

queer as folk

EPISODE 206

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queerasfolk

EPISODE 206

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
DAPHNE CHANDERS.....Makyla Smith
and as
DEBBIE NOVOTNY.....Sharon Gless

GUEST CAST

TWINK	GRAD STUDENT #1
BEN KELLERMAN	GRAD STUDENT #2
DEAN RYERSON	GRAD STUDENT #3
ZUCCHINI MAN	INCREDIBLY CUTE
ZACK O' TOOL	PARTY BOY

FADE IN:

1 INT. TED'S WAREHOUSE - DAY

1

Close on a:

COMPUTER MONITOR

where a cute and diligent TWINK jerks off at fifteen frames a second. His rhythmic thwacking is drowned out by the whine of straining air conditioners and TED, giving play by play.

TED (O.S.)

Internet access: thirty eight dollars a month. Adult porn site membership: twenty nine, ninety-five.

The camera whips back to reveal Ted, EMMETT, BRIAN and MICHAEL surrounded by a sea of electronics. The Twink is dutifully fulfilling his duties on a bed just beyond the maze of wires.

MICHAEL

(referencing the MasterCard ad)
Watching men jerk off from the comfort of your own home: priceless.

BRIAN

Masturbate the possibilities.

The Twink looks over at Brian. They make eye-contact and he begins to really get into it.

MICHAEL

But all you're showing is a twink beating his meat?

TED

And your point being?

MICHAEL

There must be at least eight gazillion gay porn sites.

EMMETT

I've personally been to at least seven gazillion --

*
*

MICHAEL

What makes yours different?

TED

Oh ye of little faith.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Ted walks over to a computer terminal featuring the Twink.

TED (CONT'D)

Imagine you're at your desk. Let's even say at Wertshafter's. And you're working on the Littleman account. It's due at five, but you're already done-- and let's be honest, you don't give a shit about Littleman anyway.

EMMETT

(genuinely confused)
Who's Littleman?

TED

(ignoring Emmett)
So you log on for a little afternoon delight. But suddenly Mr. Wertshafter barges in, demanding to know where the Littleman files are!

Ted presses a key, and the computer screen switches from steamy sex to an Excel spread sheet.

TED (CONT'D)

Voila!

BRIAN

A "boss screen." Pretty slick.

MICHAEL

Ultimate safe sex.

TED

"JerkAtWork dot net". For guys who don't only work-- at work. *

EMMETT

I say you need something bigger.

BRIAN

(eyeing the Twink)
I'd say he's doing all right.

TED

Bigger, huh? Okay.
(to the Twink)
Hey Robbie, time for your break.

They turn as the Twink fires off a pop shot that would dwarf the launch of Apollo 14. Everyone but Emmett's impressed.

(CONTINUED)

MICHAEL
Holy cum shot!

TED
(to the Twink)
Don't forget. You're back in ten.

The Twink walks past, cruising Brian.

MICHAEL
He can get it back up in ten minutes?

TED
Witness the jizzball.

Ted grabs a plastic jizzball, a modified squirt bottle filled with lotion, then squeezes it. "Cum" goes flying. Brian takes the jizzball and examines it, impressed.

TED (CONT'D)
Tricks of the trade. Proof that the handjob is quicker than the eye.

BRIAN
Leave it to you to fake an orgasm. *

Brian fires the tube at Michael who ducks.

MICHAEL
Hey --!

EMMETT
(to Ted)
You're going to make a fortune!
(then, whispering to Michael)
He's going to lose his shirt.

CUT TO:

2 INT. COMIC BOOK STORE - DAY

2

Michael is hunched over a computer at the front desk, inputting inventory. Debbie, the cleaning crew, is dusting. Emmett and Vic are organizing the comics on tables (or shelves).

VIC
(reading)
"The Squid." The Squid?

MICHAEL
Issue and year? *

(CONTINUED)

VIC

Issue twenty-one. 19 --

MICHAEL

(knowingly)

-- 67. Aisle one, shelf four.

Emmett looks over a few of the mags. *

EMMETT

Hmm. You know, I think they should be
filed according to superhero fashion
sense. Superheroes with taste.
Superheroes who clash -- *

VIC

Let's hope they never let you near the
Library of Congress.

MICHAEL

No wonder Buzzy was going under.
Nothing's catalogued. Inventory is non-
existent. No end caps, no window
displays. This place is a fucking
mess. *

DEBBIE

It also wouldn't have killed the guy to
use a little Pledge now and then.

MICHAEL

What was I ~~thinking~~ buying this place?

DEBBIE

Hell if I know. Shitty little store
stuffed with musty old comics -- *

MICHAEL

Thanks for the pep talk, Ma. *

DEBBIE

But it's your dream, honey. And that's
all that matters. *

She moves off as Michael takes a stack of comic books, heads
over to Emmett and Vic as BEN KELLERMAN, mid-30s, very good-
looking, walks through the door.

His appearance -- rumpled, those sexy little wire-frame glasses:

Emmett notices him first, bumps Michael. Comic books fall to the floor.

MICHAEL

Jesus, Em. Where were you looking?

*

EMMETT

At him.

Michael looks up, sees Ben standing there. INSERT AN ANIMATED LIGHTNING BOLT. ZAP! Back to Michael, staring, oblivious to Emmett and Vic's remarks.

EMMETT (CONT'D)

(clutching a comic)

I just love the bookish type --

VIC

(agreeing)

There's so much to learn -- between the covers.

*

EMMETT

(to Michael)

So what do we think?

Michael doesn't answer.

VIC

Michael?

MICHAEL

Huh?

VIC

Yay or nay?

The three of them assess the handsome stranger, wandering around the store, confused.

EMMETT

Brown corduroy jacket, frayed edges, blue wrinkled button down, Docksidiers circa '94. Classic breeder wear. I say straight.

As Michael watches him sort through comics:

MICHAEL

Aquaman, Sandman, Batman. Now, if he only picked up --

*

*

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

(as Ben does)

-- Superman! I say gay.

*
*

VIC

I go with Michael. Comic sense over
clothes sense.

Unaware he's being scoped, Ben walks over to Debbie.

BEN

Excuse me, I'm looking for *Wonder
Woman?*

DEBBIE

You found her! Just kidding. You
should talk to my son over there. He's
the owner. I mean, entrepreneur.

(calls)

Michael! You've got a customer!

Michael comes over, clears his throat, a little nervous, but
determined to be professional.

MICHAEL

Hi. Can I help you?

BEN

I hope so. I'm looking for some comic books.

MICHAEL

Good thing you didn't go next door -- you'd get Lebanese take-out!

(he chuckles, feels like an idiot, then back to business)

Anything in particular?

BEN

Yes, actually, I'm looking for works that, based on their narrative, graphics, cultural references, subtextual point of view, one might regard as -- um --

*

Michael helpfully offers:

*

MICHAEL

Gay?

Ben is momentarily caught off-guard.

BEN

Right!

Michael turns to Emmett, mouths "Gay." Emmett gives him an uppity, off the shoulder sneer. Michael turns back to Ben:

*

MICHAEL

Well, let's see. You've chosen some good ones. But if I might make a couple of suggestions --

*

BEN

Please --

MICHAEL

There's *Y-Men 106*, in which Easternstar helps a boy with AIDS. Mighty Comics pulled it from distribution, but I have one in my personal collection. I'd also recommend *Freedom League 56*, in which Electro and Wildman are described as being more than just "two super-friends fighting for Justice" --

*

*

*

*

*

As Michael walks off with Ben, Vic slides up to Debbie.

VIC

It's amazing how much Michael knows.

(CONTINUED)

DEBBIE

(nonchalant)

What can I tell you? My kid's --
super!

*
*

Off Debbie, proud as shit--

CUT TO:

3 INT. P.I.F.A. - STUDIO - DAY

3 *

The DEAN studies several examples of Justin's vividly rendered digital artwork. Unlike his earlier conventional, nude studies, these new images are drawings of nude accident victims-- dead, maimed, decapitated. They're beautiful, yet horrifying. And clearly telling of how Justin has survived violence: through acts of imagination.

DEAN

These drawings are very disturbing.

JUSTIN

They're supposed to be.

DEAN

And quite different than the work you submitted when we accepted you.

JUSTIN

I don't see things the same way.

*

The Dean flips through more examples of Justin's work.

DEAN

Professor Stanley tells me you're using a computer.

JUSTIN

It's the only way I can work.

DEAN

We expect our students to master the traditional disciplines.

Justin very seriously considers his concern, and then very thoughtfully responds.

JUSTIN

Sometimes the 'traditional disciplines' can also be a handicap -- as much as not being able to use your hand.

(off his inquisitive look)

I thought I could never be an artist again --

CUT TO:

4 INT. DEBBIE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

4

A full house. Brian, Michael, Debbie, Vic, LINDSAY, MELANIE, Emmett and Ted listen as Justin finishes his story.

JUSTIN

-- but instead, it forced me to find new ways to be an artist. Ways I might never have thought of, otherwise.

DEBBIE

(hanging on every word)
What did he say?

JUSTIN

He approved my portfolio and said I could stay.

DEBBIE

(giving him a kiss)
Oh, Sunshine!

LINDSAY

(a kiss, too)
That's wonderful!

MELANIE

(yet another)
Way to go, baby!

Brian playfully grabs Justin away from the womenfolk.

BRIAN

What's with all the kissing? You want to turn him straight?

He takes Justin in his arms, kisses him.

DEBBIE

Oh shit, they're going to do it right here.

VIC

I'll get my camera.

MELANIE

(to Brian and Justin)
Better yet, get a room.

MICHAEL

Or, save it for Ted's website.

(CONTINUED)

4 CONTINUED:

4

TED
You could earn a few bucks.

JUSTIN
It'd help pay for school!

BRIAN
Don't put ideas in the lad's head.

VIC
Or mine.

MELANIE
(to Lindsay, teasing)
Maybe we should do it -- help pay for
the wedding. What do you say, Teddy?

TED
Sure, Mel. Soon as you grow a nine-
inch cock.

LINDSAY
(put off)
Could we talk about something other
than sex for even few minutes?

They all sit in silence for a long, long, long, long beat,
trying to think what that might be. Finally:

EMMETT
(to Ted)
So does the Twink get overtime if he
jerks off for more than eight hours?

Justin grabs an empty bowl of dip and one of the chips.

DEBBIE
You don't have to bus, sweetie, you're
not at the diner!

JUSTIN
It's okay, I don't mind. Brian, would
you grab that for me?

Brian reaches for his crotch.

JUSTIN (CONT'D)
Not that! The platter.

BRIAN
(smiling, teasing)
"Yes, dear".

(CONTINUED)

Brian dutifully picks up the platter, follows Justin to the kitchen. The minute they're gone:

DEBBIE

(quietly, in disbelief)
Holy crap. They're like fuckin'
newlyweds.

MELANIE

I never thought I'd live to see it.

LINDSAY

I think it's wonderful.

TED

(wistful)
Yeah --
(then)
Ten bucks says they don't last a month.

Money comes out of pockets. *

VIC

I give it three weeks.

MICHAEL

Call me a romantic. Four.

EMMETT

I'll raise you ten and say two. *

MELANIE

You're all pussies! Seventy two hours.

TED

Deb?

DEBBIE

I don't put a price on people's
happiness. And considering what
they've been through, you'd think their
friends would bet with the house
instead of against it.

TED

You've got a point.
(then)
So, Linz -- you in or out?

LINDSAY

(ignoring Ted, abruptly)
We have to go.

(CONTINUED)

4

CONTINUED: (3)

4

DEBBIE
We haven't had dinner --!

LINDSAY
The sitter has to be home by nine. Mel
--?

Melanie looks at her, knows something's up.

CUT TO:

5

EXT. DEBBIE'S HOUSE - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

5

As Melanie catches up with Lindsay:

MELANIE
Linz -- are you okay?

LINDSAY
(not-at-all)
I'm fine.

MELANIE
Cramps?

LINDSAY
No!

MELANIE
Well, you're crankier than Gus when he
needs a nap. *

LINDSAY
I just had to get out of there, that's
all. *

MELANIE
I know, Debbie's tchotckes drive me
crazy, too. *

LINDSAY
It's not the tchotckes. It's listening
to that constant stream of sexual
innuendo all evening!
(beat)
And frankly, I didn't find that remark
about performing on Ted's website in
the least bit amusing.

MELANIE
I wasn't serious! Christ --! When did
you become such a prude?

(CONTINUED)

5

CONTINUED:

5

LINDSAY
 I'm not a prude!
 (then, admitting)
 Well, maybe I am -- a little.

MELANIE
 A little?

LINDSAY
 I don't understand people spreading
 their legs for all the world to see. I
 know it exists -- but the idea of
 anyone I know being a part of it really
 bothers me! Come on --

She gets into the car. As Melanie stands there, processing
 this piece of information:

CUT TO:

6 OMITTED

6

7 INT. COMIC BOOK STORE - DAY

7

Michael continues setting up his shop -- when the door opens. *

MICHAEL
 (calls)
 Be right with you!

Michael turns, and there he is again, the handsome, rumpled
 stranger.

BEN
 (flashing his winning smile)
 Hi -- *

MICHAEL
 Back so soon? Don't tell me you went
 through all those comics already! *

BEN
 (laughs)
 I'm fast.

Michael takes that in perhaps a different way than it was
 intended.

MICHAEL
 Oh --?

BEN
 I mean -- I read quickly.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MICHAEL

Oh.

BEN

Hate wasting time. Life's too short.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

BEN (CONT'D)

After all, who knows what could happen tomorrow -- or even five minutes from now?

Michael knows what he'd like to have happen five minutes from now.

MICHAEL

Isn't that the truth.

(then)

So, is there something else I can do for you?

*

BEN

I hope so.

Michael hopes so, too. He looks into his beautiful eyes.

BEN (CONT'D)

I should explain. My name's Ben. Ben Kellerman --

MICHAEL

Michael. Novotny.

BEN

I teach Gay Studies at Carnegie Mellon -

-

MICHAEL

(excitedly)

I knew it!

BEN

Knew -- what?

MICHAEL

The way you were talking about "cultural references" and all I could tell you had to be --

(he almost says "gay")

-- a professor.

*

BEN

Oh. Anyway, we're exploring homoeroticism in literature from Greek and Roman Mythology up to and including modern comic book culture. So I'm doing a little research --

MICHAEL

Research. Right. Got it. Well, let me see what else I can find for you --

He starts to search for more comics.

BEN

Actually, I've already found what I want.

MICHAEL

Yeah?

BEN

Yeah.
(a beat, then)
You.

MICHAEL

Me --?

BEN

I want you to come speak to my class.

MICHAEL

(laughs)
About what?

BEN

When it comes to comics, you're obviously the expert.

MICHAEL

I wouldn't say that. It's just something I know about -- since I was a kid.

BEN

It's more than knowing. When you talk about them, you have a -- passion.

The word hangs in the air between them for a couple of beats.

BEN (CONT'D)

So what do you say? Will you come?

(CONTINUED)

A ROMANTIC COMIC BOOK PANEL, A LA LICHTENSTEIN.

The bubble above Michael's head reads: "Oh, Ben, take me away with you!"

MICHAEL
I'd love to come.

CUT TO:

7A SCENE OMITTED

7A

7B SCENE OMITTED

7B

8 INT. SUPERMARKET - DAY

8 *

Brian, pushing a shopping cart, is in produce -- and clearly out of his element. He holds up a small zucchini, when he's cruised by ZUCCHINI MAN, who holds up a slightly larger version of his namesake. Brian ups the ante, forcing Zucchini Man to grab an even larger one. The game continues, until-- they're interrupted by Justin, who drops two boxes of pasta in Brian's grocery cart.

JUSTIN
Check it out. I got a second box of penne free with a coupon.

BRIAN
(horrified)
You clip -- coupons?

Justin follows Brian's gaze to Zucchini Man -- who turns away -- then back.

JUSTIN
You can save a lot of money.

BRIAN
I had no idea you were so tight.

JUSTIN
(playful)
Sure you did.

He gives Brian a kiss. Brian takes the coupon, rips it up, then hands Justin back the two boxes of penne.

BRIAN
Take the two boxes of penne back and get one box of rigatoni. Fuck the fifty cents. And get some Crisco -- even if it's not on sale.

He swats Justin's backside, sends him off, squeezes some peaches. Behind him, Zucchini Man has been joined by his friend, the celery stalker. *

ZUCCHINI MAN
(whispering)
See that guy? That's Brian Kinney. He used to be the hottest stud on Liberty Avenue. Now he's in a--
(whispering, like it was cancer)
"relationship."

They cluck their tongues and shake their heads in mourning. As they roll their carts past him, WE SEE Brian's heard every word.

CUT TO:

9 INT. TED'S WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

9 *

Ted punches numbers into a calculator, with the Twink, naked, standing over him. *

TWINK
Did you include my expenses?

TED
What expenses?

TWINK
One bottle of Keri lotion. Eight fifty.

TED
You have the receipt?

The Twink hands over a gooey, wrinkled piece of paper. Ted wisely decides not to touch it.

(CONTINUED)

9 CONTINUED:

9

TED (CONT'D)
I'll take your word for it.

Ted punches in the final numbers.

TED (CONT'D)
Percentage of total subscribers and
time on-line added to your base comes
to a grand total of -- eighteen dollars
and seventy two cents.

TWINK
Are you telling me I just spent eight
hours whacking off for eighteen
dollars?

TED
A lot of people do it for free, you
know.

TWINK
You said I'd be making like five
hundred dollars a day, easy!

TED
That was based on third quarter
projected earnings.

TWINK
What about this quarter?

TED
When you commit to a fledgling
enterprise, it's not about the money.
It's about investing in the future,
nurturing growth --

TWINK
Tell that to my dick -- it's worn to a
nub.

TED
I know a good physical therapist.

TWINK
Is that covered under the company
health plan?

TED
Company health plan?

(CONTINUED)

9 CONTINUED: (2)

9

TWINK

And what about the 401k you said you were going to offer?

TED

We'll have to discuss that.

The Twink, who's not so dumb after all, hands over the jizzball.

TWINK

I know when I'm being jerked around. I quit!

TED

You're walking out on a golden opportunity -- being in on the ground floor of an exciting, new creative endeavour --!

But the Twink's gone, leaving Ted alone and in trouble with his jizzball.

CUT TO:

10 EXT. STREET - NIGHT

10

Justin and Daphne walk toward Brian's loft.

DAPHNE

My new roommates never pick up their clothes, or make their beds, or wash a plate --

JUSTIN

We have a cleaning lady who comes twice a week.

DAPHNE

I have to wait half an hour to get in the bathroom -- and when I do, there's never any hot water left.

JUSTIN

We shower together.
(off her look)
To conserve energy.

DAPHNE

And they blast their music so loud, I can hardly think.

(CONTINUED)

10 CONTINUED:

10

JUSTIN
Sounds awful.

DAPHNE
It's wonderful!

JUSTIN
(cocky)
Well, I'm glad to be living with Brian.

DAPHNE
I wouldn't get too comfortable. You
know how long that'll last.

JUSTIN
(annoyed)
That's what everybody says. But he's
really changed. Like today. A really
cute guy in a tight white muscle T,
green parachute pants, and black Diesel
shoes was in the "Shop N Save".
Normally, Brian would've gone off and
left me in the check-out line. But
this time he barely looked.

DAPHNE
Sounds like you did.

JUSTIN
What do you expect? I'm at my sexual
peak. After this, it's all downhill.

They laugh as they go into Brian's building:

CUT TO:

11 INT. BRIAN'S LOFT - NIGHT

11

Justin and Daphne enter Brian's loft just in time to see
Brian fucking the guy from the produce section -- Zucchini
Man. Brian looks up at Justin-- then comes. Clean-up on
aisle seven. Justin stares, knowing better than to be
shocked or even surprised.

EMMETT (O.S.)
I told you so.

CUT TO:

12 INT. LIBERTY DINER - DAY

12

WE FIND Michael (going over index cards), Ted (going over spread sheets) and Emmett seated in a booth.

EMMETT

I tried to warn you.
(to Michael)
Didn't I try to warn him? You need something bigger, I said. Didn't I say that? But he wouldn't listen.

*
*

TED

If I don't come up with something quick, I'm going to lose my condo, my car, my ass --!

EMMETT

He's not listening now. No one ever listens. I might as well be the Invisible Man, or worse -- a mime.

Emmett plays mime, pressing his palms against an invisible wall, making a face of anguish. Ted doesn't notice. Neither does. Michael, who's practicing his speech off an index card:

MICHAEL

They always say, start with a joke.
How's this?

*
*

(reading)

"One way you can tell superheroes are gay is that their boots match their purses".

*
*
*

EMMETT

That's funny!

*
*

TED

Not funny.

*
*

MICHAEL

(crossing it out)
Stinks.

*
*
*

EMMETT

Is no one going to acknowledge my presence?

TED

Pass the jam?

MICHAEL

Pass the cream?

Emmett passes the jam to Michael and the cream to Ted.

(CONTINUED)

12 CONTINUED:

12

TED
(to Michael)
He never listens.

He and Michael exchange cream and jam as Debbie comes over.

DEBBIE
Get' em up boys! I mean your coffee
cups!

(CONTINUED)

They hold up their cups, she pours, as Brian enters the diner in a fucking fantabulous mood.

BRIAN

Morning, Deb! Flop two, a sinker and suds.

TED

Flop -- sinker -- my life's a breakfast combo.

DEBBIE

(calling the order back)

Two eggs, a donut and coffee for Mr. Wonderful. Looks like somebody got laid last night.

As Brian slips into the booth, Debbie pours Brian a cup of coffee.

MICHAEL

(continuing to rehearse)

"The male figure has been worshipped from Michelangelo to Captain Astro --"

*
*

Brian looks over at Michael.

BRIAN

What's he doing?

TED

(berating himself)

What was I doing?

DEBBIE

What's he doing?

(calling out)

Michael's giving a lecture at Carnegie Goddamned Mellon. That's what he's doing.

BRIAN

Mikey, I'm impressed. Next, you'll be receiving an honorary doctorate.

MICHAEL

Considering the closest I've ever been to higher education was the time I got fucked by that textbook salesman from Cleveland-- I doubt it.

(CONTINUED)

12 CONTINUED: (2)

12

Ted tabulates the final column.

TED

According to my calculations, I have barely enough money left to pay for my funeral.

EMMETT

Don't ask me to deliver the eulogy. No one'll listen.

BRIAN

Hey Deb, my breakfast?

Justin comes by, drops Brian's donut on the table in front of him. Brian grabs Justin's ass.

BRIAN (CONT'D)

'Morning, Sunshine.

JUSTIN

(chilly)

Can I get you anything else?

BRIAN

Now that you mention it--

He leans in for a kiss, but Justin turns his cheek.

JUSTIN

I'm late for class.

As he leaves and Michael watches him go:

CUT TO:

13 EXT. LIBERTY DINER - DAY

13

Justin is about to cross the street on the RED when Michael pulls him back.

MICHAEL

Didn't your mother teach you to cross on the green?

(then, off Justin's silence)

So what did he do now?

JUSTIN

Nothing.

MICHAEL

Cut the shit, I know that face. It's the "Brian Kinney just fucked me" face.

(CONTINUED)

13 CONTINUED:

13

JUSTIN

Except it wasn't me he fucked, it was some guy. I came home and he was in our bed --

MICHAEL

Another hurricane off the coast of Florida, another earthquake in Peru -- So what else is new?

JUSTIN

I guess I figured now that we're together --

MICHAEL

Things would be different?

Justin reluctantly nods.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

Brian's never going to change -- you know that.

JUSTIN

Then why am I there?

MICHAEL

Maybe because you got your head bashed in and he still feels guilty.

Michael sees Justin's reaction, immediately regrets it.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

I'm sorry -- I didn't mean to say that. I'm sure it's not why --

But it's too late. The truth has been spoken and Justin's already crossing the street. On the RED.

CUT TO:

14 INT. RIPT GYM - DAY

14

Ted and Emmett are working out. Ted does bicep curls, counting out his losses with each rep.

TED

Eight thousand down the drain, nine thousand down the drain --

EMMETT

Stop fretting, Teddy. I have a plan.

(CONTINUED)

14 CONTINUED:

14

Ted stops.

TED

At this point in the story, I'm so desperate I actually stop what I'm doing --

(he puts down his free weight)
-- turn to you with a plaintive expression and ask -- "You do?"

EMMETT

Of course! After you lose everything you have in the world, you move in with Michael and me. We have an inflato-bed and a spare key.

TED

An air mattress and my own key. Whoo-hoo.

He picks up his free weight, resumes.

TED (CONT'D)

Ten thousand down the drain, eleven thousand down the drain --

Suddenly, something (or someone) catches Emmett's eye.

EMMETT

Okay, I have another idea.

TED

(skeptical, to say the least)
Does it involve begging at an off ramp and sleeping in a cardboard box?

EMMETT

No, actually it involves --

Emmett points and the CAMERA RAMPS to:

ZACK O'TOOL

Why, it's none other that our favorite porn star: working out, surrounded by a bevy of pumped-up groupies.

TED

Zack O'Tool.

EMMETT

Remember when I told you that you needed something bigger? Now maybe you'll listen.

(CONTINUED)

Emmett drags Ted over to Zack, pushing past the Pumper-Uppers.

EMMETT (CONT'D)

Excuse me, boys -- 'scuzi!

(finally reaching Zack)

Zack --! Sooooo nice to see you again!

Zack looks at him, blankly.

TED

Did you really expect a porn star of his magnitude to remember you?

EMMETT

Maybe he'll remember this.

He opens his mouth wide, wider, widest. A distant memory sparks a dim flicker.

ZACK

Oh, yeah. You're that guy who was supposed to blow me.

TED

And I'm the guy who paid you to do it.

EMMETT

So what brings you to town?

ZACK

I'm shooting my latest film -- a football epic "Backsides in Motion".

EMMETT

I love anything with shoulder pads!

ZACK

(wanting to get away from them -
- bad!)

I gotta go.

He lumbers off. As they watch him:

CUT TO:

*
*
*
*

14A INT. RIPT GYM - STEAMROOM - DAY

14A

Zack sits nude, eyes closed, letting the steam caress his massive man-member. Emmett and Ted stand watching, admiring.

EMMETT

Didn't I tell you it was even bigger in person? It's huge!

TED

It's gargantuan.

EMMETT

It's just what you need -- I need -- everybody needs!

They slip beside Zack, one on each side.

EMMETT (CONT'D)

Say, Zack --

TED

Hey, Zack --

Zack opens his eyes, definitely not pleased to see them.

ZACK

Now what?

EMMETT

You see, my friend here has this live web-site --

*

ZACK

Not interested.

*

*

EMMETT

And since you have a legion of fans --

*

*

ZACK

Not interested.

*

*

TED

(jumping in)

What better way to plug your new picture!

*

*

*

*

ZACK

Whacking off on the web is for amateurs.

*

*

(CONTINUED)

EMMETT

(blurting)

We'll give you a thousand bucks, a
limousine, champagne and --

(stroking his lips)

-- your own, personal fluffer. *

TED

What're you saying --? That'll cost me
a fortune!

(CONTINUED)

EMMETT
Would you rather lose one?

TED
(after a beat)
So, Zack -- how about sharing your
member with our members?

*
*
*
*

As they await Zack's answer:

*

CUT TO:

15 INT. JEEP/EXT. CARNEGIE MELLON CAMPUS - DAY

15

Brian drives Michael onto campus. The place is Ivy League
intimidating. Michael goes over his notes for the last time.

MICHAEL
"-- sexy, perfect body, aloof,
desirable, yet unattainable --"

*
*

BRIAN
But enough about me.

*
*

MICHAEL
I was referring to Superboy.
(defeated)
This speech is for shit.

*
*
*
*

BRIAN
Why'd you agree?

MICHAEL
The professor's really cute.

BRIAN
Oh, yeah?

MICHAEL
You can put that idea out of your head
right now, mister -- I saw him first.
Besides, you're living with someone.

BRIAN
Correction. He's living with me.

MICHAEL
Either way, you're together, all comfy
and cozy.
(beat)
Except when you're fucking other guys.

(CONTINUED)

BRIAN
(angrily)
Who I fuck is none of your business.
Or his!

Before the conversation can continue, Brian screeches to the curb.

BRIAN (CONT'D)
Now get out.

MICHAEL

What the fuck's the matter with you?

BRIAN

This is it.

And so it is.

MICHAEL

Oh.

He looks around nervously.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

This was a dumb idea. Come on, let's get out of here.

BRIAN

Don't be pathetic. You made a commitment, you're going through with it.

MICHAEL

A lot you know about making commitments!

BRIAN

Which is why I never do.

Michael reluctantly gets out.

MICHAEL

What if I make a fool of myself?

BRIAN

Who gives a shit, it's fucking college.
(then)
Come over here.

Michael approaches him. Brian kisses him, lovingly.

BRIAN (CONT'D)

Now go show the frat boys what the real men are made of. And get a couple of phone numbers for me while you're at it.

And with those words of wisdom he zooms off.

CUT TO:

16 INT. C.M. UNIVERSITY - CORRIDOR OUTSIDE LECTURE HALL - DAY 16

Michael walks down the corridor to where a group of GRAD STUDENTS stand chatting outside a lecture hall (or classroom). As he approaches he hears:

(CONTINUED)

GRAD STUDENT #1
(reading from his notes)
"Homoerotic Themes and Imagery as
Depicted in the Graphic Novel".

GRAD STUDENT #2
You mean comic book!

GRAD STUDENT #1
I can just see the big essay question
on the final: Compare and contrast
Michel Foucault with Batman & Robin.

As they all laugh, Grad Student #1 turns to Michael,
mistaking him for a fellow student.

GRAD STUDENT #2
How can you compare homoerotic themes
and imagery in comic books to Gide and
Genet --

GRAD STUDENT #3
Proust or Wilde --

*

GRAD STUDENT #1
Baldwin or Williams?

*

MICHAEL
(really meaning it)
Fuck if I know.

GRAD STUDENT #2
So who's giving this lecture --
Spiderman?

GRAD STUDENT #3
It says some guy who runs a comic book
store.

GRAD STUDENT #1
He should be a real brain trust!

They all laugh, as Michael hearing this, humiliated, quietly
slips away.

CUT TO:

17 INT. LINDSAY AND MELANIE'S HOUSE - EVENING

17

Lindsay's surrounded by bridal magazines. She spots a
particularly fetching white number, tears the page out as
Melanie arrives home from work.

(CONTINUED)

17 CONTINUED:

17

LINDSAY

Hey! What do you think? Sexy, timeless
and easy to wriggle out of once the
guests are gone.

Melanie drops her briefcase on the dining room table, walks
over to investigate.

MELANIE

You want us to wear wedding dresses?

LINDSAY

What else?

MELANIE

How about tuxes?

LINDSAY

That's so butch. Come on -- let's go
through some magazines together.

Melanie hesitates for a beat, then:

MELANIE

All right.

She retreats into a closet, rummages around on a top shelf.

LINDSAY

(confused)

What're you doing?

MELANIE

After I came out -- back when I was in
college -- my dad cut me off. He told
me he never wanted to speak to me
again. So I figured I had to support
myself, somehow.

From the shelf, Melanie pulls out a dusty law book. Inside
the book is hidden a magazine.

MELANIE (CONT'D)

But you know how it is with Jewish
parents -- "Never" turned out to be
three and a half weeks. By then I made
enough money to pay for that year's
tuition and the next.

(presenting the magazine)

It's not exactly "Modern Bride".

Lindsay opens the magazine to discover old photos of Melanie -
- posing nude.

(CONTINUED)

LINDSAY

My God, Mel! And you never told me?

MELANIE

It was so long ago, I didn't think it mattered.

(a beat)

But now, I think it might.

As Lindsay looks at the layout, not knowing what to say.

CUT TO:

18 INT. TED'S WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

18

Ted and Emmett marvel at the computer screen:

*

TED

Five hundred and three people have logged on already to see Zack O'Tool!

EMMETT

Is that good?

TED

Do the math! Twenty-nine ninety five times five hundred is -- fifteen thousand dollars! Yah! Das iss very, very goodt!

EMMETT

And all just to see Zack whack. When's he getting here?

TED

(checking his watch, eagerly)
Any minute.

EMMETT

I'm so proud of you! You took your dream, grabbed it by the balls--shaved them-- and made it come true.

The phone RINGS. Of course.

TED

(into phone)
"Jerk At Work. See Zack O'Tool live."

CUT TO:

19 INT. FOOTBALL FIELD SET - NIGHT

19

INTERCUT the telephone conversation. It's Zack dressed only in shoulder pads, on his cell phone from the set of "Backsides in Motion." In the b.g. -- but not too far in the b.g. -- are four wide receivers in full football uniforms -- except no pants -- bent over in a three-point stance.

ZACK

Tad?

TED

This is Ted. Zack?

ZACK

Yeah. I'm here on the set. We're running --

(looking at the ass-formation)
-- a little behind.

TED

What do you mean a little behind? *

ZACK

I'm about to do my big scene where I ream the team for fumbling their balls. *

TED

We could start a little later -- *

ZACK

The director's calling -- we've got a big wide shot to do. *

TED

(desperate)
Zack -- *

ZACK

Could you let Tad know I can't make it? *

TED

Zack, don't hang up -- Zack! *

CUT TO:

19A INT. TED'S WAREHOUSE - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

19A

But Zack hangs up. Tad -- or rather Ted -- goes into shock. *

EMMETT

Ted? Teddy --? What is it?

(CONTINUED)

TED

I've got five hundred and three horny cybergeeks waiting to see Zack O'Tool jackin' the beanstalk -- only he's not coming! At least not here! What am I going to do?

EMMETT

My offer still stands. The inflato bed and the key are still yours.

Ted glares at Emmett, murderously, then:

TED

Get on the bed.

(CONTINUED)

EMMETT

Excuse me?

TED

I said get on the bed.

EMMETT

What for?

TED

What do you think? The show must go on. *

EMMETT

(daybreak slowly dawns)

What --? Are you crazy?

TED

(with the calmness of a madman)

You like to jerk-off, don't you? You'd do it anyway. *

EMMETT

Not with hundreds of people watching. Besides, I'm not the one they want to see.

TED

It doesn't matter. At this point, a dick's a dick -- and you're the only dick I've got!

He thrusts a bottle of lube at Emmett.

TED (CONT'D) *

Here! *

EMMETT

(handing it back) *

I'm sorry, Teddy, but friendship -- even one as deep and as close as ours -- has it's limitations.

Emmett starts to leave.

TED

I'll pay you what I was paying O'Tool!

Emmett stops on a dime. As he considers the bottle of lube:

(CONTINUED)

19A CONTINUED: (3)

19A

EMMETT

Then again, if a friend can't do you a
favor --

*
*

CUT TO:

20 OMITTED

20

21 INT. BRIAN'S LOFT - NIGHT

21

Justin is on the sofa in shorts, working on the computer, when Brian comes up behind him, feeling frisky. He sticks a long tongue in his ear, works it around thoroughly as he slips his hand in Justin's pants, working what's in there, too. The touch is instantly electric. Justin closes his eyes, goes with it. He's hard in zero-to-sixty. But he forces Brian to stop.

JUSTIN

Stop --!

BRIAN

Why, you got something better to do?

JUSTIN

Homework.

BRIAN

(joking)

We're in deep-shit trouble. *

Justin doesn't respond, continues to work.

BRIAN (CONT'D)

(realizing, finally)

You're not still upset about Zucchini Man, are you? I don't even fucking remember it. Or him. It was nothing.

Justin looks him in the eye. *

JUSTIN

I know that. It was just you being you -- and I know who you are. I don't expect you to change. In fact, I don't want you to.

BRIAN

Then what?

A beat, then:

JUSTIN

Why am I here?

BRIAN

One night, your mommy and daddy decided they wanted to make a baby and --

(CONTINUED)

21 CONTINUED:

21

JUSTIN

You know what I mean. Is it because
you feel guilty over what happened?

(CONTINUED)

BRIAN

You've been talking to fuckin' Michael.

JUSTIN

He knows you better than anyone.

(a beat, then)

So answer me. If I hadn't gotten my head bashed in, would I even be here?

A long beat. Brian is silent. And his silence is an answer. Justin quietly closes up the computer, then as he walks away:

CUT TO:

22 INT./EXT. COMIC BOOK STORE - NIGHT

22

Michael's locking up the store, starts to head off down the street when someone calls his name.

BEN (O.S.)

Michael!

He turns, sees Ben jumping off his bicycle, coming toward him. Michael forces a smile and a greeting. *

MICHAEL

Hey!

BEN

I was hoping to catch you.

MICHAEL

Well -- you caught me. *

BEN

The class waited for you. You never showed.

MICHAEL

Things got busy. I should've called. Sorry.

BEN

I'd like to reschedule -- maybe Thursday? *

MICHAEL

(avoiding Ben's eyes)

What with starting up a new business and all, I don't think I'll have the time. *

(CONTINUED)

BEN

(after a beat)

I understand. It was an imposition in
the first place. *

A beat. Ben goes back to his bicycle. Michael stops him,
looks into Ben's handsome face: *

MICHAEL

Look, the truth is -- I'm no Brainiac.

BEN

One of Superman's arch-villains, am I
right? See, I'm learning.

MICHAEL

(can't help but smile)

I'm impressed.

(then)

What I mean is, for me to stand in
front of a bunch of college students
and pretend I know something -- is
bullshit.

BEN

Why's it bullshit?

MICHAEL

Because "The Justice League of America"
isn't exactly Proust or Foucault --
whoever the fuck he is.

BEN

Can I tell you something? What you
know is just as valuable. You have
this -- this incredible knowledge of
gay semiotics you don't even realize.

MICHAEL

Gay what?

BEN

Never mind, it doesn't matter. The
point is you have this --

MICHAEL

(he knows)

-- "passion".

BEN

You radiate it. Like -- "The Flame"!

(CONTINUED)

22 CONTINUED: (2)

22

MICHAEL

You may be right. Suddenly I'm feeling
very -- hot.

As they look at each other:

*

CUT TO:

*

(CONTINUED)

22

CONTINUED: (3)

22

*

23

INT. TED'S WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

23

Ted's behind the camera, Emmett's in front of it, waving. Next to Ted, a computer monitor, showing the number of subscribers logged-on. We SEE the number is ticking lower. Four-hundred six... three hundred sixty-five...

TED

They're bailing fast.

EMMETT

Well what did you expect? They're waiting for Zack O'Tool and instead they get me. While I'm screaming in ecstasy, they're going to be screaming for their money back.

*

TED

And I'm going to have to give it to them unless you start doing something!

On the monitors, the number continues to drop. Three-hundred twelve... two hundred fifty-two...

TED (CONT'D)

(suddenly Mama Rose)

Take something off!

Emmett removes his shirt.

TED (CONT'D)

That's better.

*

But Emmett just stands there, frozen.

*

TED (CONT'D)

Take off your goddamn pants!

*

*

Emmett turns his back to the camera, demurely slithers out of his trousers.

TED (CONT'D)

Now your undies -- good! Good!

Ted glances over at the monitor again.

TED (CONT'D)

One-hundred and eighty and holding. I think we've stopped the bleeding.

(CONTINUED)

EMMETT

Now what do I do?

TED

Whaddya mean whaddya do? Grab your pud
and pull! *

EMMETT

Oh. Right.

TED

Jeeesh!

The number online jumps to two-hundred and twenty.

TED (CONT'D)

(jubilant)
It's going up!

EMMETT

So am I.

Fortunately for the actor playing Emmett, Ted's head blocks
the full extent of his manhood. However, Ted sees it and
reels.

TED

Holy shit!

EMMETT

(alarmed)
What? What?

TED

You're bigger than O'Tool! *

He checks the numbers. They're shooting back up! Two-
hundred fifty... two-hundred eighty... three-hundred ten!

TED (CONT'D)

And our subscribers think so too! Keep
goin'! *

EMMETT

(breathless)
Didn't -- I -- always -- tell ya -- I
was a -- grower -- not a -- shower? *

When do you want me to shoot? *

TED

Not yet!

(CONTINUED)

The numbers keep rising! Three-hundred sixty... four-hundred twenty... five-hundred!

EMMETT

How much longer?

Five-hundred thirty online!!!

TED

Now! Now! Go for it!

As Emmett screams, fires the shot heard 'round the world:

TED (CONT'D)

That was amazing. No one would ever know you were using the jizzball.

EMMETT

(panting for breath)

What jizzball?

CUT TO:

24 INT. C.M. CLASSROOM (OR LECTURE HALL) - LATE DAY

24

Michael is at the lectern, nervously facing a room full of students, none of whom appear to be too interested in their guest speaker. Michael casts a glance toward Ben, who offers an encouraging nod. Then he proceeds.

MICHAEL

I'm sure you're all wondering what comic books have to do with a course about "Homoerotism in Literature" -- aside from the fact that superheroes are pretty hunky.

A few mild chuckles from the audience.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

At first, I thought it sounded kind of dopey, myself.

(beat)

You see, I've been reading Superman and Green Lantern and all that stuff ever since I was a kid. At first because it was fun -- I like the drawings and the stories, it was a good way to escape the shit -- sorry -- whatever was bugging me, and because my Mom forbid me to buy them.

*
*

(CONTINUED)

Some laughter of recognition and a smile from Ben makes Michael start to relax and get into it.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

But later on, after I realized I was gay, I started to read them for another reason -- because in ways that maybe no one intended, those superheroes were a lot like me.

A SHOT OF THE STUDENTS

Boredom is turning to interest. Some actually sit up straight.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

For instance, at work, they're meek, underappreciated, and they never get laid. And when they're around other people, they can never let anyone get too close or their true identities might be discovered.

(beat)

Yet despite all the villains, the monsters, the evil forces that want to destroy them -- somehow they survive. Even the one thing that can kill Superman, for which he has no immunity -

-

AS WE CLOSE-UP on Ben listening intently.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

-- Kryptonite -- ultimately, we know he'll survive that, too, and go on to save the world.

(beat)

I guess for having read all those comic books, I believe the same thing about us. That despite everything, we'll survive. And win.

Michael looks over at Ben, smiles. And what comes back -- is love.

CUT TO:

25 INT. DEBBIE'S HOUSE - FRONT DOOR - NIGHT

25

Debbie, in robe and slippers opens the door, to reveal Justin toting a backpack, a stuffed duffel bag and his portfolio. *

(CONTINUED)

DEBBIE
Sunshine, what are you doing here?

JUSTIN
You haven't rented my old room yet,
have you?

As Debbie immediately sizes up the situation, ushers him in:

CUT TO:

26 INT. WOODY'S - NIGHT

26

At the bar a pensive Brian, sucks on a beer. Debbie is next
to him -- reaming him out.

DEBBIE
Hasn't that kid been through enough
without you causing him more pain?

BRIAN
Stay out of it.

DEBBIE
The fuck I will. At least I care about
him. All you care about is --

*

BRIAN
-- getting my dick sucked. I believe
that's been firmly established. Now
can we move on from there?

DEBBIE
Look, I'm only trying to --

BRIAN
Interfere?

DEBBIE
Call it whatever the fuck you want. I
just don't want Sunshine gettin' hurt.

BRIAN
Well, that's life, isn't it? Surprise!

He takes a swig of his beer. Debbie studies him, for a beat,
then calmly, almost bemused:

DEBBIE
You think you have everyone fooled,
don't you?
(off the sudden dart of his
eye)

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

DEBBIE (CONT'D)

Well not me, honey. I've known you too long, and regrettably, too well. No matter how hard you try to deny it, I can tell you feel the same way about him as he feels about you. Only you don't have the big, hairy cajones to say it.

BRIAN

Maybe I could borrow yours.

DEBBIE

Whatever it takes, to get you to admit you love him.

Brian ignores her, takes out some cash, tosses it on the bar.

DEBBIE (CONT'D)

And I know you do. That in spite of all your efforts to the contrary, to never let another heart touch yours -- and that's supposing you have one -- this persistent little kid's somehow managed to sneak in under the wire. That's what happened, isn't it?

Brian stonewalls her. But she won't give up.

DEBBIE (CONT'D)

Admit it's the truth. I swear, as long as I live, I'll never repeat it to another soul.

(beat)

You love him, don't you?

Brian finally looks at her. And he doesn't even have to say it. It's there, all over his face.

DEBBIE (CONT'D)

Thought so. Then tell him. Tell him what you could never say to Michael.

CUT TO:

27 INT. BABYLON - NIGHT

27

Packed as always. An INCREDIBLY CUTE guy cruises Emmett.

*

EMMETT

Is that incredibly cute guy cruising me?

(CONTINUED)

27 CONTINUED:

27

TED

Not just cruising. I'd say he's in maximum overdrive.

INCREDIBLY CUTE

(approaching)

Excuse me, but was that you today on that website?

TED

It certainly was! Be sure to visit us at "JerkAtWork.net" again soon.

INCREDIBLY CUTE

(ignoring Ted)

Your performance was really inspiring! Would you mind signing this -- to Christopher?

He whips out his dick, hands Emmett a magic marker. Emmett's taken aback, but signs:

EMMETT

"To Christopher. Thanks for being such a big fan. It's people like you who make it all worthwhile. Hope I can live up to it. All my very best. Love and luck, Emmett Honeycutt".

INCREDIBLY CUTE

Wow. Thanks!

TED

(proudly)

My little star! You know, you're going to need a porn name.

EMMETT

What's wrong with Emmett Honeycutt?

TED

Porn lore has it that you take the name of your childhood pet, and add it to the street you grew up on.

EMMETT

Back in Hazelhurst, we had a lot of pets. But my favorite was this little mutt named Fetch.

TED

And your street?

(CONTINUED)

EMMETT

We lived on the corner of Mason and
Dixon.

TED

"Fetch Dixon."
(raising his beer)
A Star is -- Porn!

CUT TO:

Lindsay's alone on the bed, looking at her bridal magazines.
Suddenly she stops, reaches beneath a stack, pulls out the
mag with Mel's porn pics. Lindsay studies the pages, and, as
she does, she begins to get aroused, starts to touch herself.

MELANIE (O.S.)

I thought you didn't like porn.

Lindsay looks up, embarrassed. Sets it aside.

LINDSAY

I don't. And what I like even less is
thinking of all those strange men --
and probably a few women -- looking at
you. *

MELANIE

It was a long time ago -- before I even
knew you.

LINDSAY

(a beat, then)
Why didn't you ever tell me?

MELANIE

It's not something I go around boasting
about -- in fact, I'd pretty much
forgotten. Until now.

LINDSAY

I don't want us having secrets.
(beat)
There aren't any more, are there?

MELANIE

(shaking her head no)
I swear.
(beat)
What about you?

(CONTINUED)

LINDSAY

Well, there was that time I was a hooker in Alaska. But it was only a summer job.

Melanie climbs into bed, picks up the mag, studies it.

MELANIE

I had a pretty hot bod.

LINDSAY

Still do. I have to admit -- these pictures really turn me on!

*
*

MELANIE

(tossing the magazine on the floor)

*
*

Why settle for a magazine, when you can have the real thing?

Melanie lies back -- a fantasy come to life. Ready for Lindsay to have her way with her. And she does.

CUT TO:

29 INT. BABYLON - SECOND FLOOR RAILING - NIGHT

29

Brian, on the catwalk, spots Justin in the center of the dance floor, kissing, grinding away with a PARTY BOY. Brian descends the stairs, wades through the sea of bodies, cuts in front of the Party Boy.

*
*

PARTY BOY

Hey --!

BRIAN

Fuck off.

Party Boy does.

*

JUSTIN

What do you want?

Brian wastes no time getting to the point.

BRIAN

You're right. The reason I took you in is because you took a bat to the head.

Justin appreciates his honesty, turns to move away, but Brian stops him. Then tenderness -- the kind you need real cajones to show:

(CONTINUED)

BRIAN (CONT'D)

But that's not the reason I want you to stay.

A beat. Justin looks at him.

BRIAN (CONT'D)

But don't get the idea we're some married couple. Because we're not. We're not like fucking straight people. We're not like your parents. And we're not a pair of dykes walking down the aisle in matching Vera Wangs.

(a beat, then)

We're queers. And if we're "together", it's because we want to be, not because there are locks on our doors. So when I'm out late, assume I'm doing exactly what I want to. I'm fucking. And when I come home, I'll also be doing what I want -- coming home to you.

Justin takes it all in. He knows the way of the world. He's been taught by the Master. His voice is strong, steady and clear, matching Brian, point for point.

JUSTIN

I want some things, too. You can fuck anybody you want, as long as it isn't twice. Same for me. But no names or numbers exchanged. And no matter what you're doing, no matter where you are, you always come home. By two.

BRIAN

Four.

JUSTIN

Three. And one more thing.

(this is important)

You don't kiss anyone on the mouth but me.

A beat, then the manifesto is agreed to -- with a kiss.

CUT TO:

30 INT. BEN'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

30

Ben's apartment is decorated post-graduate chic. A mountain bike hangs from the ceiling. Good computer. Lots of books, funky artwork, "eclectic" furniture -- everything from mid-century modern to club car lounge chairs. Ben brings a couple of beers, hands one to Michael.

MICHAEL

Thanks --

BEN

Oh -- and, uh, here, I've got something else for you.

He presents Michael with a book. Michael looks at the cover: "R-U-1-2" by Benjamin Kellerman.

MICHAEL

"R-U-1-2" -- I get it! You wrote this? You wrote a book?

BEN

My first and so far only novel. The *Cleveland Plain Dealer* called it "a noble effort from a fresh new voice." It was on the remainders table a week later.

MICHAEL

I've never even met anyone who's written anything before.

BEN

Open it.

Michael does so, reads the inscription.

MICHAEL

"To Michael -- beneath whose mild-mannered appearance beats the heart of a superhero. Ben."

(eyes welling up)

I don't know what to say.

BEN

No words required.

MICHAEL

How about this?

Unable to hold back any longer, Michael leans in and kisses Ben, who kisses back, passionately.

(CONTINUED)

30 CONTINUED:

30

As the lovemaking intensifies, Michael unbuttons Ben's shirt, starts to kiss his chest.

BEN
(whispers)
Wait --

But Michael doesn't stop, starts to undo Ben's jeans. Ben takes Michael's hands, looks him in the eye.

BEN (CONT'D)
I said, wait --

MICHAEL
(confused)
What for?

BEN
(after a beat)
I just want you to know -- I'm HIV
positive.

Off Michael's look we:

FADE OUT.

THE END