

Wilson
by
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FIRST DRAFT
8/03/11

WILSON FIRST DRAFT 8/3/11

INT. WILSON'S BEDROOM - MORNING

We open on WILSON'S (45-ish, bearded) face as he sleeps. He's in the middle of an epic dream and his facial expressions signal a varied range of shifting emotions. He CHUCKLES, growing more mirthful until at last he bursts awake with a sudden explosive laugh.

He sits up, trying to recall the fading dream.

INT. WILSON'S KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

Wilson enters his shabby bachelor kitchen. The trash pail has been tipped over and garbage covers the floor. He looks over at his sleeping dog, PEPPER.

 WILSON
 I hate you so much.

He sits on the floor and hugs the dog, waking her.

EXT. MONTE VISTA AVENUE - DAY

Wilson and Pepper go on their morning walk. Wilson kicks a delivery copy of the OAKLAND TRIBUNE down the sidewalk and then stealthily tucks it under his arm.

Pepper stops to defecate in front of a well-maintained bungalow. A fit young woman in jogging lycra exits and glares. Wilson tries to drag Pepper away, but it's too late.

 JOGGER
 I wish he could do that somewhere
 else.

 WILSON
 She.

They continue down the street. A grey-haired WOMAN with an Italian accent kneels down to address Pepper, completely ignoring Wilson.

 ITALIAN WOMAN
 Oh, you're so pretty... Look at
 those ears. What's your name?
 What's your name?

WILSON
(falsetto, like a bratty
teenage girl)
"I'm Pepper. I'm only five years
old. I was a bad girl this
morning."

The woman glances at him, creeped out, and moves along.
Wilson continues down the street, whistling.

EXT. LA TRIESTE CAFE - DAY

Wilson eyes the outdoor tables at a neighborhood coffee
place. He approaches a well-composed MAN who sits alone,
typing on a laptop.

WILSON
Mind if I sit here?

LAPTOP MAN
(confused)
I don't think anybody's sitting at
those tables...

WILSON
I know, but she really likes the
sunny spot.

He sits and ties Pepper's leash to his chair.

LAPTOP MAN
I...okay, I'm right in the middle
of something, so...

He resumes typing, irritated.

WILSON
Working man, eh? Good deal.

The man continues typing, ignoring him.

WILSON (CONT'D)
Wife? Kids?

LAPTOP MAN
Mm-hmm.

WILSON
Living the dream!

More typing.

WILSON (CONT'D)
People take their families for granted, but Christ...
(turning wistful)
When I was I kid I had a mom, a dad, two dogs, nice house... I didn't get it at the time, but what the hell is better than that? We knew our neighbors, went to the same schools... It was a real community, you know?

The man keeps typing. Wilson watches him, blank-faced.

WILSON (CONT'D)
Hey, asshole! I'm talking to you!

INT. WILSON'S BEDROOM - AFTERNOON

Wilson picks up a shirt from a pile on the floor and poses in the mirror. We notice behind him a wall of old FRAMED PHOTOS of a particular young woman. He approaches a 5" X 7" head-shot and kisses her on the lips.

Wearing a different shirt, he tries in vain to comb his hair. He spots a RED BOOK on the shelf and takes it down, flipping through the pages.

INT. ROBERT AND JODIE'S APARTMENT - EVENING

Wilson sits at a kitchen table eating pizza with ROBERT (40s, semi-bohemian). Robert's wife, JODIE, plays in the living room with their toddler, CLEM.

WILSON
It's like I forget he's alive, y'know? And then when I actually do call him, all he ever wants to talk about are the A's and John Stewart.
(takes a big bite)
What are we watching tonight?

ROBERT
Oh, you know, I don't think Jodie can do a movie tonight.

We hear the theme song from GUMBY coming from the TV in the living room. Jodie (40s, Joyce Carol Oates-y) enters and grabs a slice.

WILSON
Is that "Gumby?"

ROBERT
There's a box set.

WILSON
(takes a bite, thinking)
Seems to me you should let him
participate in his own generation.
Parents today are always trying to
inflict their own nostalgia on
their kids. If I had a kid, I'd try
to let him find his own interests.

Jodie glares with palpable disdain.

JODIE
So, what did Wilson think of our
news?

ROBERT
(uncomfortable)
I didn't tell him yet.

WILSON
Oh, God - not another kid!

ROBERT
No, no...it's just... Now that
Jodie's changing her practice,
we're thinking we might move
somewhere where we can actually
afford to buy a house. I mean, I
can work from anywhere, so...

JODIE
Show him the pictures.

She untacks some computer PRINT-OUTS from the bulletin board
and hands them to Wilson: pictures of a cute neocolonial.

WILSON
Where is this?

JODIE
St. Louis.

WILSON
St. Louis?! You'd go insane.

ROBERT
It's just...with Clem and
everything, we want to be near
Jodie's family, and y'know, we kind
of want to simplify our life. It's
actually a pretty interesting town.

WILSON

I get it. You don't want to be the one to have to drive old Wilson to the hospital when he konks out. Get out while the going's good. Smart plan.

JODIE

Holy shit! This has nothing to do with you, Wilson!

WILSON

That's nice. Thanks for thinking of me.

(turns to Robert)

Jesus, man, I know she hates me, but I always thought you were my best friend...

JODIE

He's your ONLY friend!

ROBERT

Jodie -

JODIE

No! Look, Wilson, I'll be fucked if I'm going to let him feel guilty about this! Maybe it's time to get off your lazy ass and make some new fucking friends!

EXT. WILSON'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

A single window is lit in a second-story apartment above THE PRIDE CLEANERS on Grand Avenue.

INT. WILSON'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

Wilson eats cereal, paging through the red book. He puts it down and looks over at an old wall phone.

He stands by the phone and dials.

WILSON

Hi. Are you awake?

(pause)

I always worry I'm calling too late....Nothing, same as usual. Super-busy.

(another pause; steeling himself)

(MORE)

WILSON (CONT'D)

So, I was just reading your book.
Yeah...Yeah, and so I was thinking.
Maybe I should -

(another interruption)

No, I haven't really followed them
much this year...Fifth
place?...Well, that's always the
problem - no money for free
agents... So, I thought -

(pause)

No...No, you never...

(turns grim, long pause)

Well, have you been to a doctor?

EXT. SHATTUCK AVENUE - DAY

Wilson walks with Pepper and a big bag of dog stuff, past a
row of TEENAGE PANHANDLERS.

TEEN PUNK

Hey man, got any change? I wanna
get high tonight!

Wilson digs in his pocket and gives him about fifteen cents.
The kid takes it without so much as a nod.

WILSON

You're welcome!

He continues walking until he arrives outside a shabby
Victorian. He checks the address.

INT. SHELLEY'S APARTMENT - DAY

In a ground-floor apartment cluttered with chew-toys, Wilson
unpacks his dog-bag while SHELLEY (early 40s, trim) greets
Pepper.

SHELLEY

You are SO beautiful. Yes, you are!
We're going to have so much fun!

WILSON

I'm not sure how long I'm gonna be.
It's a family emergency.

SHELLEY

I hope it's nothing serious.

WILSON

Hell yes, it's serious. My old
man's got terminal cancer.

SHELLEY

I'm so sorry...I lost my brother to Lymphoma. You take as much time as you need. I'll take good care of Pepper, don't worry...

WILSON

So...she has these pills. She -

A healthy-looking specimen in biking shorts, DIEGO, enters, dripping with sweat.

DIEGO

Oh, hi... Do we have a new friend?

He kneels to pet Pepper.

WILSON

(to Shelley)

Who's this guy?

DIEGO

(reaches for handshake)

Diego.

Wilson shakes feebly and turns to Shelley.

WILSON

I thought it was just you.

SHELLEY

Diego lives here with me. He helps out a ton with the animals.

WILSON

It's okay, I just...you know, how do I know he's not some crazy dog-fucker or something?

INT. CALTRAIN - NIGHT

Wilson enters and sits next to a COMMUTER (early 30s, half-asleep, listening to music via earbuds). Wilson takes out his dad's book and tries to read. He sighs.

WILSON

Where you headed, brother?

The commuter, startled, removes an earbud.

COMMUTER

What?

WILSON
Where you going?

COMMUTER
Home. Sunnyvale.

WILSON
I'm going to the hospital to see my
dad. Stage four lung cancer. Guess
he took a bad turn last night.

COMMUTER
Sorry...

He puts the bud back in.

WILSON
What do you do, man?

COMMUTER
(annoyed)
What?

WILSON
What's your job?
(off blank-eyed response)
Your job? J-O-B, job?

COMMUTER
I do management consulting, mostly
for the IT sector.

WILSON
No kidding? I do some VHzing for
the PXGQ sector!
(laughs)
C'mon, man - nobody understands all
that bullshit. I just want to know,
like, what are the actual
activities of your day. Like what
do you do at 10 o'clock on a
Tuesday morning?

COMMUTER
Different things. Meetings, phone
calls, reports. I'm mostly focussed
on managerial strategies for -

Wilson drops his head, pretending to fall asleep.

WILSON
ZZZZ!
(then, with some urgency)
(MORE)

WILSON (CONT'D)

Listen, brother - you're gonna be on your death-bed in 40 years thinking, "where did it all go? What did I do with those precious days?" Some shit-work for the oligarchs? Is that it?

COMMUTER

Look, I actually enjoy what I do, and I've worked my ass off to -

WILSON

(burying his head in his hands)

Oh, God... How did we end up like this?

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

Wilson sits at his dad's bedside. EDWIN, a distinguished-looking man in his 80s, lies all tubed-up in silent contemplation, next to an untouched food tray.

WILSON

You could try the Jell-O. That might stay down.

Edwin feebly pushes away the cart.

WILSON (CONT'D)

Anything funny on the Colbert Report?

Edwin turns his body - a real struggle - and looks Wilson dead in the eye. He reaches for a plastic container and draws it under the sheet. Wilson contemplates the moment. His father returns the container to the table, half-filled with cloudy urine.

WILSON (CONT'D)

(takes a deep breath)

You're probably thinking "look at this slob. He doesn't deserve all the life he has ahead of him." Well, maybe you're right. Maybe... I've always felt like you were disappointed in me. I always wanted you to, I don't know...to tell me -

A NURSE enters, killing the moment.

NURSE

Hi, Edwin. Did you eat anything for me, honey?

(checks)

You didn't touch your plate! The cook is gonna be so mad at me, Edwin! Can you sit up for me?

She checks his blood pressure.

NURSE (CONT'D)

Who do you thinks gonna win on *American Idol*? I can't believe it's the finals already. I like that girl from Texas - she's got heart.

(brief pause)

Don't feel like talking today, Edwin?

WILSON

Jesus Christ, this man is a tenured professor with a PhD in Comp Lit, so please knock it off with the condescending bullshit! Your creepy false enthusiasm is just ghoulish!

She glowers at him, hurt, finishing her tasks in silence.

WILSON (CONT'D)

Thank you!

INT. HOSPITAL CAFETERIA - EVENING

Wilson eats the same unhealthy chicken dinner that was on Edwin's tray. A young MAN and WOMAN sit a few tables away.

WILSON

Hey, this is actually pretty good.

The couple glances over.

WILSON (CONT'D)

I was just saying, for hospital food, this is pretty edible.

He notes the distress on their tear-streaked faces.

WILSON (CONT'D)

Oh Jesus, sorry to interrupt.

(we think he's going to stop, but...)

I know how it is. My dad's on his last legs. Stage four.

He scoots his chair a little closer to them.

WILSON (CONT'D)
What's up with you guys?

BEREAVED MAN
Her sister was in a bad car
accident.

WILSON
Oh, Christ...

BEREAVED WOMAN
She has three kids... She's only 38
years old...

WILSON
My dad's 82, but he's always been
super-healthy. Hasn't smoked since
the '50s...

BEREAVED WOMAN
Eighty's a long life...we should
all be so lucky... My sister was
just starting out. She -

WILSON
Yeah, maybe I should just go
upstairs and yank the plug. Who
gives a shit if some old man drops
dead?

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

Edwin has taken a turn for the worse. His eyes are half-closed and he's breathing softly. Wilson sits, anxious, on the edge of his chair.

WILSON
Okay, this is it, I guess... I've
been thinking about this moment
since I was little... When Mom
died, it just happened, you know?
But you've got a chance to leave me
with something...

Edwin doesn't seem to hear him.

WILSON (CONT'D)
Why were you always so quiet and
moody and weird? Couldn't you see
that I needed you to tell me just
one time that you loved me...
(MORE)

WILSON (CONT'D)
or you hated me, or something
besides the problems with your
goddamn garden!

He takes the old man's limp hand.

WILSON (CONT'D)
Just squeeze my hand if you can
hear me...

Nothing.

WILSON (CONT'D)
C'mon, fucker!!

EXT. PLAYGROUND - EARLY MORNING

Wilson walks around a neglected urban playground.

WILSON
Where's the old merry-go-round?
Goddamn nanny-state safety
bullshit...

He goes to the one functioning rubber swing and sits. He
pushes himself aloft, lost in memory.

EXT. SHELLEY'S APARTMENT - MORNING

Wilson presses the doorbell over and over.

INT. SHELLEY'S APARTMENT - MOMENTS LATER

Shelley answers the door in her sweatpants, confused.

SHELLEY
Oh, hi... I wasn't -

WILSON
Where's Pepper?

Pepper comes running, tail wagging. Wilson drops to the floor
and hugs her, almost in tears.

WILSON (CONT'D)
Pepper! Pepper! Oh God...

He stands, trying to regain his composure.

WILSON (CONT'D)

I'm sorry I didn't call...I just...
My dad passed on, and - weird, I
never thought I'd say "passed on" -
he died. He...

(chokes up)

He was a good dad...

(fighting off the tears)

I don't even have anybody to call!
No brothers or sisters; no wife, no
friends... I don't even know if my
goddamn cousin Tina is still alive!

He hugs her, really blubbering.

WILSON (CONT'D)

Oh Daddy, daddy, daddy...

Diego enters, towel-clad from the shower.

DIEGO

Oh... Hi.

SHELLEY

His father passed on.

WILSON

I...I'm sorry, I...

SHELLEY

Would you like some tea?

WILSON

I'll be okay...I just... A lot of
repression over the years, you
know?

He starts to gather Pepper's stuff. He turns to Diego.

WILSON (CONT'D)

Don't worry, man - I wasn't hitting
on her. I prefer a little meat on
the bones.

INT. EDWIN'S HOUSE - DAY

Wilson walks through his Dad's house - a small, sparsely-
furnished rental.

WILSON

What the hell did he do with all
his stuff?

He looks through a stack of mail; on top is a card reminding Edwin of an upcoming dentist's appointment.

WILSON (CONT'D)

Oh, Jesus...

Beneath the stack, he finds a receipt for a STORAGE LOCKER: FIVE YEARS, PRE-PAID, and a KEY with a paper tag marked #4061. We hear a voice from outside.

MECHANIC (O.S.)

Hey, I'm all done.

EXT. EDWIN'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Wilson exits and we see the MECHANIC, his tow-truck behind him, looking under the hood of an old STATION WAGON.

MECHANIC

Well, it's running. When's the last time he drove this thing?

WILSON

Hell if I know.

MECHANIC

I'd avoid the freeway if I were you.

EXT. FREEWAY - AFTERNOON

We see Wilson driving very slowly in the middle lane. Angry motorists swerve around him. He listens to conservative talk radio at full blast, talking back to the host.

WILSON

Oh, bullshit! You lying asshole!

EXT. STORAGE PLACE - AFTERNOON

He pulls into a woefully-underprotected lot and parks along a row of garage-size storage units.

EXT. STORAGE LOCKER #4061 - AFTERNOON

Wilson, joined by an ATTENDANT, tries the lock.

ATTENDANT

Sounded to me like he was fixing to move. Said he was looking at some assisted living place.

WILSON

How the hell do you know more about it than I do?

The lock opens and he goes in.

INT. STORAGE LOCKER #4061 - CONTINUOUS

Inside, we see Edwin's possessions: antique Arts and Crafts furniture, old books, lamps, etc.

ATTENDANT

You done with me?

Wilson, preoccupied, nods.

ATTENDANT (CONT'D)

You could probably get good money for some of this stuff.

WILSON

It's not for sale. This is literally all the family I've got.

The attendant slinks off. Wilson looks around, examining the familiar objects of his childhood. He notices, on a Stickley side table, that his dad has carefully laid out an array of old photos, all of the same woman.

WILSON (CONT'D)

(choked up)

Jesus Christ, Dad. Get over it...

EXT. WEST OAKLAND STREETS - AFTERNOON

Wilson drives through a sketchy neighborhood near the storage place. He spots an old boarded-up taco stand and slows to a stop in the middle of traffic, remembering something.

He turns down a side street, looking carefully at the small run-down houses along the block.

He pulls up in front of a Pepto-pink stucco one-bedroom and parks. He looks at it for awhile.

EXT. OLSEN'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

He tries the buzzer but it's clearly broken. He knocks. No answer.

WILSON

Olsen! Are you there, Olsen?

Finally, a middle-aged sad-sack, Olsen, opens the door a crack and peeks through.

OLSEN

Who's that? Wilson?

WILSON

I was just wondering if you still lived here.

OLSEN

Yeah, I do.

WILSON

What are you up to? Can I come in?

OLSEN

(dead-eyed pause)

I guess, if you want to.

He walks away from the door and Wilson follows.

INT. OLSEN'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

All is covered in dust and neglect, but it's not quite the disaster we expected. They sit at a small table. Olsen goes to his filthy fridge and pokes around.

OLSEN

Want some beet juice?

He puts the bottle on the table.

WILSON

Fuck no.

Olsen sits. Where to begin?

WILSON (CONT'D)

Still see Meyers?

OLSEN

Nah... Guy's an asshole.

Awkward pause.

WILSON

So, my dad died. I'm kind-of...

OLSEN

My old man's still alive. Mother-fucker won't die. He fucking will not die. I'm literally counting the seconds.

WILSON

I'm just... I'm trying to change my life a bit. Figured I'd look up some of my old friends.

OLSEN

Mm-hmm.

WILSON

I'm even looking to get back into the dating scene a bit... Try out the waters...

OLSEN

Ha! Good luck with that!

WILSON

Yeah, it's been a long time. Haven't really gone out with anybody much since Pippi.

OLSEN

I gave up on women a long time ago. You bust your fuckin' ass and what do you get? Empty fuckin' bank account, getting bitched at all day...Fucking fools errand.

Wilson looks at Olsen. He laughs.

OLSEN (CONT'D)

What?

WILSON

I don't know, I was thinking maybe we could be friends again, but I guess I sort-of forgot what a toxic, soul-draining vampire you are!

INT. WILSON'S BEDROOM - EVENING

Wilson takes down the photos from his bedroom wall and puts them in a box.

He then takes out a lined notebook and turns to a fresh page. He makes two columns: GOALS and CHANGES.

INT. THE POSH BAGEL - DAY

Wilson sits at the counter with his bagel, the notebook in front of him. Both categories have been left blank, with numerous visible erasures.

He looks around at the lunch-hour crowd. A fit, muscular woman with botoxed lips eats her salad with energetic stabbing motions.

WILSON
(under his breath)
Jesus, horrifying...

He sees a table of moms with their newborns, and a young couple on a silent lunch-date. A 38-ish WOMAN in nursing scrubs sits at one of the outside tables with her coffee while talking on the phone. Wilson gives her the once-over.

EXT. THE POSH BAGEL - MOMENTS LATER

Wilson exits and sits at the table next to her while she gabs away.

WOMAN
...She expects us to hop to
attention whenever she wants to
change the orders... I know, but
she never even asked Cathy if -

She notices Wilson looking at her, as though patiently waiting his turn.

WOMAN (CONT'D)
Hold on a second.
(to Wilson)
Can I help you?

WILSON
Hi! So, in the interest of cutting
through all the bullshit, what
hoops do I have to jump through to
get you to consider going out with
me? I'm not even talking about sex,
I'm more looking for someone to -

She walks away, resuming her call, as though he didn't even exist.

WOMAN

Yeah, yeah, exactly, she doesn't
even care how much we have to cover
for Peter when he etc...

INT. PET FOOD EXPRESS - DAY

Wilson carries a huge bag of dog food down the aisle. He notices a chubby, somewhat unkempt woman browsing the cat toys. He looks her over and then, thinking better of it, heads to the checkout counter.

He impulse-buys a chew-toy and looks down at the sexless, middle-aged cashier's ring finger.

WILSON

Married, huh?

(a beat)

Why are the good ones always taken?

He glances back at the cat lady.

EXT. PET FOOD EXPRESS PARKING LOT - DAY

Wilson sits in his car on the far side of the lot, looking in his rear-view mirror.

Finally, the CAT LADY emerges and gets into her car, right in front of the store. She backs out and zips for the exit.

WILSON

Shit!

Wilson guns it around the lot until he's behind her. She stops for a moment, waiting for someone to pull out, and Wilson, in a snap-decision, taps her fender with his car. She turns and mouths "What the fuck?!"

WILSON (CONT'D)

Oh God, I'm so sorry! I'm not used
to this car. I just -

She gets out and checks the damage.

CAT LADY

I guess it's okay.

WILSON

Oh no, look at that scratch. My
insurance will cover it, if you -

CAT LADY
That was there.

A small crowd is watching: a NERDISH WOMAN in her 40s, and an OLD MAN with his GRANDDAUGHTER.

WILSON
Well, maybe we should exchange information, just in case it -

GRANDDAUGHTER
It looked like he did it on purpose.

WILSON
That's insane. Why would I -

CAT LADY
It's okay. Forget it.

She heads back to her car.

WILSON
Wait! Before you go, I was wondering if maybe you'd want to go out sometime?

CAT LADY
Why does every fucking psycho have to pick on me? What the fuck did I ever do?

She gets in her car and drives away. Wilson stands there for a minute. He turns to the nerdish woman.

WILSON
So, what are you doing tonight?

INT. FENTON'S - EVENING

Wilson sits with the woman, ALTA, in a kid-friendly family restaurant.

WILSON
Christ, I haven't done this in a long time.

ALTA
Me neither. I don't get asked out on too many dates.

WILSON

Men can be cruel. Looks aren't all that important to me.

Alta decides to let that slide. She looks at her iPhone.

ALTA

God, this place has 1748 reviews on Yelp.

WILSON

What the hell does that mean?

She shows him.

WILSON (CONT'D)

Aren't you a little old for all that computer stuff?

ALTA

Ha! I'm totally addicted.

WILSON

Did you ever do "cyber sex"?

ALTA

Actually, yes.

WILSON

Okay, then explain to me what it is. Is there some device where you can actually fuck the computer?

Alta LAUGHS. Wilson looks at her, perplexed.

ALTA

So, you're not even on Facebook, or LinkedIn?

WILSON

It all just seems so undignified. I mean, aren't you really just sitting there all alone in some dark room staring at a screen? Sad.

ALTA

I'd be a lot lonelier without it, that's for sure.

WILSON

So, have you ever been married? Kids?

ALTA

No. I lived with a guy for a long time, but six years into it -

WILSON

My wife left me seventeen years ago. Walked out, got an abortion, moved to LA. No explanation, nothing. My one chance at a family - POOF!

ALTA

Yeah, the guy I lived with actually once -

WILSON

But I'm done with her. I've been pining all this time, for what? I'm ready to move on, find somebody new. Not you, necessarily, but...

ALTA

Did you ever do a PeopleFinder search? Or even just Google?

WILSON

A friend of mine said he tried it. Nothing. Forget it, I'm done.

ALTA

What's her name?

WILSON

My ex? Pippi.

ALTA

Pippi what?

WILSON

Pippi Carmichael, but like I said -

Alta taps at her iPhone.

ALTA

Hmm...Nope...

WILSON

See? Forget it. Tell me about your -

ALTA

There's a Polly Carmichael-Wiggins, but -

WILSON

Yeah, that's not... Wait, are you serious? That's her sister!

ALTA

She's all over here. Big presence.
Rancho Cordova, California.

We see Polly's Facebook profile picture: A smiling, slightly sinister-looking soccer mom.

WILSON

Yikes!

Alta puts down the phone.

ALTA

So, yeah...my boyfriend, Paul, told me he "didn't think we -"

WILSON

(points to the phone)
Wait, what else you got on there?

INT. WILSON'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Wilson sits, listening to an old song on a cassette tape. We see the framed photos laid out on the table in front of him. He picks up the phone and dials three digits.

WILSON

Rancho Cordova, California... RAN-
CHO COR-DOH-VAH...POLLY CARMICHAEL-
WIGGINS.

We hear a distant ring at the other end of the line.

EXT. SAN PABLO AVENUE - DAY

Wilson drives down a busy street, looking out the window.

WILSON

They used to be all up and down
here...

He crosses Grand Avenue and parks the car. He gets out and starts walking toward downtown Oakland.

INT. TAXI - DAY

Wilson gets into a cab.

DRIVER
Where you going?

WILSON
Tell me, pal, where does a guy find
some pussy in this town?

DRIVER
You want a strip club?

WILSON
Hell no. Strip clubs are for
suckers. I want the kind you can
actually fuck...you know, for
money.

DRIVER
You want a hooker?

WILSON
Yeah, that's it - exactly!
(beat)
I'm looking for my ex-wife.

EXT. INTERNATIONAL BLVD. - AFTERNOON

Wilson approaches a tall, once-pretty streetwalker, SINNAMON.
She wears a cheap blond wig and could quite possibly be a
man.

WILSON
Excuse me, can I ask you something?
Have you ever seen this woman?

Wilson takes out the framed 5" X 7" of Pippi.

WILSON (CONT'D)
This is an old picture - I'm sure
she's looking much worse. Bruises
from the drug use and beatings,
frizzy coke hair, waxy skin. You,
of all people, know the drill. Her
name's Pippi, but I'm sure she's
got some florid nom de guerre,
like, you know, "Klimaxx," or
something.

SINAMMON
Don't know no Klimaxx.

WILSON

No, I was just... Is there someone else I could talk to? Some madame, maybe? Or -

SINAMMON

How old is she?

WILSON

Now? She's like thirty-five...
(thinks for a second)
Wait, FORTY-FIVE... Dear God..

SINAMMON

Nobody working that old out here.

WILSON

She's just recently back in town from LA.

SINAMMON

Nope. Don't know her.

Wilson looks around. None of the other hookers look like they'll be much help.

WILSON

I guess maybe I'll get a blow-job, then.

INT. CROWN LODGE MOTEL - AFTERNOON

Wilson and Sinammon lie on the bed, fully clothed.

WILSON

She was a beautiful creature. A free spirit, you know? Swore like a goddamn sailor.

Sinammon's cell rings - she takes the call.

SINAMMON

Where you at?... Naw... Naw...
Yeah... Okay... I love you, too, baby...
(she hangs up)
There's guys who find people. You know? If she's out there, they bring her home.

WILSON

I know, I know... I just... Maybe I'm a little afraid of what I'll find. God knows what she's gone through.

SINAMMON

Deep down, she's still the same person.

Wilson lets that sink in.

WILSON

Who was that? Your pimp?

SINAMMON

Ha! No, baby...
(puts her hand on his crotch)
You gonna get that dick hard for me, baby? I gotta be goin' soon.

WILSON

The pressure's on!
(pause)
Actually, forget it - it just seems totally depressing at this point.

INT. DETECTIVE'S OFFICE - DAY

Wilson sits in the small, shabby office of EDGAR R. WAXMAN, PI, a 65-ish, no-nonsense Joe Friday-type.

WAXMAN

Height?

WILSON

I think about 5'4".

WAXMAN

Weight?

WILSON

She was pretty heavy, not that I mind. But after all the drug use, I'm picturing skin and bones. Let's say maybe 110 or 120...

WAXMAN

I'll put 115.

He types very slowly on an old PC.

WILSON
So, how's business?

WAXMAN
Terrible. Everybody just does it
themselves now.

WILSON
I picked you because you sounded
like a real detective. Waxman. You
sound like a guy who has an old
army buddy on the force and knows
how to bribe junkies for info.

WAXMAN
Not really. Mostly I track down
assholes who don't pay their child-
support.

He finishes typing.

WAXMAN (CONT'D)
Okay, let's see what we got.
(hits return)
Here's a Polly Carmichael-Wiggins.
Rancho Cordova.

WILSON
Yeah, I got that one, remember?

WAXMAN
Here's something. Pippi Carmichael
in Benicia.

WILSON
Benicia?

WAXMAN
There's a number here. Should I try
it?

WILSON
You're the gumshoe.

Waxman dials.

WAXMAN
Dead.

INT. WAXMAN'S CAR - DAY

Wilson and Waxman drive along the I-80 North toward Benicia.

WAXMAN

What are you looking to find on
this little excursion?

WILSON

My wife?

WAXMAN

She ain't your wife. It's been
twenty years. Probably won't even
recognize you.

WILSON

I just want to make sure she's
okay... We were close back in those
days, really close. And, I don't
know, maybe there's some chance
she's ready to try again, you know?
Stranger things happen...

WAXMAN

(dismissive laugh)
Typical pie-in-the-sky liberal
bullshit.

They pass a row of restored Victorian houses, a big YELLOW
MANSION on the corner.

WILSON

Nice house.

WAXMAN

(in exaggerated "sissy"
voice)
"Oh my goodneth, what a beautiful
howth!"

He laughs. Wilson gives him a look. The GPS shows a CHECKERED
FLAG at the end of the block.

EXT. FULWILER'S HOUSE - AFTERNOON

Wilson and Waxman approach a solar-panelled brown-shingle and
knock on the door. After a moment, a 13-YEAR-OLD BOY answers.

WAXMAN

Hello, son. We're looking for a -

BOY

Dad! It's not Kelly, it's some
guys!

A 45-year-old DAD comes to the door and eyes them with suspicion.

DAD

Yeah?

WAXMAN

We're sorry to bother you, but
we're looking for -

DAD

Wilson?

Wilson adjusts his glasses and stares back at the Dad.

WILSON

Jimmy Fulwiler? Holy shit!

EXT. FULWILER'S PATIO - MOMENTS LATER

They sit at a little table. Fulwiler finishes a beer.

WILSON

You look pretty much the same.

FULWILER

Yeah, well... I've had a -

WILSON

Got some surgery, right? Around the
chin?

FULWILER

You haven't changed either.

WILSON

So, where is she, Fulwiler? Is that
her boy?

FULWILER

What the hell are you talking
about?

WILSON

Pippi. Is she here?

FULWILER

Ha! Is that why you're here?

WAXMAN

She had this place listed as her
address.

FULWILER

She stayed here for a few days last year. I think she used this address to apply for some jobs.

WAXMAN

What job?

FULWILER

Nothing big. Waitressing, stuff like that. Samantha was really cool about helping her out, but it got too weird having her around with our history and everything.

WILSON

What history?

FULWILER

You know...

WILSON

I guess I don't.

FULWILER

We were a bit of an item after she left you. It's no secret, we just -

WILSON

I knew it! You were always hovering around like a fucking vulture waiting to get your hands on her!

FULWILER

It wasn't like that, believe me.

WILSON

(to Waxman)

Fulwiler here was always the most cold-blooded manipulator, pretending to care about people so he could exploit their weaknesses. Truly a fucking sociopath.

FULWILER

Okay, Wilson, time to get out of my house.

WILSON

Oh, okay - sure thing, Jimmy! Hey, does the boy know what his old man used to do for a living?

FULWILER
Fuck off, Wilson! Go fucking die!

WILSON
You too, asshole!!!

Wilson storms back to the car. Waxman starts to follow but stops, turning back to Fulwiler.

WAXMAN
You got a name for that restaurant?

INT. MEDITERRANEAN CAFE - EVENING

In a small, old-school tabbouleh and hummus place near campus, Wilson sits at the counter, waiting for service. The place is almost empty. A skinny, TATTOOED WAITRESS emerges from the back.

TATTOOED WAITRESS
Can I get you something?

WILSON
No, thanks. I just need to ask you,
do you have a Pippi working here?

TATTOOED WAITRESS
Penny?

WILSON
No, Pippi.

TATTOOED WAITRESS
Like Pippi Longstocking?

WILSON
Don't ever say that to her!

TATTOOED WAITRESS
Who?

WILSON
The Pippi that may or may not be
working here.

TATTOOED WAITRESS
I know everybody here. We've only
got a Penny.

WILSON
I've been to every damn restaurant
in the East Bay. I'm looking for my
ex-wife.

He shows her the photo.

TATTOOED WAITRESS
Yeah, that's Penny.

WILSON
What?

TATTOOED WAITRESS
(turns)
Penny!

We hear a voice from the back.

PIPPY (O.S.)
What?

TATTOOED WAITRESS
There's somebody here to see you.

PIPPY (O.S.)
(fearful)
Who?

TATTOOED WAITRESS
Your husband!

She emerges slowly from the darkness, peeking around the corner with great trepidation.

PIPPY
Wilson?

Wilson looks at her, speechless for once. She's nothing like what we expected, but a healthy, if somewhat battle-scarred, middle-aged woman.

INT. EGBERT SOUSÉ'S - NIGHT

Wilson and Pippi sit at a small table at a low-end bar, while a trio of Oaklanders watch the game.

WILSON
So... "Penny"??

PIPPY
I'm trying to get my life together,
Wilson... I...

WILSON
I can't get over how amazing you
look! I was expecting some
desiccated ghoul, but you...
(MORE)

WILSON (CONT'D)

As you may recall, I certainly never minded a larger woman.

PIPPY

Look, Wilson. I -

WILSON

Wait, Pippi. One thing: I don't care what's happened to you over the past twenty years. I mean, I do. I care a lot, but I don't need to hear the sordid details, okay? We're both very different people, and I just... I want to start over, okay?

PIPPY

Start what over?

WILSON

Nothing. I just want to maybe be friends again.

PIPPY

I've been trying to learn to be alone. It's been hard for me to -

WILSON

Thank God!

PIPPY

What?

WILSON

I was sure you were living with some biker gang or something.

PIPPY

You haven't changed at all.

WILSON

You used to like me, remember? "At least you're honest." That's what you used to say.

(pause)

My dad died, Pippi. And I never remarried... You're the closest thing to family I've got. And I have changed. I've changed a lot.

PIPPY

Did you ever get a job?

WILSON

No. No, I didn't. I lived off the settlement for many years, and now that the old man died, I'm rich beyond my wildest dreams.

PIPPI

Really?

WILSON

Ha! Oh, Pippi, I missed you so much.

He takes her hand. She doesn't recoil.

EXT. PIEDMONT AVENUE - NIGHT

Wilson and Pippi leave the bar, both a little tipsy. Pippi stumbles.

PIPPI

Shit. I'm not supposed to drink.

WILSON

Boy, it's hard to believe you're the same Pippi who used to yell and smoke and swear like a -

PIPPI

She was a disgusting pig.

WILSON

There was never a dull moment, that's for sure.

He stops, looking her in the eye.

WILSON (CONT'D)

You were the only person who ever bothered to see the real me, Pippi. That counts for a lot. Good or bad, you knew the real Wilson.

She looks back with a haunted little half-smile.

WILSON (CONT'D)

I'm proud of you, Pippi. You're doing good.

INT. WILSON'S BEDROOM - MORNING

Wilson, positively glowing, lies next to Pippi while she sleeps. Pepper enters and starts barking. Pippi jolts awake.

PIPPI
What the fuck?!

WILSON
Pepper! Shh!!

Pepper jumps on the bed and starts licking Pippi.

PIPPI
Get him off!!

Wilson shoos Pepper into the other room.

WILSON
Sorry about that. She's a little protective...

PIPPI
I just get freaked out around dogs sometimes... I...

Pippi looks around the room.

PIPPI (CONT'D)
I can't believe you still live here.

WILSON
Rent control.

PIPPI
I thought you were so rich? What about your dad?

WILSON
Ha! Oh, Pippi, c'mon. My dad was a college professor!

She looks at him, a little confused. He looks back at her, with a wistful gaze.

WILSON (CONT'D)
God, Pippi, we could have had it all.

PIPPI
Had what?

WILSON

I know it was partly my fault. I was just scared, I guess, but... Just think, if you'd had the baby, maybe we would have stayed together all these years. Just think what we could have had.

PIPPY

(pause)

I did have the baby.

WILSON

What are you talking about?

PIPPY

I had a little girl. I put her up for adoption.

He stops dead and looks her in the eye.

WILSON

You need to tell me right now if you're joking.

PIPPY

We sent you some papers, but -

WILSON

I never got any papers. I have no idea what you're talking about.

PIPPY

Yeah, she got adopted.

He studies her face, looking for any hint of sarcasm. Suddenly, he leaps up out of bed in his boxer shorts.

WILSON

I AM A FATHER!!!!

INT. DETECTIVE'S OFFICE - DAY

Wilson sits once again in Waxman's office. Waxman taps at his keyboard and hits RETURN.

WAXMAN

(happily surprised)

Hey!

(reads)

"Claire Cassiday, Pleasanton.
Parker Day High School."

WILSON
Wow, are you sure?

Waxman hits another key and an ancient printer starts up.

WAXMAN
Yeah, that never happens. You could
have done it yourself.

A page emerges from the sputtering printer. Waxman looks it over.

WAXMAN (CONT'D)
Pretty girl. Could lose a few
pounds.

INT. MEDITERRANEAN CAFE - DAY

It's lunch hour, very busy. Wilson enters and sits at the counter. He spots a harried Pippi as she heads for the kitchen.

WILSON
When are you done?

PIPPI
The other girl's late. I can't -

WILSON
I have a surprise for you.

BOSS (O.S.)
Penny, order's ready! Got a pile-up
goin'!

She grabs three plates and brings them to a table of angry professors. As she heads to another impatient customer, one of the profs complains that he got the wrong meal. The boss emerges from the kitchen. Pippi races to the cook station to pick up the right order. She passes Wilson.

WILSON
I can't stand it! Come here for a
second.

PIPPI
Look, Wilson, I can't -

Wilson unfolds the print-out from his pocket.

WILSON
Pippi, this is your daughter.

She stops dead: We see a low-res photo of a TEENAGE GIRL.

PIPPY

Oh my God... Wilson...

WILSON

She's beautiful.

BOSS

Penny! What are you doing? We're backed up! Pick up your orders.

WILSON

Hey, you - shut the fuck up! This woman is having a profound moment! I think these assholes can wait another minute for their overpriced hippie slop, okay?

EXT. PLEASANTON MCMANSION - EVENING

Wilson and Polly sit in the station wagon, parked across the street from a large, modern, suburban home.

WILSON

Why the hell would anyone want to live in the suburbs? It's a living death!

He looks through some papers.

WILSON (CONT'D)

It says the dad is a "fund manager," and the mom works in "branding." Christ, who's home with poor Claire all day?

PIPPY

What are we doing here, Wilson?

Wilson looks at her for a long time, not sure where to begin.

WILSON

I never stopped loving you, Pippi.

PIPPY

I stopped loving you.

WILSON

Ouch!

(a beat)

I didn't force you to come along, Pippi.

(MORE)

WILSON (CONT'D)

(another beat)

We don't have anybody else, do we?
My family's all dead and yours are
a bunch of assholes. You can say
whatever you want, but we still
have a connection. There's no
denying it.

PIPPI

I spent so many years hating you,
but now I can't even remember why.

Wilson chuckles, a little hurt.

PIPPI (CONT'D)

I guess it drove me crazy that I
was such a total fucking mess and
nothing I did ever scared you
away...

Wilson thinks back. He LAUGHS and bends down, pulling open
his thinning hair to show her a scar on his scalp.

WILSON

Remember this?

INT. STONERIDGE MALL - DAY

We see a teenage girl: 16, short and a bit chubby with an
innocent face that has been willfully hardened into a
simulation of toughness. She has a pageboy haircut and wears
black clothes, but her style is not so much standard Goth, as
something of her own devising. This is CLAIRE.

She browses dispassionately at the Apple Store, and then
retires to a stone bench where she takes a tangerine from her
purse and starts to peel.

A trio of athletic teens - a blonde girl (MONIKA) and two
skateboarders (ROCKY and AIDAN) - spot her and head over.

MONIKA

Hey, it's Claire! Hi Claire!

Claire glances up at her, but doesn't respond.

ROCKY

What's up, Claire? Why are you
here?

(a beat)

Are they having a sale on big-ass
clothes?

Monika laughs.

CLAIRE
(barely audible, without
looking up)
Fuck off, idiot.

AIDAN
Oooh!

ROCKY
What did you say?

Claire gets up and walks away.

ROCKY (CONT'D)
What did you say, bitch?

They follow her.

AIDAN
Hey, Claire - Rocky wants to fuck
you tonight!

ROCKY
Fuck you, man!

AIDAN
Where you going, Claire? Jenny
Craig's over here!

ROCKY
Fat-ass bitch!

Suddenly, Wilson emerges from the background and angrily
slams Rocky into the wall.

WILSON
You shut your fucking mouth, you
little prick! That's my fucking
daughter you're talking to!

Wilson looks like he's going to punch Rocky in the face, but
Pippi grabs him from behind and holds his arm. There's a
chaotic scuffle before the kid finally jerks away. Claire
watches, utterly perplexed.

INT. PANDA EXPRESS - DAY

A sobbing Claire, Wilson and Pippi sit at a small table.
Wilson nervously guzzles a gigantic Sprite, shaking the ice.

WILSON

Believe me, what Pippi did for you
was a true gift... We were in no
position to be parents...

Claire continues wailing.

WILSON (CONT'D)

I had all kinds of problems...
Pippi wound up on the street, all
strung out on drugs. It would have -

PIPPI

(angry, to Wilson)
I was never on drugs, and I didn't
live on the street! What the hell
are you -

Wilson holds up his hand to shush her.

WILSON

What I'm saying is we're just...
we're thrilled to finally meet you
after all these years...
(a beat, she calms down a
bit)
I can't tell if those are tears of
happiness, or you're just kind of
creeped out...

Claire looks at him for a second and resumes sobbing. Wilson
doesn't quite know what to do. He finishes off his Sprite,
nervously crunching the ice in his teeth.

INT. STONERIDGE MALL MEN'S ROOM - DAY

Wilson enters. There's a row of 6 or 7 urinals; a lone man
stands at the one on the far right. Wilson goes to the urinal
right next to his and unzips. The man gives him a glance.

WILSON

Got kids?

MEN'S ROOM MAN

(wary)
Yeah.

WILSON

How old?

MEN'S ROOM MAN

They're 12 and 15. Why?

WILSON

My daughter's 16. Quite a handful.

(beat)

My wife thinks we should keep our distance. Let her sort things out for herself. I don't know...

MEN'S ROOM MAN

Sometimes they act like they don't want your help, but they really do.

WILSON

Thanks for that. You're a wise man.

He flushes and zips up.

WILSON (CONT'D)

Nice cock, by the way.

INT. STONERIDGE MALL - DAY

Wilson, Pippi and Claire walk along in silence past Pottery Barn Kids, Fossil, Victoria's Secret.

WILSON

I really hope we didn't freak you out too much, Claire.

She gives him a look: are you fucking serious?

CLAIRE

It's okay.

WILSON

If you ever need to know anything about your history... Your grandpa wrote a definitive book about the California Social Realists, and -

A BEEP sounds from her purse. She checks her phone.

CLAIRE

Shit, I gotta go.

WILSON

Oh, well, it's been truly amazing to get a chance to -

CLAIRE

Okay, bye.

She races off without looking back. Wilson watches her go, then turns to Pippi, speechless.

PIPPY

I am not a drug addict, okay,
Wilson?

WILSON

Jesus, Pippi, is that all you -

PIPPY

We shouldn't be accosting her like
that. She doesn't even know us! I
thought we were just -

WILSON

Pippi, I can honestly say I've
never seen anything more beautiful
than your face when you first saw
her. You were glowing with maternal
joy.

Pippi looks at him, struggling to make sense of her emotions.

WILSON (CONT'D)

We're not doing anything wrong.
Nobody could ever say it was wrong
for a mother and father to spend a
few minutes with their daughter.

PIPPY

Yes, they could!

WILSON

Well fuck those people!

He takes Pippi's hand.

WILSON (CONT'D)

Pippi, you have to stop punishing
yourself. You're allowed to want
what everybody else wants.

Pippi buries her head in his chest.

PIPPY

I guess I'm glad we got to see
her... Now I feel like I can stop
worrying and let her go.

Wilson holds her close.

WILSON

Who knows? Maybe we'll run into her
again sometime.

EXT. 580 EAST FREEWAY - DAY

Wilson drives the station wagon toward Pleasanton.

EXT. PRIVATE HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

Wilson sits in his car across the street from a fancy East Bay private school. A distant bell rings and students swarm the campus. Claire emerges from the crowd and heads off on her own, checking her messages as she walks. She sits at a bus stop bench, angrily texting. She's lost in her own agonized world.

Wilson pulls up in front of her and rolls down the window.

WILSON

Hi there.

She looks up. He sees the despair on her face.

WILSON (CONT'D)

What the hell's the matter?

She starts crying.

WILSON (CONT'D)

Come on. I'll give you a ride home.

CLAIRE

That's okay. I can get the bus.

WILSON

I can't stand to see you like this,
Claire. Please.

He opens the door.

INT. WILSON'S CAR - DAY

He drives along. Claire sits, deep in her miserable thoughts.

WILSON

How about I take you for ice cream?

CLAIRE

Is that supposed to be funny? Give
the fat girl some ice cream?

WILSON

Jesus! Not everybody's out to get
you, Claire.

CLAIRE
Well that's what it fucking feels like!

WILSON
Who is it? Those jerks from the mall? I'll kick the shit out of them!

CLAIRE
Everybody!

WILSON
I'll kick the shit out of everybody, then!

She checks her texts.

CLAIRE
God, you fucking WHORE!!!

He stops the car and grabs her phone to check the display:

UR SO FAT U FUCKN FAT HOG

WILSON
Jesus, it's like they let a retarded chimp bang on a typewriter.

This gets a sour chuckle. He starts up again.

WILSON (CONT'D)
Look, it's a given that every decent person who ever lived got shit on in high school. I'm sure they picked on Copernicus, for fuck's sake. It's a badge of honor!

Claire laughs, not convinced.

WILSON (CONT'D)
However, this certainly doesn't mean you have to sit back and get reamed for four years. Is there one particular asshole?

CLAIRE
Yeah, Monika the bitch.

WILSON
Monika...Monika... Do you have like a creepy teacher, or a janitor?

CLAIRE
Mr. Naisbitt.

WILSON
Monika, Monika, you blow Mr.
Naisbitt like a harmonica...
(rewriting)
You blow Mr. Naisbitt's syphilitic
dick like a harmonica...

Claire laughs again.

WILSON (CONT'D)
So, the main thing we know about
Monika is that she's highly
insecure about her looks and
femininity.

CLAIRE
No way. She's super-skinny.

WILSON
Okay...well then, there's many ways
to go with that: AIDS-ridden skank,
boy in drag, crazy bulimic... just
stay on message and go with it.

CLAIRE
You passed my house.

Wilson looks at the endless vista of luxury homes.

WILSON
How can you tell?

She laughs again. He turns and pulls in front of her place
and she opens the door.

WILSON (CONT'D)
Try not to feel bad. Lots of guys
like larger women, they're just too
insecure to admit it.

Claire gets out. She hesitates for a moment.

CLAIRE
Do you want to come in?

WILSON
I don't think your parents would
appreciate that I just -

CLAIRE
Fuck them. They're never home.

She gets out.

INT. CLAIRE'S KITCHEN - AFTERNOON

Wilson and Claire sit in her family's over-appointed Sub-Zero kitchen, working their way through a paper plate of microwaved Pizza Rolls.

WILSON

Pippi and I are so happy you wound up here. The Cassidays seem like wonderful people. I feel like I should arrange a meeting so we can -

CLAIRE

That's a horrible idea.

Wilson decides not to pursue it. He looks around the kitchen.

WILSON

They must do a lot of fancy cooking.

CLAIRE

Nah, they never use any of this shit.

WILSON

They took an innocent little baby and raised it as their own. Folks like that are the real heroes of this world. I mean, sure, they could spend a bit more time with you... And I guess I could do without all the over-compensatory displays of class privilege, but... I mean, Christ, what kind of an example is that? It's like they're -
(catches himself)
Yeah, they're basically great...
Really awesome.

Claire smiles. She's becoming acclimated the rhythms of Wilson-ness.

WILSON (CONT'D)

Pippi thinks we shouldn't bother you, but... I don't know, maybe she's right, but I can't help but feel a paternal pride when I see you.

CLAIRE
(hurt)
Why doesn't she want to see me?

WILSON
Oh, she does, she does... It's
just...

He gets up to leave.

WILSON (CONT'D)
I guess it should be your call. If
you want us to fuck off, we will,
but if you'd like to hang out every
once in awhile, well, boy, that
would be unbelievable.

EXT. CHILDREN'S FAIRYLAND - DAY

We see the FAIRYLAND sign along the western shore of Lake
Merritt.

EXT. CHILDREN'S FAIRYLAND ENTRANCE GATE - DAY

Wilson stands with Pippi and Claire at the cashier's booth.

CASHIER
You have to be accompanied by a
minor or you can't enter.

WILSON
Wait, what?

She points to a sign. Wilson reads it slowly and laughs.

WILSON (CONT'D)
Ha! You think I'm a child
molester?!

All parents within earshot turn and stare.

WILSON (CONT'D)
Well, this is my daughter. Can I go
in now?

CASHIER
She looks awful big.

WILSON
So now there's a weight
restriction? Can anyone get into
this park?

The cashier sighs and hands him three tickets.

CASHIER
Have a good time.

EXT. CHILDREN'S FAIRYLAND - MOMENTS LATER

The three of them walk through the park, moved by the poignancy of the humble attractions.

WILSON
You must have been here a million times.

CLAIRE
No. My Mom's terrified of Oakland.

WILSON
Well, I guess it's all ours then.

EXT. CHILDREN'S FAIRYLAND - LATER

They ride the Jolly Trolley - a low-tech train ride for sub-toddlers - all squeezed into a small car.

WILSON
Look at you two. That's a beautiful picture.

He takes out an absurdly-old instamatic camera and snaps.

WILSON (CONT'D)
What were you like when you were Claire's age, Pippi?

PIPPI
Oh God, you don't want to know.

WILSON
Pippi's dad - your grandpa, I'm sorry to say - was quite a piece of work.

PIPPI
Yeah, I put a lot of energy into making him miserable.
(thinking back, laughs)
One time he was trying to get me to go on a diet and so I ate like twenty cupcakes and got super sick in the back of his car.

CLAIRE
God, what an asshole.

WILSON
I remember a lot worse stories than
that! What about the haircut?

Pippi gives him a look.

PIPPI
Yeah, well...

EXT. CHILDREN'S FAIRYLAND FERRIS WHEEL - LATER

Pippi and Claire ride, squeezed together in the sad
contraption, while Wilson watches. He sits next to a Berkeley
mom who waves to her toddlers in another car.

WILSON
God, they grow up so fast, don't
they?

EXT. LAKE MERRITT SHORE - EARLY EVENING

The three of them eat hot dogs by the lake, surrounded by
aggressive, squawking geese.

WILSON
God, we're probably sitting in 70
percent goose feces right now.

Pippi laughs.

WILSON (CONT'D)
Hey, hear that? That's the old
Pippi laugh! I haven't heard that
in seventeen years!

Pippi smiles, a little embarrassed.

CLAIRE
What time is it?

WILSON
Who knows?

She checks her cell: 6:45

CLAIRE
Oh shit!
(hits button on phone)
Hi, Dad... Sorry...
(MORE)

CLAIRE (CONT'D)
Yeah, I'm still with Hannah... It
was cool... Yeah, I'll just take
BART... Okay... Yeah... Bye!
(hangs up)
I better go.

WILSON
God, to hear you call him "Dad"...
He has no idea how unbelievably
lucky he is.

EXT. BERKELEY HILLS - EVENING

Pippi and Wilson walk with Pepper in the hills near the
Lawrence Hall of Science, a panoramic view of the bay behind
them. Pepper keeps jumping up on Pippi's leg.

WILSON
Pepper! Cut it out!! OFF!

He yanks her away.

WILSON (CONT'D)
Fucking rapist.

PIPPI
She must be so disappointed in
me...

WILSON
It's just, she can tell when
somebody doesn't love her and it
makes her all desperate and needy.

PIPPI
Not the dog, stupid.

WILSON
What, Claire? You're nuts! You
should see the way she looks at
you.

They walk along.

PIPPI
Really?

WILSON
It's fucking magical.

They sit, facing the bay.

WILSON (CONT'D)
Do you have anything to eat?

She takes a bag of M&Ms from her purse and checks her phone.

PIPPY
Oh, Christ...

WILSON
What?

PIPPY
Fucking Polly. I wish she'd just
leave me alone.
(as she deletes)
Delete.

WILSON
When's the last time you saw her?

PIPPY
I don't remember. Before dad died.
She keeps pestering me to come
visit. After all the shit she said
about me behind my back...

Pepper leaps up and grabs an M&M from Wilson's hand.

WILSON
Asshole! LEAVE IT! LEAVE IT!

Pepper swallows. Pippi is lost in thought.

PIPPY
Wouldn't it be funny if I just
showed up with you and Claire and
was like, "This is MY family,
bitch!"

Wilson perks up.

WILSON
Yes!

Pippi laughs.

WILSON (CONT'D)
No, don't laugh! We have to do it!

PIPPY
You're nuts. There's no way I'm
going to spend one second in her
perfect little -

WILSON

Why is that nuts? It's exactly what you have to do, Pippi. It's the perfect chance to bond with your daughter, to show her what kind of person you are.

PIPPI

She's not our daughter, Wilson.

WILSON

I know, Pippi. She's never going to live with us, and we missed out on all the birthday parties and Christmas vacations and all that, but she's still a part of us.

PIPPI

I don't want to live in a fantasy world.

Wilson laughs.

WILSON

Well, how's reality been working out for ya?

INT. SHELLEY'S APARTMENT - DAY

Wilson drops off Pepper.

WILSON

Yeah, my wife isn't so much a dog person... what can you do?

Shelley hugs Pepper.

SHELLEY

Oh, who wouldn't love you, Pepper? You can't walk two steps without somebody wanting to pet you, can you, Pepper?

WILSON

It's kind-of disturbing, actually. It's like, "Hey, up here! I'm an actual human being who can do math and drive a car and cook food."

SHELLEY

I didn't know you were married.

WILSON

Oh yeah. Wife, kids, the whole shebang.

INT. WILSON'S CAR - DAY

Wilson, Pippi, and Claire drive with the windows down along a scenic stretch of the I-80 toward Sacramento.

CLAIRE

I just told them it was a weekend trip with Hannah. They don't give a shit. They're just thrilled I have a fucking friend.

WILSON

Hey, this is a family outing. Let's try and keep it PG.

CLAIRE

(a little hurt)

That's just how I talk.

Wilson looks at her in the rear-view.

WILSON

Okay, then - swear all the fuck you want.

They all laugh.

WILSON (CONT'D)

Face it, this is pretty great.
(glances at Pippi)
Look, even Pippi's happy.

PIPPI

I've spent so much time feeling like shit about myself, never enjoying anything. I'm sick of it. Let's have a good time!

WILSON

Admit it, Pippi. I'm the best thing that ever happened to you.

Wilson turns on the radio. A POP SONG plays, perfectly complementing their happy circumstance. They drive along, propelled by the energy of the music. Suddenly, Wilson shuts it off.

WILSON (CONT'D)

God, what an obnoxious song.

EXT. POLLY AND WILL'S HOUSE - AFTERNOON

The three of them stand before a large, newly-remodelled ranch house. Wilson rings the doorbell.

PIPPI
(nervous)
Oh, God...

WILSON
Keep your chin up, kid.

The door opens and POLLY (trim, a bit older than Pippi) greets her sister with unconvincing warmth.

POLLY
Oh, honey...

They hug. Polly's husband and perfect physical counterpart, WILL, emerges.

WILSON
Hi, Will. Remember me?

WILL
Of course.

The Pippi-Polly hug subsides and they all step back to absorb the moment.

WILSON
Will, Polly, this is your niece,
Claire.

POLLY
Claire, it's so great to meet
you... Welcome.

INT. POLLY AND WILL'S HOUSE - EVENING

They all sit at the family dining table, now joined by a jockish teen son, COOPER.

WILSON
Polly, you're looking great. You
too, Will.
(takes a bite)
What's the boy's name again?

WILL
Cooper.

WILSON

Cooper. Cooper, the last time I saw you, you were about two or three years old... You were trying to get your mom to pick up some Legos, or something and you were just freaking out. At the time, I thought you guys were terrible parents, but now I get how it is...

Awkward silence.

WILSON (CONT'D)

I used to be way over on the nurture side of the whole nature-nurture thing, but not anymore. I mean, look at her...

(gestures toward Claire)

Holds her fork exactly like Pippi. I see a million things - my mother's little half-smile, Pippi's sarcastic laugh... DNA is truly unbelievable.

More silence. Pippi looks around at the table with mounting discomfort, noting the contrast between the two families.

WILL

Coop's headed to Duke in the fall. Hard to believe. Jenny's already half-way through law school.

WILSON

Christ, I forgot you had another one.

Cooper gestures to Claire.

COOPER

Is she, like, my cousin then?

WILSON

Brilliant, Watson! Definite college material.

POLLY

So, Claire...have you started thinking about school yet?

CLAIRE

(very quiet)

Fuck no.

WILSON
Ha! You see? Pure Wilson!

INT. GUEST ROOM - NIGHT

Pippi, haunted, lies there in a small trundle bed. Wilson pokes around the bookshelf.

WILSON
God, look at this. Not a single
actual book.
(reads title)
"Why Golf Matters." I feel like I'm
doing field work among the natives.

PIPPI
We shouldn't have come here.

WILSON
What? Pippi...

PIPPI
She always finds a way to win.

WILSON
What the hell are you talking
about?

PIPPI
Look at us, Wilson! We're like
something out of a horror movie.
We're fat and bald and bitter and
ugly, and they're all -

WILSON
I'd take Claire over that creepy
kid any day of the week!

PIPPI
She's not even our daughter!

WILSON
Pippi, stop it.

She calms down a bit. He sits next to her on the bed.

WILSON (CONT'D)
We're on vacation. Let's try to
have fun!

EXT. WOODS - MORNING

Claire and Wilson take a walk through the woods behind Polly's house. It's a beautiful, untouched space with a little stream. They are both very quiet, enjoying the moment.

CLAIRE

How come you're not talking?

WILSON

I don't need to talk all the time.

They continue along.

WILSON (CONT'D)

I remember some of the best times with my mom were when we were just together in the same room, not saying a word... just feeling the connection, like a chemical thing...

He leaps across the stream.

INT. POLLY'S KITCHEN - MORNING

Polly sits at the kitchen table, checking email on her iPad. Pippi, baggy-eyed and unkempt, enters.

POLLY

They went for a walk.

Pippi sits. She takes a breath, as though resolving to remain calm. Polly pours her some coffee and regards her with something akin to sisterly affection.

POLLY (CONT'D)

Oh, Pip, I was afraid I'd never see you again.

PIPPI

I just... I didn't feel much like seeing anyone in the family for a while... I needed some time by myself...

POLLY

I just want you to know, I understand why you didn't come to Dad's funeral...

Pippi gives her a look. Don't start with that shit.

POLLY (CONT'D)
I know things were...tougher for
you after I left...

PIPPY
(famous sarcastic laugh)
You think? You think maybe I had it
a bit worse than you?

Polly takes her hand, not pursuing it.

POLLY
It's good to see you wanting a
family. That says a lot to me. I
know I said some negative things
about Wilson in the past, but...

She lets it hang for a long time.

PIPPY
But?

POLLY
So, what are Claire's real parents
like? Are they okay? She seems a
bit...

PIPPY
They're amazing. Super-rich and
well-educated. Their place is like
twice the size of this
place...bigger.

POLLY
That's great. So, how do they feel
about you and Wilson making contact
with Claire like that? Or was it
their idea? I mean, they must trust
you to let you take her for the
weekend like this.

PIPPY
Yep.

POLLY
I mean, do they know about
your...troubles?

PIPPY
They're totally cool about it.

POLLY
Because I just - I'd imagine they
were a little -

PIPPI

God, you fucking CUNT!! Just say what you're fucking thinking!!

POLLY

Do Claire's parents even know where she is, Pippi?

PIPPI

Of course!! God, Polly, just because you kissed Dad's ass and did everything perfect your whole fucking life doesn't mean I'm some lowlife scumbag! I knew I shouldn't have come here! You never -

POLLY

I heard Claire on the phone this morning. She told her mother she was at Lake Tahoe.

PIPPI

You fucking bitch!

Pippi grabs the coffee pot and swings it at Polly's head, narrowly missing. Polly fights back with sinewy vigor. It's a chaotic, brutal struggle, the battle of a lifetime between two mortal enemies.

EXT. WOODS - MOMENTS LATER

Wilson and Claire stand by the stream skipping stones, all clunkers.

WILSON

When you're a kid, there's all this future, all this potential, but when you get to my age, you have to look at things a different way, live in the moment... Stuff like this - the damp air, the crunching of leaves - all that shit becomes pretty damn huge...

Wilson finally gets a double-splash.

WILSON (CONT'D)

You start looking for patterns; trying to figure out what it all means...

They move on, away from the stream. They weave through some thick briars and find themselves at the back of Polly's house. There's some commotion out front. Wilson and Claire go around the side to see what's going on.

POLLY

There he is!

In a flash, Wilson's retinae are scorched with the image of two burly POLICE OFFICERS stomping toward him. Behind them, Pippi sits in the back of a police car, while Polly teeters nearby, scratched and bleeding. He turns and catches a brief glimpse of Claire's confounded face.

CUT TO BLACK

INT. COUNTY JAIL HOLDING AREA - DAY

Wilson sits across from a schmucky-looking court-appointed lawyer, ALLAN COFFEY.

WILSON

That's just nuts. She my daughter!
How the hell could that be
kidnapping?

COFFEY

Yeah, well, the parents are pretty
P-Oed. Hard to blame them.

WILSON

Who's side are you on?

COFFEY

Look, don't worry. We'll let them
cool down and work something out.
You've got a clean record.

WILSON

What about Pippi? Did she get
charged?

COFFEY

I don't know... sounds like they
offered her some deal. I'll find
out.

WILSON

What are you talking about? A deal
for what?

COFFEY

Stop worrying so much. We'll get this worked out.

WILSON

Let me just talk to Claire for five minutes. She can clear this up.

COFFEY

Get that out of your head; there's no way. Let me work my magic.

INT. COUNTY JAIL HOLDING AREA - AFTERNOON

Wilson sits at a large wall-phone down the hall from his cell. Guards mill around while a drunk in his cell makes erratic animal noises. We hear the phone ringing on the other end of the line and, finally, a silent pick-up.

WILSON

Claire?

After a pause, we hear the voice of a MIDDLE-AGED MAN.

CLAIRE'S DAD (V.O.)

Why are you calling my daughter?

WILSON

Can you please... Can you just put her on?

CLAIRE'S DAD (V.O.)

Claire doesn't want to talk to you again.

WILSON

Look, I really wanted to meet you and your wife. It was her idea to -

CLAIRE'S DAD

You are mentally imbalanced to even think of calling this number. As far as I'm concerned -

WILSON

You're the one who's imbalanced if you really believe you can send somebody to jail just for trying to reconnect with his own goddamn flesh and blood! You need to consider what's -

Click.

INT. PLEASANT VALLEY STATE PRISON CELL - DAY

Wilson sits in an orange jumpsuit on the lower bunk in a tiny cell, staring ahead. Up top is GRANNY, a glassy-eyed young sociopath.

WILSON

Y'know, it kinda feels good to get off the cultural treadmill for awhile. You get so sick of all the celebrity gossip and all that crap, Christ, who has time to think anymore?

No response.

WILSON (CONT'D)

I always wanted to have time to read the Russians. Gogol, Turgenev, those guys. I don't guess they have anything like that in the prison library?

GRANNY

You wasn't old, I'd turn you out. Get me some state pussy.

WILSON

What?

GRANNY

Turn yo' asshole into a pussy, bitch.

INT. PRISON DINING HALL - EVENING

Wilson sits at a table with Granny and some of his friends. The leader of their little group is SILVERWOLF, an older guy with a tattoo of a winged swastika just below the bangs of his greying bowl-cut. Wilson can't help but stare.

SILVERWOLF

What you lookin' at?

WILSON

That's quite a tattoo.

SILVERWOLF

Why's that?

WILSON

I just...it's like the definitive argument-ender.

(MORE)

WILSON (CONT'D)

It's like, "No, I don't want your fucking job! In fact, I want to destroy your entire society! Fuck you!"

SILVERWOLF

What you say, bitch?

WILSON

No, I'm saying I kind of like it.
It's so -

Silverwolf nods at Granny. Granny dumps the food off his tray and starts pounding Wilson in the face with it. Guards approach and blast them both with stun guns.

INT. STATE PRISON CELL #2 - MORNING

Wilson, all bandaged up, is led into a new cell, similar to the first, but not identical. The new cell-mate, PIPER, doesn't look up from his bible.

INT. STATE PRISON CELL #2 - LATER

Wilson unpacks his meager belongings from a large Ziploc bag. He takes out an envelope of photos and looks through them.

WILSON

One thing about prison - it gives you a lot of time to beat up on yourself.

Piper glances down from his bible and sees Wilson looking with intense focus at one of the photos.

PIPER

If she's a good woman, she'll forgive you.

WILSON

God, I hope you're right... There's no excuse for the way I treated her.

He tapes the picture by his bed. It's a soft-focus Sears portrait of Pepper.

INT. BIBLE STUDY - DAY

A PASTOR speaks to a small group of cons - including Wilson and Piper - in a converted supply room decorated with computer print-out quotations from the Old Testament.

PASTOR

It doesn't matter if you're out of here twenty years, living on an island in the sea, you'll never be truly free until you've been washed in the blood of the Lamb. A believer stuck ten years in the shoe is freer than any man who disdains The Word...

WILSON

That's beautiful. Beautiful stuff. Have you always been a God-fearing man, Pastor?

PASTOR

I've tried to be.

WILSON

What a gift! If only my parents had given me that. I've spent my whole life looking for meaning, trying to make some sense of it all...

PASTOR

It's never too late.

WILSON

Well, yeah, I guess... I mean, at a certain point, there's no way a rational man can buy in to all the crazy mumbo-jumbo. It's got to be ingrained before you develop any sense of reason, or... I mean, unless you get brain damage, or something...

The Pastor glowers. A tall, grim-faced man turns and stares back blankly at Wilson.

WILSON (CONT'D)

Yes, sir, Pastor, you're a lucky man...

EXT. PRISON EXERCISE YARD - DAY

Wilson throws an old tennis ball against a brick wall while other inmates pump iron and jump rope. From out of a pack, the tall, grim-faced con from bible class walks toward him.

WILSON
Hey, how ya doi -

The con punches Wilson hard in the stomach. Wilson falls to the ground with a loud OOOFF. The con kicks him over and over.

INT. PRISON TV ROOM - EVENING

Wilson sits with a trio of Aryan Brotherhood guys watching ANIMAL HOARDERS.

ARYAN #1
Crazy bitch. Somebody should just fuckin' shoot all those cats.

ARYAN #2
Not worth it. I got time once for killing a dog.

ARYAN #1
How'd you kill it?

ARYAN #2
Snapped his windpipe.
(laughs)
Shut him the fuck up.

Wilson looks at him for a moment with sadness and disdain. Aryan #2 takes notice.

ARYAN #2
You got a problem?

WILSON
Nah, man, it's cool. I just...

Wilson looks paralyzed for a moment. Then...

WILSON (CONT'D)
I just fuckin' hate dogs, that's all. That's cool you did that.

ARYAN #2
You ever kill one?

WILSON

Hell yeah.

INT. PRISON DINING HALL - DAY

Wilson sits with the Aryans at dinner. All laugh knowingly as Wilson mimics rabbit-punching someone in the face.

INT. STATE PRISON CELL #2 - NIGHT

Wilson and Piper pray together, kneeling on the floor holding hands.

INT. CELL BLOCK G - DAY

Wilson, with shorter hair and trimmed beard, chit-chats amiably with a guard.

INT. PRISON REC CENTER - DAY

Wilson and Silverwolf put together a jigsaw puzzle of a skeleton riding a motorcycle.

EXT. PRISON EXERCISE YARD - DAY

It's winter, a few patches of ice on the ground. A Latino gang-banger nods hello to Wilson as he walks through the yard, as does the grim-faced Christian from bible class. A trio of Crips shout out to him.

CRIPS

Yo, Wilson!

INT. PRISON TV ROOM - EVENING

Wilson and Piper sit watching INTERVENTION. On-screen, a weepy father reads a last-ditch ultimatum to his wild-eyed tweaker daughter.

WILSON

That guy doesn't know how lucky he is. My daughter doesn't want anything to do with me.

They watch as the daughter breaks down sobbing.

PIPER
You fixing to kill her when you get out?

WILSON
No. I'm all done with her.

PIPER
Good man.

On TV, the daughter agrees to seek treatment and the whole troubled family amasses in a group hug.

PIPER (CONT'D)
I'm gonna miss you, but you'll be back, I bet. Better than a seventy percent chance, they say.

WILSON
No way, man.
(pats his pocket bible)
Not with this guy on my side.

EXT. PRISON GATE - MORNING

Wilson shakes hands with the friendly guard and walks through the gate with nothing but his Ziploc bag. A shuttle bus waits down the road. He takes a deep, joyful breath of fresh air.

On the way to the bus, he stops at a trash can. He takes the bible from his pocket and tosses it in without a thought.

INT. GREYHOUND BUS - DAY

Wilson sits next to a SANTA CRUZ-ISH 20 YEAR-OLD who slouches in his seat, texting.

WILSON
Excuse me, I...

The kid laughs at a message, then realizes Wilson is talking to him.

SANTA CRUZ
Yeah?

WILSON
Never mind. I don't want to bug you.

He looks out the window, a new Wilson. The kid puts down his phone and takes out a to-go box, finishing off his lunch.

SANTA CRUZ
Going to San Fran?

WILSON
Oakland.

SANTA CRUZ
I'm going to Guatemala with my
girlfriend.

WILSON
That's great. An adventure!
(pause)
I'm headed home, back to my poor
old dog...

He takes out the Sears picture and shows him.

SANTA CRUZ
He seems cool.

WILSON
I really hate to ask you - do you
think I could use your phone? I
could pay you.

SANTA CRUZ
That's okay. The bars are pretty
low, though.

He hands Wilson the phone. Wilson takes out a crumpled sheet
of lined paper and points to a scrawled number.

WILSON
Could you dial this for me?

The kid dials and hands it to Wilson. We hear a distant ring
and a faint, suspicious "hello?".

WILSON (CONT'D)
Polly? It's Wilson.
(he listens)
That's why I'm calling, Polly. I'm
not going to bother her, or Claire.
Or you. I'm just calling to tell
you that, okay?
(more)
Can you just... Are they okay?
(more from Polly)
I'm not. That's all I want to know.
(a beat)
Okay, thanks. That's great.
Goodbye, Polly.

He hangs up and hands the phone back to the kid.

WILSON (CONT'D)
So, what's going on in Guatemala?

EXT. OAKLAND GREYHOUND STATION - AFTERNOON

Wilson exits the downtown station and starts walking north.

EXT. GRAND AVENUE - EARLY EVENING

Wilson walks the streets of his old neighborhood. There are lots of For Rent signs and an odd overabundance of fly-by-night nail salons.

WILSON
(muttering to himself)
What the hell happened? Where's the bookstore?

We see the traces of an old sign: "BOOKS NEW AND USED" covered by a vinyl banner that reads "NAIL'S SUPREME."

WILSON (CONT'D)
Who gets their nails done so much?

He continues along. More nail salons.

WILSON (CONT'D)
I guess it's the only thing they can't sell on the computer!

EXT. MONTE VISTA AVENUE - EARLY EVENING

He rounds the corner and looks across the street at his old building.

In Wilson's old front window, an OAKLAND ART-HIPSTER talks on the phone, looking out at the street. Wilson watches, transfixed. The hipster covers the phone and says something toward the back room. Two MORE HIPSTERS join him and look out at Wilson. They wave, ironically.

EXT. BERKELEY STREETS - EVENING

Wilson passes a college cafe - all loners on their laptops. He continues walking and finds himself outside Shelley's Victorian. He climbs the steps and presses the buzzer. After a long pause, there's a loud crackle.

SHELLEY (V.O.)
Hello? Diana?

WILSON
Shelley? It's Wilson. Pepper's dad.

Another long pause. The buzzer buzzes.

INT. SHELLEY'S APARTMENT - MOMENTS LATER

Shelley opens the door. She has a new look - more modern, less Telegraph Avenue.

WILSON
You wouldn't believe what happened to me, Shelley.

She leads him in. It's very different from what we remember - more like a real estate office. A client sits at a work desk in what used to be the dining room. Shelley waves to her with a little "two minutes" gesture.

WILSON (CONT'D)
Where's all the dog stuff?

SHELLEY
I'm not sitting anymore.

WILSON
(with sinking hopes)
So, where is she?

SHELLEY
(getting choked up)
Even after I stopped sitting, Pepper was the only dog I kept. She was such a wonderful girl -

WILSON
(just crushed)
Was?

SHELLEY
She got so sick. At the end, she could barely -

WILSON
Oh, no... No...

He falls to his knees, waylaid by the body-blow.

SHELLEY
I tried so hard to find you. I...

The client gets up and heads for the door. Shelley, tears streaming, tries to wave her back, but it's too much.

SHELLEY (CONT'D)
I'm so sorry...

He lies there, curled up in a little ball.

EXT. STORAGE LOCKER #4061 - NIGHT

Wilson digs through his Ziploc bag and finds the key to the locker. After a few tries, it opens with a rusty creak.

INT. STORAGE LOCKER #4061 - CONTINUOUS

Wilson turns on a mini-flashlight and looks around. It's exactly as we left it. He digs around in a Mission bridal chest until he finds some old quilts, with which he fashions a makeshift bed. He turns off the flashlight and lies there in the dark, staring into the void.

WILSON
I'm sorry, Pepper.

He listens, as though expecting an answer.

WILSON (CONT'D)
(dog voice)
Don't ever use this voice again.

EXT. MOUNTAIN VIEW CEMETERY - DAY

In a remote clearing above the graveyard, Wilson and Shelley set up a little grave-marker made of sticks and rocks. Wilson, trembling, reads from a handwritten manuscript.

WILSON
Goodbye, Pepper. You were a true friend. Every minute in your presence was a blessing, and your joy over the simplest of pleasures was humbling and inspirational. You were the pride of the neighborhood, the brightener of a thousand days. To see a stranger's eyes tear at the memory of similar pet was to know the inherent goodness of your kind.

He takes a moment, choked up.

WILSON (CONT'D)

You urinated on my address book and
chewed up two sofas -

SHELLEY

Three.

WILSON

- but in doing so, you taught us
the utter worthlessness of those
things, their only true value as a
vessel for your sacred toothmarks.

(a pause)

We celebrate you, Pepper. You and
all your brothers and sisters in
the animal family. We vow to honor
and protect your kind, and oppose
with all our heart those who would
harm or degrade any living creature
in any way. Amen.

Shelley grasps his hand.

INT. VEGETARIAN RESTAURANT - EVENING

Wilson and Shelley sit quietly, contemplating their loss.

WILSON

I'm never eating another hamburger
as long as I live. What the hell
was I thinking all those years?

SHELLEY

You won't miss it.

He smiles at her.

WILSON

So what ever happened to you and
Francisco?

SHELLEY

(laughs)

Diego? He turned out to be a real
asshole.

WILSON

I knew it. Those guys who seem all
emotional and caring like that,
they're all bad news. You deserve
to be treated with respect.

SHELLEY
So, what was it like in prison?

WILSON
(laughs)
I wasn't raped, if that's what your thinking.
(notes her troubled look)
I just...they say there's no rehabilitation in prison, but in my case I feel like it kind of turned me into an adult. Finally.

He pours them both another glass of wine.

INT. SHELLEY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Wilson and Shelley have sex under the covers. She chokes out a repressed moan with each thrust, loud at first, but gradually fading to near-silence.

SHELLEY
Ow.

WILSON
What's wrong?

SHELLEY
I'm really dry.

Wilson isn't sure what to suggest.

SHELLEY (CONT'D)
It's been a long time. I...

WILSON
Me too.

They stay frozen in the same position.

SHELLEY
Maybe... Should we just stop?

WILSON
Okay.

They shift awkwardly, each lying on his/her back. After a moment, Shelley timidly moves over to share Wilson's pillow. They lie together in the darkness, surprisingly content.

INT. SHELLEY'S APARTMENT - DAY

Wilson sits on a small living-room couch watching TV, while Shelley, at her workstation with her back to him, taps away at her laptop. We notice his Ziploc on the table.

WILSON

I should have tried to find something like this years ago. I wasted so much time pining after my ex, trying to force some poor high school kid to be my daughter... None of it makes any sense.

SHELLEY

(as she types)

I think it's really healthy that you can admit that.

WILSON

Which part?

SHELLEY

That she's not your daughter. At least not in any meaningful sense.

Wilson seems to bristle a bit, but:

WILSON

You're right. I barely knew her.

She continues typing.

SHELLEY

I'm sorry. I'll be done in two seconds.

Tap tap tap.

EXT. PIEDMONT AVENUE - EVENING

They walk along, Wilson leading the way.

WILSON

I think it was in the next block. Weird how you forget that stuff. They made a great pulled pork, not that that's what I'd order...

They pass an abandoned newspaper vending box with an orange sticker marker REMOVE.

WILSON (CONT'D)

Jesus, look at that. I never thought the future would be like this... There's gonna be nothing left for guys like me...

SHELLEY

I know, I'm so overwhelmed by what's going on with the climate. Have you read all the "peak oil" stuff?

WILSON

I always pictured myself as an old man, sitting in a garden reading the newspaper or, like, an *Ellery Queen Mystery* magazine. Too bad for me, I guess.

SHELLEY

You need to get online. That's where all the action is.

WILSON

Okay, it's right around the corner. I wonder if Mike's gonna remember me. He used to give me shit for always ordering the same thing.

They round the corner. Wilson stops. Instead of a restaurant, the sign reads: SPLENDID NAIL SPA.

INT. SHELLEY'S APARTMENT - DAY

They sit at Shelley's workstation looking at the laptop screen.

SHELLEY

Okay, now hit "return."

Wilson scans the keyboard and taps.

WILSON

Whoa!

Shelley claps.

SHELLEY

See? If you can do that, you can start helping with my spreadsheets.

Wilson continues typing away.

We see a montage of full-screen images:

SKYLINE HIGH CLASS OF 1985 HOME PAGE

PHOTO OF CUTE JEWISH CHEERLEADER 1984

SAME GIRL NOW AT CLASS REUNION 2010. (Ouch).

EBAY LISTING: Six Million Dollar Man Action Playset.

AMATEUR PORN SITE: Overweight blonde.

GOOGLE SEARCH: He types in "Pippi Carmichael"

RESULTS: 0 Results. Did you mean "*Pippi's car rental*?"

GOOGLE SEARCH: Claire Cassiday

ONE RESULT: A FACEBOOK page. He clicks on it

A TINY PHOTO OF CLAIRE. He can't access the page without an account.

AN EMAIL: From Shelley. It reads: "do you want to eat my pussy?"

WILSON MAILS BACK: "when?"

SHELLEY (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Fifteen minutes?

We cut away from the screen to find ourselves on a different day, possibly weeks later. Wilson sits with the laptop on the couch, wearing sweatpants. There are Wilsonian touches in the room suggesting a more committed living arrangement, including a few of Edwin's Craftsman pieces. We see Shelley in the other room, her back to us.

WILSON
Roger that.

INT. SHELLEY'S BEDROOM - LATER

They have sex again, a giant bottle of lube next to the bed.

INT. EAST BAY ANIMAL SHELTER - DAY

Wilson and Shelley walk past an aisle of cages, looking at the dogs. Wilson comes upon an old Fox Terrier.

WILSON
What a face.

SHELLEY

He's too sad and beaten-down-looking for me.

WILSON

We could cheer him up.

SHELLEY

I don't need another project.

Wilson laughs. They continue down the line.

WILSON

God, all that "peak oil" stuff really depressed the hell out of me. And that article you -

SHELLEY

Stop! Stop! Not right now, okay?
(takes a breath)
I don't think you get how much I worry about all that stuff.

WILSON

Sorry, I... Yeah, it's oppressive... Maybe you're right - maybe we should get out of town for a few days.

SHELLEY

Let's look at the cats.

WILSON

Why?

SHELLEY

I don't know... I got a little burned out on the dogs after all those years. They're too much work.

WILSON

I can deal with it.

SHELLEY

Yeah, but... I mean, you're not necessarily sticking around forever.

WILSON

Why not?

Shelley looks to see if he's serious. It seems so.

WILSON (CONT'D)

When I think of where I'd be... A middle-aged guy with no job skills, no family or friends, no place to live... An ex-con, for Christ's sake!

SHELLEY

You're doing great at the spreadsheets.

WILSON

Is that a euphemism?

She comes upon a sad old Persian in a cage.

SHELLEY

Ohhh, look at her...

Wilson tries to smile, but he just isn't a cat guy.

WILSON

Nice.

EXT. LA TRIESTE CAFE - AFTERNOON

Wilson approaches the old cafe. This time he finds his own table, ignoring several potential victims. He takes the laptop from his backpack and logs on for the free Wi-Fi.

On-screen, he scrolls habitually through his internet bookmarks. We see:

Oakland Weather: 68 degrees.

A Huffington Post-style news aggregator.

A lurid article. TEEN GIVES BIRTH TO TOILET BABY.

An EBAY LISTING.

CLAIRE'S TWITTER FEED: It says ClaireVoyantGirl at the top, with the same little Facebook picture. He reads through her mundane proclamations:

i need these shoes nownownow amazing (link)

worst song ever (link) he looks like a retarded chimp

Wilson LAUGHS. Then:

cant go sat, going to benicia(sp?) to see bio-mom marry asshole

Wilson freezes. We see "bio-mom" in FULL-SCREEN CLOSE-UP.

He stares it down, and then looks around at his fellow laptopers, as though seeking their support. They're all happily working away. He looks back at the screen and takes a breath. He clicks. We see an article:

20 BEST CELEBRITY TATTOOS

INT. SHELLEY'S APARTMENT - EARLY EVENING

Shelley and Wilson host a vegetarian buffet-style dinner for a few of Shelley's friends. There are RONNY and DAWN, a butch-femme lesbian duo; the ALTMANNS, a socially-conscious Berkeley Hills couple; and JANINE, a middle-aged therapist. There's a pleasant vibe to the room, amiable chit-chat among peers. We see the PERSIAN CAT in the background.

Shelley talks to Naomi Altmann while she loads up her plate.

SHELLEY

I have to be back Tuesday so it's just a quick escape. Big Sur, Carmel, maybe. Wilson rented us a red Prius!

NAOMI ALTMANN

Oh, don't go to Carmel. It's completely overrun with rich assholes.

Wilson gives her a look - she's hardly on food stamps. He sits at the table next to Ronny and Dawn.

WILSON

(to Dawn)

So, how long have you two been together?

RONNY

(stepping in)

What do you mean "together"?

WILSON

Oh, I thought... I thought you were a couple.

RONNY

How did we get to be every straight guy's fantasy?

Wilson looks them over, nobody's fantasy. He's not sure how to respond.

RONNY (CONT'D)
I'm just fucking with you. Fourteen
years.

Mild laughs all around.

KEN ALTMANN
So, Wilson, what do you do?

WILSON
Me? I'm just helping Shelley out.
Some bookkeeping, stuff like
that...

KEN ALTMANN
I mean before that. How did you two
meet?

WILSON
Well -

SHELLEY
(nervously interrupts)
He used to be a customer back when
I was sitting.

WILSON
Did they ever meet Pepper?

NAOMI ALTMANN
(confused, to Shelley)
I thought Pepper was yours?

SHELLEY
I was helping him out for awhile.
Wilson had to go...out of the
country.

Wilson gives her a look, a bit thrown.

KEN ALTMANN
Where to?

WILSON
(winging it)
I was in Guatemala. Building houses
for poor families.

Shelley winces.

KEN ALTMANN
Whereabouts in Guatemala? I did
some field work near Lake Atitlan.

WILSON

Oh, you know... All over...

KEN ALTMANN

What organization were you with?
Habitat? Did you go to Totonicapan?

WILSON

Oh yeah...

Ken gives him a look, a little iffy on Wilson.

JANINE

I can't wait till Betheny is out of
the house so I can start going on
trips again.

NAOMI ALTMANN

Go now. She'll live.

JANINE

God, I'd love to. I'd like to do
anything that doesn't involve a
whiny teenager!

Wilson looks at them with simmering contempt.

KEN ALTMANN

Any kids, Wilson?

Wilson glances at Shelley. She subtly shakes her head, "no,"
as though not even conscious of it.

WILSON

No... I...
(stares into his plate)
Yes. Yes, I have a beautiful
daughter.

SHELLEY

Well, she's not -

WILSON

SHE'S MY FUCKING DAUGHTER!

An uncomfortable pall settles over the table, a long silence.

WILSON (CONT'D)

I've never been to Guatemala. I
don't even know where the fuck it
is. I was in State Prison on a
bullshit charge. I fucking hate
cats, and -

SHELLEY

Wilson -

WILSON

I FUCKING HATE CATS and right now
the ONLY WOMAN WHO EVER REALLY
LOVED ME IS GETTING MARRIED TO SOME
ASSHOLE IN BENICIA!

(a light-bulb goes on)

BENICIA! THAT FUCKING VILLAIN!!

INT. RED PRIUS - NIGHT

Wilson drives at top speed along the I-80 North. He feels the
Wilsonness flowing like heroin back into his veins.

WILSON

Fucking Fulwiler! I'll be double-
fucked if I let that prick steal my
wife again!!

He glances at the passenger seat: his laptop and a pile of
work papers. He rolls down the window and tosses it all out.

WILSON (CONT'D)

FUCK YOU!!

We see the computer bouncing on the hardtop behind him,
flying into pieces.

WILSON (CONT'D)

I am an animal! I am a fucking
caveman!!

He zips dangerously through sparse traffic toward Benicia.

EXT. BENECIA - NIGHT

He drives along the waterfront, wracking his memory for
directions.

WILSON

Where are you, asshole?

He screeches up and down side streets until at last he spots
a vaguely familiar YELLOW VICTORIAN.

WILSON (CONT'D)

Ha!

He swerves wildly around the corner.

EXT. FULWILER'S BLOCK - NIGHT

Wilson drives slowly down the street until spots a familiar driveway, filled with cars. He parks across the street and gets out. There's music coming from the back yard.

Very carefully he peeks through the bushes. A band of tattooed fat guys and Bette Page-ish girls play mediocre Rockabilly for a pair of drunk dancers. Wilson scans the sparse crowd until he at last finds Pippi. She has a sensible short haircut and wears a cheap wedding dress. His heart sinks.

He spots Fulwiler, laughing with a guest as he gathers empties.

FULWILER

We may have a few in the kitchen.
Ask Samantha.

We hear a muffled response as Fulwiler heads through the side gate carrying a load of bottles.

FULWILER (CONT'D)

(yelling back, laughing)
Don't tell her it was my idea!

As Fulwiler raises the recycling bin lid, Wilson leaps out from the darkness.

WILSON

Fulwiler!

Fulwiler jolts, dropping the bottles.

FULWILER

Fuck!

It takes him a second to realize who he's talking to.

FULWILER (CONT'D)

Oh, Christ. What are you doing,
Wilson?

WILSON

Hey, sorry to fuck up your big
night, Jimmy!

We hear guests from off-screen: "What was that?" etc.

FULWILER

(shouting back)
It's nothing!
(MORE)

FULWILER (CONT'D)
(then, all business)
C'mon, man.

He tries to steer Wilson into the neighbor's yard.

WILSON
Don't fucking touch me!

FULWILER
Don't be an asshole, Wilson. You
can't -

Wilson swings at him wildly.

FULWILER (CONT'D)
You crazy fucking - How dare you
ruin Pippi's -

WILSON
How dare you ruin my life!!

They wrestle, Wilson's rage giving him the upper hand. From
behind them, we hear a familiar voice.

PIPPI
Wilson?

Wilson drops Fulwiler and turns to face her.

WILSON
Pippi, my angel...

PIPPI
What are you doing here?

WILSON
Pippi...how could you marry this
awful creature?

FULWILER
She didn't fucking marry me, you
psychopath!
(wincing)
Ow, shit!

He feels his lip - it's bleeding. He goes to get a napkin.

WILSON
Pippi...

She is joined by TUCKER, a sinewy ex-drummer whose hollow
eyes carry the heft of a complicated past.

TUCKER
What's up, babe?

PIPPY
Tucker, it's Wilson.

He laughs, not exactly dismissive, but he's certainly heard stories.

TUCKER
Hey, man.

He offers his rope-veined hand.

WILSON
Who is this? Pippi, I -

PIPPY
He's my husband.

She smiles at Tucker, surprised. It's the first time she's said those words.

PIPPY (CONT'D)
Tucker was my sponsor. I'm clean
two years, three months.

WILSON
Sponsor! I knew it!

PIPPY
I'm sorry about what happened,
Wilson. We've been praying for you.

TUCKER
That's right, man. Definitely no
hard feelings. Believe me, I've -

WILSON
(to Pippi)
Really praying?

PIPPY
I never thought I could be happy,
Wilson, but...

Wilson looks at her in disbelief.

WILSON
Oh God, Pippi, we've lost you!

Fulwiler returns with the two big guys from the band and a stocky party-guest who flashes a POLICE BADGE.

OFF-DUTY COP
Okay, man, time to go.

He takes Wilson's arm and leads him away. Wilson struggles.

PIPPY
Don't hurt him.

WILSON
Where's Claire? Claire?!

FULWILER
That's it. Bye, Wilson!

The cop drags him out into the street, with the musicians along for back-up.

OFF-DUTY COP
Where's your car? You got a car?

WILSON
Claire!!

The Cop fishes in Wilson's pocket for his car keys. He presses the button: a loud BOOP from the Prius. The cop drops him in front of the car and stands there, making sure Wilson doesn't get any ideas. Fulwiler approaches.

FULWILER
I told Pippi I'm giving you one minute to get out of here. Then we call the cops and send you back to jail.

WILSON
I want to see my daughter!

FULWILER
Wilson, get the fuck in your car!!

Wilson sees he's beaten, a formidable wall of flesh before him. He gets in his car without a word and screeches off. The crowd of party-goers claps for Fulwiler as he returns from across the street.

INT. RED PRIUS - NIGHT

Wilson drives an erratic path through Benicia, out of his mind with anger and despair.

EXT. DENNY'S - NIGHT

Wilson sits in the parking lot of a Denny's, the only car in sight, sobbing.

INT. DENNY'S - NIGHT

He sits at the counter, a wounded nighthawk, reading the plastic menu. The WAITRESS, a middle-aged Latina with her own problems, waits for his order.

WILSON

What do you recommend?

WAITRESS

I don't know. You like pancakes?

WILSON

Pancakes?!

He puts down the menu and rubs his tired eyes.

WILSON (CONT'D)

Did you ever imagine the world as a gigantic anthill? You wander over here and bump into another ant and maybe a while later you bump into him again over here. You carry around a few twigs and then it's all over. Isn't that what it feels like sometimes?

WAITRESS

That's really true.

WILSON

We like our stories to have some structure, but real life isn't like that, is it? Or maybe it's there, and we just can't see it...

WAITRESS

Been out drinking tonight?

WILSON

Actually, no, believe it or not.
(stares down at the
counter, lost in thought)
Okay sure, what the hell. Pancakes.

She retreats to the kitchen. Wilson sits there alone with his coffee. Outside the window, a dark void.

We sense a presence behind him. Wilson turns and there stands a gangly, emaciated teen with long, dyed hair and a ghoulish affect. Observant viewers may have noticed him at the wedding reception, the one person not applauding Fulwiler's victory crossing. This is TIMOTHY.

TIMOTHY
(very deep voice)
Are you Claire's father?

WILSON
(confused)
What?

TIMOTHY
She wants to know if you hate her.

WILSON
Where is she? What are you talking about?
(he looks around)
Why would anybody say that? She knows I could never hate her.
That's insane! Why would -

Timothy texts, deftly tapping with a long black fingernail. He stares into the phone for a few seconds, and then:

TIMOTHY
(paraphrasing)
You never tried to get in touch with her. She didn't even know you were out.
(aside)
Of prison, I assume.

WILSON
Her parents said she didn't want to see me! I didn't want to mess up her life any more than I already -

He slows for Timothy to catch up with his typing.

WILSON (CONT'D)
I didn't want to mess up her life.

TIMOTHY
So you still care about her?

WILSON
More than anything. Write that:
"more than anything."

Timothy types. They wait. Finally:

TIMOTHY

Okay.

EXT. DENNY'S - NIGHT

In a wide shot, we see the silhouettes of Timothy and Wilson walking single file through the parking lot. Timothy's loping Mantis-gait moves in sharp contrast to Wilson's trudge.

EXT. BENICIA WATERFRONT - NIGHT

Wilson and Timothy approach a lone figure on a waterside bench. Timothy recedes, leaving father and daughter to themselves. They remain silent for several moments, as though transmitting complicated non-verbal messages.

Finally, Claire makes an ironically formal gesture for Wilson to join her on the bench. He sits.

WILSON

There's too much to say. I can't think of the right thing...

CLAIRE

I know.

WILSON

Are you okay?

Claire laughs, the inherited chuckle.

CLAIRE

Where the hell have you been? Were you just going to avoid me forever?

WILSON

I truly didn't think you wanted me in your life. I didn't want to -

CLAIRE

Who cares what I want? Since when did that ever fucking stop you??!

Wilson has no answer.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

You should have done whatever it took to reach out to me, not just hide out like some pussy because my dad told you to go away!

WILSON

I thought about you every day.
Every minute. I just...I didn't
want to ruin your life.

CLAIRE

Oh, please!!
(a beat)
I just don't know if I can forgive
you.

WILSON

You have to... You have to...

Claire looks him over, suddenly a bit vulnerable.

CLAIRE

Timothy!
(yells)
Timothy!

Timothy walks toward them at his own specific pace, finishing
off a cigarette.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

I need you to sit with me... I'm
trying not to freak out.

Timothy sits. They rest in silence for a moment; his presence
seems to calm her down.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

Did you tell him about the baby?

TIMOTHY

No.

Wilson freezes.

WILSON

Whose baby?

She pats her stomach.

CLAIRE

My mom and dad want to fucking
assassinate me.

WILSON

Is it... What are you going to do?

CLAIRE

What do you mean, what am I going
to do? Have a fucking baby and be
fucking happy!!

Wilson tries to hug her, awkwardly at first, but at last she fully accepts him. His arm reaches out for Timothy, drawing him in to the familial cluster.

EXT. STORAGE LOCKER #4061 - DAY

Wilson stands outside his storage locker. A well-groomed antique dealer scrutinizes a rare Charles Limbert sideboard. His female assistant emerges from the unit holding, very carefully, a 1908 Handel table lamp.

EXT. OAKLAND STREET - DAY

Wilson walks the FOX TERRIER from the pound down an oak-lined street.

EXT. LITTLE HOUSE - EVENING

Wilson sits on the porch of a small guest-house apartment, talking on the phone.

EXT. PARK - DAY

Wilson, laughing, rolls in the grass with his dog while a baby crawls nearby.

TITLE CARD: TWENTY-FOUR YEARS LATER.

INT. HOSPITAL - NIGHT

We are in a small hospital room. It's spare and clean, with well-worn vaguely-futuristic fixtures and artwork. Wilson, now around 70, lies in bed with various tubes and electrodes attached. He looks like Edwin, when last we saw him, clearly on his last legs. At his side sits a YOUNG MAN, 25-ish, wearing the popular clothes of 2035.

WILSON

(a surprising, gravelly
slur)

All these years...I never figured
it out.

YOUNG MAN
Figured what out?

WILSON
In stories it always builds to a
big explosion - boom - and that's
the end. But in real life...you
just...

He closes his eyes, utterly drained. The boy touches his
hand.

YOUNG MAN
I'm gonna go see what happened to
Mom. You want anything?

Wilson doesn't respond. The boy leaves.

Wilson lies there, facing the ceiling.

Suddenly there's a jolt in his chest. His vitals plunge on
the wall monitor. He lurches, eyes glazing. We're losing him.
A low alarm sounds.

He gurgles, almost done, but for a glorious moment he snaps
out of it, the clarity returning to his eyes.

WILSON
Ha! Of course! It's so simple, but
I never would have guessed it!
Never in a million years.

Rapid footsteps approach. He LAUGHS again, one last time.

CUT TO BLACK