

queer as folk

EPISODE 307

Teleplay By
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Story By
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Production Draft (WHITE) 12-05-2002

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PRODUCTIONS

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TEMPLE STREET
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queerasfolk

EPISODE 307

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
BEN BRUCKNER.....Robert Gant
ETHAN GOLD.....Fabrizio Filipo
VIC GRASSI.....Jack Wetherall
DAPHNE CHANDERS.....Makyla Smith
JIM STOCKWELL.....David Gianopoulos

and as

DEBBIE NOVOTNY.....Sharon Gless

GUEST CAST

GUS

RODNEY

TATTOOED TRICK

DOMINIC SCOLOTTO

HOT DADDY JUDGE

NANCY HENDERSON

JUDGE HATCHET-FACE

CYNTHIA

ROLLINS

CUTE FAN

FADE IN:

1 INT. BRIAN'S LOFT - DAY 1

BRIAN sits on the sofa in the early stages of a fuck-fest with a rough, young TATTOOED TRICK who wears nothing but the ink on his skin. Tattooed Trick traces his tongue down Brian's body until he's positioned to start giving a blow job.

TATTOOED TRICK

I wanna feel your big, hard dick in my mouth.

But Brian is bored.

BRIAN

Whatever.

He reaches for his remote control on the side table, pushes a button. A porn video POPS UP on the TV:

ON SCREEN

TITLE CREDIT: "Hung Jury". Getting right to the action (as all good TV should) a hot daddy JUDGE in black robes gets down off his bench in this TACKY COURTROOM SET that looks like it cost ten bucks Canadian -- and not a loonie more.

BACK TO BRIAN

Watching as the Judge approaches a hunky prisoner in handcuffs. He unzips the prisoner's prison oranges, starts stroking the swelling contents.

JUDGE (ON TV)

Will the defendant please rise?

As both porn stars and Brian/Tattoo get it on, we:

MELANIE (V.O.)

With all due respect, your Honor --

CUT TO:

2 INT. COURTROOM - DAY 2

Where, alas, life rarely imitates art. In contrast to the hot porn judge, a HATCHET-FACED JUDGE JUDY-TYPE presides over TED's bail hearing. A night in the clink has left Poor Ted haggard and shaken. EMMETT and MICHAEL are there for support. Ted's counselor, MELANIE, defends her friend and client:

(CONTINUED)

MELANIE

-- one hundred thousand dollars bail feels unduly harsh. The records clearly show that Mr. Schmidt has always been a law-abiding, tax-paying citizen trying to operate a legitimate business.

ROLLINS, the prissy prosecuting attorney, pipes up:

ROLLINS

If you wish to call an unsavory, homosexual pornographic website a "legitimate business".

EMMETT

(to Michael, re: Prosecutor)
As if that troll's never been on a pornsite!

Michael shushes him.

MELANIE

Your Honor, Mr. Schmidt was extremely diligent in keeping his business strictly up to code. He had no idea that his employee, Edward Stewart Malone, was a minor.

Ted looks over at Emmett. Emmett offers love and encouragement. Ted musters a smile.

JUDGE HATCHET-FACE

While it is the court's obligation to uphold Mr. Schmidt's right to operate his business of choice --
(to the prosecutor)
-- however "unsavory", Mr. Rollins --
(back to Melanie)
-- this court will not tolerate ignorance when it comes to the corruption of a minor. It will ensure that Mr. Schmidt be punished to the full extent of the law.

ANGLE ON POOR TED

who closes his eyes in agony -- holy shit. Emmett's getting hysterical.

EMMETT

Omygod, Michael --!

(CONTINUED)

MICHAEL

Calm down, Emm --

EMMETT

Calm down? You heard what she said.
"Punished to the full extent of the
law!" What about the "full extent" of
some hulking inmate who's going to turn
my Teddy into -- his bitch?

CUT TO:

3 EXT. P.I.F.A. CAMPUS - DAY

3

ETHAN has just arrived back after his concert in Harrisburg.

ETHAN

I was brrrrrilliant!

But Justin is somewhat reserved.

JUSTIN

I knew you would be.

ETHAN

The audience was skeptical at first --
of course, I don't blame them.

JUSTIN

But that all changed once you began to
play.

ETHAN

I kicked ass in the cadenza, the
Andante was perhaps a tad too con moto,
but by the Final Allegro --

JUSTIN

The audience was transfixed,
transported.

ETHAN

They even gave me --

JUSTIN

A standing ovation.

ETHAN

And this huge bouquet of --

JUSTIN

-- White roses.

(CONTINUED)

Ethan stops, turns to Justin with a "How the hell do you know? look.

JUSTIN (CONT'D)

I was there.

ETHAN

You were there?

JUSTIN

I couldn't miss your debut, so I borrowed Daphne's car and --

ETHAN

You drove all the way to Harrisburg? Why didn't you tell me?

JUSTIN

I thought you'd be pissed. Besides, your agent was all over you. So I just watched.

ETHAN

And what'd you see?

JUSTIN

You, talking to your worshipful admirers.

ETHAN

You should've rescued me.

JUSTIN

You didn't seem to mind.
(beat)
Especially that cute guy.

ETHAN

What cute guy?

JUSTIN

The one you left with.

A beat, then:

ETHAN

Oh -- him? He's a music student -- he wanted to pick my brains, that's all.

JUSTIN

That's all?

(CONTINUED)

ETHAN
We talked about grad schools.
(dismissing the entire
ridiculous notion)
I don't even think he was gay.

JUSTIN
From where I was standing, he looked
like he knew how to blow more than a
trumpet.

ETHAN
(laughs)
You sound like you're jealous.

JUSTIN
I am not jealous.

ETHAN
Then why would you even think I'd be
interested?

JUSTIN
(re: himself)
I remember another young admirer who
came to you afterwards, to tell you how
amazing you are.

ETHAN
Look, fans are going to want to meet
me. Women -- guys -- they're going to
want to talk, to flirt -- they're going
to think I'm sexy.

JUSTIN
I noticed --

ETHAN
But that's part of the deal -- we knew
it was going to happen.

He takes Justin's hand, the one with the ring.

ETHAN (CONT'D)
Hey, whatever the bullshit, you know
you're the only one I love -- the only
one I play for.

He kisses Justin, gently, strokes his face. Then as they
embrace -- and the misunderstanding is forgotten:

CUT TO:

4 INT. DEBBIE'S HOUSE - UPSTAIRS BATHROOM - DAY 4

Someone's taking a shower. DEBBIE shuffles in, the morning tabloid in hand, calls to the shower:

DEBBIE
Sorry, baby, gotta pee!.

She settles herself on the pot, starts to tinkle.

DEBBIE (cont'd)
The diner called, I have to go in early
and take over for Betty.

DEBBIE (CONT'D)
And here I just came off the late
shift --
(opening the morning paper)
Holy shit!

And there on the front page, is a photo of Ted with the screaming headline: "GAY PORN KING ARRESTED".

DEBBIE (CONT'D)
Vic, it's Ted! On the front page!
(reading)
Jesus Christ -- they arrested him!
Vic? Vic! What's the matter with you,
water in your ears?

Just then, a HEAD peeks out of the shower. It's not Vic. Debbie shrieks! It propels her off the john like a rocket.

DEBBIE (CONT'D)
Who the fuck are you?

VIC comes rushing in. He sizes up the whole situation.

VIC
Morning, Sis. I see you've met Rodney.

Debbie tries to catch her breath, as Vic hands RODNEY a towel to cover his -- rod-ney.

CUT TO:

5 EXT. LIBERTY AVENUE - DAY 5

Brian is standing on a street corner with STOCKWELL and his two aides, DOMINIC and NANCY. Stockwell proudly holds a copy of the Pittsburgh Herald.

(CONTINUED)

The headline blares "ARRAIGNMENT FOR LOCAL PORNOGRAPHER".
And there, under the headline, is the photograph of Theodore Schmidt.

STOCKWELL

This porn bust got me a lot of attention.

NANCY

And a nice bump in the polls.

DOMINIC

(to Brian)

That should give you some fodder for your next spot.

As Brian studies Ted's glazed look of shock, making sure his own expression reveals nothing.

STOCKWELL

Tell me, Brian -- you got any kids?

Brian is momentarily thrown by the personal question. Hesitates, then finally answers:

BRIAN

Yeah. A son.

STOCKWELL

Then I'm sure you share every parent's concern -- that he might come across some pornsite like this scumbag, Schmidt, was running.

BRIAN

He's only two.

NANCY

The point is, Jim made a promise to the voters to make this city "Family Friendly". He intends to keep it.

DOMINIC

You'll soon discover, the Chief's a man of his word.

BRIAN

(all smiles)

I'm finding that out.

(CONTINUED)

NANCY

Under the current mayor's administration, sex establishments have been allowed to proliferate, despite my Department's best efforts to stop them.

STOCKWELL

Just look at this street. Back rooms, bathhouses --

DOMINIC

It's a veritable breeding ground for every form of sexually transmitted disease.

STOCKWELL

(placing a hand on Brian's shoulder)

But with your help, we're going to clean it up.

NANCY

And in the process, win the election.

As Dominic, Nancy and Stockwell get into the candidate's waiting car, Stockwell turns back to Brian.

STOCKWELL

By the way, you play squash?

BRIAN

Squash's one of my favorite sports.

STOCKWELL

Good. Then meet me at the Athletic Club, tomorrow night, about eight. I'll whip your ass.

As the driver whisks them away, leaving Brian holding the newspaper -- and to notice there is now a policeman standing under the corner street sign -- "Liberty Avenue".

CUT TO:

6 INT. MICHAEL & BEN'S APT. - MICHAEL'S BEDROOM - DAY (OR NIGHT)

6

BEN is fucking MICHAEL. It's hot, it's intense. The moment has come. They try not to. Suddenly, Ben is horrified:

BEN

Shit --!

(CONTINUED)

MICHAEL
(breathless)
Did you come?

BEN
No, thank God. The condom broke --!

But before Ben can pull out:

MICHAEL
No. Don't.
(a beat)
Keep going.

BEN
What?

MICHAEL
I said, keep going. I don't care.

BEN
But you could get--

MICHAEL
I don't care. Fuck me!

Michael pulls Ben inside him, even deeper. As they come:

DEBBIE (O.S.)
Michael -- honey?

CUT TO:

7 INT. LIBERTY DINER - DAY

7

Debbie has caught her son in the middle of a daydream.

MICHAEL
Huh --?

DEBBIE
(amused)
You looked just like you did when you
were twelve years old -- daydreaming
about you and Captain Astro flying off
to some incredible new adventure.

(a beat)
Or to fuck.

MICHAEL
How'd you guess.

(CONTINUED)

DEBBIE

So where's Ben? Haven't seen him for days.

MICHAEL

He's just got a heavy workload at school, that's all.

Just then, Vic comes in.

DEBBIE

Well if it isn't Casanova!

(to Michael)

Your Uncle has a boyfriend. And well-hung, too -- at least from where I was sitting.

VIC

We've only gone out a few times --

DEBBIE

They had a sleep-over last night.

MICHAEL

That's great, Uncle Vic.

VIC

Try miraculous. I thought I was destined to spend the rest of my life dating my right hand.

DEBBIE

So when do I meet him with his clothes on?

VIC

I invited him for dinner tomorrow night. Thought I'd make a turducken.

MICHAEL

A -- what?

VIC

A turducken. You take a chicken, stuff it up a duck, then stuff that up a turkey.

DEBBIE

Kind of like a three-way -- but with poultry.

(to Michael)

You and Ben are coming, too.

(CONTINUED)

VIC

Do we need to have the entire family there?

DEBBIE

What good's having a family if they can't make you squirm?

The order bell RING, RING, RINGS!

DEBBIE (CONT'D)

Would you lay off that fuckin' bell? This isn't a prizefight!

As she dashes off to get her order, leaving Michael and Vic.

CUT TO:

Ted and Emmett have come back from the bail hearing with Melanie. Ted stares at himself on the front page of the paper.

TED

Thank God my mother'll never see this.

MELANIE

Is she dead?

TED

She never reads a newspaper.

The phone RINGS. Emmett answers.

EMMETT

Hello? May I ask who's calling? One moment.

(handing the phone to Ted)

It's your mother.

TED

(taking the phone)

Hi, Mom.

(beat)

Oh, not bad -- and you?

(another beat)

You did --?

(then)

I know, it wasn't a very good picture.

(beat)

Look, it's just a misunderstanding, Mom. It'll all work out.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TED (cont'd)

Call you later -- and don't forget to
take your high blood pressure pills.

(hanging up)

She's going to need them.

Then pacing frantically, maniacally.

TED (CONT'D)

"Gay Porn King". I have one lousy
little website. But who do they single
out? Me!

(beat)

And after I was so careful to check and
double-check every possible infraction.
Except for one. Eddie. There he was,
by my side, the whole time -- with his
phony I.D. A plot worthy of Puccini!

EMMETT

Teddy, please -- if you're not careful,
you'll need your mother's medication.

TED

I know what's going to happen. I'm
going to wind up one of those eccentric
convicts you read about. They'll open
my cell door after forty years and all
the walls'll be covered with equations
and logarithms -- in teeny-tiny scrawl.

MELANIE

We're going to do our best to make sure
that doesn't happen -- but it won't be
easy. Stockwell's out for blood. He
wants to make you an example in his
campaign against porn, drugs and sex.

EMMETT

Everything we hold dear.

TED

(to Melanie)

There must be someone you know who
could pull a few strings -- put in a
kind word on my behalf.

MELANIE

There's someone we all know.

EMMETT

(after a beat)

Brian.

(CONTINUED)

TED
I'm a dead man.

CUT TO:

9 INT. MICHAEL & BEN'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

9

Michael is going over some drawings Justin has done for "Rage, Issue Number Two", of a new character, Juice Pig, a mega-muscled hero-gone-bad.

JUSTIN
You hate it.

MICHAEL
I don't hate it. I just didn't picture him looking quite so --

JUSTIN
So -- what?

MICHAEL
Evil.

JUSTIN
You said this secret potion he's been taking to make himself invincible has warped his mind.

MICHAEL
I know -- but underneath, he's still a hero. A good guy. And he will be again -- once Zephyr has blown some sense into his head.

Just then, Ben enters carting his bike and gym bag. He seems in a good mood, at least for the moment.

BEN
Hey, guys --

JUSTIN
Hi, Ben --

BEN
What're you up to?

MICHAEL
Working on the second issue.

JUSTIN
We're trying to come up with this villain --

(CONTINUED)

MICHAEL

Not villain. Fallen hero.

JUSTIN

His name's Juice Pig.

BEN

(beat)

Oh?

MICHAEL

He's sort of this Jekyll and Hyde character. Sometimes he's charming and kind, other times --

JUSTIN

He's a monster!

BEN

(to Michael -- not amused)

I wonder where you got that idea.

(then to Justin, changing the subject)

Deb tells me Ethan was a big hit.

JUSTIN

He got rave reviews. And another booking with the Buffalo Symphony.

BEN

That's great.

Justin, sensing tension, packs his bags.

JUSTIN

(re: the drawing)

I'll give these another shot. See you guys.

He heads out. A beat, then to Ben:

MICHAEL

So how was the gym?

BEN

Did two-fifty on the bench press.

MICHAEL

You could use a protein shake after that.

He goes to fix it, but Ben stops him.

(CONTINUED)

BEN
I'll make it.

Michael watches in silence for a beat.

MICHAEL
By the way, Vic invited us to dinner tomorrow -- to meet his new boyfriend.

BEN
Roy and I are working legs tomorrow night.

MICHAEL
Can't you "work legs" earlier?

BEN
I teach earlier, Michael. Plus I've got to make calls for Paul's memorial service.

MICHAEL
I could help you.

BEN
(a sudden snap)
No offense -- but it's not your world.

As Michael glances at a drawing of Juice Pig Justin left behind -- maybe it's not so off-the-mark after all:

CUT TO:

LINDSAY's getting ready for bed. Melanie emerges from the bathroom, a used pregnancy stick in hand.

MELANIE
Negative. Again.

LINDSAY
Don't take it personally. Most women don't get pregnant their first try.

MELANIE
I'm not "most women."

As they head into:

11 INT. LINDSAY & MELANIE'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

11

MELANIE

I'm used to hitting a grand slam, first time out of the box.

LINDSAY

You may have to adjust your thinking. The doctor told you it usually takes about ten months.

As they get into bed:

MELANIE

What do we do until then?

LINDSAY

We could pick out names.

MELANIE

In the Jewish faith, you're supposed to name your first-born after your grandfather.

LINDSAY

So what was your grandfather's name?

MELANIE

Hyman.

Lindsay practically howls with laughter.

LINDSAY

No, no, no, no, no!

MELANIE

Shh! You'll wake up Gus.

LINDSAY

What's the other one?

MELANIE

Herman.

LINDSAY

I'm praying for a girl.

She kisses Melanie, turns OUT the light. They lie in the dark for a beat, then:

MELANIE

Linz -- do you suppose it's out there?

(CONTINUED)

11 CONTINUED:

11

LINDSAY
(already half-asleep)
What?

MELANIE
Our kid. Waiting for us to will it
into existence.

LINDSAY
I never thought of it like that. But
who knows? Maybe.

She falls asleep, gently snoring. Melanie lies there,
looking out the window.

MELANIE
(whispers)
Come on, kid. Get here --

CUT TO:

12 EXT. BRIAN'S LOFT - DAY

12

Looking great in a new power suit, Brian strides towards his
Stingray. A FIGURE in dark glasses, pulled-down knit cap and
an overcoat appears behind him, starts to follow him. Brian,
stops suddenly, turns around. The person collides with him --
it's poor, haggard, unshaven Ted.

BRIAN
At last. My own personal stalker.

TED
(re: the car)
This is a beauty, Bri. First chance
I've had to see it. But then I've been
busy, what with the new house and work
and being arrested and going to jail --

BRIAN
I saw the papers. Awful picture. I'd
sue.

TED
Maybe when I'm in the Big House I'll
study law and do-it-myself.

Brian starts to get into the car, Ted grabs him:

TED (CONT'D)
Brian -- your friend Stockwell wants
The Powers That Be to throw the book at
me. Think you could put in a word?

(CONTINUED)

BRIAN
Which word would you like?

TED
"Don't"!

BRIAN
Sorry, Theodore. No can do.

TED
Please, I -- I'm begging you.

BRIAN
Look, I do his television spots. I'm
not the fucking D.A.

TED
I know. But you've got his ear. He
might listen to you --

BRIAN
You know as well as I do that'd be
overstepping the bounds --

TED
And since when did you ever give a shit
about overstepping the bounds? You
were always the first to cross them.

Beat.

BRIAN
It's business.

TED
Business. Right. Of course. I
understand.

(beat)
Well, you go off to your meeting.
Don't spend another second worrying
about a little pisher like me.

Ted takes his sleeve, wipes Brian's windshield clean.

TED (CONT'D)
There you go. Drive safely!

And as Brian takes off, leaving Ted in his exhaust:

CUT TO:

13 INT. SUPERMARKET - DAY

13

Justin and Daphne are testing various fromages in the cheese section.

 DAPHNE
 (sniffs)
 Try this.

Justin does.

 JUSTIN
 Smells like some guys I've gone down
 on.

 DAPHNE
 (shoves him, laughing)
 That is the grossest, most disgusting
 thing I've ever heard.

 JUSTIN
 Thanks.
 (then)
 I want something to go with a burgundy
 or a merlot.

 DAPHNE
 Planning a party?

 JUSTIN
 For two. To celebrate Ethan's
 triumphant return.

 DAPHNE
 (sarcastic)
 Hail, Caesar.

 JUSTIN
 And to supplicate myself at his feet
 for thinking he was fucking around on
 me. Guess that's what comes from
 living with Brian.

 DAPHNE
 Correction. Brian didn't "fuck around"
 on you. He was always honest, right
 from the start.
 (sniffing another cheese)
 This one might be nice with a rich,
 full-bodied--

CUT TO:

(CONTINUED)

THE PRODUCE SECTION

Where Vic holds up an eggplant.

VIC
(showing Michael)
--Eggplant! Is this not a thing of
beauty? Touch it. Stroke it.

MICHAEL
Insert it?

VIC
(admiring its length)
I can't help it if everything's taken
on a sexual connotation since I met
Rodney.

MICHAEL
I can't wait to meet him. I'm just
sorry Ben won't be there.

VIC
I'm sure he has more important things --

MICHAEL
Like going to the gym?

VIC
He needs to spend more time at the gym
like I need -- asparagus!

MICHAEL
'Scuse me?

VIC
For the salad. A medley of arugula,
endive, grilled asparagus and smoked --

BACK TO THE CHEESE SECTION

Where Daphne is holding up an exotic, Peruvian cheese.

DAPHNE
-- Llama?
(off Justin's skeptical look)
That's what it says. Made from Llama's
milk.

JUSTIN
I can't believe it!
(not about the cheese)
I mean, that I was actually jealous.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

JUSTIN (cont'd)

I guess it only proves how much I love him. And I don't just mean sex. It's more romantic -- like Brahms, or Mahler.

DAPHNE

Uh-huh.

JUSTIN

I know. I sound like a great big--

DAPHNE

Cheeseball?

As she offers it to him with a big, innocent smile:

BACK TO PRODUCE

Where Vic tosses Michael a grapefruit.

VIC

Here, catch!

MICHAEL

Uncle Vic, did you hear me?

VIC

Believe it or not, I can pick out produce and listen at the same time. "He's angry, he's cruel --"

MICHAEL

He's not the same Ben.

VIC

It's 'roid rage, Michael.

MICHAEL

(irritably)

I know. And I have to put up with it.

(beat)

Well, I'm tired of feeling like I couldn't possibly understand what he's going through because I'm not positive!

VIC

Sounds like you're a bit rageful yourself.

As Michael takes an angry bite of an apple from the fruit section:

CUT TO:

14 INT. VANGARD AGENCY - BRIAN'S OFFICE - DAY

14

Brian is absorbed in his work as CYNTHIA enters:

BRIAN
I said no interruptions.

CYNTHIA
There's someone here to see you. Says
it's urgent.

Brian shoots her an intolerant look -- "Who?"

CYNTHIA (CONT'D)
Mrs. Ted Schmidt?

Brian sighs, gestures Cynthia to admit his visitor. A moment later, Emmett enters, nods his thanks to Cynthia who leaves them. He glances around the room, a little nervous, his eyes finally coming to rest on Brian who's looking over some papers.

BRIAN
You might've called first.

EMMETT
If I had, you'd've been in a meeting,
right?

Brian shrugs -- that's true.

EMMETT (CONT'D)
So, this is the Inner Sanctum of the
Great God Kinney. Where men's fates
are decided.

BRIAN
Did Theodore send you to throw yourself
on my mercy?

EMMETT
He doesn't know I'm here. And I have
no intention of throwing myself on your
mercy -- or anything else.

BRIAN
That's a relief. I can come out from
behind the desk.

EMMETT
(after a beat)
You realize, of course, there's a very
good chance he'll go to jail.

(CONTINUED)

BRIAN

Tell him to look on the bright side.
At least he'll get regular sex.

EMMETT

I suppose that's meant to be witty.
Well, we all know your charming sense
of humor.

(beat)

But we also know that deep down you
care about us -- even though you'd
never admit it. That would be far too
un-Kinney-like. Which is why I've
come, to--

BRIAN

(cutting him off)

I already told Ted there's nothing I
can do.

EMMETT

I know what you told him.

(a beat)

I also know what you think of Ted and
me. That we're just a couple of silly
queens setting up house. That it'll
never work. Well, there was a time I
would've thought exactly the same
thing. But -- miracle of miracles --
I've never been happier in my entire
life. Want to know why? Because he
gives me love. And respect. That's
why now it's my turn to give something
back to him.

(swallowing hard)

I swore to myself this wouldn't wind up
an old Lana Turner movie. But it looks
like it's headed in that direction. So
I'm gonna make Lana proud.

(to Brian, pleading)

Please, Brian -- I'm begging you. Help
him.

CUT TO:

15 INT. DEBBIE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

15

Debbie, Michael and Rodney are at the table -- Vic whips up
dessert.

DEBBIE

(to Rodney)

All the Grassis' are cooks.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

15 CONTINUED:

15

DEBBIE (cont'd)
Nonny -- that was our grandmother --
Nonny was a wonderful cook. Her
cannoli --
(kissing her fingertips)
-- were lighter than air. Before she
died, she asked me what I wanted. I
said her recipe. She wouldn't give it
to me. She took it with her to her
grave.

Vic places a luscious-looking dish in front of Rodney.

VIC
Which is why we're having poached pears
with almond cream.

DEBBIE
Then there was her gnocchi. If you
ever tried to make them, then you know
they can turn out like bullets. But
Nonny's --

MICHAEL
(cutting her off)
Ma, would you let Rodney talk?

DEBBIE
Who's stopping him?

VIC
(to Rodney)
You kind of have to dive in around
here.

MICHAEL
You were telling us how you and Vic
met.

DEBBIE
(chiming in)
At a poz men's group.

Michael shoots her a look. She "zips" her mouth closed.

RODNEY
At a poz men's group.

VIC
We saw each other across a crowded
room.

RODNEY
I didn't even want to go, but a couple
of friends convinced me I should meet
positive men.

(CONTINUED)

MICHAEL

Why's that?

RODNEY

I'd been dating negative men but it never seemed to work out. No matter how hard we tried, they could never really understand what it's like living with this thing. But with Vic, there's no need to explain. We already know what each other's going through. Instead of separating us, it's brought us closer.

Vic, aware of Michael's situation, tries to do damage control.

VIC

Of course not everyone who's positive feels that way.

RODNEY

You mind if I ask, are you --?

DEBBIE

No, he's not. But his boyfriend is.

RODNEY

(a bit embarrassed)

I'm sorry -- I didn't mean to say that --

MICHAEL

It's okay. I'm sure there're a lot of things I'll never understand.

(beat)

But it's not for lack of trying.

As he eats his dessert in silence:

CUT TO:

16 INT. SQUASH COURT - NIGHT

16

Brian plays handball with STOCKWELL. The court is filled with heavy breathing, grunts, echoing blasts of the ball. Stockwell misses a shot and Brian wins the point. Stockwell stops to wipe sweat, catch his breath.

STOCKWELL

Don't you know you're supposed to let the boss win?

BRIAN

Why would I do that?

(CONTINUED)

STOCKWELL
Some people might say it's smart.

BRIAN
Some people are stupid. Why would you trust me if I let you win?

STOCKWELL
Score another point.

BRIAN
Besides, I don't like to lose.

STOCKWELL
That makes two of us. Want to check out the steam room?

Brian smiles.

BRIAN
Love to.

CUT TO:

17 INT. STEAM ROOM - NIGHT

17

Among the guys -- some nude, some in towels, some actually not bad looking (for straight men) -- FIND Brian and Stockwell, sweating it out.

STOCKWELL
I've asked the D.A. to fast-track the Schmidt trial, in time for the election. I was also thinking we should do a TV spot with a bunch of school kids -- about the dangers of porn.

As he talks, Brian cruises a sweat-slicked "STRAIGHT MALE".

BRIAN
The ad's a good idea. Keep the "family guy" image alive.
(a beat)
But there's not much I can do with this trial.

STOCKWELL
But it's all over the news.

BRIAN
Yesterday's news.

(CONTINUED)

STOCKWELL

That's why I want you to keep it alive.

BRIAN

It's like selling last year's model -- everyone's seen it. Besides, it's not like you arrested O.J. The guy's a bug. A schmuck. He didn't even kill anybody.

STOCKWELL

But if we can get a conviction --

BRIAN

That would be the worst thing. Your opponent'll accuse you of going after some small-fry to get yourself free publicity, the press'll turn him into a martyr -- like my dear father used to say, if you're going to pick on someone, pick on someone your own size.

Stockwell considers this, but doesn't commit.

STOCKWELL

So where do we go next?

BRIAN

I'd suggest the showers.

Stockwell grins, pats Brian's thigh -- in a manly way, rises to leave.

STOCKWELL

Coming?

By now, the steam room is empty -- except for the "Straight Male".

BRIAN

In a minute.

As Stockwell heads off and Brian makes eye-contact:

CUT TO:

Candlelight, soft Brazilian jazz PLAYING. A spread of cheese, bread, wine and grapes for him and Ethan. Justin has gone all-out to make it perfect for him and Ethan. He raises his glass -- both are already a bit drunk.

(CONTINUED)

JUSTIN
To the New York Phil!

ETHAN
And the London Phil and the Vienna Phil
and the Berlin Phil and the -- quick,
name another Phil.

JUSTIN
Phil Farnsworth. We were in the seventh
grade together.

ETHAN
To Phil Farnsworth -- wherever he may
be!

They laugh, then Ethan feeds Justin a grape.

ETHAN (CONT'D)
I love your mouth.

JUSTIN
You do?

ETHAN
You have the most perfect lips.

He starts to trace them with his finger.

JUSTIN
(laughs)
Wait -- I'm swallowing.

ETHAN
Of course, I love the rest of you, too.
But when I was alone in that hotel room
the other night, jerking off --

JUSTIN
You were "touching yourself"? And you
didn't call me?

ETHAN
-- I was imagining you kissing me all
over. Sweet, tender kisses --

JUSTIN
And then I went down on your hot, hard
cock --
(unzipping Ethan's pants,
pulling it out)
Like this.

(CONTINUED)

He starts to suck Ethan off -- just as there's a KNOCK at the door.

ETHAN

Shit, it's probably the neighbors complaining about the music --

Ethan turns off the music as the BANGING persists.

JUSTIN

I'll tell them to fuck off.

He gestures playfully to Ethan -- shhh! -- goes to the door, opens it, FINDS the CUTE FAN from Harrisburg standing there, beaming an eager smile, a huge bouquet of roses in hand.

CUTE FAN

Hi. Is Ethan here?

Shocked, Justin stares at him for a beat, then goes to Ethan.

JUSTIN

There's someone here to see you.

Ethan gets up (having stuffed his dick back in his pants), goes to the door, stops at the sight of his Cute Fan.

ETHAN

What're you doing here?

CUTE FAN

I wanted to see you again. So I drove in.

Justin looks at Ethan -- who averts his eyes.

ETHAN

Well, you shouldn't have.

(beat)

Now, I think you'd better go.

JUSTIN

No, wait. He came all the way from Harrisburg. It's a long drive --

(to the Cute Fan)

Believe me, I know.

CUTE FAN

Are you his roommate?

JUSTIN

I'm his Muse.

The Cute Fan nods, a bit confused.

(CONTINUED)

CUTE FAN

He's incredible, isn't he?

JUSTIN

Yeah, he's incredible all right.

ETHAN

Look, I can explain --

JUSTIN

I'm sure you can. But no need.
(to the Cute Fan)
Make yourself comfortable. Have
something to eat. The wine's
excellent.

And he's out of there.

CUT TO:

19 INT. MICHAEL & BEN'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

19

Ben sets his bike against the wall, greeting Michael who sits
in the dark, one dim LAMP illuminating him.

BEN

What're you sitting in the dark for?

MICHAEL

Waiting. For you.

BEN

I told you, I was working out.

MICHAEL

Legs, I know.

Ben goes into the bedroom to put his sweaty gym clothes in
the hamper.

BEN

So what's Vic's new boyfriend like?

MICHAEL

They're so alike, it's uncanny.

BEN

Same interests, same temperament?

MICHAEL

Same disease.
(beat)
They're both positive.

(CONTINUED)

That gets Ben's attention. He comes back out, stops when he sees Michael playing with one of his syringes.

BEN
Where'd you get that?

MICHAEL
The garbage.

BEN
I've used it, Michael -- put it down.

Michael ignores him, continues.

MICHAEL
You know, seeing Vic and his boyfriend tonight made me think -- maybe you were right. Maybe you should be with a poz guy.

BEN
Look, I was upset when I said that. I didn't really mean--

MICHAEL
And maybe that poz guy should be me.

Michael traces the needle against his skin. Ben stands there, terrified.

BEN
Michael -- please.

MICHAEL
Please what? All it'd take would be one quick jab in the vein. It'd be over in a flash -- hardly feel a thing. Then I could be like you.

BEN
I don't want you to be like me.

MICHAEL
You said you want somebody who knows what you're going through. Who wakes up every morning and suddenly remembers, "Hey, that's right, I've got it." Who thinks every time he gets a cold or the flu, "This is it, the end." Who's filled with resentment and anger because he can never have children. Who has to shoot himself up with steroids because his lover died and he's scared shitless he's next.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

19 CONTINUED: (2)

19

MICHAEL (cont'd)

Who drives the person he loves -- and who loves him -- away, because he doesn't "understand". Well, now I will.

He raises the needle.

BEN

Stop. Please. For God's sake -- stop.

Michael stares at him, angrily.

MICHAEL

No, you stop. Stop using this shit. Stop hurting yourself. Stop hurting us.

Finally, Michael puts the needle down. Ben breathes a sigh of relief.

CUT TO:

20 INT. TED'S CONDO - DAY

20

Ted, in his underpants and T-shirt, is curled up on his sofa under a blanket in a fetal position. Emmett is trying his damndest to console him.

EMMETT

Even if worse comes to worse and you have to go to jail, it won't be so bad.

TED

How do you figure that?

EMMETT

You'll have time to read, to work out -- it'll be like a spa vacation.

TED

I hear the prison guards do a great herbal body wrap. And the chef prepares a fabulous light cuisine.

EMMETT

And I'll come to visit and we'll make wild, passionate love.

TED

I doubt the state pen allows gay conjugal visits.

EMMETT

They did in this film I saw.

(CONTINUED)

TED
Which one was that?

EMMETT
"Jeff Stryker Does Hard Time".

Ted restrains himself.

TED
Look, Emm, I appreciate your trying to cheer me up, but life -- at least as I know it -- is over.

Just then, there's a POUNDING at the door. Ted freaks.

TED (cont'd)
It's the police -- they've come to get me!

Emmett opens the door, but it's only Melanie, dressed for business. She barges in, orders Ted:

MELANIE
Hurry up! Get dressed! We're late!

TED
(confused)
For what? Where're we going?

MELANIE
The D.A.'s office. They're willing to accept a plea bargain. You plead guilty to the charges and they won't seek a prison sentence.

EMMETT
Oh my God -- that's wonderful! Isn't that wonderful, Teddy?

TED
(stunned)
I -- I can't believe it. How'd you convince him --?

MELANIE
I didn't. I guess you must have friends in high places.

Ted ponders the imponderable.

TED
You don't suppose Brian --
(then)
Naw -- that's impossible.

(CONTINUED)

EMMETT
(not giving him away)
I wouldn't be so sure. You know how
forceful your powers of persuasion can
be.

He gives him a smooch.

MELANIE
Don't rejoice yet. They're going to
slap you with a mother-fucker of a
fine. You're also going to have to
shut down the website.

TED
Forever?

MELANIE
You do anything even remotely connected
to porn again -- even buying a fucking
naked greeting card -- the D.A.'ll slam
you to the wall and screw you standing.
(tossing him his slacks)
Now put your on pants.

CUT TO:

21 INT. MICHAEL & BEN'S APT.- BEDROOM/BATHROOM - DAY

21

Michael lies in his bed "asleep". Ben rummages in the closet
for a tie to go with the dark suit he's wearing. As he goes
to tie it (if possible, in the mirror) he sees Michael's eyes
open, staring at him.

BEN
Didn't mean to wake you.

MICHAEL
I was already up. I didn't get much
sleep.

BEN
Me, either.

MICHAEL
So who told you to sleep on the sofa?

BEN
After what you said --

MICHAEL
I meant it.

He gets up to piss. Ben calls after him:

(CONTINUED)

BEN

Look, I'm going to have a hard enough day going to Paul's memorial, seeing the Poz Patrol with their sunken cheeks, the buffalo humps on their backs, their big bellies --!

Michael calls back:

MICHAEL

At least they're still alive -- and so are you!

A beat, then Ben follows him to:

THE BATHROOM

He watches Michael for a beat. Finally:

BEN

I've decided to stop using the steroids.

MICHAEL

Good for you.

BEN

They're counter-productive to my healing.

MICHAEL

Why don't you just say they're turned you into a raving shit?

BEN

All right. They've turned me into a raving shit.

(beat)

I'm sorry.

Michael flushes, angrily --

MICHAEL

Thanks.

-- then heads back to:

THE BEDROOM

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

But you're apologizing for the wrong thing.

(CONTINUED)

BEN

What then?

MICHAEL

You're the brainy professor. You figure it out.

Ben doesn't have to. He follows Michael, then:

BEN

I'm sorry for saying I should find someone who positive. That was the drugs talking.

MICHAEL

No, it was you. So don't make any excuses. And if that's what you want, then do it.

BEN

It's not what I want.
(beat)
I want you.

MICHAEL

At nine o'clock on Friday morning. What about at ten?

BEN

I'll feel the same at ten, and eleven, and twelve.

Michael stops, looks at him, cautiously. A beat.

MICHAEL

You really going to stop?

BEN

I already have.
(beat)
Now, why don't you get dressed and come with me to Paul's memorial?

MICHAEL

It's not my world. I don't belong there.

Ben goes to him. Touches him.

BEN

You belong with me.

CUT TO:

22 INT. LIBERTY DINER - DAY

22

Brian is eating his lunch at the counter. Justin works behind it, looking very somber and wearing the same clothes he had on the day before.

BRIAN

Somebody didn't sleep at home.

JUSTIN

What are you, a detective?

BRIAN

Same stunning ensemble you wore yesterday.

JUSTIN

I spent the night at Daphne's, if it's any of your fucking business.

BRIAN

Do I detect a discordant note in love's tender refrain?

Justin doesn't respond, moves away as Ted slides onto the seat next to Brian. He looks ahead, not acknowledging Brian, who gives a shit.

TED

(calls to Debbie)

Can I get a coffee?

Debbie, who's serving a customer, calls back:

DEBBIE

Coming right up!

Ted and Brian sit side by side in silence for several beats. Finally:

TED

I've been thinking of a way to say this that won't sound maudlin and hence incur your wrath. So I've decided to delete all references to loyalty, friendship, responsibility, and being one's brother's keeper and go with a simple "thank you".

BRIAN

Who said I'm buying you lunch?

TED

I'm talking about saving my life.

(CONTINUED)

BRIAN

Oh, that.
(beat)
It was nothing.

TED

Which is exactly what Mel tells me I'll
be worth by the time they're through
with me. But better "hard up" than
"hard time".

Debbie brings him his coffee.

DEBBIE

There you go, Teddy.

TED

Good news -- I won't be going to jail.
Thanks to -- "a friend".

Debbie glances at Brian, who instantly looks away. Then she
embraces Ted across the counter.

DEBBIE

That's wonderful -- I'm so relieved.
(re: the java)
It's on the house!

As she moves away:

BRIAN

But don't flatter yourself. I didn't
do it for you. I did it to protect my
client.

TED

Of course. How could I have been so
presumptuous?

Brian slaps a bill on the counter, heads toward the door.
Ted's eyes practically well up with tears of gratitude. As
Debbie and Justin, watch Brian go.

DEBBIE

I'll never figure out why he does that.

JUSTIN

You mean act like a total shit?

DEBBIE

When it's obvious he saved Ted's ass.

(CONTINUED)

JUSTIN

It's what he means when he says he believes in fucking, not love: spare me the pretty speeches and just do it.

And as Justin watches Brian go:

CUT TO:

23 INT. LINDSAY & MELANIE'S HOUSE - UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - NIGHT 23

Lindsay talks to Melanie through the closed bathroom door, as Gus toddles about.

LINDSAY

You're not supposed to test every time you tinkle!

MELANIE (O.S.)

Says who?

LINDSAY

You have to let Mother Nature take her course and her own sweet time.

MELANIE

(sticking her head out)

That's easy for her -- she's already a mother!

She disappears again.

LINDSAY

(then, with a sigh)

All right. I'll leave you to your "Fun With Chemistry" and go make dinner. Sloppy Joes okay?

(beat)

Mel --?

Finally:

MELANIE (O.S.)

Don't bother putting the buns in the oven.

LINDSAY

What?

Melanie emerges from the bathroom -- holding up a pregnancy stick. It's blue.

MELANIE

Because there's already one there.

(CONTINUED)

LINDSAY

Oh my God, Mel, it's -- it's blue.

MELANIE

Damn right, it's blue!

LINDSAY

That means you're --

MELANIE

You got it.

LINDSAY

Are you sure it's accurate?

MELANIE

Better be, or I'm going to sue the
panties off that company --!

LINDSAY

This is unbelievable. First time out
of the box!

MELANIE

Told you.

(then, proudly)

Don't fuck with Mother Nature, huh?
Well, I'm here to tell her -- don't
fuck with me!

And as they grab each other and do a victory dance right
there in the hallway:

CUT TO:

24 INT. ETHAN'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

24

Justin is ripping the blossoms off the roses the Cute Fan
brought, flinging them across the room -- oblivious that the
thorny stems are making his hands a bloody mess.

JUSTIN

"I want to be with someone who only
wants to be with me. Someone I can be
with forever."

(hurling another long-stemmed
rose)

What a crock of shit!

ETHAN

I meant it.

(CONTINUED)

JUSTIN

I'm sure you did. The minute you were saying it.

ETHAN

Christ, look what you're doing to your hands --

JUSTIN

So fucking what!

(then)

You're a liar.

ETHAN

I didn't want to hurt you.

JUSTIN

That is so laughably, so pathetically lame it isn't even worth commenting on. Try something else.

ETHAN

I was covering my ass.

JUSTIN

(continuing to behead the roses)

That's better. Go on.

Ethan tries to explain.

ETHAN

I was alone. You weren't there.

JUSTIN

So now it's my fault?

ETHAN

I didn't mean that.

(beat)

I missed you.

Justin looks down at his bleeding hands. Wipes them on his jeans.

JUSTIN

And since you couldn't bear to be without me for one night, you decided to pick up some drooling admirer.

ETHAN

Basically, yes.

(CONTINUED)

JUSTIN

(interviewing him)

So, tell me, Mr. Gold, as a last-minute replacement, how did he do? Did he kneel at your feet and worship your huge talent? Did he marvel at your magnificent fingering? Did the way you stroke your bow leave him breathless?

A beat, then:

ETHAN

It was one, stupid mistake! Look how many times you forgave Brian.

JUSTIN

(angrily)

I never forgave him.

(then, surprisingly)

I never had to. Because he never promised me anything. But you did. Picnics and roses and farmhouses, all set to the lilting strains of Paganini's Cantabile, Number 17 in E-Flat Minor.

Justin gets up to pack. Ethan stops him, takes him in his arms.

ETHAN

I need you. I don't know what I'll do without you.

Justin removes himself from his embrace.

JUSTIN

I'm sure you'll survive. After all, you've still got your music. It's the only thing you've ever really loved.

CUT TO:

Camelot, Shangri-la, Brigadoon -- all magical lands eventually fade into the mist. And so, too, that fleeting wisp of glory that was known as Jerk@Work. Ted has packed up his desk. Now he's wandering through his empty empire -- past the cubicles and the equipment that made him the Master of Web Masturbation. He hears the GHOSTLY SOUNDS of past glories: the moans and groans, his OWN VOICE barking out orders, egging on his jerkers. Emmett packs up the dildos, tit-clamps, cockrings.

(CONTINUED)

EMMETT

What do you want to do with all these?

TED

(snapped back to reality)

Huh --? Oh. Thought I'd donate them to charity.

EMMETT

You can get a write-off.

TED

Somehow, I don't think I'll be needing that now.

Emmett gives him a look of concern, clears away some junk and cartons, to reveal:

EMMETT

Ohmygod, look -- it's my revolving bed, from when I was a big star.

TED

You still are. It's the dicks that got small.

(he goes over to it)

I never let anyone else use it. It retired when you did.

EMMETT

It brings back sooo many memories. The G.I. Joe Jerk, the Construction Worker Whack --

TED

God bless The Village People. True visionaries.

EMMETT

(jumping on the bed)

Care to go for a spin?

TED

I -- um -- can't, I've got too much to do.

EMMETT

Please, Teddy? One last time?

A beat, then Ted acquiesces, joins him on the bed.

EMMETT (CONT'D)

Start 'er up! Here we go!

(CONTINUED)

He turns on it ON, they start to spin.

EMMETT (CONT'D)
Remember, you gave me my porn name?

TED
"Fetch Dixon". The name of your
favorite pet and the street you grew up
on.

EMMETT
You know, you never told me yours.

TED
(after a beat)
"Millicent Kensington".

They laugh -- then Ted starts to sob. Emmett turns off the
bed, takes him in his arms.

EMMETT
(taking him in his arms)
It's all right, baby -- you cry. You
cry all you want.

TED
You know what I'm most upset about?

EMMETT
No more "Rim-a-rama"?

TED
That we had to give up the house. I
really wanted you to have it.

EMMETT
Oh, honey -- your saying that means
more to me than living in it.

TED
Not quite.

EMMETT
Listen, where I come from, we'd get
hurricanes all the time. They'd blow
the roof off -- destroy everything.
But we always looked upon it as a
chance to rebuild. To make things
better. So the business is gone. So
the house is gone. So every cent you
ever made is --

TED
I got it.

(CONTINUED)

EMMETT

The point is, it doesn't matter. We still have each other. And together, we're going to do just fine.

Emmett embraces Ted with a look of hope. But Ted knows the truth.

CUT TO:

Brian and Michael stand on the catwalk overlooking the movers and the shakers, smoking cigars. Michael eyes his somewhat tentatively.

BRIAN

That's a Montecristo Especial smuggled in from Cuba. So stick it in your mouth and suck.

Michael takes a timid suck.

BRIAN (cont'd)

If that's any indication of your technique, it's amazing you have a boyfriend.

MICHAEL

I'm still in shock. We made a baby -- and after only one try.

BRIAN

It's fucking depressing, all right. That your sperm actually liked Melanie's eggs. No accounting for some people's taste.

Suddenly, Michael reels from the smoke, the booze, the fatherhood.

BRIAN (cont'd)

Easy, Mikey --

MICHAEL

I don't think I can do it.

BRIAN

What?

MICHAEL

Be responsible for another life.

(CONTINUED)

BRIAN

Did I ask you to?

MICHAEL

Not you, asshole. The kid.

BRIAN

Your job's done. From here on, the lezzie's do all the work. All you have to do is show up for birthdays and the occasional walk in the park.

MICHAEL

I don't intend to be a "drop-in Dad" like you. I'm going to be involved. A real father.

(beat)

If I can only figure out how.

Brian looks at his friend.

BRIAN

You're going to be a great dad.

MICHAEL

What makes you so sure?

BRIAN

You raised me, didn't you? And look how I turned out.

He kisses Michael, then as he heads off:

CUT TO:

27 INT. BABYLON - BACKROOM - NIGHT

27

Pants down. Dicks up. Brian walks in, puffing his cigar, attracting attention from several of the HOT RODS standing, stoking themselves. Brian makes his way through a sea of hands reaching out to touch him, proceeding deeper into the heart of the darkness. And there in the center of it, is Justin fucking some STUD from behind. Finally free of romance, his lust has reinstated itself with gale force. Then he SEES Brian. The sight of him makes Justin drive even harder. And the sight of Justin makes Brian want it, too. He pulls a GUY over, forces him down on his cock. As he rams the guy's face, his eyes never leaving Justin's -- and Justin's never leaving his:

FADE OUT.

THE END