into each others' arms, laughing and shouting and hugging and kissing.

MICHAEL

You guys --!

EMMETT

Oh, my God --!

TED

It's you --!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

EMMETT

I can't believe it!

MICHAEL

I figured I'd find you here --!

EMMETT

How'd you know --?

MICHAEL

Where else would you be?

EMMETT

Why didn't you tell us you were coming?

MICHAEL

It was a spur of the moment sort of thing, David took Hank camping --

EMMETT

So you figured you'd do a little camping of you're own!

More hugging and kissing!

EMMETT (cont'd)

Look at you! You look adorable. And hot!

(pointedly)

Doesn't he look hot, Ted?

TED

(avoiding that)

Let's have a drink.

RAMP TO THE BAR

Where Michael, Emmett and Ted are now standing, drinking Cosmos.

EMMETT

Together -- again!

TED

So how long're you here for?

MICHAEL

Long enough to spend time with you guys and my Mom and Uncle Vic and --

TED/EMMETT

Brian.

(CONTINUED)

1 CONTINUED: (3)

1

Michael glances around. It's an automatic reaction.

EMMETT

No point looking for him, sweetie.

TED

He's not here.

MICHAEL

No, of course not. Not after what --

EMMETT

(cutting him off)

He's in the back room.

CUT TO:

2 INT. BABYLON - BACK ROOM - NIGHT

2

Shirts are off, pants are down, as the Back Room Boys perform death-defying acts rarely seen in public. Michael moves through the crowd, taking it all in, greets one of the performers who's getting his ass slammed up against a wall.

MICHAEL

Hey, Todd. Haven't see you since --  
the last time I saw you here.

He moves on. In a corner, he sees BRIAN. TWO GUYS are down on their knees, taking turns sucking his cock. He opens his eyes, sees Michael.

BRIAN

Oh, hey, Mikey --

A beat. Michael is astonished by Brian's casual attitude.

MICHAEL

Is that all you've got to say?

BRIAN

No.

(then to one of the suckers)  
Cover your teeth.

MICHAEL

You know I've been e-mailing you,  
leaving you phone messages practically  
every day for the last month. You  
never answer.

(CONTINUED)

BRIAN  
Busy, busy!

MICHAEL  
Up to your old tricks?

BRIAN  
Never old ones. And never the same one  
twice.

Brian pushes the guys off his dick, zips up.

BRIAN (CONT'D)  
All right, boys, you can take a break.

MICHAEL  
I'm glad to see you're okay.

BRIAN  
Better than "okay". I'm Fabulous.  
(holding up a twenty)  
Anybody got some E?

Several hands instantly reach out. Brian picks a pill from  
an outstretched palm, replaces it with the bill, pops it.

BRIAN (cont'd)  
In fact -- I'm the most fabulous fag in  
Pittsburgh. That is, if it's actually  
possible to be fabulous in --  
(the thought isn't even worth  
finishing, so he doesn't)  
Who told you I was here -- Rosencranz  
and Guildenstern?

MICHAEL  
I'm sure I could've figured it out  
myself.

BRIAN  
(spotting a beauty)  
Shit! I've been trying to nail that  
fucker all night.

He goes after some shirtless, nameless HUNK.

MICHAEL  
Hey! Wait! When am I going to see  
you?

Brian glances back, smiles.

(CONTINUED)

BRIAN

Leave me a message.

And suddenly, he's gone.

CUT TO:

3 INT. BRIAN'S LOFT - BEDROOM - NIGHT 3

Brian finishes off the shirtless, nameless hunk, pulls out, snaps off the cream-filled condom, drops it on him.

BRIAN

Souvenir.

HUNK

That was the best fuck I ever had.

BRIAN

Wish I could say the same. Get dressed.

He climbs out of bed, checks the clock.

CUT TO:

4 INT. HOSPITAL - JUSTIN'S ROOM - NIGHT 4

JUSTIN is in bed, asleep. However, it's anything but peaceful. He tosses fitfully. After six weeks, his hair is shorter, after the operation. There is still some discoloration of his skin by his temple, where he was struck and the stitches haven't completely healed. Other than that, he pretty much looks unscathed. At least on the outside. Justin moans, agitated, as the camera PANS across the room to the door. Watching him through the glass plate is a face. We SEE it's Brian.

5 INT. HOSPITAL - CORRIDOR/NURSES' STATION - NIGHT 5

Brian turns away from the door, stands there for a beat. And in this unguarded moment, when the clock in the hall says 2:30 A.M., we see his utter exhaustion. How hard it is for him just to stay awake, keep going, keep the pain away.

TERI-ANN (O.S.)

Crummy night.

Brian glances over, sees the night nurse, TERI-ANN. With a small ironic smile, he answers:

(CONTINUED)

BRIAN

What's a little rain?

She addresses him with familiarity -- it's apparent she's seen him here many time before.

TERI-ANN

How about some hot tea? Or I could fix you up some of that soup in a cup -- although it's got enough sodium to stiff a horse.

Brian shakes his head. He wants nothing. Asks for nothing. She goes about her chores.

TERI-ANN (cont'd)

By the way, Miguel -- you know the one who's here on Tuesdays and Thursdays? -- was tossing ball with him today. Said his hand's improving. But he still has these outbursts when he gets frustrated --

BRIAN

There must be something you can give him.

TERI-ANN

Drugs can't fix everything.

BRIAN

Where'd you hear that?

---

He pops a pill.

TERI-ANN

In fact, if you ask me, what would help him the most is knowing you come here every --

BRIAN

(cuts her off)

No.

A beat, he takes out a cigarette. She gives him a look.

BRIAN (cont'd)

Who made up the fucking rule you can't smoke in a hospital?

6 EXT. (MICHAEL'S &) EMMETT'S APARTMENT BLDG. - NIGHT

6

As our boys get out of Ted's car, Ted grabs Michael's overnight bag.

EMMETT

I wouldn't take it personally, sweetie -

-

TED

He's cut himself off from everybody.

EMMETT

Everybody, that is, except for every slut in Pittsburgh with a smooth ass and a nine-inch cock.

TED

In other words, despite what happened, it's business as usual for Mr. Kinney.

EMMETT

But hey -- when your boytoy gets broken, you get another toy -- right?

Ted puts an arm around him -- as they go into the building.

CUT TO:

7 INT. (MICHAEL'S &) EMMETT'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

7

EMMETT

Here we are! Home, sweet, dump!

MICHAEL

It's great to be back.

TED

I wouldn't go that far. After those photos you e-mailed us of your new place --

EMMETT

I may not have a pool and an atrium, but I've got a stopped-up sink and a half-dead rubber plant.

TED

He's trying to grow his own condoms.

(CONTINUED)

EMMETT  
(to Michael)  
You must be sooo happy, baby!

MICHAEL  
Hank and David are getting really close. And we do all these cool things like bicycling in Forest Park, and going to Cannon Beach, and we've made some really nice friends --

A beat. Ted and Emmett look at each other.

TED  
You have -- friends?

EMMETT  
That's -- nice.

MICHAEL  
Come on, you know nobody can replace you guys.

EMMETT  
Well, I'm afraid I'm going to have to replace you.

MICHAEL  
Huh?

EMMETT  
If I don't find a new roommate soon, I'm going to be forced to move to the Home for Indigent Homos.

MICHAEL  
Have you been looking?

8 INT. (MICHAEL'S &) EMMETT'S APARTMENT - FRONT DOOR - DAY 8

The DOORBELL RINGS. Emmett opens the door.

FIRST CANDIDATE  
I'm here about the room --?

SLAM CUT TO:

9 INT. (MICHAEL'S &) EMMETT'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - DAY 9

Emmett getting fucked by the First Candidate.

10 INT. (MICHAEL'S &) EMMETT'S APARTMENT - FRONT DOOR - DAY 10  
The DOORBELL RINGS again.

SECOND CANDIDATE  
I'm here about the room --?

SLAM CUT TO:

11 INT. (MICHAEL'S &) EMMETT'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - DAY 11  
Emmett getting fucked by the Second Candidate.

12 INT. (MICHAEL'S &) EMMETT'S APARTMENT - FRONT DOOR - DAY 12  
The DOORBELL RINGS again -- Emmett answers.

THIRD CANDIDATE  
I'm here about the --

SLAM CUT TO:

13 INT. (MICHAEL'S &) EMMETT'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - DAY 13  
Emmett's getting fucked by Candidate Three.

BACK TO THE GUYS

EMMETT  
(answering Michael)  
High and low. Only no-one -- measures  
up.

TED  
(knowingly)  
Maybe you need to rethink the interview  
process.

EMMETT  
That can wait, now that we've got  
Michael back! Welcome home, sweetie!

CUT TO:

14 INT. LIBERTY DINER - DAY 14  
Lunchtime on Liberty Avenue. DEBBIE has Michael in a bear-  
hug in front of a booth where MELANIE and LINDSAY sit, GUS in  
his stroller, with lists of names and their cell phones out.

DEBBIE  
Come give your mother a hug!

(CONTINUED)

MICHAEL

Promise you'll let me go?

DEBBIE

Eagle Scout's honor -- and they're all fags, ya' know.

She hugs him -- and she lets him go.

DEBBIE (CONT'D)

Christ, you're a fuckin' skeleton!

LINDSAY

You look like you've lost some weight, Michael.

MELANIE

What've you been eating out there -- pine nuts and berries?

DEBBIE

I can see I'm going to have to fatten you up. I'm bringing you the Butch Bottom Special: Stack-o'-jacks, double sausages and eggs, and a thick slice of cherry pie ala mode.

MICHAEL

You want to fatten me or kill me?  
(noticing the paperwork)  
What's all this?

LINDSAY

Chris Hobbs' sentencing's this week.

MELANIE

And the judge is a real asshole.

DEBBIE

So we're calling everyone we can -- P-FLAGers, ACLUers -- to pack the courtroom. Make sure he knows we're holding him accountable.

MICHAEL

Justin's lucky to have you looking out for him.

Gives her a kiss.

(CONTINUED)

DEBBIE

Better than your fucking friend.  
Hasn't been to see him once!

LINDSAY

Every time we go to visit Justin, all he asks is, "Where's Brian? Where's Brian?"

MELANIE

Getting his dick sucked. That's "Where's Brian."

LINDSAY

I'm not sticking up for him --  
(off Melanie's look)  
I'm not. But maybe it's like those Vietnam vets who witnessed all those atrocities: it's just too painful for him to face.

DEBBIE

Seeing that poor, hurt kid?

MICHAEL

(to all of them)

You weren't there that night. You didn't see Brian -- in shock, blood all over him. I couldn't even tell if he was seeing or hearing. It's as if the life had been beaten out of him as well.

DEBBIE

If you ask me, he's still an asshole.

As she goes off, the girls gather Gus and their stuff.

MELANIE

Got to get to the beauty parlor --

LINDSAY

Have our hair done --

MELANIE

Get our manicures --

LINDSAY

And pick up our dresses --

(CONTINUED)

MELANIE

So we'll be ready when our dates arrive.

MICHAEL

Hey! Whoa! Did something happen while I was gone that I should know about?

LINDSAY

Don't worry. We're still lesbians. It's my sister's wedding --

MELANIE

And the less said the better.

They leave as Debbie returns with a giant stack of about twenty pancakes.

DEBBIE

Here, bone-butt, you can start on these.

15 INT. HOSPITAL - REHAB ROOM - DAY

15

Rehab equipment to retrain and re-educate people who have suffered brain injury. Everything from walking rails, steps, exercise equipment, to a mini-kitchen, even a car. Among the REHAB CLIENTS -- all dressed in regular clothes (not hospital gowns) -- is Justin, working with a PHYSICAL THERAPIST. He's throwing a Velcro ball on a string at a colorful target, trying to regain strength and dexterity in his right hand.

It's obviously frustrating to him. The therapist offers words of encouragement. He keeps trying. Even harder. REVEAL we are watching this from:

JENNIFER'S P.O.V.

She looks concerned, tired, as if she hasn't slept in weeks -- which she hasn't. DR. EZRAHI, Justin's neurologist, appears at her side.

DR. EZRAHI

Your son deserves the Timex Award.

JENNIFER

Takes a licking and keeps on ticking?

She almost manages a smile.

DR. EZRAHI

Does he always push himself this hard?

(CONTINUED)

JENNIFER

Even when he was a kid -- he was determined to ride his two-wheeler, so he kept at it -- fell a hundred times, his knees a bloody mess -- until he learned to stay up. Hasn't changed. If he wants something, he won't stop until he gets it.

DR. EZRAHI

Well, whatever it is now that's making him want to stay up, it's paid off. I'm sending him home.

They HEAR Justin curse, "Fuck!" --they turn. He's having a bit of a fit, frustrated by the exercise. The therapist confronts him.

JENNIFER

That's wonderful.  
(worried, and a little scared)  
But are you sure he's ready?

DR. EZRAHI

It's going to be a long and difficult process -- I won't deceive you. But it's time he re-immerses himself back into the safety of the world.

JENNIFER

It doesn't feel very safe.  
(beat)  
I almost lost him.

DR. EZRAHI

But you didn't. Now I want to see him here three times a week for the next month for outpatient therapy -- and call me if there's a problem.

As Jennifer watches her son -- knowing his struggle is far from over:

CUT TO:

16 INT. BRIAN'S LOFT - NIGHT

16

Brian, holding a bag of chips and a bottle of booze, has just opened the door to find Michael.

MICHAEL

I left you four messages.

(CONTINUED)

BRIAN

I told you -- busy, busy.  
(offering chips)  
Want some dinner?

MICHAEL

That's dinner?

BRIAN

It has all the essential building  
blocks of a healthy diet; saturated  
fat, salt, 90 proof alcohol --

Michael refuses, nauseated.

MICHAEL

I'm never eating again. My mother  
practically force-fed me the entire  
Liberty Diner menu.

BRIAN

So who told you to eat it?

MICHAEL

What was I supposed to do?

BRIAN

Say no?

MICHAEL

I wanted to make her happy.

---

BRIAN

And there you have it, ladies and  
gentlemen. Proof positive that making  
others happy can cause severe cramps,  
vomiting and diarrhea.

MICHAEL

Got any "Tums"?

BRIAN

You know what Tums is spelled  
backwards?

MICHAEL/BRIAN

SMUT!

They laugh together for the first time, as they share their  
old childhood joke. But Brian's smile quickly fades.

(CONTINUED)

BRIAN

Why the fuck are you here?

MICHAEL

I told you, I left you messages and you never--

BRIAN

I mean out of all the holiday destinations you could've chosen -- Ibiza, Puerto Vallarta, Six Flags Over Fuckin' Tulsa -- why the Pitts?

MICHAEL

I missed it. It's my home.

BRIAN

Not any more. You're a visitor here now. A sightseer of your former life. Well now that you've seen Deb, the Boys, me -- who's next on the tour?

MICHAEL

I thought I'd stop and see Justin.

A beat. Brian doesn't say anything.

MICHAEL (cont'd)

How's he doing?

BRIAN

How would I know?

MICHAEL

You would if you went to see him.

(then)

How 'bout coming with me?

BRIAN

What for?

MICHAEL

It might make him happy?

BRIAN

I told you, making others happy can be dangerous to your health.

MICHAEL

So can making yourself miserable.

(CONTINUED)

BRIAN

I told you -- I'm fabulous. So save the Worried Wife routine for the Doc and come with me to Woody's.

MICHAEL

I don't --

But before he can object, Brian puts his arms around him, gets very close -- nose-to-nose.

BRIAN

(then, as a Tour Guide)

It's part of the tour. "On your left, a nostalgic re-creation of your misspent youth."

(beat)

What do you say?

MICHAEL

Yeah. Sure --

Brian looks at Michael, as if searching in his face for a way back to happier, more innocent time. He seems to find it, smiles. But the moment fades.

BRIAN

I need a shower -- I stink.

Michael's eyes follow Brian as he goes into the bedroom. He watches him, unnoticed, through the panels, as Brian begins to undress. He takes off his shirt and under it Michael sees that Brian is still wearing the silk scarf covered in Justin's blood around his neck. As if he's never taken it off.

17 EXT. GARDEN - NIGHT

17

A suburban garden set up like a Fairy Land (No, not that kind), with twinkly lights, heart-shaped topiaries, Cupid ice sculptures. Rows of white folding chairs in front of a white floral wedding bough. Among all the GUESTS, FIND:

LINDSAY, MELANIE, TED AND EMMETT

All dressed up. Boys in suits and ties, and girls in fluffy dresses.

EMMETT

I can't believe it's fucking Saturday night, and I'm dressed for a funeral.

(CONTINUED)

TED

Close to it. Hetero wedding.

LINDSAY

Can't you two give up Babylon for one night?

TED

(extends a shaky hand)

I did and look -- I'm having withdrawal symptoms!

A YOUNG WOMAN passes, gives Ted the eye.

MELANIE

Too bad you're straight. You could really score big time.

EMMETT

Believe it or not, in this parallel universe, you're actually -- hot.

As another FLIRT bats her lashes at him.

TED

Woo-hoo. Lucky me.

He helps himself to a glass of --

EMMETT

Pink champagne? That's too nelly even for me.

Ted sips it.

TED

Not bad. For a douche.

LINDSAY

Look, I'm sorry to make you pretend to be our dates, but Lynnne insisted Mel and I not draw attention to ourselves --

MELANIE

What did she think we're going to do -- perform cunnilingus on top of the wedding cake?

LINDSAY

Actually, that's not a bad idea, but I promised we'd follow wedding etiquette.

(CONTINUED)

EMMETT

I've read Miss Manners, cover to cover,  
and nowhere does she say one must  
subjugate their sexuality, even if the  
bride requests.

An USHER smiles at Emmett.

EMMETT (CONT'D)

(too loud)  
He is so hot!

TED

What's her position on fucking ushers?

EMMETT

Perfectly acceptable -- but preferably  
not during the ceremony.

Emmett winks at him as MR. & MRS. PETERSON, Lindsay's folks,  
come over.

LINDSAY

Mom -- Daddy!

MR. PETERSON

There's my girl.

MRS. PETERSON

We've been looking for you.  
(warm as Nancy Reagan)  
Hello, Melanie --

MELANIE

Mr. and Mrs. Peterson --

LINDSAY

This is Ted and Emmett --

TED

We're their beards.

MR. PETERSON

Ready for "Here Comes The Bride --  
Again"?

MRS. PETERSON

Don, stop --

MR. PETERSON

Don't tell me, Nancy -- tell Linnie.  
(to Ted and Emmett)  
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

17 CONTINUED: (3)

17

MR. PETERSON (CONT'D)

Three weddings in five years -- at least I'm not the sucker paying for this one.

As "The Wedding March" begins to PLAY:

MRS. PETERSON

There's our cue -- shall we take our seats?

Out of habit, Lindsay takes Melanie's arm. They realize their mistake, disentangle, grab Ted and Emmett instead. As they make their way to their seats, Emmett cruising the usher:

CUT TO:

18 EXT. JENNIFER'S CONDO - NIGHT

18

Debbie and VIC, laden with platters and bowls and bags of food, force their way past some local NEWS CREWS and REPORTERS to Jennifer's front door, she quickly opens it, lets them in, slamming it behind them.

19 INT. JENNIFER'S CONDO - NIGHT

19

DEBBIE

Jesus Christ! What's all that?

JENNIFER

(still distressed)

They were waiting for us when we got home. Someone at the hospital must've told them Justin'd been released.

(noticing the red stains on Debbie's blouse)

What happened to you?

DEBBIE

One of those assholes bumped into me -- made me spill my marinara all over myself.

VIC

It's supposed to go on the angel hair, not you.

JENNIFER

Here, put it down, I'll get you a wet cloth. You brought enough for a week!

(CONTINUED)

DEBBIE

(a glance toward outside)  
You're going to need it -- 'til things  
calm down.

JENNIFER

Thank God it'll all be over soon.

DEBBIE

Wait 'til you see all the supporters  
we've got coming to Court!

JENNIFER

I appreciate all you've done, but I  
just brought him home -- I can't  
subject him to all that.

DEBBIE

(hiding disappointment)  
Sure, I understand.  
(to Vic, re: the stain)  
Give Jen a hand while I try to get this  
out, wouldya?

VIC

"Please"?

DEBBIE

Please!

JENNIFER

You didn't really have to go to all  
this trouble --

VIC

It wasn't any trouble.  
(a nod to Debbie)  
She cooked it.

DEBBIE

I made Justin's favorite -- chicken  
parmigiana.

JENNIFER

I'm sure he'll love it -- if I can get  
him to eat.

DEBBIE

'Course he'll eat.

JUSTIN (O.S.)

Of course I'll eat.

(CONTINUED)

They turn to see Justin. Pale, subdued, but even from his remark, headstrong and determined as ever. Debbie's eyes immediately well up.

DEBBIE

Sunshine --

JENNIFER

I thought you were taking a nap -- you all right?

JUSTIN

Fine. Don't I look it?

VIC

Good as new.

DEBBIE

Better! Stand there, let me look at you.

(she takes in the sight of him,  
heart about to burst)

You have no idea how hard I prayed -- we all did -- for this moment. To see you standing here, to know you're all right --

(overcome)

Aw, shit! Come give me a kiss!

She goes to kiss him -- but he sees the red stain on her blouse, abruptly backs up, knocking over a chair, breathing hard.

JENNIFER

It's just marinara sauce, sweetie -- that's all.

She reaches out to him, touches him, he pulls away, not wanting to be touched. An awkward silence, then:

VIC

So why don't we all sit down and eat?

DEBBIE

I'll nuke the sauce -- what's left of it.

VIC

And I'll toss the baby field greens -- otherwise known as weeds.

(CONTINUED)

JENNIFER

Honey, why don't you get cleaned up?

Off Justin's glare:

CUT TO:

20 EXT. STREET/INT. DAPHNE'S CAR - NIGHT

20

Justin in the passenger seat, DAPHNE behind the wheel.

JUSTIN

"Honey -- sweetie -- Sunshine!" Just 'cause fucking Chris Hobbs goes and bashes my head in, suddenly everybody wants to infantilize me.

DAPHNE

You were in a coma, for practically two weeks. You nearly died, you know!

JUSTIN

I was there.

Justin bravely lights a cigarette, but his hand is shaking.

DAPHNE

They're going to freak when they find out you're gone.

JUSTIN

I left a note. "Back soon -- love and kisses."

She casts him a worried look as he glances out apprehensively at Liberty Avenue, jammed with cars HONKING, people cramming the sidewalks, MUSIC pouring out of the bars. It's a circus.

He gets out of the car, stands there frozen, assaulted by the noise, the lights, the bodies. It's an obstacle course of total terror. He stops by a lamppost to catch his breath, close his eyes. A hand reaches out, touches him on the shoulder.

NICE GUY (O.S.)

Hey. Are you all--?

Justin turns, sees him, freaks.

JUSTIN

Don't touch me!

(CONTINUED)

NICE GUY

Sorry, I --

JUSTIN

Get away from me! Don't come near me!

Justin flees, leaving the Nice Guy wondering what the hell just happened.

CUT TO:

21 INT. WOODY'S - NIGHT

21

The place is packed. FIND Brian and Michael at the bar. Just like old times. Brian is already tanked. Beyond tanked.

BRIAN

(to the bare-chested bartender)

Another Jack D.

(to Michael)

So how're the Boys of Portland? I bet with all that yearly rainfall, they have these perfect peaches-and-cream cheeks --

He grabs Michael's ass.

MICHAEL

I haven't had time to do a butt-check.

A Hunky Guy walks by, cruises Michael.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

Besides, David and I have other ways of spending our evenings.

BRIAN

Like what?

MICHAEL

We read, cook, listen to music --

BRIAN

Take each others' pulse to make sure you're still alive?

A HOTTIE cruises Brian, Brian cruises him back.

BRIAN (cont'd)

If it were me, I'd be out every night, topping the tall timber.

(CONTINUED)

MICHAEL

That's why they're environmental protection laws.

Brian knocks back the whiskey the bartender brings him.

BRIAN

So tell me, Mikey, I need to know.  
(beat, profound)  
Does a lumberjack off?

He cracks himself up as Michael stares at him in silence. Finally, softly:

MICHAEL

What the fuck's going on?

BRIAN

Nothing-the-fuck's going on.

MICHAEL

You're a fucking falling-down mess.

BRIAN

I'm beautiful! I'll always be beautiful. Said so yourself. Want some?

He offers Michael some E. Michael refuses.

MICHAEL

You've cut yourself off from everyone -- including me. You're drinking -- Christ! -- like I've never seen you --  
(a beat, carefully)  
Maybe you need to talk to someone.

BRIAN

Who the hell are you. My goddamn mother? Go back to where you belong -- read, cook, listen to music with David. I'll be all right.

A beat, then Michael asks the biggie.

MICHAEL

Why haven't you seen Justin?

Brian avoids Michael's gaze, reaches for his whisky, only to find the glass empty. Finally, he answers, trying to keep hidden his feelings, like the bloody scarf, the middle of the night visits to the hospital.

(CONTINUED)

BRIAN

There's nothing I can do for him.

And at that moment, Justin walks in. Michael sees him first; overwhelmed, literally under attack by the noise, the crowd, the laughter. Guys recognize him, point, come over. He tries to evade them, get away. But the crowd blocks his way, he can't get to the door. And so, pathetically, he presses his face to the wall, holding on not to collapse, closing his eyes to make it all disappear.

Michael pushes Brian aside, goes to Justin, shoves some of the guys away.

MICHAEL

Give him some room!

He somehow, instinctively, knows he mustn't touch him, stops himself, whispers gently.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

Justin, it's me. Michael.

Justin's eyes open, grateful to see a friend.

JUSTIN

I came to find Brian.

Michael knows, nods. He turns to Brian, angrily.

MICHAEL

Well are you just going to fucking stand there?

CUT TO:

22 INT. BRIAN'S LOFT - NIGHT

22

Justin relates in a curiously detached, almost boastful manner, the details of his near-death adventures. Brian listens silently, absorbing every painful detail.

JUSTIN

The doctor said if Chris had whacked me a fraction of an inch this way or that, or at a slightly different angle -- even a little harder, I'd be a total vegetable. Or dead. As it is, he only damaged the cerebral motor strip.

(CONTINUED)

BRIAN

That where they drag race through your brain?

JUSTIN

It's part of the cerebral cortex that controls--

BRIAN

I know what it is, I attended eighth grade.

JUSTIN

(with glee)

They had to drill through my skull to release all the blood.

BRIAN

Cool, dude.

JUSTIN

(finally a flicker of ????)

They said I may never draw again.

BRIAN

They're always telling people they'll never walk again or see again or piss again, so that when you do, you'll think they're fuckin' geniuses, and then they can charge you anything they want.

---

Justin looks at Brian trying to decide, whether or not to believe him. Then:

JUSTIN

Why didn't you come to see me?

BRIAN

See you? What for?

JUSTIN

Considering I was in a coma for two weeks, then in rehab for a month trying to throw a fucking whiffle ball --

BRIAN

If you want to regain your strength and dexterity in your hand, I suggest jerking off several times a day. Works like magic.

(CONTINUED)

JUSTIN

You could've at least called to see if  
I was still alive.

BRIAN

I'm sure I'd've heard if you weren't.

Off Justin's look:

BRIAN (CONT'D)

Besides, I'm not your neurologist. I'm  
not your occupational therapist. I'm  
not your trauma specialist, I'm not  
even your momma sitting holding your  
hand.

(then, turning away, avoiding  
Justin's gaze, reiterating)  
There's nothing I could do for you.

Justin, studying him, slowly starts to figure it out.

JUSTIN

I still don't remember a thing. The  
last thing I remember is you telling me  
you wouldn't come to my prom.

Brian remembers.

BRIAN

"Buy a corsage for somebody else."

JUSTIN

But they said you showed up after all.  
And that we danced together.

BRIAN

(sings)  
"But don't forget who's taking you home  
and in who's arms you're gonna be --"

JUSTIN

And that it was amazing. Daphne said  
we were amazing --

BRIAN

We were all right.

JUSTIN

Shit, I wish I could remember.  
(continuing on with what he's  
been told)  
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

JUSTIN (CONT'D)

And then I walked with you -- to your jeep -- in the underground garage --

BRIAN

"Later --"

JUSTIN

And that's when Chris jumped out with the baseball bat and--

Brian cuts him off.

BRIAN

(abruptly)

I thought you said you couldn't remember anything.

JUSTIN

I can't. It's only what they told me. It's like a story -- that happened to someone else.

BRIAN

Well, I can remember.

(beat)

I can remember everything.

FLASHES OF MEMORY

strike Brian as if the force of a fatal blow.

BRIAN (CONT'D)

I saw him. I saw him coming after you, swinging the bat. But he was moving too fast. And you were too far away. And I ran. But there was no time to stop him. And he swung. And he hit you. And you fell down. And it was too late. There was nothing I could do. And you laid there on the cold cement --

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

(an ECHO from the past)

"No, no, no -- God!"

And Brian can't even look at him. He sits, his face turned away. And Justin now knows why he didn't come to see him. And it's all right. He goes to him. Calmly, with little expression or emotion, Justin reaches out, touches Brian's hair.

(CONTINUED)

JUSTIN

It wasn't your fault. It wasn't your fault.

Brian turns, looks at Justin, softly touches the scar on the side of his head, then very, very gently, takes Justin in his arms, holds him for dear life. Justin winces, it's painful to be touched, but he allows Brian to embrace him. Neither moves.

CUT TO:

23 EXT. GARDEN - NIGHT

23

With the wedding ceremony over, a small BAND is playing. COUPLES, who've had a few, attempt to dance. This is definitely not Babylon.

ANGLE ON MELANIE, LINDSAY AND TED

as they pass a table laden with wedding gifts.

LINDSAY

The first marriage she was registered at Tiffany's. The second, Pottery Barn. This one, the Big Q.

They bust up laughing.

MELANIE

Pathetic, isn't it?  
Straight people and their silly rituals.

TED

Oh, come on, Mel. You know if it was legal for you and Lindsay to get married, you would.

MELANIE

Well, we can't. So what's the point.

LINDSAY

The point is, heterosexual serial killers on death row can get married, we should be able to as well.

Melanie lights up a cigarette.

LINDSAY (CONT'D)

The bride requests no smoking.

(CONTINUED)

MELANIE

Fuck the bride.

At that very moment, lovely Lynnette -- this evening's slightly-second-hand bride -- comes over.

LYNNETTE

Hello, Melanie.

MELANIE

(crushing out the ciggie)  
Lynnette! I was just saying I bet you're looking forward to the honeymoon. Where're you off to this time -- the Middle East?

LYNNETTE

Borneo.

TED

Don't they have a lot of pigs there?

Emmett appears from behind the bushes with the Usher, slightly disheveled, wiping his mouth.

EMMETT

Well, I know I'm having a better time than I thought!

Lynette gives him a look, then leads Lindsay to the bandstand.

LYNNETTE

It's time to cut the cake, and you promised to toast the happy couple.

LINDSAY

Right, I did --

LYNNETTE

But before you do, I just want to thank you --

LINDSAY

For toasting my own sister at her --?

LYNNETTE

I mean -- for not embarrassing me. Not that I have anything against Melanie. And you know I adore Gus. But considering it's my wedding --

LINDSAY

Your third wedding --

LYNNETTE

And there's no reason why everyone here  
has to be subjected to --

LINDSAY

(glancing around at the  
proceedings)  
-- an undignified display of my private  
life?

A beat. Lynette signals the band to play a FANFARE. Lindsay goes over to the microphone, addresses the crowd.

LINDSAY (CONT'D)

Everyone --? I'm Lindsay, Linnie's  
sister and I'd like to congratulate her  
and Duncan on this special occasion.

A beat, as she glances over at Melanie.

LINDSAY (cont'd)

To stand in front of your family, your  
friends -- to declare your love and  
commitment in the eyes of God and the  
law is a privilege, not to be taken  
lightly. I know, because I've shared a  
commitment with my partner for six  
wonderful years, even though we're not  
married. That's because we're not  
allowed to be. But that shouldn't stop  
two people if that's what they truly  
want. So I'd like to ask my beloved --  
Melanie --

(a beat)

Will you marry me?

Melanie looks stunned. So does everyone else. Except for Lindsay, who's as happy as a bride-to-be.

CUT TO:

24 INT. (MICHAEL'S &) EMMETT'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

24

Emmett lets himself into the dark apartment carrying a large floral centerpiece from the wedding. He whispers behind him:

EMMETT

Come on in, sweetheart -- but don't  
talk too loud, my roomie's asleep.

(CONTINUED)

The Usher from the wedding follows him in, licking some icing from a piece of wedding cake. As Emmett places the centerpiece down, he winces, clenches his hand.

EMMETT (CONT'D)

That old biddy who wrestled me for this had a helluva grip.

Seeing the Usher about to lick some white, creamy icing off his finger, Emmett does it for him.

EMMETT (CONT'D)

And let's leave some for my friend -- Even though he's happily married, they say if you put a piece of wedding cake under your pillow you'll get -- icing all over your pillowcase! Now, why don't you usher yourself to my room -- right through there -- and I'll be with you in a min!

As the Usher goes off, Emmett makes his way to Michael's room. He very carefully opens the door, so as not to disturb, only to discover:

25 INT. (MICHAEL'S &) EMMETT'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS 25

MICHAEL IN BED

getting fucked by the Hunky Guy we saw cruising him at Woody's. Michael's face is turned away from the door, so he doesn't see Emmett. But the Hunky Guy turns, gives Emmett a smile, continues to fuck Michael. Emmett wanly returns it -- then leaves as quietly as he came.

CUT TO:

26 EXT. JENNIFER'S CONDO - NIGHT

26

Brian's jeep pulls up in front. He turns off the engine, the lights. They sit there for a beat, silent, neither sure what to do or say.

JUSTIN

Thanks.

BRIAN

For what?

JUSTIN

The ride, saving me --

(CONTINUED)

BRIAN  
I didn't save you.

JUSTIN  
I meant tonight.

Brian looks away. A beat, then:

JUSTIN (CONT'D)  
So will I see you?

He asks calmly, detached, as Brian looks at Justin. Finally:

BRIAN  
Yeah. You'll see me.

JUSTIN  
Well, don't wait too long. At this  
rate, who knows if I'll still be  
around?

Justin's black humor doesn't make Brian smile. Bravely, he  
heads for the door. As it opens, Jennifer's waiting.

JENNIFER  
Justin --! Where have you been? Do  
you have any idea how worried I was?  
How could you just leave like that --?

Brian starts up the Jeep. She looks over, sees him. He sees  
her. Her expression hardens.

JENNIFER (CONT'D)  
(then, back to Justin)  
Now, come inside.

As Jennifer leads Justin in -- closes the door, shuts the  
world -- and Brian -- out.

CUT TO:

27 INT. (MICHAEL'S &) EMMETT'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

27

It's late, very late. Michael softly (and nakedly), leads  
the Hunky Guy through the dark apartment to the front door.  
The Hunky Guy grabs him in a deep kiss, his hands all over  
him. Michael shushes him, closes the door on him, then  
attempts to make his way back to his room. Suddenly, the  
LIGHT snaps on. There's Emmett, sitting, nibbling his piece  
of wedding cake.

(CONTINUED)

27 CONTINUED:

27

EMMETT (O.S.)

So -- how was your piece of cake?

CUT TO:

28 INT. MELANIE & LINDSAY'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - DAY

28

Lindsay's in bed, on the phone:

LINDSAY

Mom, would you please stop crying? No, she did not put me up to it --!

Melanie, also in bed, pops her face into FRAME:

MELANIE

Blame the Jew!

LINDSAY

(shooting Mel a look)

Damn it, mother, if Lynnle can get married -- three times! -- then why the hell can't I? Well, frankly, I don't give a shit what people think!

(then, sweetly)

Love to Daddy. Can't wait to see the video!

She hangs up.

LINDSAY (CONT'D)

Bitch!

(then)

I can't believe they're this upset.

MELANIE

Fear not. In time they'll sweep it under their WASPY rug and forget all about it.

LINDSAY

I don't want to forget about it. I want full and equal recognition -- if not under the law, then at least in my parents' house!

MELANIE

I'd count on getting hitched in Mississippi first.

She starts to get up.

(CONTINUED)

LINDSAY

Can't we stay in bed a little bit longer?

Mel concedes. Lindsay pulls her into a kiss, then:

LINDSAY (cont'd)

You still haven't given me an answer.

(off Melanie's look)

"Will you marry me?"

MELANIE

(laughs)

You weren't really serious!

LINDSAY

I was dead serious.

MELANIE

Well you nearly killed your Aunt Alice -  
- she looked like she needed CPR.

LINDSAY

And I'm serious now.

(off Melanie's dubious glance)

Look, I'm sure you could say I had too much champagne, that I didn't know what I was doing, that I was making a mockery of the whole, absurd situation - which to a degree is true. But it makes me so mad -- that they're allowed to receive everyone's blessings and presents, and were not!

MELANIE

I knew it had to do with presents!

(then)

Look, we can't get married. For one thing, it's illegal -- it could only be symbolic. For another, you know how I feel about weddings --

LINDSAY

They're antiquated, meaningless rituals for heterosexuals -- I've heard.

MELANIE

Linz, we have a marriage. And a family. Six years strong -- give or take a few bumps in the road.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

MELANIE (CONT'D)

And as nice as it would be to have a party and payback, finally, for all the wedding gifts we've been forced to shell out all these years, we don't need any of that to prove to ourselves we love each other.

She gives Lindsay a quick kiss and tumbles out of bed.

MELANIE (CONT'D)

Now, come on -- let's go grab our kid and have some brunch!

She's moved on -- but Lindsay hasn't. She's clearly hurt and disturbed by Melanie's attitude.

CUT TO:

29 INT. (MICHAEL'S &) EMMETT'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

29

Emmett, Ted and Michael are having Chinese takeout. The now-drooping floral centerpiece Emmett copped from the wedding graces the table. Chopsticks fly, except for Michael's. He's not eating.

EMMETT

If I'd known about the men you could meet at straight functions, I'd've started going years ago.

TED

Leave it to you to sniff out the one truffle in the garden.

EMMETT

I wouldn't be so sure. I have my suspicions about the groom.

TED

You mean Lindsay's sister might break her own record?

(glancing at Michael poking gloomily at his dumpling)

What about you, Michael? How was your night out on the town?

Before Michael can respond, Emmett raises a drooping daisy to "full flower".

EMMETT

Oh, he brought home a nice centerpiece, too.

(CONTINUED)

MICHAEL

Jesus, Emmett --

TED

(a bit taken aback)  
You didn't waste any time. In town  
less than 24 hours --

EMMETT

Why shouldn't he have a little action?  
He's outside the 400-mile limit  
required for extramarital quickies and  
anonymous assignments.

(to Michael)

For anything more, you need overseas  
travel and a minimum 14-day stay.

TED

I just thought from what you wrote that  
you and David were so in love, so  
committed --

EMMETT

Every relationship has its own set of  
rules. Their arrangement is none of  
our business -- right, sweetie?

(he tweaks Michael's nose a  
little too playfully)

Now who wants some more potstickers?

He offers them to Michael, who doesn't accept. Finally:

MICHAEL

We broke up.

TED

What?

MICHAEL

It's over. David and I are no longer  
together.

EMMETT

You know, these are the best pan-fried  
dumplings I've ever had --

TED

Did you hear what he just--

EMMETT

He broke up.

(to Michael)

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

EMMETT (CONT'D)

You broke up.

(beat)

So why the fuck didn't you tell us?

MICHAEL

I was going to--

EMMETT

After you convinced us you'd found Paradise Lost?

MICHAEL

When the time was right.

(beat)

Only there is no right time -- to admit you failed, that you had this great opportunity to start your life over with someone you loved -- or thought that you loved -- and that you blew it.

(beat)

Which is what I did. I complained that David was working too much, that I couldn't find a job, that I didn't have any friends. I got jealous of the time he spent with Hank. And when I accused him of being thoughtless and not caring and that if I'd known it was going to be like this, I never would've come, he said, "Then go home, Michael. Go home."

A beat, then Ted and Emmett go to him.

TED

I wouldn't say you failed. If anything, I'd say you succeeded in gaining new wisdom about yourself.

EMMETT

And it's not true you have no friends. You still have us.

TED

As for coming home -- there's no shame in that. It's what it's here for.

As Ted embraces him and Emmett feeds him some dim sum from chopsticks:

30 INT. COURTHOUSE - COURTROOM - DAY

30

Debbie, Lindsay and Melanie have succeeded in packing the courtroom.

(CONTINUED)

Seated around them are Vic and Our Guys - Michael, Emmett, Ted -- and Brian, somewhat off by himself, but in earshot. Perhaps seated behind Melanie. On the bench, in his robe, looking very judicious is JUDGE ROY RUSSO, presiding. Seated down front at a table with his LAWYER is CHRIS HOBBS, looking very clean-cut in a suit and tie.

## JUDGE RUSSO

While admirable in that it suggests he has claimed responsibility in his actions, the fact that Christian Hobbs pled guilty to assault charges for his vicious attack on Justin Taylor in no way mitigates the seriousness of the crime -- or the tragic effects on these young men's lives. Both were honor students at St. James Academy. Both had planned on attending college. Now, one young man is recovering from serious brain injuries, and the other is facing a prison sentence. I ask myself how could this have happened?

## ANGLE ON DEBBIE

## DEBBIE

(a little too loud)

I'll tell you how: Chris Hobbs is a homophobic animal who should be put away!

The others shush her as the Judge eyes her.

## JUDGE RUSSO

Certainly such behavior is considered unacceptable in civilized society. However, there are other forms of behavior we also consider to be unacceptable. One such behavior is homosexuality. Even though he was very young, Justin Taylor was already a professed and practicing homosexual, involved in a sexual relationship with a man many years his senior.

Brian listens. No expression. No emotion.

JUDGE RUSSO (CONT'D)

I can only imagine how profoundly disturbing it must've been for a young man of Chris Hobbs' upbringing, raised with Christian values, to see a fellow student flaunt his lifestyle by bringing his male lover to the prom and engage in what has been described as a highly sexual dance. Given the fact that he was drinking -- which he should not have been, I can understand how Chris Hobbs might lose control of his better judgement. Still, it does not excuse his actions. And so I have struggled to find the appropriate sentence to impose for this unfortunate crime.

He checks his watch.

JUDGE RUSSO (CONT'D)

Court will recess for ten minutes.

He abruptly leaves.

DEBBIE

Where the fuck's he going?

EMMETT

Now's a hell of a time to leave!

TED

Great suspense!

MELANIE

It's how he got his name -- Regular Roy.

As she speaks, everyone listens and we SEE:

31 INT. COURTHOUSE - BATHROOM - DAY

31

Judge Russo goes into the last stall, closes the door, lifts up his robe, squats, lights up a cigarette.

MELANIE (V.O.)

Every day at 12:15 on the dot he goes to the bathroom across the hall, sits in the stall by the window, takes a dump and has a smoke.

We HEAR the sound of a loud FLUSH. Back to:

32 INT. COURTHOUSE - COURTROOM - CONTINUOUS

32

EMMETT

No way!

TED

You've got to be kidding --!

MELANIE

Wouldn't matter if he was sentencing  
Osama Bin-Fucking-Laden.

DEBBIE

Been fucking who?

Russo returns, resumes his seat on the bench.

JUDGE RUSSO

Because of Mr. Hobbs' age, that he has  
no previous offenses and that he was  
unduly provoked, this court orders he  
be given a suspended sentence and serve  
one-thousand hours of community  
service.

Off shocked faces and shouts of indignation -- except for  
Brian, who remains passive, emotionless.

33 EXT. COURTHOUSE - DAY

33

The crowd from the packed courtroom now pours out onto the  
steps of the courthouse. FIND OUR GANG (except for Brian) as  
they pass Chris Hobbs, his parents and lawyers.

DEBBIE

Look at him! He's practically a  
murderer -- and he's off, scot-free!

EMMETT

With a few piddling hours of community  
service --

VIC

I'd like to give him something to  
service --

MICHAEL

Come on, Ma -- let's go home, rest a  
little.

(CONTINUED)

DEBBIE

Damn right we're going home. But not to rest! I'm calling up every chapter of P-FLAG in the whole fucking country! We're not putting up with this -- not for a fucking minute! We're going to march -- with huge signs that'll show that asshole judge what we think of him. We'll march on Washington if we have to!

She pushes her way over to the Hobbses, starts yelling:

DEBBIE (CONT'D)

Do you hear that? We're going to The Fucking White House --!

The others try to pull her away.

TED

That's enough, Deb --

VIC

Come on, Sis --

DEBBIE

We'll have hundreds -- thousands --!  
Just you wait and -- and --!

Then suddenly, without warning, she breaks down, starts to sob. The others look on helplessly. Michael steps in, holds his mother in his arms.

MICHAEL

It's okay, Ma. He won't get away with this. We'll march. We'll protest. The biggest protest anyone's ever seen--

And as he holds her, we HEAR:

BRIAN (O.S.)

Bullshit, bullshit, bullshit.

CUT TO:

34 INT. BRIAN'S LOFT - NIGHT

34

Brian is studying a textbook. Michael is foraging for food.

(CONTINUED)

BRIAN

All protests are bullshit. A pathetic bunch of well-meaning do-gooders marching around carrying signs, chanting --

(with disdain)

"Hey, hey, Ho, Ho -- Homophobia's got to go!" Give me a goddamn fucking break.

MICHAEL

(after a beat)

I guess this means you're not going to join us.

BRIAN

(in Michael's face)

"Hell no, I won't go!"

MICHAEL

So, you're just going to sit on your ass and do nothing.

BRIAN

Yeah, I guess so. Jesus! What the fuck did I do all these weeks without you haranguing me? When're you going back, anyway?

After a beat, this is hard for him. Finally:

MICHAEL

I'm not.

BRIAN

(matter-of-fact)

I know.

MICHAEL

Ted and Emmett tell you?

BRIAN

No, I managed to figure it out all by my little self.

(a glance to Michael)

Well, I'm not surprised. I knew it'd never work out.

MICHAEL

Well, congratulations. Right as usual.

(CONTINUED)

BRIAN

This isn't about me, asshole -- it's about you.

(beat)

Did you actually believe you'd be happy in Wisconsin, playing The Doctor's Wife?

MICHAEL

Oregon. Portland's in Oregon.

BRIAN

Wherever the fuck.

MICHAEL

That's exactly the problem. I don't know where the hell I belong.

A beat. Brian takes him in his arms, answers his question with a kiss.

BRIAN

That's where. Now, go on. Meet your Mom. Make the world safe for fags.

Michael notices the book Brian's been reading.

MICHAEL

What's this --? Our old chem book from high school --!

Brian grabs it, snaps it shut.

BRIAN

I'm doing some research. I have this new client -- a drug company.

MICHAEL

You must be thrilled. You'll be able to get E -- wholesale.

Off Brian's cryptic smile:

CUT TO:

35 INT. COURTHOUSE - BATHROOM - DAY

35

Regular Roy Russo enters the john, humming contentedly to himself. He notices his appearance in the mirror above a sink, pauses to smooth his scalp, pull a nose hair, pull a pack of cigarettes from under his robe. Then he heads toward his favorite stall -- the one by the wall with the window.

(CONTINUED)

35 CONTINUED:

35

Just as he reaches for the door -- BOOM! A FLASH of light, the SOUND of an explosion!

CUT TO:

36 ON TV, THE ELEVEN O'CLOCK NEWS:

36

ON SCREEN: Judge Roy Russo is being led away, in his robes, dazed but unscathed, by a couple of paramedics.

ANCHORMAN (O.S.)

" -- The judge was unharmed, but badly shaken."

A POLICE OFFICER appears ON SCREEN:

OFFICER

" -- The Judge is fortunate to be alive. Had he sat down on the commode in question one minute sooner --"

PULL BACK TO REVEAL, WE ARE IN:

37 INT. WOODY'S - NIGHT

37

Where Emmett shouts back to the TV:

EMMETT

-- They'd've been pickin' porcelain out of his ass for the next year!

EVERYONE in the bar lets out a HOOT and a WHOOP! BACK TO THE TV:

ANCHORMAN

"So far, there are no suspects or clues --"

AT THE BAR -- where Brian, Michael, Emmett, Ted, Melanie and Lindsay watch.

TED

One thing you can say for sure -- that must've scared the shit out of him.

LINDSAY

Who do you think did it?

MELANIE

Either a Middle Eastern terrorist or someone who didn't like waiting for his sentence.

(CONTINUED)

MICHAEL

A potty bomb --! In the toilet --! We used to do that in high school --!

(he turns to Brian)

Remember that time you --

A beat. He suddenly stops laughing, as it dawns on him.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

Holy fucking shit --

BRIAN

Think I'll take off.

He stubs out his cigarette, giving nothing away, leaves. As Michael watches him go, mouth open:

CUT TO:

38 EXT. JENNIFER'S CONDO - DAY

38

Brian and Justin are in the driveway or on the lawn, tossing a ball. Daphne sits on the front step -- our cheering squad. But there's not much to cheer about. Justin's mind isn't on it.

JUSTIN

I knew they'd let him go. They don't care what happens to us. They want us all dead.

BRIAN

Forget about it. Keep your mind on what you're doing.

Justin tries to throw the ball, but he has trouble gripping it, controlling it. In a sudden outburst of frustration and rage:

JUSTIN

Shit!!! Fuck!!!

Brian is remarkably calm and patient -- and yes, loving.

BRIAN

You can do it.

JUSTIN

I can't!

(CONTINUED)

BRIAN

Yes, you can.  
(gently tossing him the ball)  
Come on, Sonny Boy.

A beat.

JUSTIN

What did you call me?

BRIAN

Nothing --

They look at each other. Brian smiles. And then slowly, Justin starts to smile, too.

BRIAN (CONT'D)

Aw riiight! Now give it your best shot!

Justin tosses the ball again. It's a wild throw, but at least he gave it his all. Daphne cheers him.

DAPHNE

Go, Justin!

Brian goes after it, as Jennifer pulls up in the driveway. She has her briefcase, she's in a suit. Home from showing houses. Her greeting to Brian is polite, restrained.

JENNIFER

Hello, Brian.

BRIAN

Hello, Mrs. Taylor.

Playing ball in the front yard with his friend, Brian is suddenly the neighborhood kid.

BRIAN (CONT'D)

We were just tossing the ball --

JENNIFER

His therapist says it's good for him.  
Helps re-establish the neuromuscular connections.

(to Justin)

But I think you should go in and rest.

JUSTIN

I'm not tired.

(CONTINUED)

JENNIFER

I'd like to speak to Brian.

Brian gives Justin a wink and a smile -- it's okay. Justin and Daphne leave.

JENNIFER (CONT'D)

The day his doctor sent him home, he said he'd never seen such a determined patient. He asked what it was that made him work so hard. I knew, but I didn't tell him.

(beat)

It was you. Everyday you didn't come to see him, it was more incentive for him to get better, to get out, so he could see you.

(beat)

But what he didn't know -- and what I never told him -- is that you were there.

(off Brian's look)

Every night. The nurse on duty told me.

(she looks at him, softening if only for a moment)

Thank you for doing that.

Brian shrugs. No big deal.

JENNIFER (CONT'D)

But now he's finally home. Safe and sound. And there's no reason for you to watch over him.

(beat)

So I want you to leave, and never see him again.

A beat, then:

BRIAN

I care about him.

JENNIFER

It's because of you he was nearly killed.

Brian absorbs her crushing condemnation in silence.

(CONTINUED)

JENNIFER (CONT'D)

Forgive me for being so blunt. But I've tried to accept him for who he is, to accept your world, to accept that he was a part of it. I even tried to accept you. And the result is, I nearly lost him. Well, I don't intend to lose him again. So if you do care about him -- and I believe you do -- then you'll do what I ask and return my son to me.

Brian looks off, SEES a couple of boys playing in the street, laughing, he turns back, hands the ball to Jennifer, goes to his Jeep, gets in -- and drives away.

FADE OUT.

THE END