

queer as folk

EPISODE 407

Teleplay By
Brad Fraser

Story By
Ron Cowen & Daniel Lipman & Brad Fraser

Executive Producers

Ron Cowen
Daniel Lipman
Tony Jonas

Production Draft (WHITE) 11-26-2003

Producer

Sheila Hockin

COWLIP
PRODUCTIONS

TONY JONAS
PRODUCTIONS

TEMPLE STREET
PRODUCTIONS

THIS SCREENPLAY IS THE SOLE PROPERTY OF SHOWTIME NETWORKS, INC. NO PORTION MAY BE DISCUSSED, PUBLISHED, REFORMATTED, REPRODUCED, SOLD, USED BY ANY MEANS, QUOTED, COMMUNICATED OR OTHERWISE DISSEMINATED OR PUBLICIZED IN ANY FORM OR MEDIA, INCLUDING WITHOUT LIMITATION, IN ANY WRITTEN ARTICLE, TELEVISION AND/OR RADIO INTERVIEW OR ON THE INTERNET, WITHOUT THE EXPRESS PRIOR WRITTEN CONSENT OF SHOWTIME NETWORKS, INC.

NO ONE IS AUTHORIZED TO DISPOSE OF SAME.

IF LOST OR DESTROYED, PLEASE NOTIFY THE STORY DEPARTMENT AT SHOWTIME NETWORKS,
10880 WILSHIRE BLVD., SUITE 1600, LOS ANGELES, CA 90024

TEL. 310.234.5200

© 2003

DEREK

TWINK #1

ROMAN

queerasfolk (non-speaking)

EPISODE 407

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
JENNIFER TAYLOR.....Sherry Miller
BLAKE WYZECKI.....Dean Armstrong
HUNTER.....Harris Allan
and as
DEBBIE NOVOTNY.....Sharon Gless

GUEST CAST

CYNTHIA	MINISTER
RODNEY	DR. HONG
GUS	DORIS
SHANDA LEER (DARREN)	MIDDLE-AGED MAN
DEREK	TWINK #1
ROMAN	TWINK #2 (non-speaking)

The ultrasound image, farther away this time, the image is
QAF IV - Ep. 407 - Production Draft (WHITE) - 11/26/03 1.
scrotum. The red spot, much smaller from this distance,
still burns intensely.

CUT TO:

FADE IN:

1

The world's most perfect dancer, still dancing. The MUSIC
INT. BABYLON - NIGHT - INTERCUT WITH ULTRASOUND IMAGES 1
scrotum and cups his genitals. With the other hand he peels
Fast flashes of hot, sweaty semi-naked male bodies undulating
under the strobing lights.

CUT TO:

A large ultra-sound image of a circular, organic looking
mass, dark blue and indistinct -- it vaguely resembles a
continent made out of meat floating in a sea of oil. There
is a moderately sized, highlighted red patch on one area of
the mass.

CUT TO:

Two male bodies colliding on the dance floor in a sweaty
embrace, spinning to the music. A hand snakes down a
glistening set of abs and disappears into the second body's
pants, groping the groin.

CUT TO:

The same mass as before but not quite as close. The mass
seems slightly more familiar but is still hard to make out.
The red spot stands out against the dark blues and blacks of
the ultrasound.

CUT TO:

The world's most beautiful basket. It belongs to a faceless
but perfectly built male who is gyrating to the loud music.
The fat cock and both heavy balls are seen through the flimsy
shorts the man is wearing. He reaches down and strokes his
balls through his shorts as he dances.

CUT TO:

The ultrasound image, farther away this time, the image is
now recognizable as a testicle hanging suspended in a
scrotum. The red spot, much smaller from this distance,
still burns intensely.

CUT TO:

The world's most perfect basket, still dancing. The MUSIC
has built to a crescendo. The faceless guy reaches into his
shorts and cups his genitals. With the other hand he peels
his shorts down.

(CONTINUED)

QAF IV - Ep. 407 - Production Draft (WHITE) - 11/26/03 2.

1 CONTINUED: 1

We get a tantalizing glimpse of pubic hair and partial bloated tube steak before there's a frustrating smash-

BRIAN

That is good news. I'll be a one-ball wonder. CUT TO:

2 INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE - DAY 2

DR. HONG

DOCTOR HONG, Asian descent, mid-fifties, has just told BRIAN the news.

DR. HONG

I suspect it's a Seminoma. A form of testicular cancer quite common in men your age. However, we can't be sure until we perform a biopsy. (CONTINUED)

BRIAN

(almost afraid to ask)
And how do you do that?

DR. HONG

First we have to remove the testicle.

BRIAN

That's what I was afraid you were going to say.

(continuing)

And if I don't have cancer do you put it back in?

DR. HONG

Unfortunately, no.

BRIAN

I was afraid you were going to say that, too.

Dr. Hong proceeds.

DR. HONG

However, the good news is, the procedure is relatively simple. As for the other teste, it will still be completely functional. Neither your sexual performance or your fertility will be affected.

BRIAN

That is good news. I'll be a one-ball wonder.

DR. HONG

No, no, no. We give you a prosthetic replacement!

(CONTINUED)

2

CONTINUED:

DR. HONG (cont'd)

All the details are in here. Call me
if you have any further questions. But

Dr. Hong spins in his chair, opens a cabinet drawer, removes
a box. Inside are balls of various shapes and sizes.

As Brian stares at the brochures and the SOUND of people
cheering and applauding "Happy Birthday" bleeds in:

DR. HONG (cont'd)
Help yourself!

CUT TO:

Brian plucks one, fingers it.

BRIAN

Sometimes you feel like a nut,
sometimes you don't.

DR. HONG

They all look and feel completely
natural. Of course we try to match
your original testicle as closely as
possible.

BRIAN

(tossing the ball in the air)
Not too big, not too small, but juust
right.

(then)

So what are my chances?

DR. HONG

With surgery and follow-up procedure,
ninety-nine percent. Not bad!

BRIAN

And without surgery?

Dr. Hong catches the ball, gives Brian a hard look.

DR. HONG

The cancer will spread through your
body, invade other vital organs, and --
you will die.

He takes out a couple of pamphlets, sets them on the desk in
front of Brian.

DR. HONG (cont'd)

All the details are in here. Call me
if you have any further questions. But
if I were you, I wouldn't put it off.

As Brian stares at the brochures and the SOUND of people
cheering and applauding "Happy Birthday" bleeds in: *

CUT TO:

He steals a quick kiss.

3 INT. TWELVE-STEP MEETING - NIGHT 3

Start tight on a birthday cake with a big number ONE on it. DORIS, a heavy and heavily-made-up woman, is our birthday girl.

BLAKE
(eaves): DORIS

This one year of clarity has meant more to me than all my other thirty-six years of pain and confusion. And for that I'd like to thank the person who helped get me here -- who sometimes had to drag me here -- my sponsor, Blake.

(CONTINUED)

Angle on Blake, standing nearby. Ted, next to him.

DORIS (cont'd)

Like many of you, Blake's been my rock. The best sponsor anyone could ever have. I don't know what I would've done without him. I certainly wouldn't be having a birthday tonight.

(then, holding back a tear)

Blake -- I've never met a person with more integrity than you. Thank you for being there for me. For being my friend. For believing in me.

As she gives Blake a big kiss and everyone applauds:

CUT TO:

4 EXT. TWELVE-STEP MEETING - NIGHT 4

TED and BLAKE are leaving. Everyone from the meeting is now out front smoking cigarettes like fiends.

TED

Did you hear how everyone in there was praising you? Of course, I agree with them -- but then I'm prejudiced.

He steals a quick kiss.

BLAKE

I need a cigarette --

TED

What're you so nervous about?

BLAKE

(evasive)

Must be all that praise.

(CONTINUED)

4

CONTINUED: Didn't any of you illiterates ever read
"Long Day's Journey Into Night"?

4

TED
Part of the tenth grade English
What is it that you're always telling
me? "Learn to accept love".

HUNTER
As Ted squeezes him tight and Blake takes a long drag on his
cigarette: was up in the fuckin' Brady Bunch.

CUT TO:

5

INT. DEBBIE'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

(CONTINUED) 5

MICHAEL, BEN, HUNTER and EMMETT are waiting in Debbie's
living room. *

MICHAEL
(checking his watch)
Should I go up and get her?

BEN
Give her a few more minutes.

EMMETT
She was up most off the night. I heard
her rattling around in the kitchen --

BEN
That can't be a good sign.

EMMETT
Then this morning, she was pacing back
and forth in her room.

HUNTER
Like Mary Tyrone.

MICHAEL
Who?

Emmett shrugs.

HUNTER
Didn't any of you illiterates ever read
"Long Day's Journey Into Night"?

BEN
Part of the tenth grade English
curriculum --

HUNTER
Compared to some off the foster homes I
was in, it's the fuckin' Brady Bunch.

(CONTINUED)

DEBBIE'S voice is heard off-screen.

DEBBIE (O.S.)

Why's everyone sitting around?

(snapping)

The guys turn to see Debbie at the top of the stairs: stylish and dignified in a black ensemble with a smart hat. Her make-up is impeccable. Not at all what they expected, they're barely able to disguise their shock. Debbie descends the stairs, in control.

BEN

Michael --

MICHAEL

It's my uncle's funeral! And if she doesn't get her ass down here in exactly two minutes, we're going to be late!

(CONTINUED)

HUNTER

Like the guy's gonna give a shit.

Michael points. Hunter sits.

EMMETT

I'm not sure she's up for this.

MICHAEL

That makes two of us.

BEN

She wouldn't miss his funeral.

MICHAEL

Who knows, after that horrible fight they had.

EMMETT

Talk about bad timing.

MICHAEL

I'd better go get her.

EMMETT

If you need help, just holler. I'm a marvel with madwomen.

DEBBIE'S voice is heard off-screen.

DEBBIE (O.S.)

Why's everyone sitting around?

The guys turn to see Debbie at the top of the stairs: stylish and dignified in a black ensemble with a smart hat. Her make-up is impeccable. Not at all what they expected, they're barely able to disguise their shock. Debbie descends the stairs, in control.

(CONTINUED)

5 CONTINUED: 5

What's how he was. Never sentimental --
unlike me. Always facing adversity
with a smile and a cynical remark. I'm
sure if he saw us all here he'd say,
"What the hell're you wasting your time
on a dead man for? Go get laid." So I
would just like to say thank you, Uncle
Vic. For all you taught me. You were
a brave man. A good man. Which is all
any of us can hope to be.

DEBBIE

Then let's go.

She sweeps out the door. As the guys follow quickly, sharing
confused looks:

CUT TO:

6 EXT. CEMETERY - DAY 6

Open on Vic's casket suspended over the open grave.
Surrounding it are our "immediate family", plus RODNEY,
JENNIFER, some DISTANT COUSINS, MIDDLE-AGED GAY MEN and a
smattering of LESBIANS. Everyone holds a single red rose. A
GAY MINISTER is wrapping up Vic's eulogy. *

MINISTER

Before we consign our brother Victor
Antonio Grassi to the arms of our
loving and benevolent God, is there
anyone who'd like to offer a personal
remembrance?

Michael, who stands between Debbie and Ben, steps forward.

MICHAEL

This is so hard -- where do I start?
My Uncle Vic was the first person I
told I was gay. He laughed and said,
"Thank God! Now your grandmother'll
have someone else's soul to pray for!"

There's light laughter from the crowd. *

MICHAEL (cont'd) *

That's how he was. Never sentimental --
unlike me. Always facing adversity
with a smile and a cynical remark. I'm
sure if he saw us all here he'd say,
"What the hell're you wasting your time
on a dead man for? Go get laid." So I
would just like to say thank you, Uncle
Vic. For all you taught me. You were
a brave man. A good man. Which is all
any of us can hope to be. *

(CONTINUED)

6

CONTINUED:

6

Michael looks at his mother.
Michael returns to his place between Ben and his mother. As Ben embraces him:

MINISTER

Anyone else?

There's a pause, then Emmett chimes in:

EMMETT

He made a fuckin' fabulous tarte aux pommes with creme fraiche.

(CONTINUED)

There's a ripple of respectful laughter from the crowd. On the other side of the grave, Ted offers Emmett an admiring look, which Emmett returns with a tentative smile. Melanie chimes in.

MELANIE

He was the only person I knew who actually looked good in a Hawaiian shirt. Well, almost.

A murmur of agreement from the assembly. One of the middle-aged fags speaks up.

MIDDLE-AGED MAN

He once did coke with Liza at Studio 54.

JUSTIN

He was gay before it was fashionable.

*

Brian is suddenly seized by an almost forgotten memory:

BRIAN

He got arrested for having sex in a public bathroom.

Murmurs of admiration from some of the mourners. A bit of outraged babble from the relatives. Rodney speaks out.

*

RODNEY

He lived in gratitude.

Michael looks at his mother.

MICHAEL

Ma --?

DEBBIE

Your Uncle's heard more than enough of what I have to say.

*
*

(CONTINUED)

6 CONTINUED: They pass. Ted follows next, alone. His eyes are on Emmett, and are filled with regret. Next pass Ben, Hunter, Melanie and Lindsay. 6

MINISTER

If you'd like to place your roses --

It's been so long since anyone we know People move forward, lay their roses on the top of the casket. As it begins to descend, Debbie watches -- her face revealing nothing.

Guess we've been lulled into complacency by all the new drugs.

CUT TO:

7 EXT. CEMETERY - DAY (CONTINUED) 7

Down a path from the gravesite -- as everyone makes their way out. First comes Michael and Debbie. *

MICHAEL

You holding up okay?

DEBBIE

Why? Do I look like I'm fallin' apart?

MICHAEL

You're doing great.

DEBBIE

I want to get back to the house before everyone arrives -- I was up half the night preparing food.

She hurries him along. Emmett and Rodney are next to pass. *

RODNEY

There're boxes we still hadn't unpacked. He said, "What's the hurry?" *

EMMETT

I guess that's why they say we should appreciate every minute.

RODNEY

That's hard to do, when they go by so fast.

They pass. Ted follows next, alone. His eyes are on Emmett, and are filled with regret. Next pass Ben, Hunter, Melanie and Lindsay.

MELANIE

It's been so long since anyone we know has died --

LINDSAY

Guess we've been lulled into complacency by all the new drugs.

(CONTINUED)

7

CONTINUED:

7

I wrapped up the cold cuts and the
salads --

BEN

I wa. (to Hunter) do that.
You okay, pal?

HUNTER

You want the cake and cookies in the
Yeah -- sure.

They pass, Jennifer, Brian and JUSTIN.

BRIAN

I say it's better to go out when you're
young, in a blaze of glory, than end up
a diseased old queen.

(CONTINUED)

JUSTIN

You might feel differently if it were
you.

Brian glances at him, doesn't say anything.

JENNIFER

At least he didn't get sick and linger.
That's the worst.

BRIAN

(agreeing)
And in such poor taste. Buy a one-way
ticket to Ibiza, party 'til you drop,
then discreetly -- disappear.

CUT TO:

8

INT. DEBBIE'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

8

Late afternoon. The aftermath of the funeral. Most people
have paid their respects and are gone. Michael and Ben
remain. As well as Rodney and Emmett. Debbie's a whirlwind,
emptying paper plates and cups and napkins into a garbage
bag. Melanie, Lindsay and Jennifer are attempting to help
her.

JENNIFER

I wrapped up the cold cuts and the
salads --

DEBBIE

I was about to do that.

MELANIE

You want the cake and cookies in the
fridge?

(CONTINUED)

8 CONTINUED:

8

DEBBIE
I want you to sit down. All of you!
I'll take care of it.
Here, I brought you this. Some of
Vic's things. Thought you'd want them.
JENNIFER
You haven't stopped all day.

DEBBIE
Best to stay busy.

LINDSAY
I agree. In fact, they're starting
some new classes this week at the
Center. I was thinking I'd sign up for
pottery. How about coming with me,
Deb? We can get our hands dirty --

JENNIFER
That's a wonderful idea!

MELANIE
And they say doing something creative
is a highly effective way to process
your grief.

DEBBIE
I'm Italian. What I find highly
effective is food and plenty of vino.

And with that, she exits into:

9 INT. DEBBIE'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

9

Debbie sets the garbage bag by the back door, begins washing
up the dishes -- as Rodney comes in, carrying a shoebox.

RODNEY
Deb --?

DEBBIE
How're you holding up, honey?

RODNEY
Not as good as you.

She doesn't say anything. He offers her the shoebox.

RODNEY (cont'd)
Here, I brought you this. Some of
Vic's things. Thought you'd want them.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: A letter. From your Uncle Vic.

MICHAEL

DEBBIE

(takes the box)

That's very thoughtful -- years ago, when
he was sick and we thought he was gonna
die.

RODNEY

There're some family photos, his rings
and watch -- there's also a letter
addressed to you.

DEBBIE

A letter -- to me?

(CONTINUED)

As she takes it out, looks at it:

RODNEY

Listen, would you mind if I took off?
I'm feeling a little tired.

DEBBIE

Oh, sure. Try and get some rest. Oh,
and here -- take this.

She hands him a wrapped platter.

RODNEY

That's all right --

DEBBIE

You're gonna eat -- you hear me?

He doesn't fight her. He gives her a kiss on the cheek. She
responds with a guilty smile. Once he's gone and she's
alone, her mask drops and her weariness shows. She picks up
the letter, stares at it for a beat, then, hesitantly opens
it, reads it. Michael comes in.

MICHAEL

Ma, why won't you let Mel and Linz and
Jennifer help you -- what's that?

DEBBIE

A letter. From your Uncle Vic.

MICHAEL

Oh --

DEBBIE

He wrote it to me a few years ago, when
he was sick and we thought he was gonna
die.

MICHAEL

What's it say?

(CONTINUED)

9 CONTINUED: 9

A beat. Then with purpose and determination:

DEBBIE

It says --

Yes (beat, beat)

-- we're gonna have a party.

He gives him a kiss.

CUT TO:

10 INT. TED'S CONDO - NIGHT

(CONTINUED) 10

Ted, still in his dark suit, is loosening his tie, taking off his jacket. Blake is putting out take-out.

TED

Seeing that box and knowing Vic was inside, that was -- tough.

BLAKE

I bet.

TED

But Debbie picked out a real nice shirt. With hula dancers and palm trees.

BLAKE

At least he'll have something to wear when he goes out dancing.

(beat)

Hope Thai's okay.

TED

It's amazing.

BLAKE

Better taste it first.

TED

I mean how caring you are. Just like everyone at the meeting said.

BLAKE

(with a shrug)

I know how stressful funerals can be. I figured you could use a little comfort.

TED

You figured right, counselor.

He gives him a kiss.

(CONTINUED)

He pounces on Blake, who tries to curtail him:

BLAKE

(uncomfortably)

I got pad thai and mee grob --

TED

Love it! The pad thai than you.

(then)

He continues:

You know what I kept thinking the whole time? I know it's awful, but -- that could've been me. All those people -- Michael and Brian and Mel and Linz -- and Emmett.

(CONTINUED)

(beat)

They could've been there for my funeral.

BLAKE

Luckily, that didn't happen.

TED

You know what else I kept thinking? I know it's also awful of me --

BLAKE

What --?

TED

How incredibly horny it was making me. While everybody was eulogizing Vic, all that was on my mind was having wild, screaming man-sex with you.

BLAKE

That's -- perfectly normal. Faced with death, you need an affirmation of life.

TED

I'm a proponent of the old eros-thanatos theory as much as the next guy. But how does that explain the last time I was in the produce section, I wanted to kiss you and bite you and fuck you and suck you --

He pounces on Blake, who tries to curtail him:

BLAKE

Come eat before it gets cold.

TED

Better the pad thai than you.

He continues to kiss Blake.

(CONTINUED)

10

CONTINUED:

10

The second the guys step into the apartment they're aware of a certain familiar scent in the air.

BLAKE

Ted -- Teddy --

Jesus! You smell that?

But his protests are muffled by Ted's lips. As Blake stops resisting, surrenders:

Hunter!

CUT TO:

11

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

11

Michael and Ben are walking home from Debbie's in silence.

(CONTINUED)

BEN

I was expecting the funeral to be a disaster. But as it turns out, your mother behaved herself, you made a beautiful speech, and your hair looked great.

MICHAEL

Thanks --

But he's too preoccupied to react to Ben's attempt to cheer him. Finally:

MICHAEL (cont'd)

But doesn't it seem strange to you -- how well she's holding up?

BEN

My guess is she's still in shock. Besides, I've lost enough friends to know there's no right or wrong way to behave. Everyone grieves in their own way and in their own time.

Michael nods, relieved. As they continue into their apartment building:

CUT TO:

12

INT. MICHAEL & BEN'S APARTMENT - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

12

The second the guys step into the apartment they're aware of a certain familiar scent in the air.

MICHAEL

Jesus! You smell that?

BEN

Hunter!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: Well he obviously went snooping and found it--

He stops mid-sentence as Michael reaches for the roach, puts Hunter is on the couch, guiltily stubbing out a joint and waving one hand to clear the air.

BEN (cont'd)
Michael --MICHAEL

What the hell are you doing?

Michael picks the lighter up from the coffee table, lights

HUNTER

Smoking your hidden joint. What's it look like?

(CONTINUED)

MICHAEL

Is this why you didn't want to come with us to my Mom's? So you could get stoned?

HUNTER

Beats the hell out of eating cold cuts and hearing stories about some old guy I hardly know.

MICHAEL

That old guy happened to be my uncle!

HUNTER

Then you go and get all teary-eyed. I prefer having a toke.

Hunter stalks into his room and slams the door behind him. Ben gives Michael a look of reprimand.

BEN

We're fostering a minor, Michael. If they found out we had pot or any other illegal substances around the house, we could lose him.

MICHAEL

I forgot I even had it. Brian gave it to me, in case of emergency.

BEN

Well he obviously went snooping and found it--

He stops mid-sentence as Michael reaches for the roach, puts it in his mouth.

BEN (cont'd)

Michael --?

Michael picks the lighter up from the coffee table, lights it.

(CONTINUED)

Brian laughs ironically, tears the fortune into tiny pieces, tosses it up in the air like confetti.

QAF IV - Ep. 407 - Production Draft (WHITE) - 11/26/03 17.

12

CONTINUED:

BRIAN (cont'd)

What's yours say?

12

BEN (cont'd)

What're you doing?

slowly and sensually peel his clothes off for you, exposing every inch of his perfect body.

MICHAEL

(inhaling)

Justin gets out of the chair and moves toward Brian, still pretending to read the fortune.

BEN

Michael, we can't tell him not to use drugs if we do it ourselves.

(CONTINUED)

*

Michael, holding in a huge toke from the joint, finally releases it.

MICHAEL

Of course we can. That's what parenting's all about.

Michael takes another hit from the joint, closes his eyes in bliss -- momentarily carefree for the first time in days.

CUT TO:

13

INT. BRIAN'S LOFT - NIGHT

13

Brian and Justin are eating Chinese take-out. Justin holds the last cashew shrimp up to Brian, feeds it to him, temptingly, with his chopsticks.

JUSTIN

Last one.

Then Justin passes Brian a fortune cookie. Brian breaks the cookie open, reads the fortune inside.

BRIAN

"A surprise awaits you."

Brian laughs ironically, tears the fortune into tiny pieces, tosses it up in the air like confetti.

BRIAN (cont'd)

What's yours say?

JUSTIN

"The man you love will slowly and sensually peel his clothes off for you, exposing every inch of his perfect body."

Justin gets out of the chair and moves toward Brian, still pretending to read the fortune.

(CONTINUED)

13

CONTINUED:

13

Brian moves away, begins to clear take-out containers.

JUSTIN (cont'd)

"Then he'll take out his beautiful dick
so you can suck it --"

Justin nods and smiles. But it's not okay.

BRIAN

This is one long fortune --

CUT TO:

JUSTIN

There's more.

Justin moves into Brian's lap, still pretending to read as he straddles Brian's thighs.

JUSTIN (cont'd)

"Next, he'll rim your ass to get you
crazy, then he'll ram his cock up you
and fuck you so hard you'll pass out."

BRIAN

"In bed."

(off Justin's look)

You're supposed to add "in bed" to the
end of every fortune.

JUSTIN

I was thinking "on the floor."

Their mouths meet in a hot kiss. Then Justin puts his hand down Brian's pants, grabs his cock. Brian suddenly jolts, grabs Justin's hand, pulls it away, gets up.

JUSTIN (cont'd)

(confused)

What?

BRIAN

Nothing. Your hand's cold.

Justin moves to Brian, places his hands on Brian's chest.

JUSTIN

I'll warm them up.

Brian moves away, begins to clear take-out containers.

BRIAN

That's okay. I'm kind of tired.

Justin nods and smiles. But it's not okay.

CUT TO:

"Christmas".

DEBBIE
14 INT. DEBBIE'S HOUSE - EMMETT'S ROOM - DAY - b/w and 14

have them cart me away, there's a damn
Emmett's sleeping soundly. Suddenly, an old 50's vinyl
recording of "Joy to the World" BLASTS through the house,
causing him to almost fall out of bed. were gonna

lose him. It was right before

Christmas. The doctors said it looked

CUT TO:

15 INT. DEBBIE'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY 15

(CONTINUED)
Emmett makes his way down the stairs. From his P.O.V., we
see that it's as if Christmas had projectile vomited across
the living room. Ornaments, tinsel, ivy, wreaths, snowmen,
Santas, candles, candy-canes, stockings -- everything and
anything you can think of is strewn about. The old
phonograph plays the Christmas music. Debbie struggles with
putting together an artificial tree.

EMMETT

O-kay. When I went to bed, it was
March -- and I only took one Xanax.
Soooo -- exactly how long have I been
asleep?

DEBBIE

Fuck! I can't tell if these branches
are tops or bottoms.

EMMETT

Got to ask another tree about that one.

(then)

Deb --?

DEBBIE

Huh?

(then)

Can't you see it's Christmas?

He stares at her like she's from an episode of "The Twilight
Zone".

EMMETT

"Christmas".

DEBBIE

And before you call the looney-bin and
have them cart me away, there's a damn
good reason. Rodney brought me this
letter Vic wrote a few years ago --
about the time we thought we were gonna
lose him. It was right before
Christmas. The doctors said it looked
like he wasn't gonna make it.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

15 CONTINUED: 15

DEBBIE (cont'd)

So, in the letter he made me promise that -- even if he wasn't here -- we'd still have the most beautiful holiday ever.

CUT TO:

INT. TED'S CONDO - BEDROOM - DAY 26

EMMETT

But, Deb -- he was here. And not just for that Christmas -- but for several many more Christmases.

DEBBIE

(CONTINUED)

(no time to argue)
Well he's gone now. And I say what better way to pay tribute than by having one last celebration.

EMMETT

Aren't you a little late?

DEBBIE

Doesn't matter. When somebody you love writes you a letter asking you to do something, you've got no choice but to do it.

EMMETT

(thinking of Ted)
Even if the person hurt you?

Debbie looks at Emmett for a beat, knowingly, then:

DEBBIE

You just have to hope that, in the spirit of the season, the person who was hurt will somehow find it in his heart to forgive you.

(then struggling with the branches)

Ya know chopping down a fuckin' tree would be easier!

EMMETT

Let me know when you want me to string the popcorn.

As he leaves Debbie to her Yuletide:

CUT TO:

16 INT. TED'S CONDO - BEDROOM - DAY 16

START CLOSE ON BLAKE, still lying in bed, on his side, eyes wide open. Ted's face appears behind his shoulder, gives him a nuzzle and a kiss.

(CONTINUED)

BLAKE

Yes

TED

A beat. Ted Hey, sleepyhead. Alarm went off, ten minutes ago.

BLAKE

Oh. BLAKE

I know --

TED

Well don't you have places to be, things to do, people to see?

(CONTINUED)

BLAKE

(starting to get up)

You're right. I should get up --

Ted playfully pushes him down.

TED

But first we should relieve that morning stiffness --

He starts to go down on Blake, but Blake stops him.

BLAKE

Ted. Please --

TED

What? Not in the mood?

BLAKE

It's not that.

Blake looks at him for a beat, then with difficulty:

BLAKE (cont'd)

I don't think we should do this anymore.

TED

Cuddle without our clothes on? Play "this little sex-piggy went to market" -
-?

BLAKE

Yes.

A beat, then:

TED

Oh.

(CONTINUED)

16 CONTINUED:

16

BLAKE

Teddy, please, before you start thinking that it's something it's not --

TED

Then why did you? To make "amends"?
You mean that it's me?

BLAKE

It's not.

TED

(laughs)
Of course. Never is.

(CONTINUED)

BLAKE

I should've known better.

TED

Than to get involved?

BLAKE

It was wrong.

TED

To fall in love? Have sex? Be close?

BLAKE

The program says --

TED

Fuck the program! It's my life. I'm allowed to make my own decisions.

BLAKE

And as your counselor, it's my responsibility to help you make the right ones.

TED

You have! You have helped me -- more than you know. Like that woman at the meeting said -- I don't know what I would've done, how I would've survived, without you.

BLAKE

That doesn't include sleeping with you.

TED

Then why did you? To make "amends"?

(CONTINUED)

16

CONTINUED:

16

BLAKE
 For the same reason you did.
 Look (beat) *ya been doing great -- better*
 Because I wanted to. But it's hurting
 you.

TED
 "Hurting" me? How could it be hurting
 me?

(CONTINUED)

BLAKE
 Because you need to focus on yourself
 right now. Nothing else is important.
 (beat)
 And that includes me.

As Blake gets up, goes into the bathroom, leaving Ted
 standing there:

CUT TO:

17 EXT. HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

17

It's the middle of the school day, as Ben and Hunter leave
 the building. Hunter has a bright shiner under his eye.

HUNTER
 The fucking asshole tripped me! Then
 he lied and said it was an accident.

BEN
 So you hit him?

HUNTER
 Gotta stand up for yourself.

BEN
 And what if he'd made you bleed?
 Everyone would need to know you're
 positive. Is that what you want?

HUNTER
 (sarcastically)
 Yeah. It's exactly what I want.

BEN
 (stopping him)
 Look, you've been doing great -- better
 than anyone expected.

(CONTINUED)

17 CONTINUED:

17

HUNTER

Proving what? That hustlers not only can give expert head, they can even write a book report.

BEN

That's not what I meant. So why would you fuck it up --?

HUNTER

As if it matters what I get on my SAT scores, or if I'm a National Merit Scholar -- since I'm going to end up in a box, like Vic.

(CONTINUED)

Ben looks at Hunter for a beat, understanding now why he's been upset.

BEN

Look, not long ago, the person who infected me died.

HUNTER

(astonished)
You knew him?

BEN

Yeah.

HUNTER

And you didn't kill him?

BEN

He was my ex-lover.

HUNTER

Shit -- you can't trust anyone.

BEN

The point is, afterwards, I did some pretty self-destructive things.

HUNTER

Like what?

BEN

Like taking steroids, because I thought they'd make me healthier. But they only did more harm than good. And it didn't change the fact that I still have this thing inside of me. Same as you.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

17 CONTINUED: 17

BEN (cont'd)

But no matter how scared or angry we are, we can't self-destruct, or let it sabotage our lives.

Hunter looks at Ben like he's nuts.

HUNTER

I don't know what the fuck you're talking about, dude. I told you -- the guy tripped me, that's all.

A beat, then:

(CONTINUED)

BEN

Right. That's all it was. Now come on -- let's go home.

CUT TO:

18 INT. DEBBIE'S HOUSE - UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - DAY 18

Emmett comes out of his room to find a herd of plastic reindeer grazing in the hallway. Debbie comes down from the attic, carting two more.

DEBBIE

Found Donner and Blitzen!

EMMETT

Want me to help round them up?

DEBBIE

Thanks, honey, but I've got the herd under control.

She sticks a reindeer under each arm, heads downstairs. Emmett follows her into:

18A INT. DEBBIE'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS 18A

Where the artificial tree has been assembled limb by limb. Ornaments and decorations lay scattered about everywhere. Michael stands in the midst of the Yuletide detritus, still in his coat, taking it in.

MICHAEL

Holy Christ!

DEBBIE

The crèche scene! Thanks for reminding me!

(then, re: her reindeer)

Haven't seen these in awhile, have you?

(to Emmett)

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

18A CONTINUED:

18A

DEBBIE (cont'd)

He used to love 'em. Every year he'd say "Where're the waindeer, Ma?" -- 'cause every year we'd put 'em up on the roof.

(beat)

Then Vic got sick. But this year, we're goin' all the way! Like we used to!

EMMETT

(to Michael)

I'll leave you to your waindeer.

(CONTINUED)

MICHAEL

Where're you going?

EMMETT

Christmas shopping. There're only 280 days left!

He's out the door. Michael turns to Debbie:

MICHAEL

Ma --?

But she's off and running, back up the stairs again. Michael follows her.

18B INT. DEBBIE'S HOUSE - UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - DAY

18B

As Debbie reaches the top, a little winded:

DEBBIE

(catching her breath)

Whew! I must've been up and down these stairs twenty times today.

MICHAEL

It's really nice of you to do all this for Uncle Vic -- but don't wear yourself out.

DEBBIE

(dismissing it)

I'm fine, sweetheart.

She goes to grab two more reindeer.

MICHAEL

Why don't you let me help you --

DEBBIE

No, it's okay --

(CONTINUED)

18B CONTINUED:

18B

She finishes wiping her face, charges back up the stairs. As Michael watches (trying to take one away)
I'm happy to do it --

CUT TO:

DEBBIE
(holding on tight)
I've already got it --

MICHAEL
(a tug-of-war)
Come on, let me --

Then, suddenly, ferociously, she grabs it back:

DEBBIE
Would you let go? I don't want your
goddamn help!

Leaving Michael looking startled and confused, she carries the reindeer down the stairs.

18C INT. DEBBIE'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

18C

Debbie puts the reindeer down, grabs a Christmas napkin, wipes her face as Michael comes down, sees her.

MICHAEL
Ma --

DEBBIE
I've got to do this -- all of it --
myself, okay?

MICHAEL
But -- why?

DEBBIE
Because it's Vic's last request. And
if I do it all perfectly -- the way he
would've like it -- then maybe he might-
-
(she stops herself)
It's just got to be right, that's all.
Nothing can go wrong.

She finishes wiping her face, charges back up the stairs. As Michael watches her:

CUT TO:

Gus watches the screen, fascinated. Lindsay enters with a plate of child food.

19 INT. BRIAN'S LOFT - EVENING 19

Lindsay has just shown up unannounced with GUS and a large bag of child care accessories. (In the b.g., "Rebel Without A Cause" is playing on Brian's liquid TV.)

BRIAN
Does no one respect privacy any more?
Is it all but a forgotten right?

LINDSAY
Gus has been saying "Dada" all day.

BRIAN
(shrugging it off)
So he's developed a sudden interest in
German Surrealism --

LINDSAY
I think he means you.

Lindsay hands Gus to Brian.

LINDSAY (cont'd)
Try to be amusing. He's been an enfant
terrible all day.

Brian makes a hideous face which Gus seems to appreciate, then plops him in front of the television as Lindsay heads to the kitchen.

BRIAN
(re: James Dean)
Keep your eye on the pretty one, Gus.
He not only knew how to live -- he knew
when to die. No getting old and gross,
no seeing himself gradually decompose,
no "Diapers Revisited". He went out in
a blaze of glory, both balls intact --
what more could a man ask for?

Gus watches the screen, fascinated. Lindsay enters with a plate of child food.

LINDSAY
Isn't he a little young for James Dean?

BRIAN
You don't want him watching the
Teletubbies, do you? Might make him
gay.

(CONTINUED)

Dinner with Michael, Ben and Hunter is not going down well.

LINDSAY

You know, in your own weird subversive way, you're not a bad father. I had to get suspended --

BRIAN

I prefer to see myself as the anti-Dad. It's not like I called in a bomb threat or went on a shooting spree.

LINDSAY

Whatever you are, if you'd like to spend more time with him, all you have to do is ask.

(CONTINUED)

BRIAN

I'll stick with my uncredited cameo appearances.

As Gus eats happily:

LINDSAY

You know, one day in the not too distant future, we'll be watching him graduate from school. Then I imagine he'll meet a lovely young girl -- or boy. Get married, maybe. Have grandchildren, maybe.

Brian gives her a look.

BRIAN

You really know how to kill a moment, don't you?

LINDSAY

Don't worry. I'm sure you'll be the hottest, handsomest anti-grandpa ever.

Brian looks at his son for a beat, then glances out the window. The sun is about to set. As Brian HEARS Gus, O.S., saying "Dada":

CUT TO:

Dinner with Michael, Ben and Hunter is not going down well.

MICHAEL

On top of everything else, you had to get suspended --!

HUNTER

It's not like I called in a bomb threat or went on a shooting spree.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Hunter gives Michael a look, storms off without a word. As soon as the door to Hunter's room SLAMS:

MICHAEL

That's not the point, smartass! I've already got enough shit to worry about without having to worry about you, too!

around picking fights. And you can't

coddle him.

HUNTER

So stop worrying!

MICHAEL

I'll worry as much as I goddamn well please! What the hell were you thinking about?

(CONTINUED)

HUNTER

I wasn't thinking about anything!

MICHAEL

Obviously!

Hunter gets up from the table.

MICHAEL (cont'd)

You are not excused!

HUNTER

I'm not gonna sit here and get yelled at.

MICHAEL

Then quit acting like an idiot!

Ben's had enough.

BEN

Michael, stop.

MICHAEL

That's all we need -- for him to get into trouble!

BEN

(to Hunter)

Go to your room. Go on.

Hunter gives Michael a look, storms off without a word. As soon as the door to Hunter's room SLAMS:

MICHAEL

He's got to understand he can't go around picking fights. And you can't coddle him.

*

(CONTINUED)

20

CONTINUED: 20

FOLLOW HIM as he makes his way to the entrance, sees the packed dance-floor, the sweaty, muscular men in a dancing frenzy.
BEN
I'm wasn't coddling him.

MICHAEL
What he can use is some discipline.

BEN
What he can use is some understanding.
(beat)
Look, I know you've got a lot to deal with -- but so does he.

(CONTINUED)

MICHAEL
It's not his uncle who died, it's not his mother who's gone round the bend --

BEN
No, but he's the one who's sixteen, who's positive, who's dealing with an HIV-related death for the first time. Try to imagine how terrifying that must be.

(beat)
So if he's acting out right now, it's because he's scared shitless. And yes - a little understanding might be helpful.

Michael stands for several beats, silent and contrite.

MICHAEL
I'm sorry. I didn't think about it.

BEN
Why should you? You don't have it.

CUT TO:

21 INT. BABYLON - ENTRY - NIGHT

21

Whatever is uncertain in this world, you can always count on the thumpa-thumpa. FIND Ted as he enters the club. Hesitant at first, he's not been here for awhile. So many things are being triggered that he might as well be at a shooting range.

FOLLOW HIM as he makes his way to the entrance, sees the packed dance-floor, the sweaty, muscular men in a dancing frenzy.

(CONTINUED)

TED'S P.O.V. *little tina?*

Babylonians taking bumps and snorts here, there, everywhere. He looks up, sees two familiar figures on the catwalk, makes his way to:

ANOTHER ANGLE - CATWALK

As he approaches DEREK and ROMAN, Dr. C's two tweaked-out henchmen, still tweaked out. They spot him, get immediately intimate.

DEREK

Hey, look who it is --!

ROMAN

Teddyboy! Where the fuck have you been?

TED

I've been -- out of town.

DEREK

Doin' the circuit?

TED

Yeah.

ROMAN

We're goin' over to Dr. C's later.

DEREK

Hot, hot, hot!

ROMAN

Wanna come -- cum, cum?

TED

No thanks, guys. But -- I was wondering -- that is, if you have -- you know.

They know.

ROMAN

A little tina?

He checks to make sure no one's watching, then slips a hand down his pants, pulls a small vial of white powder out of his crotch. Ted discreetly puts some bills in Roman's hand, quickly pockets the vial.

(CONTINUED)

21 CONTINUED:

21

TED
Thanks.

Then Roman pulls a bumper out of his pocket, takes a shot, offers it to Ted.

ROMAN
Special one-time offer. First hit's on me.

Ted stares at the bumper, feels his dick twitch in anticipation. But he suddenly sees something down below that makes him stop with alarm. (CONTINUED)

TED
Gotta go --

He flees down the stairs. As he hurries toward the exit, we RAMP over to the bar, REVEAL what Ted saw:

22 INT. BABYLON - BAR - CONTINUOUS

22

Justin and Emmett, nursing Cosmos.

JUSTIN
He's never turned me down before.

EMMETT
I have to admit, it doesn't sound like the Brian Kinney we all know, and feel rather ambiguously about.

JUSTIN
Maybe I'm getting too old for him. Or maybe it's the hair.

EMMETT
I love the hair. And if you're too old, the rest of us should be in assisted care.

JUSTIN
Then what?

EMMETT
Maybe you're in a slump. Happens in the best of non-relationships. Try spicing it up!

JUSTIN
There's nothing -- and practically no one -- we haven't done.

(CONTINUED)

22 CONTINUED: 22

Justin pushes the two twinks out of the way, goes after him.
Emmett glances at the other end of the bar, sees two hot young TWINKS cruising Justin.

EMMETT

CUT TO:

All it takes is a couple of new ingredients to perk up an old familiar dish.

As Justin checks out the Spice Boys:

CUT TO:

23 INT. BRIAN'S LOFT BUILDING - CORRIDOR - NIGHT 23

Brian steps out of the elevator -- tired, preoccupied after a long day at work. Absently, he unlocks the metal door, slides it open, steps into:

24 INT. BRIAN'S LOFT - CONTINUOUS 24

He closes the door, sets his briefcase down, then SEES Justin and the two hot TWINKS naked and entwined on his bed. *

TWINK #1

(seeing Brian)

He is hot!

Justin gives Brian a horny smile.

JUSTIN

Thought you might like a long, hard night after a long, hard day.

Brian stares at them for a beat, then:

BRIAN

I just remembered, I left something at the office.

He heads for the door.

JUSTIN

Brian --!

Justin pushes the two twinks out of the way, goes after him. But it's too late. Brian's already out the door, pulling it closed with a clang.

CUT TO:

25 EXT. MICHAEL & BEN'S APARTMENT - DAY 25

Michael and Hunter come out with their bicycles, off to start the day.

MICHAEL

Dinner's early tonight so we can get to my Mom's by seven. Be sure to wear something nice -- that new sweater we got you. It's a special occasion -- she'll want us to look our best. And if there's time after school to get a haircut --

(CONTINUED)

HUNTER

You done with my make-over?

MICHAEL

Yeah, I'm done.

HUNTER

Good. Because I'm not going.

Michael gives Hunter a sharp look, is about to strongly object -- then changes his mind, tries the soft approach instead.

MICHAEL

It'd be nice if you'd at least make an appearance.

HUNTER

I don't do the Santa ride. Especially when it's not even fuckin' Christmas.

MICHAEL

It's important to her -- to respect Vic's wishes.

HUNTER

That's not why. She figures if she gives him this stupid party, his spirit'll come back and say, "Ooooo, Debbie, I forgive you for treating me like a sack of shit before I died."

(pleased with himself)

It's what they call "magical thinking".

MICHAEL

And how do you know so fucking much?

(CONTINUED)

25

CONTINUED:

25

HUNTER

INT. KINNETIK - DAY
CYNTHIA'S One of my former foster assholes was a shrink. Spent the better part of a year trying to seduce me -- talk about your magical thinking!

MICHAEL

Whatever the reason is, it's important.

A beat, then:

HUNTER

So what's she gonna do when I croak?
Throw me an Easter egg hunt?

Michael stops, looks at him for a beat, then:

MICHAEL

Listen to me. You're not going to croak, okay? You're young, you're healthy. You're going to be around for a long, long time.

HUNTER

How do you know? I could end up the same as Vic!

Michael searches for an honest answer. Finally:

MICHAEL

None of us knows how we're going to end up. Or when.

(beat)

That's why you have to live in the now, like Ben says.

HUNTER

That's awesome advice, dude. Ben's Buddhist bullshit has really inspired me. Well, I'd better get a move on -- before I run out of "Now".

As he takes off:

CUT TO:

26 INT. KINNETIK - DAY

26

CYNTHIA'S trying to comprehend what she's hearing.

CYNTHIA

I can't believe you're taking off!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BRIAN

Flight 18, to Barcelona and Madrid.

(Obscure "Company" reference for show tune fairies.)

BRIAN (cont'd)

Care to help me practice my Spanish:
"Como esta usted?"

CYNTHIA

I'm fine, thank you! But you must be
demented!

(CONTINUED)

BRIAN

It was one of those spontaneous sort of
things.

CYNTHIA

And how are we supposed to
spontaneously sort of cover for you
while your tanning your ass? You have
meetings with Remson, Brown, Eyeconics -
- and Toasty Oaties is chomping to
meet!

BRIAN

I actually like my cereal soggy. So
they can wait. They can all wait until
I get back.

CYNTHIA

And when are you coming back?

BRIAN

I'll let you know.

She exhales a furious puff.

CYNTHIA

You know, I've worked for you for five
years, and I've never known you to just
-- take off. So why now, when you've
just opened your own firm, would you
suddenly decide to --

BRIAN

(cutting her off)

That's the point of being your own
boss, isn't it? Make your own hours,
come and go as you please, not answer
to anyone --

(CONTINUED)

JUSTIN (O.S.)
Almost anyone.

Brian turns, SEES Justin standing there.

BRIAN
The ball and chain. Would you mind
excusing us, Cynthia?

CYNTHIA
Be sure to eat plenty of fresh fruit --
and drink lots of tap water!

(CONTINUED)

She storms out. A beat, then:

JUSTIN
Where're you going?

BRIAN
Ibiza. I'm leaving tonight.

JUSTIN
Without me?

BRIAN
Hey, you're going back to school,
remember? It would be highly
irresponsible of me to pull you out --

JUSTIN
Fuck school! Fuck the bet! And fuck
you! We were supposed to go there
together!

Justin just detonated the bomb -- Brian explodes.

BRIAN
We're not fucking married! And I don't
need to get your fucking permission if
I want to go somewhere!

Justin stares down the barrel of Brian's anger for several
beats. Then, finally, genuinely:

JUSTIN
You're right. You're absolutely right.
We're not married. We have no
obligation to tell each other anything.

Brian averts his eyes. Then:

(CONTINUED)

26

JUSTIN (cont'd)
Seasons greetings.
Look, if there's something I did, or
said, to piss you off, I didn't mean to-

Brian cuts him off. [long] [with the spirit for Vic's -

BRIAN
It's not you.

JUSTIN
Then what?

(CONTINUED)

Brian doesn't answer. Justin retracts the question.

JUSTIN (cont'd)
Okay. Do whatever it is you have to
do, for whatever reason you have to do
it. But I just want you to know I love
you. And that I'll be here for you
when you get back.

Justin kisses Brian tenderly, leaves. As Brian watches him
go:

CUT TO:

27 INT. TED'S CONDO - NIGHT

27

START on the vial of crystal. Ted stares at it. He picks it
up, rolls it between his fingers. He touches the cap -- when
the doorbell BUZZZZZES. He quickly shoves the vial in his
pocket, goes to answer it:

TED
(nervously, through the door)
Who is it?

EMMETT (O.S.)
The Ghost of Christmas Past.

Ted opens the door, is startled to find Emmett standing
there.

EMMETT (cont'd)
Seasons greetings.

Ted offers him a curious look.

EMMETT (cont'd)
Just getting into the spirit for Vic's -

(then)
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

EMMETT (cont'd)

Never mind. I stopped by to tell you that -- I read your letter.

TED

You did? He did. Because -- to tell you the truth, there was a part of me that

didn't want to recover. That

A few times, actually. That felt

you (then) ed it. Pretty cunty, huh?

It was very well written.

(then)

Fabulous stationery, too.

(CONTINUED)

TED

I got it at that little store you turned me on to -- you know, where you had your business cards done.

EMMETT

I luuv that store! And that cute British guy, Morgan, who runs it?

TED

I know. He's a hottie, isn't he?

EMMETT

I've always been a silly slut for that accent. One "cheerio" and my legs are up and pointin' north --!

Ted chuckles. They stop themselves. A confused beat.

EMMETT (cont'd)

Anyway -- the letter. So, I read it and --

TED

(stopping him)

Wait. You gave the letter back to me. I ditched it.

EMMETT

Luckily for both of us, Blake retrieved it and gave it back to me.

TED

I -- didn't know he did that.

EMMETT

I'm glad he did, because -- to tell you the truth, there was a part of me that didn't want you to recover. That wanted you to be in pain. That felt you deserved it. Pretty cunty, huh?

(CONTINUED)

27

CONTINUED:

27

TED

Not really. I felt the same way,
myself.

EMMETT

Anyway, I've got to hand it to him.
He's a damn good counselor -- and a
damn good friend, to care about you
that much. You're lucky to have him.

Ted doesn't say anything.

EMMETT (cont'd)

Well. I just wanted to wish you the
best, Teddy.

He turns to go.

TED

Wait. You want some soda -- piece of
bundt cake?

EMMETT

Maybe some other time.

They look at each other, then Emmett leaves. Ted reaches
into his pocket, takes the vial of crystal out. As he rolls
it between his fingers:

CUT TO:

28 INT. BRIAN'S LOFT - NIGHT

28

Brian is at the fridge, pulling two Coronas out. He snaps
the caps off, hands one to Michael, who appears very
stressed.

BRIAN

You look like you could use a blow job.

MICHAEL

I'll settle for a joint.

Brian gets a joint from his drug box, hands it to Michael,
who lights it, takes a toke, then:

MICHAEL (cont'd)

I suddenly feel a preponderance of
death.

Michael hands Brian the joint.

(CONTINUED)

BRIAN

Isn't that a play by Arthur Miller?

MICHAEL

It's an unsettling observation by Michael Novotny. Everywhere I turn, I'm confronted by the inevitable fact of one's mortality.

BRIAN

Death can really hang you up the most. (CONTINUED)

MICHAEL

And I don't mean just Uncle Vic. I mean Ben. And Hunter.

(beat)

It's a horrible thing to say -- I try not to think it. But --

He breaks off emotionally, close to tears, but forces himself not to cry.

MICHAEL (cont'd)

But they could both die, like him, and I'll be the one left to pack up their stuff and turn out the lights --

Brian takes the joint. Takes a toke.

BRIAN

You don't know that. Just because they're positive doesn't mean they'll be the first to go. Hell, it could be you. You could step out in the street and get hit by a Mercedes Kompressor. So much classier than a bus.

MICHAEL

Thanks.

BRIAN

Or you go to the post office to buy a stamp and get blown away by a disgruntled postal worker. In case you haven't noticed these days they're all disgruntled.

MICHAEL

I know. I just -- I just get scared at the thought of being alone.

Brian shrugs.

(CONTINUED)

BRIAN

It's how we all came in, it's how we're all going out.

Michael takes back the joint, takes a toke.

MICHAEL

But until then, I'd prefer at least the illusion that someone else is there. If only temporarily.

(CONTINUED)

BRIAN

They're not going anywhere, for a long time. Trust me.

MICHAEL

And neither are you.

Brian laughs, turns away, ostensibly to stub out the joint.

BRIAN

Who said anything about me?

MICHAEL

I mean it's good to know that no matter what happens, we'll always have each other.

(he gives Brian a kiss)

Right?

As Brian takes a hard swallow, doesn't answer:

CUT TO:

29 EXT. REHAB CENTER - NIGHT

29

Blake comes out, the end of his shift. FOLLOW HIM to the street, where he hears:

TED (O.S.)

Need a lift?

He turns, sees Ted standing by his car.

BLAKE

It's okay -- I don't have far to walk.

TED

It's getting cold. Feels like snow.

BLAKE

Thanks anyway.

(CONTINUED)

TED
Please?

BLAKE
Ted, I've tried to explain. I don't
know what else to say.

TED
Then let me talk, okay?
(a beat)

After you told me you didn't want to
see me any more --

(CONTINUED)

BLAKE
I said it wasn't a good idea for us to
see each other --

TED
Right. I was so upset, you know what I
did?

Blake looks at Ted, knows.

BLAKE
Oh, no --

Ted pulls out the vial of crystal.

TED
Dr. C's finest. Good price, too.

BLAKE
Shit --

TED
But after walking it around -- I did a
little accounting and figured doing
this would put me back in the minus
column. This time, maybe permanently.
So I decided to pass.

BLAKE
(greatly relieved)
A wise decision.

Ted looks at Blake for a beat, then -- surprisingly, smiles.

TED
You know, the first time we met, I fell
in love because you needed me to take
care of you. This time, I fell in love
because I needed you to take care of
me. And you have.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

TED (cont'd)

In fact, I wouldn't be standing here right now if it weren't for you. Sorry if I was too selfish and horny to see it.

BLAKE

Thank you, Ted.

A beat, then:

TED

So, where does that leave us? Besides stuck with lousy timing once again.

BLAKE

(laughs)

We do seem to have that, don't we? But who knows, maybe one day the timing'll be right.

TED

You think?

BLAKE

One can hope.

(then)

Oh --

(holding out his hand)

-- just so you won't be tempted.

Ted takes the vial, opens the cap, spills the powder to the four winds. As a light snow begins to fall:

TED

What do you know. It's snowing.

CUT TO:

30 INT. DEBBIE'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

30

Fake snow flakes falling in front of SHANDA LEER, flanked by two barely clad go-go boys (THE LUSTRES), performing Brenda Lee's "Rockin' Around the Christmas Tree".

PULL BACK TO REVEAL Debbie's house has been decked out with every Christmas decoration known to man. Shanda finishes her number to spirited applause from the GUESTS, as Justin goes over to her.

JUSTIN

I always knew Shanda Leer would be back on her heels again.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SHANDA

Can't keep a good drag queen down!
(patting her newly blonde hair)
So is it true "Gentlemen Prefer
Blondes"?

JUSTIN

I don't know about gentlemen, but dirty
old men sure do.

SHANDA

Even better!

She slips her arm through his, allows him to lead her to the
sweets table, passing Melanie, Lindsay, Michael and Ben.

MELANIE

I keep thinking, I can hardly wait for
the after-Christmas sales. Then I
remember it isn't Christmas.

BEN

Deb really went all-out.

LINDSAY

How about those elves in leather
harnesses in the front yard!

MICHAEL

That was Uncle Vic's idea.

MELANIE

I'm sure he'd be very touched to know
how your mother's honored him.

Michael forces a smile, then glances with concern over at
Debbie in a Santa hat, passing among the guests with a tray
of Christmas cookies.

DEBBIE

Have one, honey -- help yourself --
(coming to Rodney)
Try a Santa cookie -- they were Vic's
favorite. Used to bite the head off
when he was a kid!

She shows him how -- chomp! Rodney tries to get into the
spirit of things, takes a reserved bite.

RODNEY

I wish he were here now, to share these
with us.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DEBBIE

The group Who's to say he's not? So let him see
you smile.

Rodney tries, as Ted crosses to Emmett, pouring himself a cup
of eggnog.

She moves a chair next to the tree, picks up a crystal angel.
EMMETT
Want some?

TED

Actually, I hate eggnog.

EMMETT

Me, too. But somehow, I feel
obligated.

He takes a sip, shudders.

TED

Well, one nice thing about celebrating
Christmas off-season --

EMMETT

The rates are cheaper?

TED

You get to be reminded again to love
your fellow man.

(then)

Merry Christmas, Em.

EMMETT

You, too, Teddy.

Just then, Debbie JANGLES some sleigh bells.

DEBBIE

Can I have your attention, everyone?
This year, Christmas has come a little
early -- or a little late, depending on
how you look at it. But either way
it's here, 'cause that's what Vic
would've wanted: for us to celebrate
his favorite holiday -- and him.

The group adds it's heartfelt hear-hear's.

DEBBIE (cont'd)

Now it's time to add the finishing
touch to the festivities.

She moves a chair next to the tree, picks up a crystal angel.

(CONTINUED)

DEBBIE (cont'd)

Every year, Vic and I used to fight over who got to put the angel on top of the tree. He usually won -- 'cause I let him. But this year, baby brother, I'm doing it. In your honor.

Debbie climbs up on the chair with the angel. Michael gives her a hand.

MICHAEL

Careful, Ma --

DEBBIE

If I can climb up on the roof, I can climb up on a fuckin' chair.

Michael holds the chair as Debbie leans forward to place the angel on the top of the tree. But the top branch of the tree tips to one side and the angel slips off, CRASHES to the floor. Dead silence. Then Debbie climbs down, looks at the shattered angel -- and her shattered hopes of forgiveness.

DEBBIE (cont'd)

It's ruined.

MICHAEL

It was an accident.

DEBBIE

It had to be perfect --

MICHAEL

Ma --

DEBBIE

It had to be perfect!

Debbie rushes out of the room and up the stairs. No one in the living room moves, or barely takes a breath.

PAN to a BRIGHT LIGHT on the Christmas tree. DISSOLVE from the light to:

31 INT. HOSPITAL - OPERATING ROOM - DAY

31

Another BRIGHT LIGHT, this one above an operating table. PAN DOWN to Brian, lying on the table.

DOCTOR'S VOICE (O.S.)

Okay now, Mr. Kinney, just relax and count slowly backward from ten.

(CONTINUED)

31 CONTINUED:

31

BRIAN
(softly, slowly)
Ten -- nine -- eight -- sev --

His eyes shut.

FADE TO BLACK.

THE END