

QUEBEC

by

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A man's voice is audible over a black screen.

RICHARD (V.O.)

Before anything... it's important for you to know that in Canada, there's no such meal as Macaroni and Cheese. They're called Kraft Dinners. There's a reason. It's so important. I'll tell you later.

A FULL SCREEN image of a Goofus and Gallant 50s-style comic from *Highlights* kids magazine appears - the side by side recurring morality drawings for kids.

On the left side, a boy GOOFUS has approached a firetruck and firefighter called to his suburban neighborhood for some emergency; Goofus has interrupted his work. The text reads *Hey, mister! How did that fire get started?*

In the right-side drawing, a more handsome boy GALLANT stands back from fire truck activity that's come to his street. The text reads *Gallant stays back so emergency workers can do their jobs.*

INT. WAITING ROOM, PEDIATRIC SURGERY OFFICE - DAY

DOUG HABER, 32, sits in the waiting room among child patients and their parents. He's reading this *Highlights*. It bears the title *Highlights for Children, Fun With a Purpose.*

Doug looks up and sees JEN HABER, 32, coming toward him from the interoffice. She wears a nursing uniform and winter coat. Doug stands as Jen arrives; she's checking a clipboard schedule.

JEN

We do have a surgery. So I'm on till like six. How late are you working?

DOUG

Four-thirty. I'll just see you at home.

JEN

Okay. Thanks for walking me in.

Doug nods. Then Doug moves forward to kiss Jen goodbye, but Jen's ducked her head to address some problem with her coat zipper. So Doug sort of stupidly kisses Jen's winter hat. It was an awkward thing to do. Jen looks up at Doug because of it. She seems to be awaiting some kind of explanation for that. Doug doesn't offer one.

They just stare at each other - the vibe is a couple not right on track with each other at present.

DOUG

So I'll see you tonight.

JEN

Okay...

Jen turns back for the interoffice as she removes her coat.

INT. ELEVATED TRAIN, MOVING, CHICAGO - LATER

Doug rides a crowded el car past westside Chicago. CLOSE ON Doug - he looks like he's got heavy thoughts on his mind. A WOMAN'S VOICE becomes audible.

WOMAN'S VOICE (V.O.)

I returned to the lot from the grocery and found three black guys sitting on my car, eating snacks. I didn't see anyone who worked for the store to help. They finally left, but called me names and words like "cunt," "tasty," "lick" and "titties." Nancy Chast. 2/16.

EXT. PARKING LOT, DOMINICKS GROCERY, CHICAGO - LATER

Doug stands beside a structure resembling a birdhouse near cart return of a large, urban grocery. The broad sign above it reads *D.E. Your Dominicks Experience, Tell Us About Your Dominicks Experience*. Doug's been reading an evaluation card he's taken from the box - the one narrated above.

DOUG

(quietly, upset over the
content of the card)

Fuck...

Then Doug takes more cards from the box.

Meanwhile, a group of YOUNG BLACK MEN IN BLUE BANDANAS hangs out in the lot nearby.

FIRST GANG MEMBER

(to other gang members)

She was all busy suckin' my dick.
Suckin' down.

Doug looks over at the gang. He stares at them for a while, After a further moment of apprehension, Doug walks closer to them.

FIRST GANG MEMBER
Ass all up. Suckin'.

Doug has stopped one aisle away from the gang.

DOUG
Guys?

No one listens to him.

DOUG
(non-threatening)
Can you guys walk around? There's
no cut-throughs. Through the lot.

They ignore Doug for the most part; they were breaking up
anyway. They slap hands as they part company from one
another.

SECOND GANG MEMBER
(saying goodbye to third)
All right, nigger.

THIRD GANG MEMBER
All right, nigger. All right,
motherfucker.

Doug looks around to see if customers have heard these
exchanges.

Nearby, a white couple with disconcerted expressions packs
groceries in the trunk.

Doug sees them. Then Doug heads into the store with the
cards. Soon, he walks past a pair of Latino baggers on their
way out.

LATINO BAG BOY ONE
(pleased to see him)
What's up, Doug?

DOUG
Hey, Miguel.

INT. DOMINICKS GROCERY, AISLE ONE - LATER

During work, Doug has stopped an inventory check to notice a
new photo going up on the MANAGEMENT PHOTO WALL;

EMPLOYEE
Richard Welhner. He's up in the
lounge.

DOUG
Richard?

EMPLOYEE
Yeah. From Quebec.

Doug looks at the pictures. Richard Welhner's is positioned next to Doug's in the middle level of what amounts to a pyramid-shaped, management hierarchy in framed photographs - there's just one other atop theirs - the store manager.

INT. EMPLOYEE LOUNGE, GROCERY - LATER

There is a employee lounge on the grocery's second floor. There, Doug greets RICHARD WELHNER, 35, amid the water cooler, plastic break table and wall schedule.

RICHARD
(earnestly)
Good to meet you.

DOUG
Good to meet you, man.

RICHARD
We just moved from Quebec. My wife
was transferred.

FREEZE FRAME on the men shaking hands.

DOUG (V.O.)
He was a good guy. What can I tell
you?

INT. STOCK ROOM/DELIVER ROOM, GROCERY - DAY

While Doug logs stock, a stockboy passes with a ladder. Nearby, Richard's working and sees the ladder might smack Doug.

RICHARD
(to Doug)
Watch your head.

Doug ducks under the ladder.

DOUG
(to Richard)
Thanks.

EXT. PARKING LOT, GROCERY - DAY

After their shifts, on another day, a few of the assistant managers - including Richard and Doug - part company in the grocery lot.

DOUG
(looking at a schedule
flyer)
I have Thanksgiving. Does anyone
want to trade? My wife's parents
are having a...

No one in the group really wants it.

RICHARD
(just a little
reluctantly)
I'll get that for you.

DOUG
Yeah.

RICHARD
Yeah. I'll take it.

DOUG
Thanks.

RICHARD
No problem.

The guys split up. While the others walk to their cars, Doug heads out to the street and the bus stop.

EXT. DIVISION STREET, GROCERY, CHICAGO - LATER

Doug sits on a bus bench beside the street that runs out front of the grocery. Soon, Richard pulls up before him in his car.

RICHARD
(to Doug)
You want a lift?

Doug points the direction opposite where Richard's heading.

DOUG
Well, I'm going west.

RICHARD
No problem.

DOUG

Yeah?

RICHARD

No problem.

Doug stands and walks over to Richard's car.

INT. RICHARD'S CAR, MOVING - LATER

Richard drives Doug home through his neighborhood. A few moments of awkward silence pass.

DOUG

You're from Quebec?

RICHARD

Yeah.

DOUG

Were you at a Dominicks?

RICHARD

It's not called Dominicks. But yeah. It's the same parent company. Everything's pretty much the same.

DOUG

What's it called?

RICHARD

What's that?

DOUG

What is it called?

RICHARD

Erickson's.

EXT. DAMEN AVENUE, WESTSIDE CHICAGO - LATER

Doug stands outside Richard's car near a sidewalk in his neighborhood; Richard's just dropped him off.

DOUG

Thanks, man.

RICHARD

You sure you want to walk?

DOUG

(pointing up the street)
It's a one-way. This is easier.

Doug waves and closes the door. He starts walking up the sidewalk as Richard drives off.

EXT. DAMEN AVENUE - LATER

Doug walks past neighborhood buildings, then he passes a construction area. Doug notices something. He stops walking. Doug stares at the construction lot.

DOUG'S POV

A half-built, brand new grocery is going up. A sign beside it reads *DOMINICKS GROCERY PLUS. April 22nd.*

Doug continues to look at the new grocery; he's become pretty interested for whatever reason.

As he's watching, Richard drives up into view behind him, pulling to a stop near the sidewalk, staring at the grocery as well.

RICHARD

That's a nice spot.

Doug turns and sees Richard.

DOUG

Yeah...

RICHARD

I had to turn around because of the one way. It's a Plus?

DOUG

What's that?

RICHARD

Plus?

DOUG

Yeah.

RICHARD

Man, they're going to do great. All there is around here is that Osco. On Barry.

DOUG

Yeah. I'm going to put in for it.

Some time goes by.

RICHARD
Yeah, me too.

CLOSE ON DOUG; this news has surprised him.

RICHARD
Later.

DOUG
...Later.

Doug watches Richard drive off. After a moment, Doug's face takes on a QUIZZICAL IF NOT SLIGHTLY PISSED LOOK.

INT. CITY BUS, MOVING, CHICAGO - LATER

Doug and Jen ride a Chicago Transit bus through the westside neighborhood; Jen's dressed in her nursing uniform.

JEN
Where?

DOUG
Augusta. Right in Wicker Park.

JEN
(pleased)
Are you going to apply for it?

DOUG
Yeah. And this other guy from my store. Richard Welhner. From Quebec.

JEN
Who?

DOUG
Richard Welhner. From Quebec.

JEN
Who?

DOUG
This guy Richard Welhner from Quebec. His wife transferred.

Doug pulls the bell chord to signal his stop's coming. Doug looks over at Jen; she SEEMS A LITTLE DISTRACTED AND IS LOOKING OUT THE WINDOW. Doug watches her.

CUT TO:

AN EVALUATION CARD

Close on a grocery evaluation card. The camera focuses on handwritten words that read "why you jew me..."

CUT TO:

DOUG'S FACE/GROCERY PARKING LOT - DAY

Doug's back in his grocery lot reading this card. A man's voice becomes audible

MAN'S VOICE (V.O.)

Your bag boy called me "Jew"
because I didn't tip him. He said
"Holmes, why you jew me on bags."

Doug's bummed over the bad report. Then he looks up.

DOUG'S POV

THREE MEN IN SUITS have left a parked Lincoln Sabre and walk toward the grocery.

Meanwhile, MANAGER SCOTT FERGUS, 38, on his way in, walks up beside Doug.

SCOTT

Hey.

DOUG

Hey.

(nodding to the guys in
suits)

Why's the board here?

SCOTT

They want to run stock. They're
opening a new store. A Plus on
Augusta.

DOUG

Yeah. I'm applying. Manager.

SCOTT

Awesome.

DOUG

Richard, too.

SCOTT

What's that?

DOUG
Richard Welhner is too, I guess.

Doug looks over at the Board Members as they enter the store. Scott has walked off. Then Doug notices Richard Welhner leaving his parked car for the store. Soon, Richard turns and looks at Doug. They stare at one another for the slightest of loaded moments and give off just a whiff of suspicion and competition. Then Richard Welhner offers a good-natured smile and waves. From across the lot, Doug waves back.

INT. DOMINICKS GROCERY, AISLE NINE - LATER

Doug stocks *Teddy Graham* graham crackers near the cereal section. Scott approaches him with a YELLOW REFLECTIVE VEST.

SCOTT
Hey...

DOUG
Hey...

SCOTT
(holding out the vest)
There's jumpers.

Doug looks past Scott, out the broad storefront windows ahead of him.

There, six or so BLACK GANG MEMBERS IN BLUE BANDANAS hang around in the grocery parking lot.

DOUG
(reluctant, to Scott)
I'm on stacking. That's--

SCOTT
I'd go. I have to pick my mom up.

DOUG
Who's on Lot?

SCOTT
Richard.

DOUG
Well, ask Ri--

SCOTT
He's with Kev. From Pepsi. They're putting a new product up. He asked for Richard.

Doug looks down the aisle.

DOUG'S POV

At the aisle's far end, RICHARD HOLDS A CONVERSATION REGARDING PRODUCT PLACEMENT with the Pepsi rep. The rep hands Richard some items he's brought.

PEPSI REP
(barely audible from down
the aisle)
Here you go. Comps. Coffee mug.
Ball cap.

RICHARD
Cool...

Doug turns back to Scott.

DOUG
(a little surprised)
He asked for him?

SCOTT
Yeah. They've been working together
the last couple weeks. They got
friendly.
(gesturing with the vest,
to Doug)
Can you get out there?

DOUG
I have bad cards stacking up. From
the lot. The board's here.

SCOTT
I'll get you inside tomorrow.

Scott EXTENDS THE REFLECTIVE VEST to Doug.

SCOTT
Pepsi Zest.

DOUG
What?

SCOTT
That's the new product.

DOUG
What is?

SCOTT

Pepsi Zest. It has lemon.

Doug looks at the vest. He doesn't want to take it. Soon, though, he does. Scott waves and goes, and, reluctantly, Doug begins shouldering in to the vest.

EXT. PARKING LOT, DOMINICKS GROCERY - LATER

THE GROUP OF YOUNG BLACK MEN IN BLUE BANDANAS hangs around in the lot as white shoppers walk by. They're a distance away from the camera, laughing it up and carousing. Doug enters the foreground of the frame; his back is to the camera as he approaches the young, black males; so the back of the vest is visible for the first time - it reads in block letters across the back *DOMINICKS COURTESY PATROL*.

FIRST GANG MEMBER

(joking on another gang member)

Kierra ass is big like a planet.
She got a planet ass.

SECOND GANG MEMBER

She got a fat pussy, too.

DOUG

(arriving)

Hey, guys?

FIRST GANG MEMBER

(to the gang member they're teasing)

When she's fuckin' you...

DOUG

Let's go, guys.

Then Doug waves two young, black SECURITY GUYS over from a few aisles over.

FIRST GANG MEMBER

(continuing to gang member)

...you're like the wicked witch
with a house on you, but a house
made from her ass and pussy.

Shoppers seem disturbed over the crude distraction; Doug notices.

SECOND GANG MEMBER

(laughing)

A big ass house made from her pussy
and her ass.

Doug looks over at the store.

DOUG'S POV

Manger Scott and THE BOARD MEMBERS in suits hold a
conversation in the entranceway. ONE BOARD MEMBER is looking
over, apparently taking notice of the disturbance.

Doug sees this.

DOUG

(to the gang)

Come on, guys. Walk around. You
can't cut through the lot.

FIRST GANG MEMBER

(laughing, to other gang
member)

She's going to smash you with her
ass house.

The security guys approach the group - One's real heavy -
KEITH, the other small - BREDON.

KEITH

(to the gang)

You can't cut through, Dog.

FIRST GANG MEMBER

(to Keith)

Fuck you, Whopper.

KEITH

Fuck you, man. Fuckin' call me
Whopper.

DOUG

(cautioning about his
language)

Keith...

SECOND GANG MEMBER

(to Bredon)

What you want, Whopper Crumb?

BREDON

Your mom eats crumbs, motherfucker.

DOUG
(to Bredon)
Hey, cool down.

Doug notices Fergus and the Board Members STARTING TO COME OVER.

BREDON
Out a trash can.

DOUG
(to Bredon)
Cool down, Bredon...

FIRST GANG MEMBER
(to Scott Fergus arriving)
I'm a customer. Did you hear that
shit?

KEITH
You're a trespasser.

FIRST GANG MEMBER
I bought a Charleston Chew. Man,
fuck you. Ask him.

The young man points at Doug.

BREDON
Where is it?

FIRST GANG MEMBER
I ate it.
(to Doug)
Ain't I buy a Charleston Chew,
asshole?

Doug doesn't answer. The Chief Board Member MITCH looks on.

MITCH THE BOARD MEMBER
(to Doug)
Your name's Doug, right? Haber?

DOUG
Yeah.

MITCH THE BOARD MEMBER
Did he buy a Charleston Chew?

DOUG
What?

MITCH THE BOARD MEMBER
Did he buy a Charleston Chew, Doug?

DOUG
(dismissing it)
Like at two o'clock.

MITCH THE BOARD MEMBER
(losing patience)
Did he buy a Charleston Chew this
afternoon? Come on, Haber.

DOUG
Yeah...

MITCH THE BOARD MEMBER
Then he's a customer.

FIRST GANG MEMBER
I buy one every day. I'm a customer
every day buying Chews. I got to
get some shit now. You didn't ask
me that.

The young man and some of his group walk toward the grocery.

MITCH THE BOARD MEMBER
Welcome.

Mitch has stepped back and made a welcoming gesture.

MITCH THE BOARD MEMBER
All of you guys.

SECOND GANG MEMBER
(heading in with the
others, to Bredon)
Whopper Crumb.

BREDON
Your mom cooks Whoppers,
motherfuck.

DOUG
(to Bredon)
Hey, come on.

The gang has laughed and walks toward a soda machine in the
entranceway.

SCOTT
(to Bredon and Keith)
Back to your lots.

The Board Members begin to return to the grocery. Doug stays where he was in the lot. Then Scott Fergus speaks to him quietly before he joins the others.

SCOTT
What the fuck are you doing?

DOUG
Just... They--

SCOTT
(upset)
Here's how you're going to fix
this.

Doug awaits what Scott has to say.

EXT. PARKING LOT, DOMINICKS GROCERY - LATER

Scott Fergus and the Board Members have returned to the grocery entranceway to continue their meeting. Doug waits with them though is not part of their conversation; HE'S HOLDING A STRAWBERRY CHARLESTON CHEW.

Then gang members leave the grocery, and though Doug seems not to want to do what he's doing, he walks toward them. FERGUS AND THE BOARD MEMBERS LOOK ON.

Doug walks nearer to the gang. They stop walking when they see Doug and let him arrive before them.

DOUG
I want to offer you... I'd like to
offer you...

Doug offers the young man the candy bar he's been holding.

DOUG (CONT'D)
...a complimentary strawberry
Charleston Chew to...

The gang laughs. The kid takes the Charleston Chew. Doug stands there. Time passes. The camera SLOW ZOOMS ON Doug.

DOUG (V.O.)
I indicated the flavor.
"Strawberry."

The gang takes off.

DOUG (CONT'D; V.O.)
 I told him we'd like to offer him a
 complimentary "*strawberry*"
 Charleston Chew.

Doug stands around near the lot for a moment.

INT. DELI COUNTER - LATER

Downstairs, Doug approaches the store's deli station. Richard is still visible stacking product with the Pepsi rep in the frame's edge. SOMETHING AT THE DELI CATCHES DOUG'S EYE. He stops and looks at it.

There, a poster hangs on the wall space beside the cold cuts cooler. It reads *Employee of the Month Rogelio Cruz*. Beneath the text, there is a picture of a deli employee cracking up like some joke's going on; beneath him it reads *For Cutting The Cheese*.

DOUG
 (upset)
 Octavio...

Doug faces the Deli Captain OCTAVIO and points at the poster.

OCTAVIO
 It's a joke.

DOUG
 Come on, man.

OCTAVIO
 It's a joke, Holmes. For morale purposes. Welhner didn't say nothing. He's *inside* today. You're *lot*.

DOUG
 I'm just going to take it down.
 Okay?

OCTAVIO
 It's for morale purposes.

Doug begins to remove the poster. THEN HE OVERHEARS SOMETHING.

SCOTT (O.S.)
 We should eat. Do you guys want something from the Rotisserie?

Nearby, Scott Fergus, Mitch and the other Board Members hold another conversation.

MITCH THE BOARD MEMBER
I'm just going to snag something
from Deli in a minute.

CLOSE ON Doug; he heard this. After a moment, he looks from the Board Members ACROSS THE MAIN AISLE AT RICHARD WELHNER AND THE PEPSI REP. Then Doug turns back to the gag poster.

CLOSE ON Rogelio Cruz's picture, laughing it up over the text.

Doug stares at the poster for a moment. Then Doug takes his hands off the thing - he's decided to leave it there.

DOUG
(to Octavio)
Can I get a House Salad? For my
wife.

OCTAVIO
Sure, Holmes.

DOUG
And can you stop referring to
people as Holmes, man?

Time passes.

DOUG (CONT'D)
Unless their name is Holmes.

OCTAVIO
What?

DOUG
Don't call people Holmes. Unless
their last name is Holmes or
something. It's too... whatever.
Familiar.

INT. ELEVATED TRAIN CAR, MOVING, CHICAGO - LATER

Doug rides the train crammed between an apparently unaccompanied ten-year-old Chinese kid and a bag lady. Some time goes by. Then the bag lady hands Doug a small scrap of newspaper she's torn out for some reason.

BAG LADY
(to Doug)
Would you be my Valentine?

Time passes. Then she tries to hold Doug's hand. Doug withdraws it.

DOUG (V.O.)
Sometimes you get on the train, and
you think it's going to go pretty
fast...

Out the train window behind Doug, just a foot from him, is a REALLY OLD GUY walking along the platform the train is passing. The train is JUST INCHING ALONG, so he's keeping pace with the train. Doug stares at him.

DOUG (CONT'D; V.O.)
... Then it doesn't.

Doug looks at the old guy.

DOUG (CONT'D; V.O.)
I graduated Illinois all B's. I
stayed at Dominicks where I worked
summers because I was tracked for
full management then
administration.

EXT. TRAIN PLATFORM, CHICAGO - DAY

A shot of city train tracks from a platform stop. There isn't a train on them.

DOUG (V.O.)
That train was going to go pretty
fast.

A train speeds past.

DOUG (CONT'D; V.O.)
The Super Bullet. The Doug Express.

INT. CITY TRAIN - SAME (PRESENT)

Back in the present, Doug's train inches along in stride with the OLD GUY. Doug stares at him.

DOUG (V.O.)
But it hadn't really shifted into
gear yet... or whatever trains do
to go fast, so...

CLOSE ON Doug as he considers this issue.

INT. DOUG'S APARTMENT - NIGHT (PAST, FLASHBACK)

Doug and his wife Jen share dinner at a small dining table off their small kitchen. Jen's dressed in her nursing uniform. They're mid-conversation in a tired, after-work atmosphere.

DOUG

He was stashing them.

JEN

Fruit Roll Ups?

DOUG

Yeah, then taking them home. For his son or something. I had to fire him.

JEN

You fired him?

DOUG

Yeah, he had like eighteen boxes in his car.

JEN

Boxes of what?

DOUG

Of Fruit Roll Ups.

DOUG (V.O.)

It was getting stale around our place.

Doug looks down at his meal.

DOUG (V.O.)

From what?

(thinking)

I don't know...

JEN

Was it the same flavor?

DOUG

Of what?

JEN

Fruit Roll Ups?

DOUG

No. Different flavors.

DOUG (V.O.)
These Fruit Roll Up roundtables we
have maybe. Like twice a week.

EXT. LAKESIDE, NORTHSIDE CHICAGO - DAY (FLASHBACK)

Doug and Jen walk along the lake among many other Chicagoans
out strolling.

DOUG
Because they were late on them.

JEN
On what?

DOUG
Fruit Roll Ups. Like a week late.

JEN
All the Fruit Roll Ups were late?

DOUG
Yeah...

INT. RECEPTION HALL - DAY (FLASHBACK)

Doug and Jen sit at one of many table at a wedding reception.
It's downtime between ceremony events, and an acquaintance
has just finished greeting and chit-chatting with Doug;
they're shaking hands to end the encounter.

DOUG
Take care.

The guy walks off.

JEN
Who's that?

DOUG
Distributor.

JEN
For who?

DOUG
Pritch.

JEN
What does Pritch do?

DOUG
Fruit Roll Ups.

Jen nods. She looks off. Doug looks over at her.

DOUG (V.O.)
It's a bring down...

IT SEEMS LIKE JEN'S THOUGHTS HAVE TAKEN HER ELSEWHERE.

DOUG (V.O.)
Too much of that. I could see it.
She's a grownup. You know?

Doug looks at her.

DOUG (V.O.)
And she's around doctors a lot,
probably not talking Fruit Roll
Ups.

EXT. RESURRECTION HOSPITAL, NORTHWEST SIDE - LATER (PRESENT)

In the present again, Jen Haber is dressed in her nursing uniform and speaks with a HANDSOME, YOUNG DOCTOR before the entranceway of a Chicago, neighborhood hospital.

DOCTOR
I thought she was going to die.

JEN
Was it that bad?

The Doctor SHOWS AN INCH DISTANCE with his finger and thumb.

JEN
How did you get her back?

DOCTOR
(casually)
Just instinct.

Doug walks up to the two from the sidewalk; he's come to meet Jen.

DOUG
Hey...

JEN
Hey, Doug.
(introducing her
colleague)
This is Doctor Timms.

DOUG
Hi.

DOCTOR
(extending his hand to
Doug)
Hey, man. Mark.

JEN
(to Doug)
We were just talking about how Mark
saved a four-year old's life.

The group stands there for a moment.

DOUG
(to Dr. Timms, awkwardly)
Good job.

INT. CITY BUS, MOVING - LATER (EVENING)

Doug and Jen ride the Chicago city bus back home. They're not
talking to each other.

DOUG (V.O.)
She's not cheating on me. I'm just
saying...

CLOSE ON Doug.

DOUG (CONT'D; V.O.)
I'm sick of Fruit Roll Ups. You
know?

EXT. HAMILIN PARK, NORTHWEST CHICAGO - LATER (EVENING)

Doug warms up with a jogging club in the large neighborhood
park. Doug is dressed like the others in jogging gear.

DOUG
(greeting guy who arrived)
Hey, Neil.

A couple women arrive.

DOUG (CONT'D)
Hey, Donna.

DOUG (V.O.)
In June, I joined a running club...

Closer shots on a few of the jogging club members stretching.

DOUG (V.O.)
...to mix it up a little and meet
new people who weren't part of the
grocery.

EXT. LAKESIDE, NORTHSIDE CHICAGO - LATER

The jogging club of thirty members has jogged from the park to the lakeside. They run in a pack toward downtown skyscrapers and pass boats shored up for winter along Lake Michigan. JEFF, 33 and Doug jog beside one another.

JEFF
(to Doug, in the middle of
conversation)
I loved The Clash.

DOUG
Me, too.

DOUG (V.O.)
Jeff was probably the most
compatible guy to me. But he kept a
pretty fast pace.

Jeff maintains a quick jogging pace. Doug jogs beside him.

DOUG (CONT'D; V.O.)
I'd just resumed jogging after like
five years. So I could do it, but I
couldn't really talk and do it.

Doug runs quietly beside Jeff for a while.

EXT. DOWNTOWN CHICAGO - LATER

The Front Runners jog down the sidewalk past the massive John Hancock building. Doug jogs beside Jeff but they're no longer chatting.

EXT. DOWNTOWN CHICAGO - LATER

Amid the financial district skyscrapers, the jogging club reaches its midway point and heads back north up the downtown sidewalk; Doug jogs behind Jeff's group; Jeff's talking to someone else.

DOUG (V.O.)
So I had a lot of time to think...
and I kept thinking about Richard
Welhner...

CLOSE ON DOUG as he jogs.

EXT. NEW GROCERY BUILDING LOT, NORTHWEST CHICAGO - LATER

Doug has brought Jen to the lot of the new grocery that's nearing completion. They look at the building.

DOUG

Seventy-two thousand. You get a spot of the board. A couple years after that, I'll apply for national corporate.

JEN

(pleased, smiling)
That's great.

DOUG

Yeah...

DOUG (V.O.)

...Coming down from Quebec or wherever, shifting me to lot. What the fuck?

RICHARD (O.S.)

Hey, Doug.

Doug's focused on the store and hasn't heard that.

RICHARD (CONT'D; O.S.)

Doug...

Doug realizes someone's calling him. He turns.

RICHARD WELHNER STANDS ACROSS THE LOT, looking the grocery over the same way Doug is, only Richard's brought along HIS ASIAN WIFE AND INFANT SON; he's smiling.

RICHARD

Hey...

Doug looks back at him.

DOUG

Hey, man...

RICHARD

This is my wife. Goji.

She waves. Doug waves back.

RICHARD

I was telling her about this new one. Hey, come over and meet Tim.

Doug and Jen head over.

RICHARD
(introducing his infant)
This is Tim Welhner.

Doug arrives, and Richard joke manipulates Tim's hand for a wave, then a handshake which Doug awkwardly accepts.

JEN
(to Goji)
I'm Jen.

GOJI
Goji.

JEN
What kind of name is that? It's really pretty.

RICHARD
Filipino. We met on my mission. To the Philippines.

INT. BASKIN-ROBBINS, NORTHWEST CHICAGO - LATER

Richard and Doug stand at the counter of Baskin-Robbins. It's where Richard was headed next, and he's invited Doug and Jen along. Goji, Jen and Tim wait in the distance at a table.

RICHARD
(to Doug, privately)
I'm glad I saw you.

DOUG
Yeah...

RICHARD
I wanted to talk to you.

DOUG
About what?

RICHARD
About Kev.

DOUG
The Pepsi rep? Kev..?

RICHARD
About that stuff. Yeah.

Time passes.

RICHARD (CONT'D)
(more quietly, admitting)
I'm a drug addict. Recovering. And
am alcoholic.

Doug's been surprised.

RICHARD
Kevin's my sponsor.

DOUG
(like it's perfectly
normal)
Okay. Yeah.

RICHARD
Wednesday I had a... I just needed
to talk to him.

DOUG
Yeah.

RICHARD
So I didn't mean to...

DOUG
Don't worry about it. Come on.

RICHARD
Thanks, Doug.

The clerk has put Doug's yogurt order in front of him.

RICHARD
(meaning the yogurt)
I got it.

DOUG
That's okay.

RICHARD
(insisting comically)
I got it.

The clerk rings Richard up. Doug looks over; a vaguely
touched expression comes over Doug's face - it seems to say
Doug was maybe wrong to have thought poorly of him.

INT. DOUG'S KITCHEN - MORNING

Doug is dressed in a suit and stands at the kitchen counter,
eating breakfast; Jen cooks her own at the stove nearby.

JEN

Why don't you sit down?

DOUG

I don't want to get anything on my suit.

JEN

Who else is interviewing?

DOUG

Today?

JEN

Yeah.

DOUG

I'm not sure.

JEN

You're going to get it, babe.

Doug looks at her. She doesn't know she's being watched. Doug considers Jen; loving feelings seem to come over him, and Doug smiles at the thought of her.

INT. ELEVATED TRAIN CAR, MOVING - LATER

Doug, in his coat and tie, rides among other commuters in the train car. The train comes to a stop. Then Doug SEES RICHARD WELHNER enter the train; Richard's dressed in a suit.

RICHARD

(good-natured)

Hey...

DOUG

Hey...

RICHARD

Are you interviewing for Augusta?

DOUG

Two fifteen.

RICHARD

Quarter to three. Good luck.

DOUG

You, too.

After a moment, Richard holds out his hand for a "five" slap. Doug gives him "five."

INT. CITY TRAIN, MOVING - LATER

The two sit side by side as the train moves through Chicago.

CONDUCTOR (O.S.)

Transfer.

EXT. TRANSFER PLATFORM - LATER

Doug and Richard stand together on the transfer train platform, high above the west side neighborhood. Richard begins to put headphones from a walkman on.

RICHARD

Do you mind if I put my headphones on?

DOUG

No, man.

RICHARD

Canadian news is on at one-thirty. Wednesdays.

DOUG

That's cool.

RICHARD

I try to catch it.

DOUG

That's cool.

Richard puts the headphones on. He presses a walkman button. The content over the headphones is barely audible.

MAN ON TAPE

Maintain your resolve to focus on consequences.

Doug might have heard this. He sort of half glances over at Richard.

MAN ON TAPE

Bear in mind that every decision has repercussions. Good and bad.

Doug continues to half-look at Richard while Richard looks down the tracks for an oncoming train.

INT. BOARD ROOM, CORPORATE OFFICE, DOMINICKS CO. - LATER

Dominicks BOARD MEMBERS and Doug have met at the table of a board room for his interview.

DOUG

Our biggest obstacle... we have Cabrini projects right there. We're trying to draw from Lincoln Park and pretty high end neighborhoods. We get a lot of cut-throughs. Keeping the lot safe is our biggest obstacle, but I don't shy away from lot. It's critical.

MITCH THE BOARD MEMBER

That's good. That's critical at the Augusta Dominicks, too. We have public housing right there.

RICHARD SITS BEYOND THE GLASS OFFICE WALL, waiting his interview turn in reception.

DOUG

It's a balancing act. You need safety. But you need good community relations.

Mitch listens; HE HAS THE CUTTING THE CHEESE POSTER with his paper work.

MITCH THE BOARD MEMBER

I'm glad you mentioned community relations. The housing... those are our neighbors. Our customers, too. It's important to get along. Doug, what's this?

Doug looks across the table at something Mitch has held up.

Mitch holds up the small poster - *Deli Employee of the Month Rogelio Cruz; For Cutting The Cheese.*

MITCH THE BOARD MEMBER

This was in your deli. On the refrigeration unit.

Doug looks at the poster.

DOUG

That's pretty out of line...

MITCH THE BOARD MEMBER

Yeah.

DOUG

When did you get that?

MITCH THE BOARD MEMBER

November twelfth. This is b.s.

DOUG

It is. I was probably on Lot that day. I like to stay out there.

MITCH THE BOARD MEMBER

Who was inside?

Doug is obviously conflicted about this matter now.

DOUG

The twelfth?

MITCH THE BOARD MEMBER

Yeah.

Doug waits a while.

DOUG

(a little weakly)

Maybe Richard...

MITCH THE BOARD MEMBER

Richard Welhner?

DOUG

Yeah. I think. Richard I think.

SECOND BOARD MEMBER

Can you send him in?

DOUG

Yeah...

Doug stands. BEHIND HIM, RICHARD IS LOOKING IN BUT CAN HEAR NONE OF THIS.

Mitch gestures to Doug with a stack of D.E. evaluation cards he has there.

MITCH THE BOARD MEMBER

Doug, these aren't great. Take a month. Bear down. We'll get some fresh cards and we'll take it from there. I like what you're saying.

(MORE)

MITCH THE BOARD MEMBER (cont'd)
I need to like what you're doing a
little more.

DOUG
Thank you.

MITCH THE BOARD MEMBER
Thank you, Doug.

Doug leaves the table for the board room door.

INT. WAITING AREA, COOPERATE OFFICES - SAME

Doug has walked back in to the waiting area. Richard stands
up from his seat.

RICHARD
How did it go?

DOUG
Good.

RICHARD
Awesome. Good job.

Richard offers a "five" slap. Doug gives him "five." Richard
heads in. Then Doug glances back through the glass walls at
the meeting area.

DOUG'S POV

At his place at the head of the board meeting table, Mitch is
holding the "Cheese" poster, preparing to grill Richard about
it right off the bat. Richard has no idea; he's entered
smiling and has started shaking hands around the table.

Doug looks in at him.

EXT. ELEVATED TRAIN PLATFORM, NORTHSIDE - LATER

A shot of Doug from across the tracks as he sits on the
platform bench above the city with MIXED FEELINGS.

DOUG (V.O.)
Man. Fuck.

INT. BOARD ROOM, CORPORATE OFFICE, DOMINICKS CO. - SAME

The Board and Richard sit around the table dead silent. The
Employee of The Month poster in question rests in the center
of the table - the object of the recent conversation.

RICHARD
It's not a... um. That's not a
Canadian expression.

BOARD MEMBER
What's that?

RICHARD
In Canada we don't... Cutting the
cheese simply means cutting the...
actual cheese. It doesn't have a
double...

The men look back at Richard.

RICHARD
I just missed it.

MITCH THE BOARD MEMBER
Yeah...

They sit there silently.

MITCH THE BOARD MEMBER
Come on.

RICHARD
Yeah...

More silence follows.

RICHARD (CONT'D)
It's... In Canada it's cracking.

SECOND BOARD MEMBER
What?

RICHARD
It's Cracking the Cheese. In
Canada.

The men just look back.

RICHARD (CONT'D)
The expression.

MITCH THE BOARD MEMBER
Cracking the cheese?

RICHARD
In Canada. Yeah.

Time passes.

RICHARD (CONT'D)
Cracking the cheese.

The board greets that with indifference.

RICHARD (CONT'D)
So...

No one says anything.

RICHARD (CONT'D)
I simply really believed that
Rogelio had been given an intra-
deli award. For cutting the actual
cheese. I'm sorry.

The Board looks back at him. A long time passes.

RICHARD
I simply really believed that
Rogelio has been given an intra-
deli award for cutting the actual
cheese.

MITCH THE BOARD MEMBER
I heard you the first time. Listen,
we have permit delays. We're on
hold this month. We won't be
deciding for two weeks. Make up the
ground. Okay?

RICHARD
Okay.

MITCH THE BOARD MEMBER
Okay?

Richard nods. They stare at one another for a while.

RICHARD
Thank you for giving me your
valuable time.

Richard rises to leave the table. MUSIC IS CUED AND SLOW
MOTION BEGINS as Richard must make eye-contact and shake
hands with the individual Board Members around the table,
each of whom communicates with his demeanor that he is
embarrassed for Richard over the personal interview.

CUT TO:

BLACK SCREEN

After a significant period of time, Richard's voice begins to play over the black screen.

RICHARD (V.O.)

We drive on the right side of the road in Canada.

EXT. STREET, CANADA - DAY

On an ordinary street in Canada, an ordinary guy pulls his car up to a stop sign. He's on the right side of the road. The script *Canada* is superimposed over the picture.

RICHARD (V.O.)

We speak English predominantly...

EXT. COURTHOUSE, TORONTO - DAY

Two lawyers encounter each other on the courthouse steps. The script *Canada* is superimposed over the picture.

LAWYER ONE

Hey, Donny. I haven't seen you for a while.

LAWYER TWO

Yeah.

LAWYER ONE

How's it going?

LAWYER TWO

Pretty good.

INT. RICHARD'S CAR, MOVING, CHICAGO - DAY (PRESENT)

In the present, Richard drives through a Chicago neighborhood. Goji rides beside him.

RICHARD (V.O.)

Famous Canadians don't seem real different than Americans. I bet you don't even know some of them are Canadian.

CUT TO:

A FULL SCREEN PHOTOGRAPH OF MATTHEW PERRY.

RICHARD (V.O.)

Matthew Perry.

A PHOTOGRAPH OF RAYMOND BURR

RICHARD (V.O.)
Raymond Burr. David James Elliot.
From JAG.

A PHOTOGRAPH OF DAVID JAMES ELIOT FROM JAG.

A PHOTOGRAPH FROM A MIDDLE-AGE WOMAN FROM THE 1960s.

RICHARD (V.O.)
Mrs. Money Penny from the James Bond
series. Even Keanu Reeves.

A PICTURE OF KEANU REEVES APPEARS.

RICHARD (V.O.)
People think it's the same country.

INT. RICHARD'S CAR, MOVING - SAME (PRESENT)

Richard is driving in Chicago again.

RICHARD (V.O.)
But it's not. There are a lot of
little differences.

INT. MEETING HALL, MONTREAL CANADA - NIGHT (PAST, FLASHBACK)

Richard sits in a circle formed of winter-coated men in
folding chairs. No one speaks for a while. A sign on the door
reads *Greater Ouster Dependency Assistance*.

RICHARD (V.O.)
Canada treats dependency through
regular health care programs.

The men remain seated, waiting for their meeting to start.

GUY IN WINTER COAT
(quietly)
Who cracked the cheese?

INT. RICHARD'S CAR, PARKED, CHICAGO - LATER (PRESENT)

Richard has stopped to drop Goji off at work. His infant Tim
rides in a safety seat in the back.

RICHARD (V.O.)
Same sex marriages enjoy the same
legal standing as any other kind.

EXT. ST. JUDE'S CHURCH, TORONTO CANADA - DAY

Two men in tuxedos have just been married; they stand on the steps and are comically being encouraged to kiss by a crowd of happy and well-dressed guests; they do.

EXT. DAY CARE FACILITY, NORTHWEST CHICAGO - SAME (PRESENT)

In the present, Richard carries Tim late from the car up to a day care facility. He's met by a day care worker.

RICHARD (V.O.)

Day care's state sponsored. It's essentially free. And good. There's more of a sense of social concern. Of people having to live together, I guess.

INT. RICHARD'S CAR/PARKING LOT, GROCERY - LATER

Richard pulls his car into the early morning quiet of the grocery parking lot. The place isn't open yet. Richard shifts to park in a parking space.

RICHARD (V.O.)

It's colder. But the people are warmer, I guess. A little warmer.

Doug walks up to the store outside. Richard sees him and honks to get Doug's attention. Doug turns and sees Richard. Richard gives him a wave. Doug waves back.

INT. LARGE CENTER AISLE, GROCERY - LATER

Richard and Latino Deli Captain Octavio hold a conversation in the grocery's main thoroughfare aisle.

OCTAVIO

Doug didn't take it down. We discussed it, and Doug left it up. I suggest you get on the same page.

RICHARD

Doug knew about it?

OCTAVIO

Knew all about it.

RICHARD

And Doug got it? Doug got the joke? Everyone gets the joke?

OCTAVIO

You learn *that* joke in the crib,
Holmes, in America. That's why I
photoshoped the poster. It's
relatable.

RICHARD

Why didn't Doug take it down?

OCTAVIO

Maybe for morale. But I don't know
specifically.

RICHARD

Okay.

Octavio takes off. The store gives off a strange vibe as it
hasn't opened yet, and Richard's standing all by himself in a
lot of space. Richard remains in the aisle. He's thinking
over what Octavio's just told him - thinking about Doug.

INT. PRODUCE SECTION - LATER

The Dominicks grocery is pretty vast. The produce section is
large. Before opening, Doug and Richard unload produce across
the section from one another. After a while, they make eye
contact. Doug waves at Richard. Richard looks back. He
doesn't return Doug's wave. He just stares at Doug. Doug
looks over at him. Finally, Richard waves back. Doug returns
to stocking produce, but his expression makes it clear he
thinks something weird just happened.

DOUG (V.O.)

What the fuck?

EXT. PARKING LOT, DOMINICKS GROCERY - LATER

Doug has come out to the lot to take a soda break during a
quiet hour at the store. He's sitting on the back of a milk
truck, chilling. Then he notices something across the lot.

DOUG'S POV

A distance across the lot, Richard holds a conversation with
Kevin the Pepsi Representative/Richard's dependency
rehabilitaion sponsor.

Doug looks over at them.

DOUG (V.O.)

I hoped he was doing okay. I don't
know what happened at his
interview.

(MORE)

DOUG (V.O.) (cont'd)
I hoped he was doing okay. He was a
good guy... going on Missions...

Then Richard sort of nods over in Doug's direction. Then Kevin looks over at Doug. They say something maybe concerning Doug, maybe not.

Across the lot, Doug looks on curiously. He stares a while this way - wondering whether he's the subject of their conversation and why.

INT. TAILORS, CHICAGO AVENUE, WESTSIDE - NIGHT

Late at night, Jen stands at the counter of a tailor shop, paying for a tailored evening dress; she's talking to Doug on her phone.

JEN
(complaining about work)
She's driving me crazy. She didn't
even leave a list of the medicines,
after her shift.

DOUG (O.S.)
(sympathizing)
Man... Are you coming home now?

JEN
(while really yawning,
indiscernible)
I still have to get your coat. For
tomorrow.

DOUG (O.S.)
What?

JEN
I have to get your coat for
Thanksgiving.

EXT. CLEANERS, CHICAGO - LATER (NIGHT)

The street out front of the cleaners is quiet. Jen has left with a sports coat. She's waiting for the bus. Nothing's coming down the street this late at night. Jen looks tired. After a moment, she starts walking down the sidewalk home.

EXT. DOUG AND JEN'S BUILDING - LATER (NIGHT)

Jen has walked to her apartment entrance with the coat.

INT. DOUG AND JEN'S APARTMENT - LATER (NIGHT)

Doug fell asleep on the couch while playing his electric guitar. The amplifier's making a buzz nearby. Jen walks into the room. She touches his head.

JEN

Come to bed.

INT. DOUG'S KITCHEN - MORNING

The next morning, sun shines into the kitchen. Doug enters, awaking. He turns the coffee maker on. Then Doug steps out onto a small deck just off the kitchen.

EXT. DECK - CONTINUOUS

The deck is ludicrously small, a tiny, joke, fire-escape sort of platform. Doug has come out here for some air. He starts a calisthenic kind of hands-on-hips trunk turn to get his blood flowing, trunk turns to his right and finds his building-next-door-neighbor doing precisely the same thing on his mini deck, but trunk-turning to his left. They're two feet from one another and are making awkward eye contact.

DOUG

Hey...

NEIGHBOR

What's up?

Not getting the peace he was hoping for, Doug turns back to his kitchen. But HE FINDS JEN RIGHT IN HIS FACE.

JEN

Where's the fucking pie?

INT. DOUG'S KITCHEN - LATER

Doug and Jen stand at opposite sides of their small kitchen.

JEN

(upset)

We have no pie for my parents. For Thanksgiving.

DOUG

I didn't have a chance to...

JEN

You work in a grocery.

DOUG
(defensive)
What's that supposed to mean?

JEN
I means you should be able to get a
pie. There's a pie section.

DOUG
I forgot. I just... I have a lot on
my mind.

Doug steps toward her to make things better.

JEN
I asked you three times. My mom
wants us there at nine-thirty.
Nothing's open.

DOUG
Come on.

Doug has reached Jen. He tries to caress her arm.

DOUG
Come on. I've had a lot on my mind.

JEN
(frustrated, not too
harsh)
Get away from me.

INT. ELEVATED TRAIN CAR, MOVING - LATER

The train's full with Chicagoans headed to the suburbs for Thanksgiving. Facing one another, Doug and Jen HAVE BEEN SO CROWDED TOGETHER THAT THEIR NOSES ARE ALMOST TOUCHING; it's awkward for Doug because Jen's still pissed.

EXT. JEN'S PARENT'S HOUSE, SUBURBS - LATER

Away from the crowded space of the city, Jen's family has gathered for Thanksgiving. Young family members play in the large backyard. Doug and Jen sit together on the porch, looking on.

JEN
It's nice to get out of the city.

DOUG
Man. Yeah.

JEN
(warming up to him,
smiling pleasantly)
You think we can have a yard? In
our next place? A small yard?

DOUG
Definitely...

A kid cousin walks by.

KID
(to Doug
Happy Thanksgiving.

DOUG
You, too.

The kid heads off. Doug and Jen sit there quietly for a while.

DOUG
That was cool of Richard to cover.

JEN
What?

DOUG
To take the holiday. You know? That
was pretty cool.

Doug takes a sip from his drink.

JEN
Didn't you say he was Canadian?

DOUG
Yeah.

JEN
They don't celebrate Thanksgiving.

Doug looks at Jen.

JEN
It's an American holiday.

Time passes. Doug makes a face that suggests he's wondering about something; he looks troubled. Jen notices.

JEN
What?

DOUG

He just... He just kind of acted like I owed him one. Like it hurt a little bit, but he'd do it for me. You know what I mean?

CUT TO:

EXT. PARKING LOT, DOMINICKS GROCERY - DAY (FLASHBACK)

This is Richard in stylistic slow motion reluctantly taking Doug's holiday shift saying *I'll get that for you*; his expression, though, implies he's sacrificing but is still willing to do it.

EXT. PORCH, JEN'S PARENTS HOUSE - SAME (PRESENT)

Doug and Jen remain seated on the porch.

DOUG

He acted like I owe him one. You know?

Then Jen stands.

JEN

I'm going to go not cut the pie.

INT. DINING ROOM, JEN'S PARENT'S HOUSE - LATER

Thanksgiving dinner has been served. The large collection of Jen's family waits before starting, though, to go around the table mentioning their blessings. Doug's not paying attention; he's concentrated on work and newly suspicious thoughts of Richard.

JEN'S YOUNG COUSIN

...and I'm thankful we have no school this week.

The group laughs. The next family member goes.

JEN'S UNCLE

I'm thankful that this holiday has brought us all together. And that the Bears won today.

The group laughs. Clockwise now, it's Doug's turn. But he's zoned out thinking of Richard and doesn't realize it. Jen sits beside him. She nudges him.

JEN
(quietly)
Go.

DOUG
(quietly)
Go where?

JEN
Go on what you're thankful for.

Doug looks up. The whole table of guests looks back at him.
Doug realizes what's happening.

DOUG
I'm so thankful... I'm thankful
that this holiday is bringing us
all together...
(smiling)
And that the Bears won today.

The group doesn't laugh. Time passes. Jen looks at Doug like he's a freak.

INT. DOMINICKS GROCERY, CHICAGO - DAY

In their large, city grocery, Doug has encountered his manager Scott as Doug arrives for work.

DOUG
Did you hear anything about the
interview?

SCOTT
They like you. They like Richard.
There's a kid from Lakeview.
They're going to see what plays out
over the next couple weeks.

Doug continues walking farther into the grocery. He takes notice soon of Richard working with Kevin his sponsor/Pepsi rep down an aisle. They both face Doug - the vibe is perhaps something going on between them concerning Doug.

INT. EMPLOYEE LOUNGE, GROCERY - LATER

A group of Latino grocery employees have gathered around the large, washable-marker, weekly schedule, wall calendar. It's been newly filled-in for the coming week.

LATINO BAG BOY ONE
(to a second bagger)
Switch Wednesday with me, bro.

Doug heads over to the calendar to check his schedule. He stops there and looks at it.

DOUG'S POV

An assignment box for this day's date reads: Doug H - Lot.

After a moment, Doug shifts his eyes down to something further. Doug's become surprised.

DOUG'S POV

The week calendar is laid out vertically and looks like this:

Doug H - Lot

Doug H - Lot

Doug H - Lot

Doug H - Lot

Doug H - Lot

Doug H - Lot

CLOSE ON Doug, reading this; he can't believe it.

DOUG

Scott...

SCOTT

Yeah.

Scott has come into the lounge. Doug points at the schedule.

DOUG

The full week? Lot?

SCOTT

Pepsi's sending a new season of stuff. Yeah. Kevin wants Richard. Their chips. Pepsico's chips. Their paperware--

DOUG

That's seven days of bad cards from the lot.

SCOTT

Doug--

DOUG

I've got two weeks before the Board decides about Augusta. That's one week of suck cards. Come on, Fergus.

SCOTT

What, you're calling me by my last name now?

DOUG

Scott--

SCOTT

Kevin wants Richard. That's Pepsi.

Doug stands there for a while. He appears to have a change of heart.

DOUG

You know what? I'm taking Lot. Give it to me. They have lot concerns at Augusta. I'm going to get some prime lot cards. I'm going to show them I can do it.

SCOTT

Awesome.

DOUG

I'm going to jam for seven days.

SCOTT

Awesome.

They stand there for an awkward moment.

SCOTT

Go jam.

EXT. PARKING LOT, DOMINICKS GROCERY - LATER

Doug speaks with security guards Keith and Bredon in an aisle of the parking lot. Doug's wearing the Courtesy Patrol vest.

DOUG

We're going to go in to threes.

Doug's been clapping several times to raise enthusiasm, though it seems to have no effect. The three head out in to the lot.

EXT. PARKING LOT - LATER

Doug stands midway along an aisle, checking the lot over. He turns toward the store.

There, a few GANG MEMBERS leave the grocery. At the same time, others in blue bandanas approach the store along the wide driving aisle that runs before it. They see one another and begin slapping hands.

KID IN BANDANA
What's up, nigger?

Doug looks on.

The gang carries on, laughing over something and GREETING ONE ANOTHER WITH CURSES.

DOUG
(quietly)
Man...

Doug begins to walk toward the entranceway to confront the group.

DOUG
Bredon.

Doug gestures for Bredon to join him. They walk toward the group.

The group has grown larger. They laugh loudly and trade coarse insults as customers come on behind them from the grocery including a FEMALE SHOPPER who needs to get past. Doug and Bredon reach the group.

DOUG
Let's go, guys.

The group pays Doug no attention. Doug points at the young man with whom he's had encounters.

DOUG (CONT'D)
(privately)
I'll get you another Chew. Come on.

The female shopper has her way blocked yet.

SHOPPER
Excuse me.

SECOND GANG MEMBER
Fuck you.

SHOPPER

Excuse me. Jesus Christ. Excuse--

She has decided to move through the men even though they haven't made way. Her determination makes the young men laugh.

THIRD GANG MEMBER

(to the shopper)

Go on, Skinny Ass.

They laugh again. The shopper pushes her cart off.

DOUG

(to the group)

You just can't hang around and talk here.

FOURTH GANG MEMBER

What about that white lady?

This young man has pointed a distance across the lot where TWO WHITE MOTHERS WITH TODDLERS speak together casually near the trunk of one's car after shopping.

FOURTH GANG MEMBER (CONT'D)

And that lady?

DOUG

What?

FOURTH GANG MEMBER

They're fuckin' bothering me, talking. Why you let them talk?

DOUG

You're right about... Bredon, why don't you..?

(to Bredon)

Can you take care of that? Break that up.

The group laughs and claps. Bredon leaves.

DOUG

Now come on. Let's leave the lot. Everyone. Let's go.

They group begins to break apart with a few kids heading off and others walking toward the store. Doug begins to walk deeper in to the lot and farther from the entranceway. After a while, once Doug's made his way back to a central lost aisle, he takes notice of something.

Ahead of him in the aisle, the female shopper from the ordeal pushes her cart toward her car, though she must go PAST THE D.E. EVALUATION BOX to reach it.

Doug watches her.

She continues to push the cart along the aisle, toward the D.E. box and beyond to her car.

Doug continues to watch her.

She has come nearly parallel with the box but pushes her cart past it without taking notice of the service.

Doug watches; he's relieved.

She goes farther past the cabinet. Then she stops and turns BACK TOWARD IT.

Doug watches her.

DOUG
(under his breath)
Fuck...

She walks to the D.E. box.

Doug continues to watch her.

The shopper reaches the cabinet, takes up an index card, then the chained pen. She begins to write. Then she pauses, writes and pauses again as the pen runs out of ink. She shakes it and tries to make further marks. She looks down the aisle and sees Doug looking back at her.

SHOPPER
(to Doug)
Do you have a pen?

Doug stares at her for a moment.

DOUG
No.

She opens her purse and moves items around in search of a pen.

Meanwhile, down the aisle, Doug glances at a pen clipped to his shirt pocket.

Then the shopper removes a pen from her purse.

Doug looks on.

DOUG
(quietly)
Man...

She begins to fill out an index card.

Doug turns away and walks for the grocery.

DOUG (V.O.)
I was thinking I should just stash
those things.

Closer on Doug. The woman, out of focus, fills out the card
in the distance.

DOUG (CONT'D; V.O.)
But I thought... Richard's all
right. I'm not going to cheat
against him. I'm just going to
buckle down.

INT. DAIRY SECTION, GROCERY - SAME

Meanwhile, Richard Welhner price checks some dairy cooler
shelves. THEN AN ATTRACTIVE REGISTER GIRL, SYLVIA ROJAS, 17,
approaches him; she holds a gallon milk jug.

SYLVIA
This is expired. Way.

RICHARD
(surprised)
Really?

SYLVIA
Way.

RICHARD
I'll talk to Roman. Thanks.

Sylvia walks off.

Meanwhile, Doug walks up an aisle nearby. He's noticed
Richard ahead of him.

CLOSE ON RICHARD; he's looking at Sylvia walking away. His
eyes drop.

CLOSE ON DOUG looking at Richard. He turns to see what
Richard's looking at.

What he sees is Sylvia Rojas's ass. Then Doug looks back at
Richard.

CLOSE ON Richard, checking Sylvia out. Then Richard, subtly and absentmindedly, licks his lips, then makes a VERY SUBTLE SOUND like one might after taking a small bite of something delicious.

CLOSE ON Doug watching Richard.

DOUG (V.O.)
She was seventeen.

INT. CHECK OUT REGISTER - DAY (FLASHBACK)

On a day in the past, Sylvia works at her register. A six pack of Sierra Nevada beer rests on the scanner. She's speaking in to the intragrocery microphone.

SYLVIA
(amplified over store
sound system)
Mr. Haber. Number Five.

Sylvia waits. The customer waits. The beer sits there. Then Doug arrives at the register. He scans the beer. Then he walks off.

INT. DAIRY SECTION - SAME (PRESENT)

Back in the present, Doug continues checking out Richard watching Sylvia.

DOUG (V.O.)
He's a good guy?

Richard turns back to the dairy cooler. He's sorting cottage cheese containers and discovers a cracked one that's been leaking.

RICHARD
(quietly, but pissed)
Jesus Christ.

ON DOUG AGAIN; the profanity has surprised him but has him interested. ZOOM IN.

DOUG (V.O.)
He wasn't praying either.

Richard's found the spill worse than he thought.

RICHARD
Jesus fucking Christ, man...

Doug watches him and smiles privately to mean he may have discovered something about Richard.

DOUG (V.O.)

He wasn't really Dudley Doright. Alcoholic. Likes the Almeja. That's Spanish for "pussy." I hear the baggers say it all day. Which is kind of funny, because it actually means "clam" in Spanish, and we carry Almeja Sauce.

CUT TO:

CLOSE ON A JAR OF ALMEJA SAUCE

DOUG (V.O.)

In World Foods. We have a big Spanish customer base. So we carry Almeja Sauce. It's actually pretty good.

INT. EMPLOYEE LOUNGE - DAY (FLASHBACK)

On a day in the past, Doug sits at the employee lounge, taking his lunch.

DOUG (V.O.)

I added some to my pasta now and then.

A collection of Latino baggers and receiving workers hang out near the lounge coffee area.

DOUG (CONT'D; V.O.)

I had to put up with the nonsense from the Spanish guys, but...

RAFAEL

Are you having some pussy sauce, Mr. Haber?

DOUG

(tolerating it)
Yeah...

RAFAEL

Is that good pussy sauce?

DOUG

Okay, guys.

ERNESTO
 (calling to another Latino
 employee nearby)
 Tomas. Doug comiendo salsa de
 Almeja.

Subtitles appear and read *"Thomas. Doug's eating pussy
 sauce."*

ERNESTO
 Mire. Te gusta la salsa de Almeja.

SUBTITLES READ *Check him out. He likes the pussy sauce.*

Doug is bothered by this. He picks up his plate and heads out of the lounge for some privacy. But, passing the large window look-through to the grocery first floor, something catches his attention; Doug looks out the window.

DOUG'S POV

Down on the first floor, Scott Fergus - the store manager - carries his lunch in to a private office designated *Manager*.

Doug looks down through the glass. CLOSER ON DOUG as he stands there hoping for this kind of privacy.

CUT TO:

RICHARD WELHNER'S MANAGEMENT WALL PHOTOGRAPH

AISLE ONE - PRESENT

Doug stands before the photos in the present again, looking up at Richard's picture.

DOUG (V.O.)
 Who's *this* guy? Watching ass.
 Licking his lips. Pushing me to lot
 with his drug friend. Pepsi friend.

Doug holds D.E. evaluation cards he's brought in from the box.

INT. EMPLOYEE LOUNGE, GROCERY - LATER

Doug sits at the lounge table, organizing his D.E. stack. Scott Fergus has picked up an envelope from the counter. He places it on the table before Doug.

SCOTT

That's addressed to the Board. For the cards. They want the fresh ones.

Scott leaves Doug at the table with the index cards and walks out to the hallway. Doug begins to read the next card in the stack. A male voice becomes audible.

MAN'S VOICE (V.O.)

Gordon Jiminy. A kid hanging out in your lot open slapped me in the ear because I asked him to stop leaning against my driver side door--

Doug checks out another card.

WOMAN SHOPPER (V.O.)

What happened to me was so fucked up. And your lot guy lied and said he didn't have a fucking pen so I could write this...

Doug puts the card down. He seems beat. Some time goes by. Doug looks around the empty room. HE APPEARS TO BE DELIBERATING OVER SOME MORAL ISSUE. Then Doug folds the two, poor evaluation cards he's kept separate from the greater stack and PUTS THEM IN HIS COAT POCKET. Scott Fergus enters the lounge at that moment; Doug has barely finished stowing the cards.

SCOTT

Ready?

Doug places the greater stack of index cards in the envelope. Then he hands it over to Scott.

INT. EMPLOYEE LOCKER ROOM, GROCERY - LATER

Doug is alone in the employee locker room. He takes the two index cards from his coat pocket and LEAVES THEM IN HIS LOCKER. Doug closes the door, locks it and begins to leave.

INT. WAITING ROOM, PEDIATRIC SURGERY OFFICE - LATER

Doug sits in the pediatric offices where Jen works. She's visible, working in the interoffice. She signals she'll be another five minutes. Doug nods. He sits there for a while. Then he looks over at the magazines beside him.

There's a kid's book there entitled *A Goofus and Gallant Activity Book*.

Doug picks it up. He begins thumbing through it. Soon, a particular page catches his attention.

What Doug's reading are the Goofus and Gallant, 1950s-style morality stills. In the first drawing, Goofus appears unhappy over the meal he's been served at his family dinner. There's a button to activate a narrator's voice. Doug presses it.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

*Goofus complained when dinner
wasn't weiners, even though he'd
had weiners for lunch.*

Doug looks at the boxed drawing beside it

This drawing depicts Gallant's dinner. The meal delights Gallant as much as his parents. Doug presses for the narrator.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Gallant enjoys a variety of foods.

The camera pans up to Gallant's youthful, fully-contented expression.

Doug's expression; something's bothering him.

EXT. WEST SIDE CHICAGO - LATER

Later, Doug and Jen walk past westside shops together, headed home.

JEN

How's it going at work..?

DOUG

Pretty good...

JEN

Do you think you're getting close
to the store?

DOUG

I don't know. I'm getting some luke
warms reports, I guess. I'm still
trying to turn it around.

EXT. AUGUSTA STREET - LATER

Doug and Jen walk home past shops on Augusta. Neither speaks to the other. BOTH SEEM TO BE IN A FUNK.

DOUG (V.O.)
Weird day.

EXT. STREET CORNER - LATER

What's weird is Doug and Jen are waiting at the cross walk light for traffic to clear and aren't talking to each other at all.

DOUG (V.O.)
I just think she didn't have the heart to tell me again how stupid everybody at her work was...

Doug looks out at the street.

DOUG (CONT'D; V.O.)
And I didn't have the heart to tell her how stupid everybody at mine was.

The light changes, they start to cross.

DOUG (CONT'D; V.O.)
So we just didn't say anything.

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD - LATER

They've reached their neighborhood and walk by apartment buildings.

DOUG (V.O.)
I was thinking of a way I could be positive about the new grocery and the position there. But I didn't feel positive.

They reached their building.

DOUG (CONT'D; V.O.)
When you can't talk about old work because it's too much of a drag... and there's nothing new. What do you do?

Jen uses her key.

INT. DOUG'S APARTMENT - LATER (EVENING)

Doug and Jen sit together at dinner. They eat quietly for a while.

JEN

Work was all right today?

DOUG

Yeah. It was good.

CUT TO:

Another drawing in the juvenile Highlights, 1950s style. This one DEPICTS DOUG, though, sitting at the employee lounge break table in the grocery and stashing D.E. cards in his coat pocket as he's preparing others for mailing.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Doug cheats to accomplish his marginally significant goals, and rationalizes it because Richard Welhner said Jesus Christ twice and checked out Sylvia Rojas's ass...

Another drawing appears. In this one, Doug price checks in a grocery aisle, though he's paused to check out Sylvia Rojas as she walks by.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

...even though Doug holds hard staring sessions at Sylvia that last and last, and in fact, once, for personal use...

Another drawing. Doug stands in his bathroom with his back to the audience. He's nude. His right hand is held in front of him and is apparently moving briskly because just above his right arm the artist has drawn vigorous motion marks -)))

NARRATOR (V.O.)

...took a picture of her from the back without her knowing it with a disposable camera from the photo processing kiosk.

Another drawing appears. This one depicts Doug and Jen in the missionary position in bed; Jen wears a blank, sort of disinterested expression. Sylvia Rojas appears in a thought bubble above Doug.

NARRATOR (CONT'D; V.O.)

Even though she's only seventeen and Doug has to scan her beer.

EXT. NEW GROCERY BUILDING LOT, WEST SIDE - LATER

Doug has walked in to the lot of the new grocery again. He's been looking at the building for a while.

DOUG (V.O.)

I was on the Goofus. I was left side. I knew it. But I had to get this place.

INT. DOUG AND JEN'S BEDROOM - LATER

Later, Doug and Jen are engaged in one of the watered-down, love-making sessions Doug recalled in the drawing. Afterwards, they rest a short distance from one another in bed. Doug looks over. Jen has stayed in her funk.

DOUG

Is everything okay?

JEN

Yeah. I'm just tired.

DOUG

Hey...

JEN

Huh?

DOUG

Do you know where the corporate offices are?

JEN

Dominicks?

DOUG

Yeah.

JEN

Where?

DOUG

Miami. That's where the convention is every year, too.

JEN

Wow...

DOUG

Guess when? February.

JEN
Man. That would be nice.

DOUG
Get out of Chicagó?

JEN
Yeah...

DOUG
In February?

JEN
Yeah...

DOUG
Make love on the beach?

Doug caresses Jen's arm.

JEN
That would be great.

DOUG
It's just down to me and Richard
mostly. You know?

JEN
The Canadian guy?

DOUG
Yeah...

INT. ELEVATED TRAIN, MOVING - DAY

Doug rides among other commuters on his way to work.

DOUG (V.O.)
Whatever. I did it. I just wasn't
going to cheat again.

EXT. PARKING LOT, DOUG'S GROCERY - LATER

Doug stands at the D.E. box, reading an evaluation card he's
taken out.

MAN'S VOICE (V.O.)
(the content on the card)
I just wanted to let you know that
everything was top notch.

CLOSE ON DOUG, PLEASED AND PROBABLY SURPRISED, READING THE
GOOD REPORT.

MAN'S VOICE (CONT'D; V.O.)

My baggers were courteous and helpful, as were your courtesy personnel which is a real good idea, let me add. Just top notch.

Then Doug flips to the next one.

SECOND MAN'S VOICE (V.O.)

I like the move to more of a store presence in the parking lot. After a young black man made an obscene comment to my wife, we were ushered to our car by your courtesy person who then dispersed the group. It's the kind of thing that will keep us coming back. A-1.

Doug puts a rubber band around the cards to secure them together. THIS WHOLE TIME, THOUGH, THE GANG'S BEEN GATHERING INSIDE THE FENCE LINE IN THE GROCERY LOT. They watch Doug, and one calls out to him.

FIRST GANG MEMBER

What's up, courtesy faggot?

Doug turns and sees them.

DOUG

I'm calling the police. So...

Doug heads toward the grocery and must go past the gang.

DOUG (CONT'D)

You're on Dominick's property.
You're trespassing. I've told you.

SECOND GANG MEMBER

I'm on a parking lot.

DOUG

It's our lot.

THIRD GANG MEMBER

Fuck you.

FOURTH GANG MEMBER

Fuck you, bitch.

DOUG

You ought to go. I'm calling.

THIRD GANG MEMBER

Your mom's courteous. She took my ride, sissy.

DOUG

What does that mean?

Doug has reached the gang. THEN A GANG MEMBER SNATCHES THE D.E. CARDS FROM DOUG'S HAND.

DOUG

Hey.

FIRST GANG MEMBER

Are these your faggot cards? They teach you how to be a faggot?

Doug reaches for the cards. The gang member throws them to his friend. They keep the game going, then a gang member TOSSES THE CARDS OFF.

THE CARDS LAND IN A PUDDLE OF MUCK, city dirt and snow. The cards rest under dirty water and are PROBABLY WRECKED.

Doug sees them.

DOUG

Fuck...

Doug picks up the cards and tries to dry them on his vest. The gang's been laughing. They've come around him.

DOUG

Fuck you, man. You know?

The gang crowds Doug.

DOUG (CONT'D)

Back up.

FIRST GANG MEMBER

Back what?

DOUG

Back up, man. I'm not fucking around. Dick.

FIRST GANG MEMBER

What did you call me, motherfucker?

DOUG

Get out of the lot. Get off me.

Doug pushes his way out of the group as the young men laugh. As he walks toward the grocery, he looks at his cards.

CLOSE ON the cards. They are smeared and are no longer legible; ONE CAN BARELY MAKE OUT THE WORDS *TOP NOTCH* as the ink is running down the page.

DOUG
(quietly)
Fuck...

INT. EMPLOYEE LOUNGE - LATER

Doug sits at the lounge table, transcribing the contents of the smeared D.E.s on to clean cards. The word he looks at reads - *c(smear)o-u-s*.

DOUG (V.O.)
(trying to read it)
Courteous? Cantakerous?

Manager Scott Fergus enters the lounge and sees Doug.

SCOTT
Aren't you on Lot?

DOUG
I'm trying to fix these cards. They got messed up.

SCOTT
Don't forget, they're going in today.

DOUG
Yeah...

SCOTT
Half hour. I'm going over there. Who's on Lot?

DOUG
Just Bredon. Keith's sick.

SCOTT
I'll put Octavio out. He can leave the deli. We'll get it covered.

DOUG
Thanks, Scott.

SCOTT
You have the vest?

DOUG
My locker.

Doug hands Scott his locker key. Scott turns and leaves, and Doug returns to transcribing the card.

INT. STAIRWELL, DOMINICKS GROCERY - LATER

Scott descends the stairwell steps and chooses a locker key from the others on the ring.

INT. EMPLOYEE LOUNGE - SAME

Doug keeps writing a clean card.

INT. EMPLOYEE LOCKER ROOM - SAME

Scott opens Doug's locker. Then he leans in to retrieve something. Its open door obscures him, but after some time, he stops still and stands there for a while. Then Scott withdraws from the locker WITH A LARGE STACK OF DISCARDED D.E. cards.

INT. EMPLOYEE LOUNGE - LATER

Doug has finished his cards and places them in a stack of the week's other ones. Then Scott Fergus enters the lounge with Doug's discarded cards. He stops behind Doug.

SCOTT
Hey.

DOUG
(turning)
Hey.

Doug stares at Scott.

DOUG
What's up?

SCOTT
I found a whole stack of D.E.s in
your locker.

Doug has been surprised and doesn't respond.

SCOTT
Haber.

DOUG
Yeah.

SCOTT
A whole stack.

Scott holds the index stack. Doug stares at him.

DOUG
Scott, man. Lot... Lot's so fucked
up.

SCOTT
I know it is. But it's not about
you. Okay?

DOUG
Okay.

SCOTT
I'm going over to Augusta. Why
don't you pack this stack and take
a ride with me?

Doug listens.

SCOTT
I want to see you hand these over.

Doug looks back.

SCOTT
Pack your stack.

INT. AISLE 12 - LATER

This is a close profile shot of Richard stacking product. Richard has turned to look down the aisle though. What he's looking at - in lesser focus - is Doug down the aisle sort of being escorted toward parking by Scott Fergus.

INT. SCOTT FERGUS'S HONDA ACCORD, MOVING - LATER

Scott drives his Honda Accord through the west side. JOHN DENVER plays on the car radio. Doug sits in the passenger seat; Doug's been reading the top card of the stack he keeps on his lap.

WOMAN'S VOICE (V.O.)
Moira Toeller. 1/9. I just think
it's crappy the way--

Doug flips the card for another.

MAN'S VOICE (V.O.)
Kevin Lamb. 1/9. On 1/9 I got
jacked in the face--

Doug flips the card.

SECOND MAN'S VOICE (V.O.)
(reading)
...harassed me with taunts and made
"titty" comments to my wife.

Doug looks over at Scott.

DOUG
(to Scott)
These are sort of repeats, so I
stashed them to...

SCOTT
What?

DOUG
Like this "titty" one. I had one
already.

SCOTT
One what?

DOUG
A "titty" one.

SCOTT
A "titty" one?

DOUG
They're saying "titty" and stuff to
customers. I sent one in already.

SCOTT
A different one?

DOUG
What?

SCOTT
A different "titty" one?

DOUG
Well, they were both about a
"titty" comment. So...

Scott isn't going along with the argument.

DOUG (CONT'D)
It's the same comment.

SCOTT
It's a different encounter. You
can't just stash it, Doug, because
you have double "titties." Come on.

Doug sits there for a while. The car idles at a light.

DOUG
Can we say I'm bringing them in on
my own then?

SCOTT
What?

DOUG
That I'm bringing the cards in?
You're not telling me to? I wanted
to?

The wipers go back and forth.

SCOTT
Whatever, man. Just turn them in.

EXT. PARKING LOT, NEW DOMINICKS GROCERY - LATER

Mitch and the other Dominick's board members have apparently
been speaking with Doug and Scott for a while in the lot - a
bad vibe hangs in the air. Mitch is holding the turned-over
cards.

DOUG
I just... I didn't think they were
good examples of...

Further time passes. The men look at Doug.

MITCH THE BOARD MEMBER
(laughing disingenuously)
Maybe we'll decide that. Okay?

DOUG
Yeah.

The men remain in a group but no one speaks.

DOUG
I just thought it was better if I
brought everything.
(MORE)

DOUG (cont'd)
If you had a full idea. You can't
improve unless you do that, so...

No one responds. Finally, Doug just waves and, with Scott,
turns to go.

EXT. DIVISION STREET, WEST SIDE - LATER

The Front Runners jogging club jogs along the sidewalk of
Division Street on their way back. Doug runs toward the back.
Doug passes a stop sign; he half-punches it from frustration
he's feeling. IT RATTLES MORE LOUDLY than Doug expected, and
pedestrians look over.

EXT. PARKING LOT, DOUG'S GROCERY - DAY

On Lot detail, Doug stands beside the open D.E. box; he reads
an index evaluation card.

MAN'S VOICE (V.O.)
.. then the guy made me go all
spreadeagle and took off with my
milk jug.

DOUG
(quietly)
Fuck...

Doug puts the card back in the box. As he closes the cabinet
an African-American customer, 58, comes past with his bagger.

DOUG
Find everything okay?

OLDER CUSTOMER
Yes, thanks.

Doug accompanies them the short distance to the customer's
car. Though, soon, Doug notices FOUR GANG MEMBERS loitering
just inside the fence line nearby.

DOUG
You're on the lot.

Doug has arrived at the customer's car. As the man raises the
trunk, Doug begins to help with the bags, and A YOOHOO BOTTLE
STRIKES THE BACK OF HIS HEAD. Doug is startled, turns and
sees the gang members staring back at him and laughing.

DOUG
I'm calling the police. That's
assault. You're gone.

They've continued laughing. Doug leaves the customer to collect a cart left stray near the gang.

DOUG
You're gone.

FIRST GANG MEMBER
Suck my dick.

As Doug walks toward the men on his way to the cart, he RELEASES THE MACE CANISTER from the safety catch on his belt.

FIRST GANG MEMBER (CONT'D)
Hey, suck my dick.

The kid laughs and pulls on the shoulder sleeve of Doug's jacket as he passes.

FIRST GANG MEMBER (CONT'D)
Suck my di--

Doug TURNS AND SPRAYS MACE directly into the young man's eyes.

FIRST GANG MEMBER (CONT'D)
What the fuck are you doing?

The gang begins to grab at Doug.

FIRST GANG MEMBER (CONT'D)
My eyes, man. Fuck.

The kid has dropped to a knee. Doug hustles back from the gang.

INT. EMPLOYEE LOUNGE, GROCERY - LATER

Doug sits at the table of the employee lounge with a Chicago POLICE OFFICER and Scott Fergus. Richard sits in a lounge chair nearby, and baggers pass in and out of the room.

POLICEMAN
Did you have interactions with him before?

DOUG
A couple. In the lot.

The policeman makes notes on a form. Scott looks on. CLOSE ON RICHARD for a while as he sits there, listening.

POLICEMAN (O.S.)
 (uncertain)
 I mean what was he doing? Did he
 grab you?

DOUG (O.S.)
 Yeah. He like... he tugged my
 shirt.

POLICEMAN (O.S.)
Tugged?

DOUG (O.S.)
 He pulled it. And a bottle hit me.

POLICEMAN (O.S.)
 He threw it?

DOUG (O.S.)
 I don't know. It was a group.
 Someone in the group.

Doug's come undone a little.

POLICEMAN
 Hey, you full maced him in the
 face. He's in the hospital. Do you
 want to calm down?

DOUG
 He hit me in the head with a
 bottle. It's out there.

POLICEMAN
 You got all kinds of bottles out
 there. I know he's got a face full
 of liquid frenzine. I know his mom
 and dad are upset. I'm trying to
 figure out what he did to you.
 (to Fergus)
 They want to talk to someone. An
 owner they said. Someone.

Scott rises.

SCOTT
 (displeased)
 I have to call the board.
 (more quietly)
 Fuck....

DOUG
(to the policeman)
He grabbed me.

Scott has left the room. The officer makes further notes.
Then he stands as well.

POLICEMAN
Are you pressing charges?

DOUG
I don't know. I have to talk to the
board. Are they? Can they?

POLICEMAN
I don't know. His parents are
upset.

The policeman leaves the lounge. Doug rises from the table
then wanders toward the sink. Soon, Doug becomes more deeply
upset when he finds an open bag and SEVERAL SCATTERED TATER
TOTS in the sink.

DOUG
Javier, what are you..?

BAGGER
What?

The bagger faces Doug.

DOUG
You left these here?

BAGGER
They're damaged. From the freezer.

DOUG
What? Are they going to melt? Come
on, man.

Doug begins tossing the tater tots toward the lounge's large
garbage can. He seems to relieve frustration by throwing the
tater tots strongly the five feet to the can. Nearby, Richard
Welhner fills a coffee cup and unwittingly crosses the space
between Doug and the can and gets STRUCK IN THE WRIST.

RICHARD
Ow. Hey...

DOUG
What?

Scott has entered the lounge.

SCOTT
(meaning "what's going
on")
What?

RICHARD
He's whipping stuff at me.

DOUG
I was tossing them out. He walked--

RICHARD
It hit my wrist. They're heavy.
They're frozen.

SCOTT
Hey. Come on.
(to Doug)
You want to piss the board off
more? Come on. Goddamn.

RICHARD
They're dense. They're frozen. Ow.

DOUG
Man, fuck you.

RICHARD
What's your problem?

DOUG
Just fuck you, Welhner. All right?

RICHARD
What's your problem?

RICHARD'S HOLDING HIS WRIST.

SCOTT
(to Richard)
Do you want to file an instore?

RICHARD
What?

SCOTT
An instore? An instore complaint?

RICHARD
I don't know. Just... they're
pretty dense. They're frozen.

DOUG
Fuck you, Richard.

RICHARD
What's your f'n problem?

SCOTT
What is your problem, Doug?

Scott looks at Doug for a while then leaves the lounge again.
Then Doug slams a tater tot into the sink.

INT. COFFEE SHOP, WEST SIDE - DAY

Doug and Jen sit at the coffee shop counter, drinking coffee.
Folks in winter clothes sit among the other tables.

DOUG
I have to talk to a neighborhood
group.

JEN
Where?

DOUG
At a rec center. Explain it. What
happened.

JEN
Who's going to be there?

DOUG
The board. Fergus. Everyone.

EXT. DAMEN AVENUE, NORTHWEST SIDE - LATER

Doug and Jen have left the coffee shop and walk past
storefronts in the west side neighborhood.

JEN
So Richard told Scott you hit him
with something?

DOUG (V.O.)
I was trying really hard not to say
tater tot.

DOUG
Yeah.

JEN
What?

DOUG
Some stuff.

JEN
What stuff?

Doug doesn't answer right off.

DOUG
...A tater tot.

JEN
He said you whipped a tater tot?

DOUG
That's what he said. Yeah. I
whipped it. He's really been
messing me around.

JEN
(confused)
Did you open a bag of tater tots
then throw one?

DOUG
They were being... discarded. So..

They reach a corner and wait for traffic to pass. Some time goes by. Then traffic clears, and they cross for the sidewalk on the other side. DOUG LOOKS AT JEN. JEN SEEMS A LITTLE DETACHED.

DOUG (V.O.)
I could see just then how weary Jen
was over everything. Just our life.
Our tater tot life.

Doug keeps looking at Jen.

DOUG (CONT'D; V.O.)
I loved her so much. It's how
people lost people.

Jen looks over at Doug. Then, something seems to occur to Doug. He brightens a little.

EXT. WAYNE STREET, NORTHWEST SIDE - LATER

Doug has walked with Jen to the foyer of their building.

DOUG

You know, this might give me the chance to show that I can do community relations. At the talk? If I nail it? Build a bond between the community and... It might be a plus.

JEN

Yeah...

DOUG

Do you want to work on it? We can work on it tonight?

JEN

Yeah. Good.

INT. CABRINI GREEN, REC CENTER - NIGHT

African-American men and women sit among rows of folding chairs in the Cabrini Green Housing Project's recreation center. They face a small stage where Scott Fergus, Richard, Mitch and the other Board Members of Dominicks have taken seats. Doug, dressed in a suit, stands at a podium and reads from a few pages of legal pad paper.

DOUG

The event would have happened if they were any race or creed.

The African-American audience listens.

DOUG (CONT'D)

The young men routinely trespassed and cursed. And were intimidating to our customers. Some of you folks are our customers. You should know that you're our priority.

The audience listens. JEN SITS AMONG THEM.

DOUG (CONT'D)

We're determined to serve you with courtesy and care. On the afternoon in March, while on Courtesy Patrol, the group of young men that we're meeting about approached a Dominicks customer, a bagger and me while making threats. And I was struck in the head by a bottle of Yoohoo.

MAN IN AUDIENCE
(calling out)
How do you know who threw that
Yohoo?

Doug looks up.

DOUG
What?

MAN IN AUDIENCE
How do you know who threw it?

DOUG
I noticed previous to the... thing
that the young man that I had the
altercation with was drinking
Yooohoo. After I was struck, I
noticed that he didn't have it
anymore. There was also no one else
in the lot.

There is no response from the audience. Doug begins to read
again.

DOUG (CONT'D)
I discharged a single pull of mace
in his direction. I'm glad he's
recovered, and I'd like to finish
by telling you that the incident
only occurred because I needed to
protect a customer. Customer care
is priority one at Dominicks. It
would have happened if the
customer's safety was threatened by
a group of any creed, any color or
religion.

The audience listens.

DOUG (CONT'D)
We at Dominicks are proud of our
ties to the Cabrini community. We
think it's a great community.

Some members in the audience begin to nod their heads.

DOUG (CONT'D)
We intend to continue to provide a
courteous and safe shopping
atmosphere for you. We intend to
keep polite customer care priority
one.

(MORE)

DOUG (CONT'D)

And we intend to continue to provide shopping carts with that one wheel that just won't work right.

Doug looks up from his page and smiles. Some members of the audience begin to laugh. The Board Members take the occasion to smile and laugh as well. Jen looks on, pleased. Doug enjoys the good cheer for a moment before he finishes.

DOUG (CONT'D)

We understand that the young men involved in the incident are not good examples of the community but are troublemakers who there are a lot of everywhere in this day.

Audience members nod again.

DOUG (CONT'D)

We're proud to be in the Division Corridor. We're proud to call you our customers and to do business with you.

The audience nods once more. Richard listens; his serious expression means he may be envious over Doug's performance.

DOUG (CONT'D)

And you can be confident that we're on Division to stay. The incident was unfortunate for both parties, but we won't let a few bad apples spoil the batch. You can be sure of that. Thank you for coming.

Doug stacks his papers on the podium. The audience has remained quiet, then soon, they begin to clap.

EXT. PARKING LOT, CABRINI GREEN - LATER

Later that evening, Doug, Richard, Manager Scott Fergus and Mitch and the Board Members wrap things up with a couple of AFRICAN-AMERICAN COMMUNITY LEADERS outside the center.

OLDER BLACK COMMUNITY LEADER

I think everybody's feeling all right about it.

RICHARD

(trying to chime in)
I think it was a one-time thing.
Yeah.

OLDER BLACK COMMUNITY LEADER
What's that?

RICHARD
I agree it was isolated. I think it was just some black apples. And we're not going to see it happen again.

The group stares at Richard. Some time passes.

OLDER BLACK COMMUNITY LEADER
Black apples?

Doug looks at Richard.

RICHARD
What?

OLDER AFRICAN-AMERICAN
You said black apples.

Seriously unfomortable silence passes.

RICHARD
...I said bad.

OLDER AFRICAN-AMERICAN
The fuck you did.

MITCH THE BOARD MEMBER
Hey, come on. It's been a long night. That was a slip.

OLDER AFRICAN-AMERICAN
That says a lot of shit.

RICHARD
That was a slip. I'm sorry.

Doug looks over at Richard. Mitch looks over at Richard, too, LIKE HE'S AN ASSHOLE. Doug notices.

EXT. MICHIGAN AVENUE, DOWNTOWN - LATER (NIGHT)

Doug has taken Jen for a night on the town to celebrate how well the speech went. They walk up Michigan Avenue, through the main shopping thoroughfare of Chicago under holiday lights that have gone up. The speed of the picture is stylistically slowed a little and the sequence is silent, but they're frequently and obviously mentioning the phrase *black apples* in a delighted retelling of the night's events. It's a distinct lip synch, especially in slower motion.

INT. RICHARD'S APARTMENT - SAME

Conversely, in their living room, Richard breaks the news to Goji in the same slow motion. CUED MUSIC continues playing. Goji keeps repeating *black apples?* with an astonished expression. Richard says *black apples* with an expression that suggests he's mystified how it came out like that. Then Goji repeats the phrase in a confused and increasingly angry manner.

EXT. PARKING LOT, DOUG'S GROCERY - DAY

Richard stands before the D.E. box reading a card. Customers pass with their carts.

WOMAN'S VOICE (V.O.)

A fractured gallon of chocolate milk's been sitting in your lot for three weeks.

RICHARD

(quietly)

Man, come on...

WOMAN'S VOICE (V.O.)

In the southeast corner. Pick it up maybe.

PARKING LOT, GROCERY - LATER

At the far eastern side of the parking lot, where old snow has been piled, Richard comes upon the DISCARDED JUG OF CHOCOLATE MILK. He lifts it and gets old milk all over his hand. Richard starts to wipe the mess with his coat, then realizes that he doesn't want to do that, then he just kind of freezes.

RICHARD

(upset)

Man...

Richard just stands there, holding the leaking jug away from his body. Then HE GETS STRUCK IN THE BACK BY AN APPLE. Richard turns. Three of the gang members have just come into the lot over the fence.

GANG MEMBER

What's up, motherfucker?

SECOND GANG MEMBER

What's up, black apple?

RICHARD
(startled)
Hey, come on.

They face each other.

RICHARD (CONT'D)
Can you guys just walk around?

GANG MEMBER
You walk around.

SECOND GANG MEMBER
You walk around, black apple.

RICHARD
I said bad.

GANG MEMBER
Walk around my dick.

RICHARD
That's okay. Just... You can't cut
through the lot. Can you get your
hand off me?

They've crowded Richard and one's shouldered into him.

RICHARD
I'm going to summon the police.

The words "summon" has made the kids laugh.

SECOND GANG MEMBER
Who are you going to summon?

RICHARD
I'm going to summon the police.

THIRD GANG MEMBER
Summon them, motherfucker.

RICHARD
I'm going to. I'm going to summon
them.

They laugh more loudly at this. Richard's confused.

INT. LOCKER AREA, GROCERY - LATER

Richard, out of sorts, sits on a bench near the lockers. He's
by himself. He's holding a Canadian dictionary.

CLOSE ON the dictionary page. It reads *Summon - to beckon, ask for.*

Richard looks at it. Another part of the definition has got his attention and seems to have depressed him. He looks at it.

US - More common - to call.

Richard looks at the this part of the entry; he seems worn out.

EXT. LOADING DOCKS, GROCERY - LATER

Later, Richard receives a large shipment at the loading docks behind the grocery; he's been speaking with the DELIVERY DRIVER; both hold clipboards.

RICHARD

You stiffed me on Chips Ahoy last week.

DELIVERY MAN

On Chips Ahoy?

RICHARD

We were nine short on Chips Ahoy.

DELIVERY MAN

(making a note)

Chips Ahoy. Plus nine.

Richard checks his sheet.

RICHARD

We're going to go ten up on the Fritos Scoops.

DELIVERY MAN

Chili lime?

RICHARD

Yeah. Five up on the Tostitos Cheddar Slam.

DELIVERY MAN

(marking it)

Okay.

RICHARD

Five up on Spicy Queso.

DELIVERY MAN

What?

RICHARD

Spicy Queso.

DELIVERY MAN

Across the board?

RICHARD

Yeah.

DELIVERY MAN

(reaffirming)

On Spicy Queso.

RICHARD

On Spicy Queso.

The delivery man makes a note. Richard looks off. He breathes out cold weather in a sigh that suggests all this shit's just killing him.

EXT. LOADING DOCKS, GROCERY - LATER

Richard has finished with the delivery. He sits on the loading platform to take a break; he seems tired of the drudgery of his job and all this snack talk. And after a moment, HE TAKES A JOINT from his shirt pocket. Then he puts it in his mouth. Time passes. Richard lights it. Then his cell phone rings. He takes it from his pocket and answers.

RICHARD

Hello.

Meanwhile, Doug comes out to the loading docks from the store. He's behind Richard and sees him, though Richard doesn't know it.

RICHARD (CONT'D)

Hey, Goj.

(listening)

Yeah.

(listening)

Okay.

Richard takes a toke from his joint. Doug watches him.

RICHARD (CONT'D)

Yeah. I think they realize it was a slip up, and that I didn't mean anything really...

(listening)

(MORE)

RICHARD (CONT'D)
Yeah, I'm doing some Outside to
make up some ground.
(listening)
Okay, Sweetheart.

Richard breathes in from his joint. Doug watches him.

RICHARD (CONT'D)
Hey, Timmy. I'll be home later,
hon.
(listening)
Okay.

Richard hangs his phone up. Doug continues to watch Richard sitting out on the dock edge alone; SYMPATHETIC FEELINGS COME OVER DOUG.

DOUG (V.O.)
The whole thing was... He wasn't
just a guy from Quebec. You know?

Doug looks at Richard for a while longer. Richard smokes his joint.

DOUG (CONT'D; V.O.)
He was just a guy. Trying to deal.

At this point, Richard turns and notices Doug; they look at each other for a while; Richard holds the joint.

RICHARD
You're not going to write me up,
Doug. Are you?

DOUG
No, man.

Richard nods; he appreciates it.

RICHARD
Everything's just kind of getting
to me. I really want it this year.
The grocery.

DOUG
I know.

Time passes.

DOUG (CONT'D)
Smoke it down, bro. I would, too,
but I get bad headaches.

Richard extinguishes his joint. Then he rises.

RICHARD

I have to get back out to the lot.

Doug nods.

CUT TO:

A row of Adult Videos on a video store shelf.

INT. VIDEO STORE

Doug stands in the adult section of a video store. He selects a couples tape entitled "Steam."

INT. DOUG'S LIVING ROOM - LATER

Doug enters the living room with the video. Jen has returned from work and hangs her coat in the closet nearby.

JEN

What's up?

DOUG

Hey.

JEN

(meaning the video)

What did you get?

DOUG

...Steam.

JEN

What?

DOUG

Steam.

JEN

I never heard of it.

DOUG

It's porn. Couples porn. It's one of my resolutions.

JEN

To watch more porn?

DOUG

(laughing)

No... to whatever. Watch it with you. Spice things up.

Jen looks at Doug. She smiles.

JEN

Oh, yeah?

DOUG

Yeah. Just to... You know?

Doug starts to walk toward the bedroom.

DOUG

Can I put it in?

JEN

You can put the video in. Then we'll see.

Doug starts to laugh again.

INT. AISLE FOUR, GROCERY - DAY

Doug and Richard price check opposite sides of the same grocery aisle. They keep their backs to one another while they work. Neither speaks to the other. Then Scott Fergus comes up the aisle.

SCOTT

Hey.

They face him.

SCOTT

The Board called. That's it. It's down to you two and a guy from Lakeview. They want a final sit down Friday. They'll tell you after.

Doug and Richard look back.

DOUG

And that's it?

SCOTT

That's it. Friday.

RICHARD

It's down to me and Doug?

SCOTT

And this guy from Lakeview. But he's only got three years in.

Scott leaves. Doug and Richard remain in the aisle.

EXT. EMPLOYEE LOUNGE, GROCERY - LATER

After clocking out, Richard and Doug collect their things to leave work for the day. Richard's holding a Dominicks grocery plastic bag with a few items in it.

DOUG
(nodding at the bag)
What do you have?

RICHARD
Almeja sauce.

DOUG LOOKS AT RICHARD.

RICHARD (CONT'D)
I'm cooking dinner for Goji and Tim tonight. I've been sort of a hard case around the house lately. I've been stressed about getting this job. So I'm going to cook something.

(sort of gesturing with the sauce)
They said this is good.

DOUG
Who did?

RICHARD
Mateo and those guys.

Latino bagger Ernesto comes up to the water cooler near Doug and Richard.

ERNESTO
(looking at Richard)
You have that clam sauce, Holmes?

RICHARD
Yeah.

ERNESTO
(smiling)
You should ask Sylvia Rojas about her Almeja sauce, Holmes.

RICHARD
She makes it?

ERNESTO

Ask her, Holmes. She has the best recipe.

Doug looks on as a couple of the Latino stockboys laugh privately.

EXT. NEW GROCERY BUILDING LOT - LATER (EVENING)

Doug has come to the lot of the new grocery again. He's standing there, looking at the grocery building. Soon, though, he looks across several parking lanes and sees Richard standing there doing the same thing he is. After a moment, Doug waves. Richard waves back with the hand he's not using to hold his Almeja sauce.

INT. AISLE SEVEN, DOUG'S GROCERY - DAY

Down an aisle of paper products - paper towels, napkins, etc. - Richard holds a conversation with 17-year-old, check-out girl Sylvia Rojas in phonetic-sounding Spanish.

RICHARD

Tuve recientemente alguna salsa de almeja. Yo realmente lo goce.

Subtitles read *"I recently had some pussy sauce. I really enjoyed it."*

Sylvia stares back at Richard.

RICHARD

Pero oi que la mejor salsa de la almeja es su salsa de la amleja.

Subtitles read *"But I heard that the best pussy sauce is your pussy sauce."*

RICHARD

Podemos discutir nosotros su salsa de la almeja? Quiza durante su interrupcion?

"Can we discuss the sauce of your pussy? Maybe during your break?"

Sylvia looks upset. She walks away. Richard watches her go; he's confused over her reaction.

INT. EMPLOYEE LOUNGE, GROCERY - LATER

Later, Richard breaks in the employee lounge. He's taking his lunch at the lounge table while a group of the familiar Latino employees looks on from the coffee machine area.

ERNESTO

Richard, did you ask Sylvia about her clam sauce, Holmes?

RICHARD

Yeah...

The guys laugh.

RAFAEL

Did you say she had the best?

RICHARD

Yeah.

ERNESTO

(breaking up)

Holmes, that's pussy sauce.

The whole group of Latino employees laughs.

RICHARD

What?

ERNESTO

That's pussy sauce, Holmes. What you were asking her.

RAFAEL

It's for pussy.

After a moment, Richard puts it together. He seems disheartened and bothered by the group. Soon he rises with his lunch tray during further laughter and heads for the door to leave. But as he passes the large, lounge window that looks down on the grocery's first floor, he notices something.

RICHARD'S POV

Down on the first floor, manager Scott Fergus takes his private lunch in to his manager's office.

Richard watches Scott in a manner that suggests he wants what Scott has. And as he looks down through the window, RICHARD APPEARS TO MAKE SOME SORT OF DETERMINATION. Then he leaves the employee lounge.

INT. AISLE 14 - LATER

Richard walks up a grocery aisle. He's checking the shelves for something specific.

RICHARD'S POV

The shelves are filled with pharmaceutical supplies. The camera tracks past box after box of band aids. Then athletic tape.

Richard stops. He finds what he was looking for. After a moment of consideration, he reaches for it.

INT. PRODUCE SECTION - LATER

Meanwhile, Scott Fergus prices produce. Then Richard approaches him to talk; RICHARD'S WEARING A SORT OF DRUG STORE-STYLE WRIST SUPPORT that he apparently picked up from the pharmaceutical aisle.

RICHARD
Hey, Scott.

SCOTT
What's up?

RICHARD
Nothing much.

Richard hangs around for moment.

RICHARD
Hey, my wrist is acting up a little. Still. From the tater tot thing. So... flaring up.

Scott looks at Richard's wrist support.

RICHARD
From that deal with Doug. When he was messing around in the lounge.

SCOTT
Yeah. Okay.

RICHARD
I think I should probably do that instore.

SCOTT
The instore complaint?

RICHARD

Yeah.

SCOTT

That circulates through the company. To the board. Everywhere. Are you sure?

RICHARD

Yeah, I think that's probably best. In case he does it to somebody else.

SCOTT

Does what?

RICHARD

In case he whips a... tater tot at somebody else.

SCOTT

You want to file an instore to discourage Doug from whipping a tater tot at somebody else?

RICHARD

I should. Yeah.

SCOTT

Okay. I'll get the forms.

RICHARD

Thanks, Scott.

Some time passes.

RICHARD

Because it's flaring up.

SCOTT

Okay.

Scott takes off. Richard hangs around the produce display in his wrist support. This decision seems to have brought him down a little - he doesn't look like he's feeling great. There are packs of *Brawny* paper towels in the foreground that feature the smiling lumberjack cartoon spokesperson; Richard's face is visible just beyond his. Richard's not smiling.

EXT. PARKING LOT, GROCERY - LATER

Later, Doug sits on the bus bench before the lot, leaving work for the day. He's looking over at the grocery lot as Richard gets in to his car.

DOUG (V.O.)
I felt all right about Richard now.

Richard pulls out of the lot.

DOUG (CONT'D; V.O.)
I mean he wasn't giving me rides anymore. Still... we understood each other, I guess.

After a while, Richard drives by Doug. They make eye contact. Doug waves. Richard waves back as he passes; HE WAVES WITH THE WRIST-SUPPORT HAND, though. And Doug notices.

A ZOOM ON DOUG; he knows what the wrist/forearm brace means.

EXT. DAMEN AVENUE, NORTHWEST SIDE - DAY

On a day off, Doug and Jen looks through the racks at a used record store. He pulls out a *White Lion* record.

DOUG
(to Jen, smiling)
You used to have this. Do you remember?

JEN
(amused, lying to make a joke)
It was my sister's.

EXT. DAMEN AVENUE - LATER

Doug and Jen take their purchases back home.

EXT. DAMEN AVENUE - LATER

Farther up Damen, Doug and Jen walk past Starbucks as Richard comes out. Richard sees Doug.

RICHARD
Hey.

Doug looks over at him.

DOUG
Hey.

They stop and face each other.

DOUG
You remember Jen?
(to Jen)
Richard.

JEN
Yeah. Hey.

DOUG
Hey.

JEN
(excusing herself)
I need to go to the ATM.

Jen waves and heads up the sidewalk. Doug and Richard face each other for a while.

RICHARD
What are you doing?

DOUG
Checking out some records.

RICHARD
How are you doing?

DOUG
All right.

They stand there for a while.

RICHARD
(ashamed)
I filed an instore against you...

They look at each other for a while longer.

DOUG
All right.

RICHARD
Those things weigh 340 grams.

DOUG
Well... I don't really know what a gram is, because we don't use that.
But I guess that's a lot.

RICHARD
It is.

DOUG
Because you're hurt.

RICHARD
Yeah...

Time passes.

RICHARD (CONT'D)
Goji's going back to the
Philippines. With Tim.

Doug listens. Jen is in the background at the bank machine.

RICHARD (CONT'D)
For a while. We're trying to work
some stuff out. I told her I'd
slipped up on my program, and... it
didn't go well.

DOUG
Man. I'm sorry.

Richard nods.

RICHARD
I'll see you at the store.

DOUG
Yeah.

Richard starts walking up the sidewalk. Doug stays behind and watches him go.

INT. REGISTERS, CHECK OUT, DOUG'S GROCERY - DAY

Richard has entered the grocery and preps a register for opening.

HARDY
Hey, Richard Welhner.

HARDY KNOWLES, a mentally-challenged and overweight bagger, 40, has stopped to greet Richard on his way in.

RICHARD
Hey, Hardy.

They shake hands. After Hardy leaves, Richard wipes some substance that's transferred from Hardy's hand to his. He watches Hardy walk away. THEN SOMETHING HAPPENS. Richard looks on as Hardy walks down the center aisle.

CLOSE ON RICHARD. After a longer while, RICHARD BEGINS TO TEAR UP OVER THOUGHTS ABOUT HARDY for some reason. Then Doug walks up.

DOUG

Hey...

RICHARD

(recovering)

Hey, man.

DOUG

Are you all right?

RICHARD

Yeah.

DOUG

What?

RICHARD

Nothing.

DOUG

What?

RICHARD

Nothing. Hardy.

DOUG

Hardy Knowles?

RICHARD

Yeah. Sometimes I just get sad.
I don't know. Just thinking about
stuff with Hardy. Just his life.
Like... I don't know. Do you know
why Hardy's hand's powdered.

DOUG

Why?

MITCH AND A SECOND BOARD MEMBER WALK UP BEHIND DOUG AND RICHARD and can overhear them, though neither Doug nor Richard knows it.

RICHARD

Retarded guys masturbate so often
they rub the skin on their penises
off. They don't know better. They
don't know enough to stop jerking
off. It's like a coarse powder.

MITCH THE BOARD MEMBER

Hey, guys.

Richard turns. He sees MITCH AND THE OTHER BOARD MEMBER RIGHT BEHIND HIM. He realizes the men heard some of his conversation.

RICHARD

(surprised/concerned)

Hey...

MITCH THE BOARD MEMBER

Is Scott in?

DOUG

Yeah...

RICHARD

Scott should be in receiving.

MITCH THE BOARD MEMBER

(to Richard, a little
cold)

Okay...

DOUG

(to Mitch)

I wanted to ask you a question
about the application.

MITCH THE BOARD MEMBER

No problem.

RICHARD

(beginning to leave)

I'll see you guys later.

Richard starts to walk off. He gets a pretty good distance away, but the men's HUSHED VOICES he can overhear behind him make Richard turn around. Richard looks back at the group he left.

RICHARD'S POV

Mitch and Doug continue their conversation near the register.

MITCH THE BOARD MEMBER

(hushed)

What was he doing? He was talking
about jacking off?

DOUG
(hushed)
Richard?

MITCH THE BOARD MEMBER
(hushed)
He was talking about jacking off?
In front of customers? Jacking it?

Doug doesn't say anything.

Meanwhile, Richard watches them; concerned, he's waiting to hear what Doug will say.

Doug and Mitch face each other still; Doug hasn't committed to an answer yet. He glances at Richard then glances back.

DOUG
(hushed)
Yeah, I guess. Yeah.

CLOSE ON RICHARD; he can't believe this.

MITCH THE BOARD MEMBER
(hushed)
Well, I don't like trash-talking.
In the workplace. Jack-off talking.

DOUG
(hushed)
Yeah...

Richard stares at Doug. THEY MAKE EYE CONTACT.

INT. AISLE 12 - LATER

Doug works in the snack aisle, stocking for a while.

DOUG (V.O.)
I told myself I didn't lie. They
asked if he was talking about it.
He was. It wasn't a lie. But it
wasn't the truth either.

Doug places a box up on the shelf.

DOUG (CONT'D; V.O.)
If you want to take the gray out,
just picture the Highlights stuff.

CUT TO:

Further drawings in the juvenile, Highlights magazine style. In the first, Richard holds a conversation with a drawn character that apparently represents Hardy the bagboy. They're smiling and enjoying their conversation.

NARRATOR

Richard respects all people.

Another drawing. In this one, Doug is depicted holding a conversation near the cash registers with the Board Members.

NARRATOR

To their superiors, and when Richard was only privately expressing sadness over a coworker's circumstances, Doug conveyed the impression that Richard was "talking trash talk" in the workplace and willy nilly talking about retarded guys "jacking off," was "jack-off talking."

INT. AISLE THREE - SAME

Meanwhile, Richard stands midway up an aisle. He's staring in a very concentrated manner at a shelved food item.

RICHARD'S POV

A row of Macaroni and Cheese boxes.

RICHARD (V.O.)

So I was saying.... Macaroni and Cheese...

EXT. PARKING LOT, DOMINICKS - LATER

Doug sits on the bumper of a milk truck, drinking soda, taking a break.

RICHARD (V.O.)

We don't call it that in Canada. We say Kraft Dinner. You want to know why?

Richard is standing outside the grocery entranceway, staring at Doug.

RICHARD (V.O.)

I'll tell you. Because there's no cheese in it.

Richard holds his look on Doug. Then he walks out to confront him.

RICHARD (V.O.)
In Canada you can't call something
something it's not.

Doug turns and sees Richard coming.

RICHARD
F you.

DOUG
What?

RICHARD
F you. I didn't say that.

DOUG
They asked me if you said it.
That's what you said.

They look at one another.

DOUG
That's what you said.

RICHARD
You know what? Fuck you, Doug.

DOUG
How's your wrist?

This stops Richard.

DOUG
How's your wrist, Richard?

There is a long pause.

RICHARD
(less harsh)
Just fuck you.

Then Richard just turns and leaves. Doug watches him go.

INT. ELEVATED TRAIN, MOVING - LATER

Doug sits in the train beside the Valentine lady.

DOUG (V.O.)
I hoped he was doing all right.
Whatever he was doing.

EXT. NEW GROCERY BUILDING LOT - LATER

Doug has stopped in the lot of the new grocery again. He looks at it.

DOUG (CONT'D; V.O.)
But I learned something about myself. I'll do enough to keep my life going. Gallant or not. The guys I guess I really admire... The guys...

Doug has noticed GANG MEMBERS IN BLUE BANDANAS cutting through the empty lot. Doug looks at them.

DOUG (CONT'D; V.O.)
They take the fastest way to where they're going, right across the lot. I never thought we were alike. Some things go wrong at work...

INT. DELI COUNTER, GROCERY - DAY (FLASHBACK)

This is a stylistic flashback - a SLOW MOTION SEQUENCE dramatizing when Mitch the Board Member discovered the gag Employee of the Month poster on the deli refrigeration unit. Mitch sees the poster.

DOUG (V.O.)
Some things go wrong...

EXT. PARKING LOT, DOMINICKS GROCERY - DAY (FLASHBACK)

This is a SLOW MOTION RECOLLECTION of Richard, out in the lot being struck in the back by an apple.

EXT. LOADING DOCKS, GROCERY - DAY (FLASHBACK)

Another slow-motion flashback to Richard lighting his joint on the loading dock behind the grocery.

DOUG (V.O.)
...The next thing you know, your wife's back in the Philippines...

EXT. PARKING LOT, NEW DOMINICKS GROCERY - DAY (FLASHBACK)

A slow-motion flashback to the day when Richard waved his infant's hand to Doug as a joke greeting.

DOUG (V.O.)
... you don't have a little baby hand to wave anymore.

EXT. RESURRECTION HOSPITAL, NORTHWEST SIDE - LATER (PRESENT)

Jen Haber, in her nursing uniform, chats with the handsome, young doctor in front of the hospital.

DOUG (V.O.)

That's all it takes. You don't think so? How's everybody losing everybody else?

Doug shows up, walking from the sidewalk, to walk Jen home.

EXT. DOWNTOWN CHICAGO - DAY

The jogging group jogs in their large pack downtown.

DOUG (V.O.)

...You know, when you're a kid, you want to be an astronaut or something, pull a moonshot around the world. It's whatever you want. But when you grow up, you just get what you can, I guess.

Doug runs with the others.

DOUG (CONT'D; V.O.)

However. You have to.

EXT. HAMLIN PARK, NEIGHBORHOOD PARK - LATER

Jen has met Doug in Hamlin park after his club run. She kisses him hello. They start to walk off together.

DOUG (V.O.)

I have my wife. I love my wife. I have my job. My job's all right. I just need some progress. Some change.

Doug has stopped to introduce Jen to his club friend Jeff and JEFF'S WIFE.

DOUG (CONT'D; V.O.)

Not the moon. Because if I don't change these stale old clothes I'm wearing, I'm going to land hard, I know it, and lose things I love. That's a mixed.... whatever... metaphor, but you know what I'm trying to say.

EXT. SIDEWALK, NORTHWEST NEIGHBORHOOD - LATER

Doug and Jen walk home together.

DOUG (V.O.)
I'm going to lose.

Doug looks over at Jen. HE STARES AT HER FOR A WHILE. Jen turns to him, finds Doug looking and smiles.

INT. DOUG'S BEDROOM - LATER (EVENING)

Doug and Jen lay in bed, beneath the covers. They're watching TV. The porn tape cover rests on the nightstand beside them. They're goofing on the tape, making fun of some of the content and enjoying one another's company.

CUT TO:

INT. RICHARD'S APARTMENT - SAME (NIGHT)

Richard's watching porn by himself. He's sitting on his couch.

On his TV, ten or so cheerleaders change in their locker room.

Richard watches. He seems listless.

RICHARD (V.O.)
Peter Jennings is Canadian.

CUT TO:

A FULL SCREEN PHOTOGRAPH OF NEWSMAN PETER JENNINGS

RICHARD (V.O.)
Alexander Graham Bell was, too. The inventor of the telephone.

A FULL FRAME PHOTOGRAPH OF A TELEPHONE.

RICHARD (V.O.)
Born in Brantford, Ontario.

INT. ELEVATED TRAIN PLATFORM, CHICAGO - DAY

Richard, in a coat and tie, waits on the train platform for the train.

RICHARD (V.O.)
And what you call sofas, we call
Chesterfields.

CUT TO:

A SOFA

RICHARD (V.O.)
The other day, I was just sitting
on my Chesterfield...

Richard sits in this sofa. He's in his living room. He's got
a bowl of cereal.

RICHARD
...Having breakfast.

Then a group of joggers jogs past his street level apartment
window. After a while, Richard notices. They're the
Frontrunners - Doug's club. Some wear jackets that bear the
club name on the back.

RICHARD (V.O.)
You wouldn't see that at home. It's
boastful. Bragging. But I liked it.

Richard watches the joggers.

RICHARD (V.O.)
They came by Sundays. They looped
back.

EXT. RICHARD'S BUILDING - LATER (FLASHBACK)

Richard has dressed in some rudimentary jogging gear and
waits on the sidewalk outside his place. As some Frontrunners
run past, Richard begins to run with them.

RICHARD (V.O.)
I joined in. I ran along for a
while.

EXT. LAKESHORE, CHICAGO - LATER (FLASHBACK)

Richard jogs among some Frontrunners as the pack heads south
along the city lakeshore.

RICHARD (V.O.)
I liked the vibe... this group,
getting better, doing better. Even
before the sun came up.

The sun is just coming up beside them.

RICHARD (V.O.)

Then it rose. And it felt different to me. More golden. Like it could bring a brighter day than any other day I'd seen. It was an American sun. So I ran along with the group ... glad I was in America on this morning, under the super sun. Running.

A shot of the group from behind. They run beside the massive lake. Richard has had to stop. The group is a distance off. Richard has his hands on his hips, catching his breath. The group runs farther from him.

RICHARD (V.O.)

...and not back in Quebec, just sitting around on my Chesterfield.

Richard, left behind, gives a well-meaning wave to the group of runners who run farther ahead of him.

RICHARD (V.O.)

I felt American.

INT. ELEVATED TRAIN CAR, MOVING - SAME (PRESENT)

Richard rides the el in the present again, dressed in his interview suit. The train has stopped at a platform. Doug boards. Doug wears a suit as well. Richard looks at him. They sit across from one another. There's no one else in the car. The train has begun to move.

EXT. TRAIN PLATFORM, CHICAGO

Doug and Richard wait on the transfer platform for the transfer train. A couple other commuters wait nearby.

DOUG

(to Richard)

I should have maybe taken that poster down.

Richard looks over.

RICHARD

What?

DOUG

I should have taken the poster down.

RICHARD
The deli one?

DOUG
Yeah...

Doug looks at Richard.

RICHARD
You can't do everything... You know?

DOUG
Yeah.

Time passes.

RICHARD
I probably shouldn't have monopolized receiving and all the display stuff. It stuck you in Lot.

Doug nods. Soon, Richard removes his walkman and headphones from his coat.

RICHARD
This isn't news... It's motivational.

DOUG
That's cool. Go for it.

Richard puts the headphones on. He presses play.

MAN'S VOICE (V.O.)
You're Number One...

INT. TRAIN, MOVING - LATER

The train car is crowded with business men and women. Doug and Richard stand in the crowded aisle, holding safety straps.

MAN'S VOICE (V.O.)
You're number one because you... A)
Show True Grit.

The train rolls along. No one's talking to anybody else.

MAN'S VOICE (V.O.)
True Grit means working hard for a purpose.

(MORE)

MAN'S VOICE (V.O.) (cont'd)
Non True Grit, or false grit, means
working hard to benefit others.

EXT. BUSINESS DISTRICT, DOWNTOWN CHICAGO - SAME

Business people fill the sidewalks outside, smoking on break
or passing by with briefcases.

MAN'S VOICE (V.O.)
You're number one because... B)
You're The Shotcaller.

Elsewhere, young business people lunch from brownbags on
steps and rest benches.

MAN'S VOICE (V.O.)
If someone else is calling the
shots, the shots stand a chance of
being different ones than the shots
you would call and not in your best
interest. Insure well being by
calling your own shots.

Business people wait for a bus nearby.

MAN'S VOICE (V.O.)
You're Number One because... C)
You'll Always Make the Grade -
because you do more than what's
expected. You're not afraid to put
others under your thumb because you
do more.

INT. TRAIN CAR, MOVING - SAME

Richard listens to his headphones. He's looking at Doug
across the train car. Doug isn't looking back. Richard DOES
SOMETHING PECULIAR. He raises his thumb to eye level, with
his hand held out, and he covers his image of Doug with it.

Then Doug faces Richard.

From Doug's point of view, it looks like Richard is simply
giving him a "thumbs up."

After a moment, Doug returns the "thumbs up."

Richard looks back. This heartfelt gesture seems to have
moved Richard; some of the steel has gone out of his
expression.

EXT. TRAIN STATION, LOOP, DOWNTOWN - LATER

A rush hour crowd of business people pour through the Chicago downtown depot. Doug and Richard walk in the middle of them, heading toward their interview.

CUT TO:

CLOSE ON THREE, SMALL PLASTIC SPECIMEN CUPS

The kind one uses for urine testing. A secretary has placed them discreetly on a table top near an office lobby restroom in the Dominicks corporate offices.

EXT. BUILDING, DOWNTOWN CHICAGO - SAME

Walking together, Doug and Richard reach the entrance of a skyscraper. Doug begins to enter.

RICHARD

Doug...

Doug stops and faces Richard. Time passes.

RICHARD

Good luck, Doug.

Richard gives Doug an authentic "thumbs up." Doug smiles at Richard and returns the gesture.

INT. LOBBY, DOMINICKS CORPORATE OFFICES - LATER

Close on one of the specimen cups resting on the table near the lobby restroom. Slightly out of focus beyond it, in the distance, is Richard; he's sitting in the lobby waiting area staring directly at the foreground cup. Doug and a third applicant - so young he looks like a teenager - wait nearby but pay no attention to the cups. Richard is greatly concerned, though. And as time passes, his expression moves from concern to dejection.

INT. BATHROOM, CORPORATE OFFICES - LATER

Richard and Doug stand at adjacent urinals in the large corporate bathroom. The third applicant has finished and leaves the bathroom. Richard gives off no energy only the notion that he's lost. Doug looks over at Richard from beside him. It's a bad moment for Richard. Doug looks at him. Then Doug begins to recognize that he won.

EXT. LAKE SHORE, NORTH CHICAGO - DAY

Doug and HIS ALMOST FRIEND JEFF RUN BESIDE ONE ANOTHER near the front of the Front Runners jogging club pack.

DOUG (V.O.)

After five months, I was going stride for stride with Jeff. I had so much wind.

INT. RESTAURANT, NORTH CHICAGO - NIGHT

At a nice restaurant, Doug and Jeff go over an advertising lay out. Jen and Jeff's wife sit across the table.

DOUG (V.O.)

I hired his company to do my advertising.

JEFF

First few months you should really saturate it.

DOUG (V.O.)

We all became good friends.

EXT. BACK YARD, DOUG'S PLACE - DAY

Doug sits alone on the patio of his small Chicago city house. He looks relaxed. Something he's watching has made him smile.

Out in the back yard, Jen and Jeff's wife play with Jeff's son; they're all having fun - Doug's hosting a small party. Jen looks up and smiles at Doug.

DOUG (V.O.)

It was all pretty cool... getting it.

EXT. DOUG'S HOUSE - DAY

Doug's come out front to get the mail. He's begun to look through it. Something particular catches his attention. He looks at it.

It's a postcard picture of Quebec, Canada - Montreal. The word *Quebec* lays across it in a graphic. Doug turns the card over. He begins to read. Soon, Richard's voice become audible.

RICHARD (V.O.)

Hey, man.

INT. ERICKSON'S GROCERY STORE, QUEBEC CANADA - DAY

Richard sits in the office of an Erickson's chain grocery, writing this postcard.

RICHARD (V.O.)
How are you doing? How's Chicago?
I'm good.

A montage of images of Richard working at Erickson's begins. Richard stocks dairy product against the glaring white backdrop of the milk section.

RICHARD (V.O.)
I'm really good, man. I might have
my own Erickson's in about a year.
Our Manager Tom Harley's moving to
Arizona.

Richard cashes out a register.

RICHARD (V.O.)
It feels good to be back. It's
almost fall. It's a nice time of
year here. Things start to cool
off.

EXT. ERICKSON'S GROCERY STORE, QUEBEC - DAY

In Canada, Richard pushes one long row of carts - like a snake - in the Erickson's lot.

RICHARD (V.O.)
Goji's visiting.

Across the lot, Goji waits beside their car. She's holding their boy. She waves.

Richard pushes the cart snake. He smiles and waves back.

RICHARD (V.O.)
We're working on things.

INT. RICHARD'S APARTMENT, QUEBEC - EVENING

Richard and Goji sit on the sofa at night watching TV. They both seem happy to be there.

RICHARD (V.O.)
How's everything? How's your store?
Maybe I'll see you in south Florida
for the convention in a couple
years, if I get my Erickson's.
(MORE)

RICHARD (V.O.) (cont'd)
We can go parasailing or something.
Jetskis. Well, the guy's here from
Mims with the Sunny Delight. I have
to take it in. So anyway... I just
wanted to say hey.

EXT. DOUG'S HOUSE, CHICAGO - SAME (PRESENT)

Doug continues to read the postcard by his mailbox.

RICHARD (V.O.)
Greetings from Quebec. Richard
Welhner.

Doug stands there for a while, looking at the postcard. Then
he walks toward his house with the mail. Jen's comes out on
her way to work

JEN
See you, babe.

DOUG
See you...

JEN
I got the tickets for Miami. Do we
have to do all the convention
meetings?

DOUG
We just have to drop in to a
couple.

Jen smiles at him.

INT. DOUG'S CAR, MOVING - LATER

Doug drives through the west side. He's stopped at a light.
He's looking at the postcard he's brought with him.

DOUG (V.O.)
It's getting cooler. Yeah. But
Richard still drifts through my
head, though. I wasn't always
Gallant with him. But he wasn't
always Gallant with me, I guess.

EXT. NEW GROCERY BUILDING LOT, WEST SIDE - LATER

Doug has driven into the lot of the new grocery. It's open
and is enjoying brisk business. The lot is full. Customers
come and go with their carts.

DOUG (V.O.)
 I wasn't always Goofus either. And
 neither was he. But there's no such
 thing, I think. We're all just
 both. I don't know. Goofants.

Doug walks into the grocery.

DOUG (CONT'D; V.O.)
 It's so hard just to get along with
 your life.

INT. AISLE ONE, NEW GROCERY - DAY

Doug stands there in this aisle, staring up at the wall at
 something; the store's large and busy.

DOUG (V.O.)
 You do what you have to do to write
 new chapters in, and not the same
 old story. To write joy in. And
 relief. Sunshine.

Doug's looking up at the management team photos; the pictures
 are arranged in what amounts to a kind of pyramid structure
 of the management team. At the top of them is A PICTURE OF
 DOUG. Beneath his picture it reads *Doug Haber. Manager.*

Doug's looking up at the photographs; he seems pleased.

DOUG (V.O.)
 So when I think of Richard, I try
 to think of the whole thing. You
 know? The whole big thing.

CUT TO:

A last set of Highlights style drawings. In the first side by
 side there is a juvenile, Highlights-style depiction of Doug
 and Jen making love in their hotel bed in Miami. The drapes
 are open. It's daytime. Sun shines in, and there's a boat out
 on the water. They're in "cowboy" with Jen on top; both are
 smiling. The text reads *Doug gets a little "Afternoon
 Delight."*

The drawing beside it depicts Richard Welhner glumly stocking
 an orange drink in a grocery refrigerator in his grocery. The
 text reads *Richard stocks Sunny Delight.*

DOUG (V.O.)
 Does that help? Yeah... totally.

AISLE ONE, NEW GROCERY - SAME

A long view from down the aisle shows Doug standing in the aisle, staring up at his picture while he smiles. SCORE BEGINS.

CUT TO:

BLACK. A LONG PERIOD OF TIME PASSES which gives the feeling the picture's over.

RICHARD (V.O.)
There's one last thing you should
know about Canada, I guess.

INT. RECEPTION HALL - DAY

A group of older woman play in a bridge tournament in a reception hall. The script "Canada" is superimposed.

RICHARD (V.O.)
We pretty much say "cutting the
cheese" all the time.

CANADIAN WOMAN
(privately, to teammates)
Who cut the cheese?

RICHARD (V.O.)
What can I say?

INT. ABC STUDIOS, SOUNDSTAGE - DAY

On the courtroom set of the show JAG, the actors settle into their places as the director confers privately with the D.P. Then some cast members begin to laugh over some private matter that's happened between them. Actor DAVID JAMES ELIOT laughs along with the others.

DAVID JAMES ELIOT
Who cut the cheese?

RICHARD (V.O.)
Cracking. Cutting. Pretty much
interchangeable.

DAVID JAMES ELIOT
(to new guy arriving)
Don't come over here, Stuart.
Someone cracked the cheese.

INT. ERICKSON'S GROCERY STORE, QUEBEC - DAY

Richard walks through an aisle, past where a group of stockboys are unpacking products. *Canada* is superimposed over the picture. Then *Erickson's*.

RICHARD (V.O.)
I told the Board we didn't say
that. Did I tell them that? I can't
really remember. I think I did.

EXT. MONTREAL, DOWNTOWN - DAY

On a day off, Richard and Goji walk through a shopping district in Montreal.

RICHARD (V.O.)
It's hard to keep your story
straight in the states. All the
clamor and noise.

They stop at a food stand.

RICHARD (V.O.)
Here, you can hear yourself think.
Stroll. Stop and get some ketchup
chips.

EXT. MONTREAL, DOWNTOWN - LATER

Richard and Goji have purchased their snacks - some kind of individual potato chip snack box - and walk together farther up the shopping district; they're holding hands.

RICHARD (V.O.)
Those are ketchup-flavored potato
crisps.

They walk off.

RICHARD (V.O.)
Or chips. You say chips, right? I
don't know. I don't care. I'm just
going to enjoy my ketchup chips
with my wife.

Richard and Goji continue walking for a while.

RICHARD (V.O.)
We'll stop in a little while. Sit
at an outdoor cafe. Summon the
waiter for some ice tea.
(MORE)

RICHARD (V.O.) (cont'd)
Not so bad, right? So see you
later... Or as we say in Quebec ...
adios.

CUT TO:

BLACK FOR REAL. CREDITS BEGIN.