

queer asfolk

EPISODE 310

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queerasfolk

EPISODE 310

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
JIM STOCKWELL.....David Gianopoulos
HUNTER.....Harris Allan

and as

DEBBIE NOVOTNY.....Sharon Gless

GUEST CAST

GUS	CYNTHIA
OFFICER	DR. MARK BURGESS
DESK CLERK	NURSE #1
OBSTETRICIAN	DOCTOR
SOCIAL WORKER	NURSE #2
GO-GO COP	

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1 EXT. LIBERTY AVENUE - NIGHT

1

The boulevard of dreams -- broken, wet and otherwise -- seems unusually deserted tonight as JUSTIN and BRIAN walk along together.

JUSTIN

Man cannot live on the back room of
Babylon alone. It'll be fun to fuck
someplace different for a change.

They come to the nondescript entrance of:

THE LIBERTY BATHHOUSE

only to discover a "CLOSED" sign scribbled and stuck to the door.

JUSTIN (CONT'D)

When'd that happen?

BRIAN

How the fuck do I know? Come on --

They head off down the street to (or the CAMERA goes SWOOSH! and there they are in front of):

THE GRAVEL PIT

But ye olde sex club's been "CLOSED UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE".

JUSTIN

Shit! Them, too?

Even Brian's looking a bit peeved.

BRIAN

Let's try the Adonis.

A quick walk or SWOOSH! to:

THE ADONIS VIDEO ARCADE

But it, too, is dark and silent -- "COME AGAIN".

JUSTIN

(pointing at the sign)
The questions is, where?!

*
*

Suddenly, a blinding SPOTLIGHT hits them. They turn around and through squinting eyes see a POLICE OFFICER shining the light at them from his squad car.

OFFICER

What're you boys up to?

(CONTINUED)

BRIAN

We're looking for a good place to fuck.
Know of any?

OFFICER

(to Justin)
How old are you?

JUSTIN

Nineteen.

OFFICER

Lemme see some I.D.

Justin pulls out his wallet, approaches the car. He hands the officer his license with defiant eyes.

JUSTIN

Were you hoping for something younger?

The cop turns to stare sternly up at him.

OFFICER

Are you hoping to call your lawyer tonight from a holding cell at the precinct?

BRIAN

(Eddie Haskell-polite)
He's just a little rambunctious, officer. You know how they are at his age.

A tense moment, then:

OFFICER

Party's over, boys. Go home.

He flicks the license back at Justin, drives off. As Justin bends down to scoop it off the sidewalk:

JUSTIN

(sarcastic -- like a weather announcer)
It's become a *bona fide* police state here on beautiful Loss-of-Liberty Avenue.
(to Brian, pissed)
Something's gotta be done!

BRIAN

Yeah -- me.

(CONTINUED)

1 CONTINUED: (2)

1

As he yanks Justin around the corner into an alleyway: *

CUT TO:

2 EXT. ALLEYWAY OFF LIBERTY AVENUE - CONTINUOUS

2

Brian's back hits a brick wall as Justin rips down his pants. On the side of the building, we SEE a POSTER of "Jim Stockwell -- The Man, The Mayor." He's in his Tee-shirt and looking like one of the guys: the image is obviously from Brian's first commercial of him.

The poster image of Stockwell "watches" as Justin sinks to his knees and works on Brian's cock; the heat building and building into a perfect act of defiance. Brian's head turns to the sky as his jaw drops in ecstasy and he fires his load.

A moment later Justin stands to face Brian with a smile. Then he leans in toward Brian, is about to plant a kiss, but fakes him out and ends up spitting on the poster -- leaving a big gob of cum on Stockwell's smiling face.

JUSTIN

(to poster)

That's for the boys down at the precinct, Jim.

As Brian cocks -- an eyebrow:

CUT TO:

3 INT. RIPT GYM - DAY

3

MICHAEL and EMMETT are sweating on the treadmill as Brian strides by, sits down on a nearby bench next to BEN, starts doing curls.

BRIAN

Morning, boys.

MICHAEL

Missed you last night at Babylon.

BRIAN

It was such a lovely evening, Justin and I decided to go for a stroll.

BEN

You should've been there.

EMMETT

I hear it was an overflow crowd.

(CONTINUED)

MICHAEL

. Filled to capacity.

BRIAN

What was the enticement -- free airline miles for every cock you suck?

BEN

There's nowhere else to go.
Stockwell's closed down half the
. street.

EMMETT

And you've empowered him do to it.

BRIAN

Frankly, he's doing us all a favor.
The Gravel Pit was a skank-hole -- the
only thing I ever picked up there was a
case of crabs. The Baths were always
filled with trolls. And The Adonis
hasn't cleaned the cum off its floors
since the day it opened.

BEN

That's not the point.

Brian waits to hear what is. *

BEN (CONT'D)

Our world's being taken away from us.

EMMETT

And that includes our right to fuck! I
thought somehow that might have
personal significance for you. *

MICHAEL

The only thing that has personal
significance for him is signing up
Stockwell's backers and moving to New
York. *

Brian points at Michael -- "Right on!" as we HEAR:

TED (O.S.)

NO, I WILL NOT CALM DOWN!

They look over toward the commotion at the Front Desk, where
TED is fuming.

EMMETT

Be right back --

(CONTINUED)

Emmett heads over to the desk, asks:

EMMETT (CONT'D)

What's going on -- what's wrong?

TED

(bristling)

They won't let me in.

DESK CLERK

We got an Insufficient Funds notice from the bank when we tried to bill his account. *

TED

That's bullshit!

EMMETT

I'm sure it's just a mix-up. We'll get you a guest membership for now --

TED

I've been coming here for nine years -- NINE YEARS! You'd think you could show a little respect! Fuck you and your membership!

Ted storms off. Emmett smiles with embarrassment at the DESK CLERK --

EMMETT

Sorry about that.

DESK CLERK

Honey, you should see the carnage when yoga sells out.

-- then he returns to Michael and Brian. *

EMMETT

Poor Teddy -- these days, the slightest little affront is like a knife in his heart. *

BEN

Maybe what he needs is a vacation. *

BRIAN

Maybe what he needs is industrial-strength Valium. *

CUT TO:

(CONTINUED)

A FLASHING HEARTBEAT ON A MONITOR

MELANIE (V.O.)

Valium!?

OPEN TO:

4 INT. ALLEGHENY GENERAL HOSPITAL - OB/GYN EXAM ROOM - DAY 4

Where LINDSAY and MELANIE are watching the Doppler monitor with Michael and an OBSTETRICIAN at the bedside.

MICHAEL

Well look at it! It's beating so fast!

OBSTETRICIAN

That's quite normal. Pregnancy's hard work -- for both the child and mother.

LINDSAY

Especially after Melanie's endometriosis. *

MICHAEL

(concerned, the first he's heard) *

Endo -- meetry -- what? *

OBSTETRICIAN

(to Melanie)

You'll probably discover the pain'll subside during the pregnancy.

MICHAEL

Pain? What pain?

LINDSAY

But in the meantime, she should still be taking it easy -- right, Doctor?

MICHAEL

Is something the matter?

MELANIE

Would everyone please stop worrying?

LINDSAY

I'm not worrying --

MICHAEL

I am!

LINDSAY

I was just making a suggestion.

(CONTINUED)

OBSTETRICIAN

There's no harm in taking it easy.

LINDSAY

(to the doctor)

She's practically working herself into a state of exhaustion.

MICHAEL

What --?

MELANIE

(defensive)

I am not working myself into a state of exhaustion.

LINDSAY

Please.

(to the doctor)

She thinks she can do it all.

MELANIE

Because I can!

*

OBSTETRICIAN

You need to be careful, Melanie, not to overdo. Too much stress, not eating properly -- these can all lead to serious complications.

MICHAEL

Jesus --

MELANIE

I take good care of myself, I really do. My darling, devoted partner is simply over-reacting and driving me nuts!

Michael eyes her with a worried face.

MICHAEL (V.O.)

I'm the one who needs the Valium.

*

CUT TO:

5 INT. LIBERTY DINER - DAY

5

Michael is eating lunch with Ben and Brian.

(CONTINUED)

BRIAN

(tsk-tsking to Ben)
You'd think with all the chronic
masturbation he'd be calm, but he's a
jangle of nerves.

*
*
*
*

MICHAEL

It's not funny! Mel's running herself
ragged.

BRIAN

That's what happens when you're always
on the rag.

*
*
*

BEN

There's not much you can do -- she's
the one carrying the baby.

MICHAEL

Our baby.

BEN

So did you see it? What did it look
like?

BRIAN

Did it have your cute little turned-up
nose, button eyes and perfectly shaped
penis?

*
*

MICHAEL

You really think so?

*
*

BEN

Hey!

*
*

MICHAEL

It's the size of a peanut. The baby!
But it was amazing. Pretty fuckin'
amazing.

*
*

Just then, Ben's cell phone BEEEEEPS!. He digs it out,
answers.

BEN

(into phone)
Hello? Yes --?
(somewhat confused)
My what?
(he listens)
Oh. Oh, right.

What he hears next causes some distress. He stands up, moves
away from the table.

(CONTINUED)

BEN (CONT'D)

Is he all right?

(listens)

I see.

(smiles at Michael)

I'm teaching until three -- but I can be there after that.

(beat)

Thanks.

He hangs up.

MICHAEL

Everything all right?

BEN

Yeah, no problem.

(gives him a peck)

I'll see you later. And stop worrying.

Off he goes, just as DEBBIE approaches with the bill.

DEBBIE

Who's worrying? That's my job, goddamnit.

BRIAN

Melanie's working too hard, and Michael --

Brian grabs Michael's hand, lowers his voice, melodramatic.

BRIAN (CONT'D)

-- Michael's afraid for the life of the child!

Debbie sits down in Ben's vacated seat. *

DEBBIE

(to Michael)

Sweetheart, let me tell you a story. Once upon a god-forsaken time, there was a beautiful princess who worked her ass off until the day her kid popped. Then she was back at the job three days later.

BRIAN

That Diana was an inspiration.

DEBBIE

Bottom line is, I couldn't afford the luxury of not working. I had to earn a living.

(CONTINUED)

MICHAEL

But you were seventeen! Mel's in her thirties, she had endo-whatever-the-fuck-it's-called, and she's just taken on the biggest court case of her life!

BRIAN

Plus, let's not forget -- she's a cwazy wesbian.

Debbie pauses for a moment.

MICHAEL

Now can you see why I'm worried?

(a beat)

Well? Say something!

DEBBIE

Someone'd better keep an eye on that girl.

Debbie stands up, walks away.

MICHAEL

Now I really need a Valium.

TED (V.O.)

"Try Discount Viagra" --

CUT TO:

6 INT. TED'S CONDO - DAY

6

Ted's at his computer, deleting his junk e-mail, talking to himself.

TED

"Watch Teenage Girls Doing It With Farm Animals." Whoo-hoo -- I can hardly wait.

(beat)

"Refinance Your Home" -- like I need to worry about that anymore.

(beat)

"Underground Sex Party". What, with corpses?

Ted clicks the mouse, opens the message. He scans the info.

TED (CONT'D)

"You've received this cuz you're on the list of Pittsburgh's hottest sex-pigs."

(beat)

Boy, does your list needs updating.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

*

TED (CONT'D)

(then)

"Cum join the hottest sex party in town tomorrow at the Paradise Motel."

(to himself)

That filthy, pestilence-ridden hole? If they want to close some place, they should close that!

(reading on)

"Slings in every room. Bring your own poppers and party favors."

(big sigh)

Sorry, boys, you're going to have to party without me.

*
*

He DELETES THE MESSAGE just as a gust of Emmett blusters through the front door, all bundled up.

EMMETT

My god! Jack Frost certainly is nipping at my nose -- and other extremities.

*

TED

Welcome to the winter of our discontent.

Emmett offers him a sympathetic smile.

*

EMMETT

No luck on the job boards?

TED

I can either make a mint selling home beauty care products a few short hours a day over the Internet, or be the new C.E.O. of Enron. Take your pick.

EMMETT

You know, maybe you should take some time off.

TED

(gritting his teeth)

What do you think I've been doing?

EMMETT

I mean real time off. Go somewhere, relax. Now that you have the opportunity, make the most of it! Have fun! Forget about everything.

*

TED

A lovely thought -- except for one minor inconvenience: I have six fucking dollars to my name.

(CONTINUED)

EMMETT

Not a problem.

TED

Since when?

EMMETT

Since I did three successful parties
this week.

Emmett pulls out a wad of cash, sets it on the table in front
of Ted.

TED

I'm not taking your money.

EMMETT

Why not?

TED

Because it's not mine.

EMMETT

It's ours. Teddy, how many times did
you help me out when I couldn't even
pay my phone bill? You've always been
sooo generous to me. Well, now it's my
turn to help you.

Ted is mortified, looks at the money with contempt as Emmett
continues. *
*

EMMETT (CONT'D)

I read about this fabulous B&B just two
hours out of the city. An old
converted farmhouse right beside a
little stream, with a wood-burning
fireplace in every room and a gourmet
restaurant. It sounds like the perfect
place to take some deliciously trashy
novel and unwind. *

TED

I don't want to go without you.

EMMETT

This is something you need to do,
alone. For yourself.

Emmett gives him a kiss, and hands him the money.

CUT TO:

7 INT. ALLEGHENY GENERAL HOSPITAL - HUNTER'S ROOM - DAY 7

Ben steps into the room. The TV's going, silently. HUNTER's lying in bed, looking very pale, wiped out, in discomfort. But he's lost none of his charm.

HUNTER

What the fuck took you so long?

BEN

Nice to see you, too.

He pulls up a chair, sits by the side of the bed.

BEN (CONT'D)

I got a call telling me "my nephew" was in the hospital.

(beat)

Which was rather surprising, since I don't have a nephew.

HUNTER

You do now -- "Unc".

Ben stares at him for a beat, then:

BEN

Well, since we're "related", you mind telling me what's going on?

HUNTER

The doctor said I've got some kind of kidney infection. Hurts like hell.

BEN

I hear they can be pretty painful --

HUNTER

I passed out, right on the sidewalk. After laying there for an hour, somebody finally bothered to call an ambulance. *

BEN

At least you're here now. I'm sure they'll take good care of you.

HUNTER

Yeah, they'll take care of me. They want to know the name of my parent or guardian. *

(beat)

So I gave 'em yours.

(CONTINUED)

Ben gives him a look.

HUNTER (CONT'D)

Well you said I should call if there
was a problem.

(shrugs)

There was a problem.

BEN

Look, I'm not going to lie to them,
get myself in trouble, you as well.
So I'd better go explain to them --

He rises to leave. Hunter stops him.

HUNTER

No, wait! If you tell them you're not
my uncle, they'll call the police.
They'll put me back in the system.

BEN

That may not be the worst thing.

HUNTER

You think so? I told you what it was
like! Weren't you listening?

BEN

I'm sure there must be some decent
families --

HUNTER

They're not going to want me. They're
gonna want some cute little three-year
old.

(beat)

I'm going to get to rot in some county
home, with the other rejects.

Ben tries hard not to feel sorry for him.

BEN

There must be some other solution.

HUNTER

Can you come up with one?

Ben looks at the kid for a beat. Then, with finality:

BEN

(a beat, then)
I'm sorry, Hunter.

(CONTINUED)

HUNTER

Then why'd you even bother giving me
your number, asshole? So you could
feel like some fuckin' do-gooder?
Well, next time, don't bother!

He tosses Ben's crumpled phone number at him, curls up, self-protectively under the cover as the hospital SOCIAL WORKER walks in. She gives Ben a cursory smile, checks a clipboard.

SOCIAL WORKER

Ben Bruckner?

BEN

That's right.

SOCIAL WORKER

It says here you're Hunter's uncle.
I'm going to need you to fill out some
forms.

She thrusts the clipboard at him. As he hesitates, looks at Hunter, then her:

CUT TO:

It's The Policeman's Ball -- Babylon style. Topless GO-GO BOYS dressed up as police officers gyrate to the MUSIC on their pedestals. On stage, an S&M dance number in a prison cell, where a gang rape of a cute YOUNG PRISONER by a bunch of HUNKY COPS is being performed. It's highly erotic -- and disturbing: Liberty Avenue's mocking response to the recent events.

ON THE DANCE FLOOR

Several Babylonians have also adopted police gear. Amidst the good-natured debauchery, we FIND:

BRIAN AND JUSTIN

reveling in the heat of the night. A beautiful GO-GO COP moves in on the duo. They go at it a while, until Brian pulls out a vial and offers them each a hit. The Go-Go Cop eagerly takes a bump, but Justin is reluctant.

JUSTIN

Not tonight.

BRIAN

Don't you want to party like it's
"1984"?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Justin smiles at him, shakes his head.

JUSTIN

There's something I've got to do.

Brian runs his hand down Go-Go Cop's sweaty chest.

BRIAN

Yeah. Me, too.

JUSTIN

I'll catch you later.

Brian watches curiously, as Justin disappears through the crowd and out the door.

The Go-Go Cop asserts himself to regain Brian's attention.

GO-GO COP

You're under arrest for possession of illegal drugs.

Brian turns to him. Under the circumstances -- who knows? -- it could be real. But Brian reacts with a mildly bored look of amusement.

BRIAN

I have a better idea. Why don't we head to the back room and play good cock-bad cock?

He grabs the Go-Go Cop's handcuffs, attaches their wrists, then drags him aggressively into the steamy darkness.

CUT TO:

EXT. MELANIE & LINDSAY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

A car drives up and parks in the driveway. The trunk pops and Melanie gets out. She lifts the trunk, starts hauling out bags of groceries, her laptop, a box of files.

Suddenly a CRACKLE from the bushes. She looks up, terrified, sensing someone lurking in the darkness.

MELANIE

Somebody there --?

No answer. Melanie swallows.

MELANIE (CONT'D)

Who is it?

(CONTINUED)

More movement from the bushes. Melanie is paralyzed with fear.

MELANIE (CONT'D)

I've got mace --!
(as she struggles)
If I can fucking find it --

Suddenly, Michael emerges.

MICHAEL

It's just me, Mel --

MELANIE

Michael?

MICHAEL

Don't shoot.

He steps into the light, palms up.

MELANIE

JEEZUS FUCKING CHRIST! You scared the
shit outta me! What the hell are you
doing here?

MICHAEL

Just thought you might need some help
with the groceries. You barely managed
to get them into the car.

Melanie blinks, confused as Michael picks up a heavy grocery bag.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

Good thing you didn't get that other
bottle of detergent --

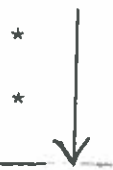
MELANIE

How'd you know I was --
(then)
Were you at the supermarket?
(angrily)
Have you been following me?

MICHAEL

(adamantly)
NO!
(then)
Well -- kind of.

CUT TO:



10 INT. MELANIE & LINDSAY'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS 10

Michael, tagging sheepishly behind Melanie, schlepps the grocery bags into the kitchen, plops them on the counter. Lindsay is there in her bathrobe, surprised by the sight of him at this late hour.

MELANIE

Can you believe Junior Detective's been spying on me all day?!

LINDSAY

(to Michael)

You have?

MICHAEL

I was worried!

(to Melanie)

The doctor said you needed to watch your stress level, so I --

MELANIE

So you decided to raise it by nearly giving me a heart attack?

LINDSAY

Michael does have a point. Working all day, doing the groceries at midnight --

MICHAEL

Next time, you should let the box-boy help you to the car.

*

Melanie's had enough of his "concern".

MELANIE

I don't fucking believe this! I'm only ten weeks pregnant! Is this the kind of over-bearing, over-protective behavior I have to look forward to for the next six months!?

LINDSAY

Shhhhh -- Gus is sleeping.

MELANIE

(whispers)

Well it had better stop right now!

(to Lindsay)

That goes for you --

(then, to Michael)

-- and you. Do I have your word? Do I?

*

*

*

*

(CONTINUED)

10 CONTINUED:

10

LINDSAY
She's really mad. You'd better say
yes.

MICHAEL
Okay --
(conceding)
I won't spy on you anymore.

MELANIE
Thank you!

MICHAEL
But I may -- "check in on you".
(a beat)
On occasion.
(another beat)
At random intervals.

*
*

As Lindsay stifles a smile and Melanie burns:

CUT TO:

11 EXT. LIBERTY AVENUE - NIGHT

11

The city is silent and still in the pre-dawn hours. Against a streetlit brick wall, we SEE a long, tall shadow approach. The shadow becomes shorter and shorter as it gets closer.

Now we SEE a DARK FIGURE slap some glue on top of a Stockwell poster like we saw at the beginning, and a new poster goes up: "Heil to the Chief" --Stockwell's face (grotesque, like a German Expressionist wood cut), with a Hitleresque mustache drawn above it's upper lip.

The mysterious dark figure turns around to ensure his isolation, revealing himself to be -- Justin!

As he hurries away, to be swallowed up by the night:

*

FADE TO BLACK:

FADE IN:

12 EXT. LIBERTY DINER - DAY

12

START ON a row of posters of "Heil to the Chief" slapped on a wall/fence/whatever in front of the diner.

DEBBIE (V.O.)
Would you fuckin' look at that!

Now SEE Debbie, Emmett and Ted.

(CONTINUED)

EMMETT

Isn't it fabulous?

TED

They're up all over town.

Lindsay joins them, pushing Gus in his stroller.

DEBBIE

Linz! How do you like our new art exhibit?

LINDSAY

I'd say it adds a needed touch of class to the neighborhood.

DEBBIE

(to Gus)

What about you, cutie? What do you think?

Brian comes up, joins them.

BRIAN

(not thrilled to see it)

Isn't there a fine for defacing public property?

DEBBIE

I wasn't talking to you.

LINDSAY

Who did it?

TED

Big secret. Nobody knows.

EMMETT

It's like our very own Avenger!

DEBBIE

It's about time somebody spoke out.

BRIAN

Besides you?

Justin joins them, looking exhausted.

DEBBIE

Christ, Sunshine! You look like you've been up all night.

JUSTIN

I was working on a project.

(CONTINUED)

BRIAN

If you're done with him, pass him on to me.

JUSTIN

Not that kind of project.

EMMETT

So what does our resident young art student have to say?

LINDSAY

Care to critique?

Justin glances at the poster, shrugs.

JUSTIN

The message is heavy-handed, the graphics crude --

DEBBIE

Everybody's a fuckin' critic.

LINDSAY

I like the bold coarseness of the design. It's in the great tradition of agit-prop art.

DEBBIE

What --?

JUSTIN

Propaganda posters that agitate the masses.

Brian casts him a glance. A nanosecond of ... forget it. *

DEBBIE

That should "agitate" Stockwell's bowels when he sees it!

TED

Well, I'd better take off -- I want to get to the country before it gets dark.

Debbie hands him a paper bag.

DEBBIE

Lemon bars for the drive.

TED

(touched)

Thanks, Deb.

(CONTINUED)

LINDSAY

Drive carefully -- the roads might be icy.

BRIAN

And don't pick up any strangers --

ALL

-- unless they're cute.

They all laugh. Then Emmett goes over to him.

EMMETT

You just forget about everything, you hear? And have a fabulous time.

Ted nods, then Emmett embraces him. They share a long hug. Then Ted gets in his car, drives off. As they all wave goodbye:

CUT TO:

13 INT. MICHAEL'S APARTMENT - DAY

13

The phone's RINGING. Michael dashes into the living room from the bathroom, finds Ben sitting, writing. *

MICHAEL

Jesus, didn't you hear the phone?

BEN

Sorry, I was working on this chapter. My mind was a million miles--

MICHAEL

(picking up fast)

Hello?

(beat, then)

Yes -- who's calling?

(beat)

Uh -- one moment.

As he passes the phone to Ben:

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

(confused, concerned)

It's Allegheny General. They want to verify your "billing address".

Ben, uncomfortably, takes the phone from Michael.

BEN

Hello? Yes --?

(beat)

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

13 CONTINUED:

13

BEN (CONT'D)

That's right. Yes, that's all correct.

(pause)

That's uh -- pretty steep.

(beat)

No, one payment'll be fine. Thanks very much.

Ben hangs up.

MICHAEL

What was that?

BEN

It was the -- uh -- hospital.

MICHAEL

. Yeah, I know. Is something the matter -
- are you sick? Why didn't you tell me
--?

BEN

It's not me.

(beat)

It's -- Hunter.

It takes a moment for that to sink in.

MICHAEL

Hunter. As in Hunter the Hustler?

BEN

It was an emergency. He had a kidney
infection. But he's going to be okay.

MICHAEL

What's with the billing info?

BEN

(hesitates, then)

I -- uh -- told them I'd pay for it.

MICHAEL

Well how much is it?

BEN

A couple of thousand.

MICHAEL

(sputtering)

A couple of --? Are you out of your--?
Why you?

BEN

They think I'm his uncle.

*

(CONTINUED)

Michael stares at him, speechless, then:

MICHAEL

Why do they think that?

BEN

Because I said so.

(before Michael can scream)

If I hadn't, they'd have put him in some god-awful county facility --

MICHAEL

I don't want to hear about it! That kid is not your responsibility!

BEN

He was in trouble, he needed help.

MICHAEL

And there you were, charging to the rescue! Well you're going to go back there and tell them the truth. Then they can call Family Services or whoever the fuck because we're not getting involved. Not! Do I make myself understood?

As Ben looks at him for a long beat:

CUT TO:

14 EXT. CITY INTERSECTION - DAY 14

Ted's car pulls up to a RED traffic light, stops.

15 INT. TED'S CAR - CONTINUOUS 15

Ted waits for the light to change with tired, defeated eyes. After a moment, he glances across the intersection, sees:

15A EXT. THE PARADISE MOTEL ("AIR-CONDITIONED!") - TED'S P.O.V. 15A *

a run-down, ramshackle dump.

BACK TO TED

Its name rings a bell -- "Hey, sex-pigs!" As he waits for the green, his cell phone BEEEEEPS! *

TED

(answering)

Hello --?

INTERCUT WITH:

16 INT. ^{DINER}~~TED'S CONDO~~ - DAY 16

Emmett is on the phone:

EMMETT
Hi, baby! Just checkin' in. You on
your way?

TED
To the promised land.

EMMETT
It's supposed to be paradise.

Ted stares at the motel sign, "Paradise Motel".

EMMETT (CONT'D)
Well, you just drive carefully -- and
call me when you get there.

TED
Sure, Emm -- will do.

Ted disconnects, keeps staring at The Paradise ("COLOR TV in every room!") Suddenly, HONKING from behind. The light's TURNED green. He's jolted back into his body. He has to make a decision -- fast. Go through the intersection or make a hard right. He chooses a hard right.

17 EXT. PARADISE MOTEL - DAY 17

He pulls up in front of the motel, stops. Swallows.
Breathes deep.

CUT TO:

18 INT. VANGARD AGENCY - BOARDROOM - DAY 18

Brian is preparing for a presentation with a client. Justin is setting up the art when he comes across:

JUSTIN
"Eat The Meat"?

BRIAN
My most genius slogan for Frawley's
Steakhouse. Dreamt it up in the back
room at Babylon.

JUSTIN
I could have guessed.

Cynthia comes in.

(CONTINUED)

CYNTHIA

Brian?

He looks up. Sees Stockwell standing there beside her, holding a copy of the Pittsburgh Herald and not looking pleased. Justin suddenly gets busier.

BRIAN

Thanks, Cynthia.

As she goes:

BRIAN (CONT'D)

Why don't we go to my office?

STOCKWELL

Have you seen the Editorial page?
(tossing the paper on the
table)

They're calling me a Nazi! A Nazi!
And it's because of those goddamned
posters! *

Justin turns to Brian, nervously.

BRIAN

Why don't you finish that later?

Justin walks past Stockwell on his way out. There's a moment of eye contact, then Justin leaves.

BRIAN (CONT'D)

(dismissing it)

They're a prank. A joke. *

STOCKWELL

It's not a joke! They're everywhere
you look. Driving over here, I saw
them practically on every street
corner. There's even one in front of
Police Headquarters!

BRIAN

So have it removed. You're the Chief. *

STOCKWELL

I need you to come up with some kind of
spot.

BRIAN

What for?

STOCKWELL

To refute this! People are laughing.

(CONTINUED)

BRIAN

Because it's funny.

Stockwell stares at him, about to be highly insulted.

BRIAN (CONT'D)

Come on --! If you take those posters seriously, they'll roast you alive. The only way to deal with it is to laugh at yourself. Harder than anyone.

(beat)

When's your next public appearance?

STOCKWELL

Lunch with the Businessmen's Association in an hour. Then "Good Afternoon Pittsburgh".

BRIAN

Perfect. You get in front of the camera and you joke about it. In fact, you bring it up -- "Have you seen those posters of me?" Let the voters know that you welcome dissention. That unlike Nazi Germany, we're blessed to live in a free society where all voices are heard. And that as Mayor, you intend to keep it that way. Now let's see a smile.

Stockwell attempts to crack one.

BRIAN (CONT'D)

Keep practicing.

CUT TO:

19 INT. PARADISE MOTEL - TED'S ROOM - DAY

19

Ted sits on his bed, his suitcase still zipped up, flipping through a novel he's brought. But he's not into it. He sets it down, opens a drawer of the bedstand, pulls out -- a Bible. He looks at it for a beat, puts it back, then spots a cardboard ice bucket. *

20 INT. PARADISE MOTEL - CORRIDOR - DAY

20

Ted carries the cardboard ice bucket to the soda machine. He passes a row of rooms -- their doors all open. It's like a bathhouse -- group scenes; a guy on his bed, masturbating; someone in a sling getting fucked. Inhibited, yet enticed, he can't help pausing to watch. At the soda machine is a good-looking, confident thirty-something guy (DR. MARK BURGESS) naked but for a towel around his waist. *

(CONTINUED)

MARK

(to Ted)

A dollar twenty-five for a fucking can
of soda.

TED

I know. It's ridiculous.

MARK

(counting his change)

Shit -- seventy-five. Don't exactly
have any pockets --

TED

Here -- let me.

MARK

Thanks.

Mark gives Ted the once-over as Ted puts coins in the slot.

TED

What would you like -- Coke?

MARK

Love coke.

(then)

You got any?

He gestures inhaling something up his nose. Ted laughs,
nervously.

TED

Not that kind.

MARK

Too bad there's not a machine for that.

TED

Yeah --

MARK

What about favors?

TED

Not really --

MARK

I've got some in my room if you'd like.

TED

Uh -- no -- no, thanks. It's not
really my thing.

(CONTINUED)

MARK

I'm Mark, by the way --

TED

(passing him a soda)

Ted.

MARK

It's really clean -- wouldn't do it, otherwise. See, I'm a doctor -- ear, nose and throat. Got to be careful not to damage the nasal passages.

TED

You're the expert --!

MARK

Why don't you stop by -- I'm in 310. Got a party going. Nice bunch of guys -
- cute, too.

TED

Thanks -- but actually, I'm just on my way up north.

MARK

Well if you decide to go south, come join us. Thanks for the soda!

As Ted watches him move off:

CUT TO:

21 INT. ALLEGHENY GENERAL HOSPITAL - HUNTER'S ROOM - NIGHT 21

Television's ON again, as Ben comes into the room. Hunter's laughing his head off. Obviously feeling better.

HUNTER

Where do they get these judges? Are they really judges? And those losers suing each other! How come they're all fat?

BEN

Turn it off.

Hunter angrily does as he's told.

HUNTER

What's up?

(CONTINUED)

BEN

You know this little hospital stay of yours is costing me a couple thousand dollars?

HUNTER

(impressed)

No shit.

BEN

And for what? So you can go back to living on the street?

Hunter shrugs, looks away.

HUNTER

I'll be all right.

BEN

You call sleeping in doorways, eating out of the garbage, "all right"?

HUNTER

I didn't ask for a fuckin' lecture. *

BEN

Well you're going to get one anyway.
(a beat, then)

Instead of peddling your ass, maybe you should be thinking of this as a wake-up call. An opportunity to turn your life around.

HUNTER

You know something? You're right! I should go on one of those lunatic religious shows and praise the Lord for giving me this second chance. "I'm saved. I'm saved!" *

BEN

And I might as well save some cash.

(beat)

I'm going to go tell that social worker the truth. Straighten this mess out, once and for all. You have yourself a good life. *

(beat)

And next time you're looking for a sucker -- call somebody else. *

Hunter stares at him with angry, silent eyes as Ben heads out into the:

22 INT. ALLEGHENY GENERAL HOSPITAL - CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS 22

Ben approaches the Nurses' Station, speaks to a NURSE #1. In the background, a DOCTOR checks over some charts.

BEN

Excuse me -- I'd like to speak to a social worker about the patient in four-twenty.

This grabs the attention of the Doctor. He steps over.

DOCTOR

Are you Hunter's guardian?

BEN

Actually, I'm --

Just then, the Nurse interrupts, gives the Doctor a form to sign.

DOCTOR

Sorry --

(he signs, the back to Ben)

We're releasing him tomorrow. But before we do, I think there's something you should know.

CUT TO:

23 EXT. STREET - NIGHT

23

Melanie is walking to her car, struggling with her briefcase, laptop and a box of files. She arrives at her car, fumbles for her keys, has to put everything down. Suddenly, a bolt of pain shoots through her. The box drops, causing files to spill, papers to fly. She grasps onto the car as -- SOMEONE rushes out of the shadows to her aid. It's:

MELANIE

Michael --!

MICHAEL

Are you all right?

She tries to breathe through the pain. A moment later, she seems to recover.

MELANIE

I'm fine --

MICHAEL

No, you're not. I saw you --

(CONTINUED)

MELANIE

It's just a little indigestion --

Then as Michael helps her pick up the fallen files:

MELANIE (CONT'D)

And I thought we agreed you'd stop
stalking me.

MICHAEL

I lied. It's a good thing I did.

MELANIE

I told you what it is.

MICHAEL

Indigestion.

MELANIE

Despite what you've heard, do not eat
sour pickles when you're pregnant.

MICHAEL

Thanks, I'll remember that.

Suddenly, another shockwave of pain jolts through her body.
She clutches onto Michael, in agony.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

Is this the pickle, too? We're getting
you to a hospital!

As he helps her into her car:

CUT TO:

24 INT. VANGARD AGENCY - CORRIDOR - NIGHT

24

The office is dark and silent -- but there's a LIGHT coming
from under the door of the Art Department.

25 INT. VANGARD AGENCY - ART DEPARTMENT - NIGHT

25

Justin is alone, working the graphic enlarger machine that
makes poster-size copies. The only LIGHT is coming from the
copier that lights up Justin's face. Suddenly, the door
opens. Justin, startled, scrambles to abort the job and hide
everything. But it's too late. He's caught. Brian emerges
from the dark. After a tense beat:

BRIAN

Let me guess. The Mad Avenger was too
cheap to do his copying at Kinko's --
so you offered to do it for him.

(CONTINUED)

JUSTIN
It's just an art project. For school.

BRIAN
(looking him in the eye)
Uh-huh.

Brian inspects the "school project". It's a new poster. Stockwell again, but this time with a clown nose and the title "Laughing Stock".

BRIAN (CONT'D)
I'm sure you'll get an A-plus. Even though it's a bit "crude" and "heavy-handed" --

JUSTIN
(with a guilty grin)
I didn't think anybody'd be here this late. Guess you found out my secret identity.

He attempts to continue with the copier. Brian shuts it off.

BRIAN
Fun's over, Superboy.

As Brian confiscates the posters.

JUSTIN
What're you doing?

BRIAN
You made your statement once. That's enough. Now it's time to cut it out.

JUSTIN
(determined)
I'm not going to cut it out. I'm doing what I believe in. *

As Brian sends the posters flying with an angry sweep:

BRIAN
Fuck what you believe in! I'm telling you to stop!

Than Brian starts to go. Justin calls to him:

JUSTIN
You also once told me you wanted me to be the best homosexual I could possibly be. That includes not giving a shit what anyone else says. *

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

25 CONTINUED: (2)

25

JUSTIN (CONT'D)

To think for myself.

(beat)

Well, I think Stockwell is a homophobe,
a fascist, a threat to everyone and
everything we know. And just because
you don't --!

*
*
*
*

BRIAN

(angrily)

You don't know what I think!

(then)

I don't give a shit about Stockwell.
But you're not just fucking with him --
you're fucking with me. My business.
Now get the hell out of here.

*
*

He walks out. As Justin starts to pick up the posters:

CUT TO:

26 INT. PARADISE MOTEL - TED'S ROOM - NIGHT

26

Ted picks up his coat, his packed bag, is about to leave when
his cell phone BEEEEEPS! He answers.

INTERCUT WITH:

27 INT. TED'S CONDO - NIGHT

27

Emmett is on the phone.

EMMETT

Teddy, it's me. Are you there?

TED

I'm here.

EMMETT

So how is it?

TED

Very -- quaint.

EMMETT

How's the room? Nice view?

Ted looks out his open door, SEES TWO GUYS fucking in the
hall.

TED

You wouldn't believe the sights.

EMMETT

I wish I was there with you.

(CONTINUED)

27 CONTINUED:

27

TED

You'd really get off on it. But I have to run -- they're serving wine and cheese in the Victorian sitting room.

EMMETT

You enjoy every yummy mouthful.

Ted clicks off, picks up his overnight bag, takes a breath and heads out into:

28 INT. PARADISE MOTEL - CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

28

On his way down the hall, Ted passes Room 310. The door is open. He hesitates, then peers in.

29 INT. PARADISE MOTEL - ROOM 310 - NIGHT

29

A mass of man-flesh is in the bed. SEVERAL GUYS going at it like jackhammers. One of them is Mark, who looks up, sees Ted.

MARK

Hey, come on in.

Ted hesitates, takes a tentative step into the room. Mark wriggles away from the other guys, who barely notice -- they just keep fucking each other. Mark takes a bump, smiles at Ted.

MARK (CONT'D)

Great shit. Like I said -- only the best.

(placing powder on his knuckle)

Want a snort?

TED

No thanks.

MARK

Sure?

Mark sees that Ted's transfixed by the guys' uninhibited fuck fest.

MARK (CONT'D)

They're hot, aren't they? And so beautiful. I'm beautiful.

Everything's fuckin' beautiful --!

(a beat)

You want to be beautiful --?

Ted looks at him, then back at the fucking guys. Then he sets his bag down, grabs Mark's knuckle, snorts the powder.

(CONTINUED)

MARK (CONT'D)

That's right, baby. You're going to have a good time.

Ted blinks, rubs his nose. Suddenly the crummy motel begins to CHANGE in front of his -- and our -- eyes. The COLORS seem to deepen, somehow become MORE VIVID and INTENSE. Mark and the fucking guys seem even hotter -- indeed, beautiful -- with AURAS OF LIGHT around them.

We RAMP into Ted's accelerated, hyper-kinetic experience. Hands caress him, feel him, remove his clothes. He's being kissed and licked all over. One of the guys enters him from behind. Ted releases a moan, a PRIMAL GROAN -- of pain, of relief, of surrender.

CUT TO:

30 INT. ALLEGHENY GENERAL HOSPITAL - MELANIE'S ROOM - DAY 30

Melanie is in bed. Lindsay and Michael are at her side -- as they all listen to NURSE #2.

NURSE #2

There was a bit of spotting, along with the cramps --

MELANIE

You call those "cramps"? I've had cramps -- but never like that!

LINDSAY

Is she going to be all right?

MICHAEL

And the baby?

NURSE #2

Everything's fine. But it's a good thing you got here as quickly as you did.

MELANIE

.Thanks to my stalker.

She grabs Michael's hand, gratefully.

NURSE #2

(to Michael)

Are you the father?

(CONTINUED)

MICHAEL

Yeah --
(then, trying to explain)
That is, what I mean is --

MELANIE

(trying to explain)
What he means is --

LINDSAY

(trying to explain)
What they mean is -- we're all the
parents.

As the Nurse looks at them, tries to comprehend:

CUT TO:

31 INT. ALLEGHENY GENERAL HOSPITAL - CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS 31

Michael leaves Melanie's room, heads for the elevator, presses the button, waits. DING! -- the door opens, and out steps:

MICHAEL

Ben --!

BEN

(startled, too)
What're you doing here?

MICHAEL

Melanie had a little emergency.
Luckily, I happened to be -- in the
neighborhood. So I drove her over.

BEN

Is she okay?

MICHAEL

Provided she lay off the kosher dills.
Did you straighten everything out?

BEN

Not exactly.

MICHAEL

Why not? I thought you were going to
come clean -- get your money back.

Ben struggles to formulate the words. They're not coming.

(CONTINUED)

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

(pissed)

For chrissake, Ben! You're not really going to let this kid hustle you out of two thousand --

*

BEN

You don't understand.

MICHAEL

Understand what? What don't I get this time? That you feel guilty, that you feel sorry for him and he knows it, that he's going to play you for everything he can?

BEN

(angrily, blurting)

He's positive!

(beat, then softly)

He's positive.

Michael takes the news in. Along with Ben's pain. And, surprisingly, his own.

MICHAEL

I'm sorry. I'm really sorry.

Ben nods, accepts Michael's apology.

BEN

That's why I couldn't just --

*

MICHAEL

I understand.

(a beat)

Does he know?

*

*

BEN

Not yet. The doctor was going to tell him, but I said it would be better if he heard it from me.

(beat)

Considering I'm the next of kin.

*

*

*

*

*

CUT TO:

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

32

Stockwell's in a fine mood after making a public appearance.

STOCKWELL

You're a genius.

(CONTINUED)

BRIAN

You just figured that out?

STOCKWELL

I spoke at the Pittsburgh Press
Association Luncheon today. Played it
exactly like you said. Laughed it off.

(beat)

They ate it up.

Brian offers a tight smile.

BRIAN

After that rubber chicken, I'm sure
they did.

STOCKWELL

And guess who I heard from when I got
back to the office.

BRIAN

The NRA?

Stockwell laughs as he pulls out a letter.

STOCKWELL

The Gay and Lesbian Center.

BRIAN

(raising an eyebrow)

Oh?

STOCKWELL

Some woman named --

(checking)

-- Tannis. They're endorsing me!

BRIAN

I'm not surprised.

STOCKWELL

(reading)

"The Gay and Lesbian Center officially
supports Chief James Stockwell in his
mayoral campaign, and praises his
efforts to stop the proliferation of
unsafe sexual practices that have been
allowed to go unchecked, and that have
been a blight on the image of our
community."

(beat)

Guess they can't call me a homophobe
now, can they?

(CONTINUED)

Brian's reaction is subdued. *

BRIAN

Guess not.

STOCKWELL

Three other gay organizations have come out for me as well. They all pretty much said the same thing -- "It's about time somebody cleaned up Liberty Avenue." And I have you to thank.

A beat. Brian looks up at him.

STOCKWELL (CONT'D)

You've helped me get the message out there -- that I want a safe, clean, morally upstanding city for all our citizens. You and the fine folks at the Gay and Lesbian Center understand that. *

He pats Brian on the shoulder. A kindly, paternalistic gesture. As Brian sits there, silent: *

CUT TO:

33 INT. TED'S CONDO - DAY

33

It's very early. Ted comes in the door, wearing sunglasses. He drops his bag, heads straight to the fridge. He grabs a carton of orange juice, chugs it down, greedily, finishes it off. He sees a box of grocery-store Entenmann-type chocolate-covered donuts on the counter. He rips open the box, devours an entire one, then starts on another.

Emmett comes in from the bedroom in his robe, screams when he sees Ted. Ted, startled, drops the box of donuts. They go flying (rolling?)

EMMETT

God, Teddy -- you scared me!

TED

Sorry --

EMMETT

I wasn't expecting you back so soon. I thought you were going to call me.

TED

(his mouth full)
I forgot --

(CONTINUED)

He picks the donuts off the floor, puts one in his mouth, the rest in the box. Emmett observes his voracious gobbling.

EMMETT

Didn't you eat before you left?

TED

I wanted to get an early start.

EMMETT

Would you like an egg with your sugar?

TED

(polishing off another)

This is fine --

EMMETT

So, did you have a fabulous time?

TED

Fabulous.

EMMETT

Feel more relaxed?

TED

Lots.

EMMETT

I'm so happy, baby. Well, give me a kiss!

He gives Ted a big smooch. Ted is reticent, but tries to fake it. Then:

EMMETT (CONT'D)

What's with the glasses?

TED

The sun was in my eyes --

Emmett takes Ted's glasses off -- sees the bags and dark circles.

EMMETT

You look exhausted!
(concerned)
Didn't you get any sleep?

TED

(trying to joke)
It was too quiet!

(CONTINUED)

EMMETT

Next time we'll go together. We'll
make lots of noise.

(then)

I'll get dressed -- you'll tell me all
about it.

As he heads off to the bedroom, Ted takes a deep breath.
Then sounding as cheerful as possible:

TED

So, how'd your party go? Another
raging success?

From the bedroom:

EMMETT (O.S.)

Everything was going perfectly -- until
the hostess tells Vic her husband's
allergic to shellfish. Too bad she
didn't mention it before he ate the
crab and lobster dip!

Ted forces a laugh, then wolfs down the last donut, tosses
the box away, disgusted with it -- and himself.

CUT TO:

34 INT. MICHAEL'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - DAY

34

Michael opens his still-tired eyes and turns to see Ben lying
in bed beside him, staring up at the ceiling.

MICHAEL

Morning.

BEN

Morning.

MICHAEL

How'd you sleep?

BEN

Not great.

MICHAEL

Me, either.

BEN

What kept you up?

(CONTINUED)

MICHAEL

Same thing as you.

(beat)

So what're you going to say?

Ben searches the ceiling.

BEN

Damned if I know. I've never had to tell anyone before that they're positive. Especially a kid.

MICHAEL

Look, it's not the end of the world. It's not a death sentence. If anyone knows that, you do.

BEN

I also know how I've struggled with it. How terrifying it can be. And I'm twice his age. And I was lucky. I had a happy childhood. Loving parents. All the advantages money can buy. He's had none of that.

(beat)

He has even less now. *

MICHAEL *

(softly, supportively) *

I know -- *

BEN *

How's he going to survive with nothing -
- not even a roof over his head, or
knowing where his next meal is coming
from? Not to mention medical attention
-- *

MICHAEL *

All the more reason he should be in a
foster home. *

BEN *

No one would take him before, who's
going to take him now? *

(a heavy beat)

And it still doesn't answer the
question, "How do I tell him?"

MICHAEL

You'll think of the right words. It's
your gift.

(CONTINUED)

BEN

There are no right words to take away
the one illusion every kid's entitled
to -- his invincibility. His
immortality.

MICHAEL

Still, he has to know. And better you
should tell him than anyone.

BEN

Because I've got it, too.

MICHAEL

Because you care. *

(beat)

Even though I wish you didn't. Because
now you'll care even more.

Ben looks at him. And in his face we can see Michael's
right. *

CUT TO:

35 INT. MELANIE AND LINDSAY'S HOUSE - DAY

35

Debbie and Gus greet Melanie and Lindsay as they come back
from the hospital.

LINDSAY

How was he?

DEBBIE

A little lamb is what he is!
(passing him to his Moms)
My grandson-or-granddaughter had better
be as good as this one.
(then)
How is my grandson-or-granddaughter?

MELANIE

He-or-she is just fine.

LINDSAY

And so's the mother.

DEBBIE

Thank you, Jesus.

MELANIE

He had nothing to do with it. Thank
Michael.

(CONTINUED)

DEBBIE

For what?

LINDSAY

Being a nagging, intrusive,
overprotective pest.

DEBBIE

How the hell'd he get to be like that?

MELANIE

Damned if I know!

Laughing, Debbie heads for the door, stops.

DEBBIE

(ever-so-sweetly)

Oh, and next time? Try to take better
care of yourself -- or I'll be the one
who's on your fuckin' tail!

She slams out, then:

MELANIE

I should go upstairs.

LINDSAY

To work?

MELANIE

To rest.

LINDSAY

For how long?

MELANIE

A couple of hours.

LINDSAY

I mean, until you drive yourself to
exhaustion, or until something like
this happens again?

(a beat, a breath)

Because next time we might not be so
lucky --

She can't continue.

MELANIE

I'm sorry I put you through this. I
promise it won't happen again.

LINDSAY

Don't make promises you can't keep.

(CONTINUED)

MELANIE

I mean it.

LINDSAY

And the case --?

MELANIE

Looking after the world -- fighting for what's right -- is important. But not at the expense of you and Gus and this baby.

She gives Gus and Lindsay each a kiss. Then as she heads up the stairs:

CUT TO:

36 INT. ALLEGHENY GENERAL HOSPITAL - CORRIDOR/HUNTER'S RM. - DAY36

Michael and Ben step off the elevator, head towards Hunter's room. Both look somber. They stop outside the door. *

MICHAEL

Want me to come in with you? *

BEN

Let me talk to him first. Then you can join us. *

MICHAEL

However you want. *

A beat, then Ben opens the door to Hunter's room. Hunter's bed is empty.

BEN

He's not there.

MICHAEL

Maybe he's in the lounge, or walking around.

Ben goes over to: *

THE NURSES' STATION

BEN

Nurse?

Nurse #1 appears from the back office.

NURSE #1

Mr. Bruckner. I was just trying to call you.

(CONTINUED)

36 CONTINUED:

36

BEN
Where's Hunter?

NURSE #1
I was hoping he might be with you.

A look of concern starts to cross Ben's face.

BEN
With me?

NURSE #1
The night nurse saw him leave his room
about four in the morning. It seems he
never came back.

As Ben looks to Michael:

CUT TO:

37 INT. BABYLON - NIGHT

37

Brian wades into a swamp of shirtless boys, the MUSIC swirling all around him.

His eyes sweep the room like a jungle cat, looking for his next prey. We TRACK with him as he steps through the lights and under the gridwork toward:

THE BACK ROOM

A group of GUYS is standing around bitching and moaning about something. He pushes past them, disinterested, but he stops cold -- as does the MUSIC and the rest of the world -- when he SEES the padlocked door: "CLOSED"

He blinks. A beat. Then:

CUT TO:

38 EXT. STREET - NIGHT

38

Once again we return to the streets -- dark, silent, empty. A shadowy figure approaches a wall.

It's Justin the Avenger. He slaps some glue on an old "HEIL TO THE CHIEF" poster and over it plasters "LAUGHING STOCK". He's about to put up another when, suddenly, he finds himself face to face with Brian. They stare at each other for a tense moment. Is Brian going to yell at him, hit him? He pulls the brush out of Justin's hand. Then he takes the poster, and slaps it up himself! Justin stares at him -- incredulous. After a moment, Brian turns to him.

*

(CONTINUED)

BRIAN

Well, are you just going to fucking
stand there?

Justin quickly and unquestioningly goes into action. He
hands Brian another poster. And they work, together, side-by-
side:

*
*

FADE OUT.

THE END