

t h e i n v e s t m e n t

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FADE IN:

Towering, green blades sway silently in the gentle morning breeze. They canopy a praying mantis who brutally tears into the neck of a tiny tree frog.

CLYDE (V.O.)
Life holds no respect for the weak.

The frog convulses violently. Clings desperately to its last precious moments --

CRUNCH! The mantis severs the frog's spine. The frog's body goes limp. Another bite slices clean through. The frog's head flops over. The frog's shredded, exposed neck spurts a tiny fountain of blood. The mantis digs in.

CLYDE (V.O.)
I learned this law at an early age.

A gigantic, brown, hairy beast crashes down from the heavens. Crushes both the mantis and its prey...

EXT. FIELD - NOON

...Now at proper human scale, the hairy beast turns out to be the head of a nine-year-old boy, CLYDE DUNKELDORF. Drenched in blood, sweat, tears, and mucus, he struggles desperately to stave off the onslaught of three bigger boys.

CLYDE (V.O.)
Though not quite early enough.

The biggest of the boys, always dressed in a chin-hugging turtleneck, TREVOR, bends over Clyde. Yanks him to his feet.

TREVOR
Get up, freak!!

Clyde takes a moment to catch his breath.

CLYDE (V.O.)
Allow me to introduce Trevor
Winston. And his associates
Nicholas Janszen and Simon Estrin.

The Associates gather round Clyde. Trevor punches him in the stomach. Clyde doubles over. Coughs. Spits blood. NICHOLAS points to the back of Clyde's head.

NICHOLAS
Sick! T, check out this shit!

He points to the crushed mantis and frog corpses smudged into Clyde's hair. Trevor wretches.

TREVOR
Wipe it off, Nick. I wanna watch
him eat it.

NICHOLAS
Fuck that! Make the freak wipe it
off!

Trevor looks Clyde in the eyes.

TREVOR
Eat it, you ugly little shit, or
I'll kick your nuts into your neck.

Clyde raises a hesitant hand to the back of his head.

TREVOR
Now, freak!

Clyde scrapes his fingers through his hair. Grimaces at the sensation. Holds the mess in front of his face. Can't do it. Trevor clenches his fist.

TREVOR
Now.

SIMON
Better do it, Clyde.

Clyde glances at SIMON, then shoves the bloody gunk into his mouth.

TREVOR
Chew it!

Clyde chews a couple times. His face goes green.

TREVOR
Swallow it!

Clyde gulps hard. In less than a second, he vomits it all over his own shoes. The Associates laugh their asses off.

TREVOR
Freak --!!

BRRRING! A recess bell goes off. Trevor motions to the other Associates. They hold Clyde still. Trevor slams his knee as hard as he can into Clyde's testicles.

TREVOR

It's so much fun to hurt you.

Clyde collapses. Shoves his hands protectively into his crotch. Laughing, the Associates run back to class.

Convulsing in agony, Clyde rolls over onto his left side. Reveals his blinking right eye. Twice the size of his left. The normally white sclera a milky green. The socket sticks out of Clyde's skull like the headlight of a Model T.

No way in hell did Clyde deserve the Associates' assault, but they were right. He's a freak.

INT. CLASSROOM

A run-down, under-funded, over-populated shit hole of scuffed floors, scratched desks, and faded walls.

The teacher, MRS. WETZLER, 40s, lined face, shabby dress, lectures a packed classroom. Clyde wanders in. Mrs. Wetzler shoots him an exasperated glare.

MRS. WETZLER

So nice of you to join us, Mr. Dunkeldorf. What happened this time?

Clyde doesn't answer. Mrs. Wetzler sighs.

MRS. WETZLER

Go see Ms. Klein.

Clyde does an about-face.

INT. NURSE'S OFFICE

Clyde sits on the examination table patiently enduring his routine rubbing-alcohol facial. The nurse, MS. KLEIN, 20s, plain but pleasant, inspects every inch of Clyde's beaten face.

MS. KLEIN

How many times has this happened?

CLYDE

A few.

MS. KLEIN

Have you tried reasoning with them?

FLASH TO:

EXT. FIELD - DAY

The Associates beat Clyde bare-fisted.

BACK TO:

INT. NURSE'S OFFICE - AFTERNOON

Clyde nods. Ms. Klein ponders the situation.

MS. KLEIN

Bullies are just insecure. Maybe
you should try being their friends.

CLYDE

I have.

FLASH TO:

EXT. FIELD - DAY

The Associates beat Clyde with splintered planks.

BACK TO:

INT. NURSE'S OFFICE - AFTERNOON

Ms. Klein is appalled.

MS. KLEIN

And no adults have done anything?

CLYDE (V.O.)

She'd only been there for a couple
weeks, so I forgave her ignorance.

FLASH TO:

EXT. FIELD - DAY

While the Associates beat Clyde, the recess supervisor, MR. LITTLETON, 30s, a bum in a uniform, watches with vague interest. He looks away only once to hawk a chunk.

BACK TO:

INT. NURSE'S OFFICE - AFTERNOON

Ms. Klein has stopped cleaning Clyde's wounds.

MS. KLEIN

Have you tried standing up to them?

CLYDE
They're bigger than I am.

MS. KLEIN
Running away?

CLYDE
They're faster than I am.

MS. KLEIN
Avoiding them?

CLYDE
They find me every day after
school.

MS. KLEIN
Every day??

Clyde doesn't respond.

INT. PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE

MR. WINSTON, 40s, silver crew cut, coke-bottle glasses, and a K-Mart suit, cracks his knuckles. The faded community college degree is his one attempt to squeeze an ounce of pride out of his otherwise drab office.

Hung over, Mr. Littleton wobbles next to Mr. Winston. Ms. Klein and Clyde sit across from Mr. Winston. A pile of used tissues at his feet, Trevor balls his eyes out. Blows his nose almost in Clyde's gigantic eye. Mr. Winston cringes.

MR. WINSTON
That's enough, Trevor.

Trevor doesn't stop.

MR. WINSTON
I said that's enough!

Trevor obeys. Blows his nose again. Mr. Winston snatches the tissue. Tosses it onto the pile.

MR. WINSTON
Please continue.

MR. LITTLETON
They sometimes play a little rough,
like boys do, but I never saw no
"abuse."

MR. WINSTON
Thank you, Steve.

Mr. Littleton nods. Leaves. Ms. Klein carefully maintains her temper.

MS. KLEIN
He's lying.

MR. WINSTON
Clearly, Miss Klein, my son is very sorry about what happened.

Trevor shrieks with another round of tears.

MR. WINSTON
Trevor!

Trevor quiets to a snuffle.

MR. WINSTON
Apologize to Clyde.

TREVOR
I'm... s-s-sorry...

MR. WINSTON
Clyde, do you accept Trevor's apology?

Dumbfounded, Clyde stares at Mr. Winston.

MR. WINSTON
Now that that's settled --

MS. KLEIN
That's it?! No punishment! No consequences!

MR. WINSTON
I assure you, Ms. Klein, Trevor will get what he deserves.

MS. KLEIN
Unbelievable. Come on, Clyde.

She takes Clyde's hand. Drags him out of the office. Spits venom at Mr. Winston.

MS. KLEIN
I'll see you in court.

Mr. Winston stands. Sounds a little too scared.

MR. WINSTON
On what charge?!

MS. KLEIN
How about criminal negligence of a
minor at an accredited,
educational, child-care facility?!

Mr. Winston didn't expect that. He collects his thoughts.
Takes a deep breath. Puffs up his chest. Gets in her face.

MR. WINSTON
Miss Klein, I'm not only a
respected educator in this town,
but also good friends with the
mayor and the chief of police.

MS. KLEIN
That's supposed to scare me??

MR. WINSTON
Tiny towns have very good memories.

MS. KLEIN
Then I'll give Brookwood a child-
abuse scandal it'll never forget.

INT. HALLWAY

Ms. Klein kneels to Clyde's level.

MS. KLEIN
Hang in there. It's not over yet.

INT. CLYDE'S HOUSE - EVENING

Freshly pummeled, Clyde enters his tiny, dilapidated house.
Locates a box of Mac 'n' Cheese. Opens the fridge. No milk.
He mixes the macaroni and cheese powder in a bowl.

INT. LIVING ROOM

Clyde takes the bowl out to his MOTHER, 30s, short, fat, and
nasty, planted on an ugly, orange recliner. A smoldering
butt in one hand, and a Pabst in the other, her baggy cheeks
quiver rhythmically to the steady stream of chunky snores.

Clyde sets his Mother's dinner next to her. Detaches the
butt from between her fingers. Puts it out in the full
ashtray. Sets a typewritten note on her lap. Shuffles off
to bed. His Mother's baritone growl makes him flinch.

MOTHER
What do you want, you ugly little
shit?!

Clyde doesn't answer. His Mother picks up the note.

MOTHER
The fuck is this?!

She gives it a quick glance, crumples it up, and throws it at him. It bounces off his huge eye. Clyde picks it up. Takes it to his room.

INT. CLYDE'S ROOM

Blank walls and a grubby mattress. Clyde lies down. Closes his eyes.

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

The class practices cursive-writing. The Associates are mysteriously absent. The recess bell rings. Everyone but Clyde runs off. Mrs. Wetzler goes to his desk.

MRS. WETZLER
Come on, Clyde. Go play.

Clyde silently sets down his books. Puts on his jacket.

INT. HALLWAY

Heading for the doors, Clyde passes a janitor's closet.

SIMON
Hey Clyde!

His voice came from inside the closet. Clyde turns around. Simon opens the door.

SIMON
Come here.

Clyde stays still.

SIMON
I promise I won't hurt you.

Clyde doesn't believe it for a second. Trevor bursts out.

TREVOR
He said get the fuck in here!

He drags Clyde inside. Thrashing and screeching.

INT. CLOSET

Trevor slams the door.

TREVOR
Hold him down.

The Associates do as they're told.

TREVOR
Gag him.

Clyde screams for help. Nicholas shoves a rubber glove into Clyde's mouth. He gags. Spits it out. Screams again. Nicholas punches him. Simon finds a dirty rag. Covers Clyde's mouth. Ties it behind his head.

TREVOR
Get the broom.

Simon finds a long, metal broom.

TREVOR
No. The other one.

In the back of the closet, Simon finds a dirty, old, wooden broomstick. He passes it to Trevor.

TREVOR
Nick. Pocket knife.

Nicholas hesitantly hands it to him. Trevor flips it open. Whittles splinters and notches into the end of the broom.

TREVOR
Turn him over.

Despite the gag in his mouth, Clyde screams and screams. Tears pour down his cheeks.

SIMON
T, you sure?

TREVOR
Shut the fuck up and do it!

The Associates twist Clyde to the floor.

TREVOR
Take off his pants.

They do. Trevor arms himself with the broom.

TREVOR

Nobody makes me cry in front of my
old man.

He assumes the position. Speaks directly into Clyde's ear.

TREVOR

Tell anyone about this and I'll
fucking kill you.

Before Clyde has the chance to agree to Trevor's treaty,
Trevor shoves the broom as hard as he can into Clyde's
trembling backside.

Astounding pain. Clyde's delirious eyes roll into the back
of his head.

Trevor pulls out. The broomstick glistens red. With a
satisfied grin, Trevor admires his work.

Then Trevor rapes the ever-living shit out of Clyde. As hard
as he can.

INT. HALLWAY

Completely empty. Clyde screeches with muffled, pathetic,
desperation...

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. HALLWAY

Still empty. Clyde screeches...

FADE OUT:

INT. HALLWAY

A thin trail of blood leads from the open closet to Clyde.
In the fetal position. Twitching. He makes no sound. Sheds
no tear.

INT. CLASSROOM

Clyde waddles in. Takes great pains not to move his ass
cheeks.

MRS. WETZLER

Clyde, where on earth have you
been??

Clyde sits down. Shudders at the pain.

MRS. WETZLER
Go to Mr. Winston's office.

Clyde isn't quite paying attention. Mrs. Wetzler points a stern finger.

MRS. WETZLER
Now.

Clyde obeys without protest.

INT. HALLWAY

Clyde slowly, very painfully wanders down to Mr. Winston's office.

CLYDE (V.O.)
I waited for days or weeks. I don't even remember anymore. Then I finally decided to get help.

INT. NURSE'S OFFICE - DAY

Breaking into tears, Clyde runs in.

CLYDE
Miss Klein! Miss Klein!

The second he enters, he sees that Miss Klein has been replaced. The NEW NURSE faces him.

NEW NURSE
I'm sorry. Miss Klein's gone. Can I help you with something?

Clyde's tears dry up. He shakes his head. Leaves.

CLYDE (V.O.)
I found out years later that she'd been let go under questionable circumstances. My first and last friend gone. Almost forever.

EXT. FIELD - DAY

The Associates beat Clyde.

CLYDE (V.O.)
Life continued in very much the same way as it had.

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

Clyde does his work with the rest of the class.

CLYDE (V.O.)
My physical wounds eventually
closed, and, after another two
years...

EXT. SCHOOL - MORNING

Clyde climbs the steps on his first day of 7th grade. Before he even reaches the front door, he has the entire student body stopped dead in its tracks. Staring. Clyde pretends not to notice.

CLYDE (V.O.)
The Associates and I entered
different junior high schools. I
wouldn't encounter any of them
again for a long, long time.

EXT. PLAYGROUND - NOON

Sitting by himself, Clyde munches a sandwich.

CLYDE (V.O.)
I'd known for years that I was a
social outcast, so I spent my time
learning, observing.

He watches a couple big kids pick on a short NERD.

CLYDE (V.O.)
I was soon to discover the most
important law of life.

A couple of pretty girls pass in front of him. The whole scene freezes in his mind.

CLYDE (V.O.)
Girls.

He focuses on the center of attention, MELODY SINGER, 12, a blonde, blue-eyed bombshell. And she knows it. Clyde's eyes work her over.

CLYDE (V.O.)
From their hair to their feet and
everything in between, they
controlled everything.

The scene resumes. Clyde spots an overweight girl also sitting by herself.

CLYDE (V.O.)
Well, the pretty ones.

Melody stops when she sees the boys messing with the Nerd. She waves. One of the bullies, BRETT, punches the Nerd. Waves back. Melody smiles wide.

MELODY
You are so mean!

She and her girlfriends continue on their way.

At another corner of the playground, Clyde finds a new group. Two skaters perform tricks for girls.

CLYDE (V.O.)
The second I discovered this law, I also realized how potent it really was.

One skater screws up his trick. The girls ignore him. The other skater pulls his off with panache. The girls clap, cheer, and laugh. Leave the first skater to lick his wounds.

New corner, new group. A good-looking guy talks to a good-looking girl. Then another guy corners them. The two guys get into a fight. The girl steps away, but doesn't run. Instead, she looks on with a delicious smile.

Clyde thinks for a second. Stands up. Goes to a nearby window. Considers his reflection.

CLYDE (V.O.)
I knew I wasn't tall, strong, or pretty. Nor was I dextrous. But there had to be a way.

INT. CLYDE'S HOUSE - AFTERNOON

Clyde finds a pile of unopened bills. The one item his Mother peeked at is an announcement that she may have already won \$10 million. Clyde picks it up. Sees that she's filled out the forms and pasted the stickers.

Clyde sets down the letter. Opens the fridge. Acquires bread and peanut butter. Joins his passed out Mother in front of the TV. Chomps down on his PB.

On the tube, he finds a game show where a fat, middle-aged woman screams elated at her \$10,000 winnings.

Clyde stops chewing. Turns around. Stares at his Mother's purse. Cocks an eyebrow.

EXT. PLAYGROUND - NOON

Running out with the rest of his classmates, Clyde eagerly locates his usual observation point.

CLYDE (V.O.)
I'd formed a theory based on the
previous evening's family time.

Everything goes slow-motion as Clyde observes the other kids swarming to their places.

CLYDE (V.O.)
Now I had to test it.

He pulls out a five dollar bill. Raises it in the air. Everything goes back to normal speed when a hand grabs hold of the bill. Clyde takes the hand. Pulls the hand's owner down to him.

KID
What the fuck?!

The KID is about twice Clyde's size. The Kid tries to look more annoyed than he really is.

CLYDE
You can keep it if you do something
for me.

KID
Or I could kick your ass and leave
you whining for your mommy.

Clyde laughs.

CLYDE
If you kick my ass, I won't give
you any more.

KID
Then I'll kick your ass every day.

CLYDE
I don't bring money every day.

The Kid's confused eyes wander away. He tries to pry the bill from Clyde's hand, but Clyde's grip remains firm.

KID
What do you want?

Clyde points to Brett.

CLYDE
Beat him.

KID
You insane?!

CLYDE
Too much for you?

KID
No, it's just...

CLYDE
How about him?

Clyde points to the little Nerd whom the bullies picked on earlier.

KID
Your money, dude.

Clyde lets go of the cash. The Kid doesn't waste a second. Goes straight over to the Nerd, kicks him in the shin, and, once the Nerd's on the ground, kicks his ribs a few times.

Clyde nods slowly. Embraces the power of what he's just discovered.

He now notices his classmates. The jeans, shirts, shoes, everything. The ones who have less beat each other for more. The ones who have more use what they have to compete for each other's attention.

CLYDE (V.O.)
A philosopher once claimed that money is the root of all evil. He obviously never had any.

He stands up.

CLYDE (V.O.)
I'd proved my theory. Now it was time to exploit it.

INT. BROOKWOOD PICAYUNE - DAY

In a cramped office, Clyde sits across from the paper route SUPERVISOR, mid-20s, dweeby.

The Supervisor does his best to keep his attention on Clyde's application, but can't help sneaking the occasional glance at his eye.

SUPERVISOR

Uh, well, the thing is... You don't seem to have any experience.

CLYDE

It said no experience was necessary.

SUPERVISOR

Oh, well, yeah. But you can't miss any school. Gotta get your education.

CLYDE

I'm happy to do the morning shift.

SUPERVISOR

Huh, well... um...

He racks his brains. Grasps at straws.

SUPERVISOR

We just filled the position.

CLYDE

Why would you bother with an interview if --?

Caught, the Supervisor jumps up. Extends his hand. Doesn't wait for Clyde to shake. Pulls Clyde out of his chair. Pushes him as politely as possible out of the room.

SUPERVISOR

Thanks for coming!

He closes the door.

EXT. BROOKWOOD PICAYUNE

Disappointed, Clyde waits outside. The Supervisor hastily removes the window ad. Stomping away, Clyde spots a hopeful kid heading towards the Picayune. As they draw closer, the kid stares at Clyde.

CLYDE

Not hiring.

He points back to the Picayune. The kid takes a few steps. Turns around. Looks at Clyde as if Clyde were from another planet, then continues on inside.

Clyde spins around. The ad's back up. Noticing Clyde's renewed attention, the Supervisor hurries out, drags the new applicant inside, and removes the ad.

INT. STRIP MALL - AFTERNOON

For the next few hours, Clyde goes in and out of every business. Pretzels, donut shops, bookstores, and pet supply stores all send him packing. Eyes stare, heads shake, and doors slam.

EXT. SCHOOL - MORNING

Clyde hikes into school. After his downtrodden weekend, he keeps his eyes fixed on the ground --

A dollar sign. A bunch in a row. Clyde scans his surroundings. Locates a bulletin board. Runs over. Discovers a hand-written ad.

"Help wanted. Must possess: strong organizational skills, obsessive attention to detail. \$\$\$Ca\$h\$\$\$."

The only contact information is an address. Clyde snatches the ad.

INT. THE OLD MAN'S HOUSE - DAY

Resembling a 19th century gentleman's club, the main room consists of an assortment of leather furniture, foreign rugs, and a small reception desk.

At the desk sits THE OLD MAN in a distinguished suit and spectacles. His harsh eyes reside within cavernous sockets draped in a long, wrinkled face.

He silently goes about busywork. Calculates on an abacus. Scribbles the figures with a feather pen on pristine, virgin parchment.

A small, brass bell alerts him to Clyde's entrance. The Old Man doesn't lift his eyes.

THE OLD MAN

Good day?

Clyde enters with caution.

THE OLD MAN

Are you coming in, or loitering?

Clyde perks up. Goes to the desk.

THE OLD MAN

And what exactly is it that I can
do for you this fine day?

He finally lifts his eyes. Doesn't scream, doesn't flinch,
doesn't stare. His lack of a reaction to Clyde's eye leaves
Clyde speechless.

THE OLD MAN

Unless I'm grossly mistaken,
society still holds high regard for
punctual responses to direct
questions posed by one's elders.

CLYDE

I'm here about the --

THE OLD MAN

Speak up!

Clyde does his best not to shake in his boots.

CLYDE

I was wondering --

THE OLD MAN

Seven desperately mundane words out
of your pitifully inarticulate
mouth, and I still have no idea
what you want!

Clyde opens his mouth for a third attempt.

THE OLD MAN

Either acquire a touch of
testicular fortitude, or get the
hell out of my office, you ugly
little shit!!

Clyde snaps. Blurts it out in one jumbled, spit-spraying
mess.

CLYDE

Fuck-you-motherfucker!!

He lunges for the Old Man. Wraps his fingers around the Old
Man's ancient, wrinkled neck. Squeezes as hard as he can.
Manages a good one or two seconds before --

The Old Man deftly smacks Clyde's arms away, vaults over the
desk, knocks Clyde to the floor, and pins him there with his
left arm on Clyde's neck.

The Old Man pulls a letter opener from his pocket. Clyde's eyes snap open. The crazy fuck's gonna butcher him. The Old Man admires his implement.

THE OLD MAN
I wonder, if I were to slaughter
you right now, would anyone ever
notice?

He flips his letter opener.

THE OLD MAN
Or would your rotting corpse
collect dust for a millennium...

He smiles at the fantasy dancing in his head.

THE OLD MAN
...only to be discovered by an
ambitious paleontologist who tosses
it aside along with the rest of his
discarded refuse?

His eyes meet Clyde's.

THE OLD MAN
Hmmm?

CLYDE
Please...

THE OLD MAN
Never beg. It's a sign of
weakness.

He places the letter opener just below Clyde's chin.

CLYDE
No --!!

The Old Man slices Clyde's neck. To Clyde's amazement, he's still alive. He touches his neck. Three tiny drops of blood decorate his fingers.

THE OLD MAN
Now, what was it you wanted?

CLYDE
A job.

THE OLD MAN
And why should I give it to you?

Clyde's confidence rises a notch.

CLYDE
Because I'm the only one here.

THE OLD MAN
How do you know there haven't been
other applicants?

CLYDE
The only tracks entering this shit
hole are mine!

The Old Man releases Clyde's neck. Gets off of him. Extends
a hand. Clyde sits up. Accepts the Old Man's hand. The Old
Man pulls him to his feet. Dusts off his shoulders.

THE OLD MAN
You have potential, but a lot to
learn. First lesson: titanium
testicles are the beginning of
strength, not the end.

Clyde's stunned. Not yet sure what to make of this lunatic.

THE OLD MAN
Use profanity in my presence again
and I'll kill you.

Clyde nods. The Old Man sits behind his desk. Motions for
Clyde to stand in front.

THE OLD MAN
I assume you read the advertisement
in its entirety?

Clyde nods.

THE OLD MAN
Speak up!

CLYDE
Yes.

THE OLD MAN
The job is simple, but grueling.
Report here tomorrow morning at six
o' clock, and then again
immediately after your schooling.

CLYDE
What'll I do?

The Old Man smacks him.

THE OLD MAN
You will speak when spoken to and
never ask questions.

CLYDE
Yes, sir.

The Old Man smiles at Clyde's touch of formality.

THE OLD MAN
You will do exactly and only what I
say.

CLYDE
Yes, sir.

The Old Man gives him a dismissive wave. Goes back to his
figures. Clyde stands there a second. Nods. Gets out.

INT. CLYDE'S ROOM - MORNING

It's still dark outside. Clyde packs for school.

INT. THE OLD MAN'S HOUSE

As he closes the door behind him, Clyde finds the Old Man
glaring at him.

THE OLD MAN
You're late.

CLYDE
I'm five minutes early, sir.

THE OLD MAN
Not according to my clock.

CLYDE
I'm sorry --

THE OLD MAN
Never apologize. It's a sign of
weakness.

CLYDE
Yes, sir.

The Old Man leads him into another room.

INT. RECORD COLLECTION ROOM

Packed shelves, leaning stacks, bursting boxes. The Old Man points to a nearby spot in front of an overflowing box.

THE OLD MAN

They're in disarray. You will put them in order.

Clyde grabs a record. The Old Man slaps him hard upside the back of his head. Clyde drops the record back on the pile. Tries another. Another hard slap greets his head. Clyde tries again. This slap is twice as painful as the last.

The Old Man sighs. Picks up one of the records Clyde just touched. Picks up one Clyde hasn't touched. Spins the two records on his pinky fingers.

THE OLD MAN

What's the difference?

Clyde inspects the records.

CLYDE

They're by different artists.

The Old Man shakes his head.

THE OLD MAN

No, no, no, you little idiot. Look closer.

Clyde does. The Old Man turns one record to face Clyde.

THE OLD MAN

One, by the grace of God, is sans ta main dégoûtante.

He turns the other to face Clyde. Though Clyde doesn't speak French, he does see his own fingerprints lingering on the record's edge. He then casts his eyes on the box to which the Old Man had previously assigned him.

Each of the records Clyde handled bears the stigma of his touch.

THE OLD MAN

If you leave tracks, they will find you.

Clyde fights the temptation to ask any questions.

CLYDE

Yes, sir.

The Old Man offers the two records. Clyde very carefully slips them onto his own pinky fingers.

THE OLD MAN

Finish before school, and you'll be well compensated.

CLYDE

Yes, sir.

INT. RECORD COLLECTION ROOM

Clyde races around in a desperate attempt to reorganize the Old Man's records. Clyde moves boxes, moves them back, shuffles stacks, reshuffles them, but ultimately focuses his attention solely on one box.

The Old Man stands behind him.

THE OLD MAN

Finished?

CLYDE

With this box. They're arranged alphabetically by genre, sub-genre, artist, then album title.

THE OLD MAN

What about the others?

CLYDE

I didn't get to them.

THE OLD MAN

Then I'm afraid you'll only receive partial compensation.

CLYDE

Yes, sir.

The Old Man hands him an envelope.

THE OLD MAN

I'll expect you at three o' clock.

CLYDE

I don't get off school 'til 3:15.

THE OLD MAN

Then I'll expect you at twenty
minutes past.

He leaves. Clyde opens the envelope. His eyes open wide.
His mouth drops open. A wad of hundreds.

EXT. SCHOOL - MORNING

In a brand new jacket and jeans, Clyde struts proudly into
school. Not many heads turn, but the ones who do can't keep
their eyes off him. Even Brett takes notice.

Clyde finds Melody. Smiles. Her eyes find his toothy grin.
Roll in disgust. Clyde keeps going.

INT. RECORD COLLECTION ROOM - AFTERNOON

Over the process of several days and weeks, Clyde patiently
organizes the thousands of records.

CLYDE (V.O.)

I worked every morning and every
night. In the end, it took me more
than three weeks to finish.

INT. THE OLD MAN'S HOUSE

Clyde finds the Old Man.

CLYDE (V.O.)

Was it worth it?

INT. RECORD COLLECTION ROOM

Clyde shows off his system. The Old Man nods. Hands Clyde a
manila folder. Then wanders among the shelves. Locates a
specific record. No label. He crosses back to Clyde.
Offers it to him.

CLYDE

Thank you, sir.

THE OLD MAN

What's the matter?

CLYDE

Nothing, sir.

THE OLD MAN

Never lie to me, Clyde.

CLYDE
I don't have a player.

The Old Man leaves the room. Reappears with a shabby turntable.

THE OLD MAN
This should do.

Clyde looks down at his earnings, the record, and the player.

CLYDE (V.O.)
Absolutely.

The Old Man goes to leave.

THE OLD MAN
I'll see you bright and early tomorrow morning.

CLYDE
I thought I was done.

The Old Man faces him.

THE OLD MAN
This task was only the first of many.

CLYDE
Yes, sir.

INT. CLYDE'S HOUSE - EVENING

Clyde sneaks past his Mother into his room.

INT. CLYDE'S ROOM

Clyde closes the door carefully. Hooks up the record player. Places the record delicately on the spindle. Turns it on. Mesmerizing chants flow out of the machine's tiny speakers.

CLYDE (V.O.)
It was a revelation. These amazing sounds would calm my rage better than any drug ever could.

INT. THE OLD MAN'S HOUSE - MORNING

Clyde arranges books. The Old Man presents him with his compensation and a copy of The Prince.

CLYDE (V.O.)
Weeks turned into months...

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL - MORNING

Now about 15, Clyde enters his high school. Doesn't even notice the myriad of onlookers.

CLYDE (V.O.)
...and months into years.

EXT. THE OLD MAN'S HOUSE - AFTERNOON

Clyde rips monstrous weeds out of cracked, dry earth. The Old Man gives him his compensation and a pair of gardening gloves.

CLYDE (V.O.)
The wisdom I gained would become a
thousand times more valuable than
any currency.

INT. CLYDE'S ROOM - NIGHT

Clyde scribbles notes in a journal. They read: "Life holds no respect for the weak."

INT. LOCKER ROOM - DAY

Clyde hides behind a locker. Watches as Brett and his friend kick the shit out of the same Nerd from years before. Every time the Nerd tries to get up, they kick him back down.

INT. CLYDE'S ROOM - NIGHT

Clyde scribbles more notes. This time: "Never underestimate the powers of greed, advertising, and stupidity."

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

Clyde sits on a curb watching two girls debate the relative quality of their footwear. Apart from their respective logos, the shoes are identical. But it doesn't matter. After a couple shoves, the girls throw down.

INT. CLYDE'S ROOM - NIGHT

A final note to the journal. This one is: "You can buy anyone, though not always with money."

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

Clyde marches up to Brett and his buddies.

BRETT
The fuck do you want?!

Clyde hands him a manila envelope.

BRETT
The fuck is this?!

Clyde doesn't answer. Spins on his heel. Goes his merry way.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL - AFTERNOON

Clyde eats his lunch alone in the parking lot. Brett's on an intercept course. Clyde doesn't jump or flinch. Brett grabs him by the shirt. Lifts him to his feet. Clyde maintains his calm.

CLYDE
Can I help?

BRETT
How the fuck did you know I'm failing English?!

CLYDE
Well, honestly...

FLASH TO:

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

With no one else around, Clyde sneaks in, finds a stack of papers on the teacher's desk, puts on his gardening gloves, and flips through the papers to find a big, fat "F."

BACK TO:

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL - AFTERNOON

Clyde shrugs.

CLYDE
...I'm surprised everyone doesn't know.

Brett lifts him higher. Shoves a paper in his face.

BRETT
Where the fuck did you get this?!

Clyde checks it out as if he'd never seen it before. It's another English paper, with Brett's name on it.

FLASH TO:

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

Clyde takes a few moments to study Brett's "F" paper.

INT. LIBRARY - DAY

Armed with a copy of Brett's paper, Clyde does a web search. Comes up with "fuck-your-professor.com."

EXT. CLYDE'S HOUSE - MORNING

Clyde slips a manila folder into the mail.

EXT. CLYDE'S HOUSE - AFTERNOON

Clyde removes a package labeled "fuck-your-professor.com" from the mail.

BACK TO:

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL - AFTERNOON

Clyde smiles an impish smile.

CLYDE
I have my ways.

BRETT
This for real, Dunkeldorf?

CLYDE
Turn it in and find out.

BRETT
What if I get an "F"?

CLYDE
Then you'll be in the exact same
place you are now.

He looks at where they're standing.

CLYDE
Well, not literally.

Brett doesn't say anything. Lowers Clyde to his feet. Eyes the paper.

CLYDE
Do let me know how it turns out.

He wanders away.

EXT. CLYDE'S HOUSE - EVENING

As Clyde enters his house, he hears a rustling in some nearby bushes.

CLYDE
It's about time you came by.

Caught, Brett fumbles out of the bushes.

BRETT
I got a C-.

CLYDE
Congratulations.

He moves past. Brett stops him.

CLYDE
Pardon.

BRETT
Why didn't I get an A?

CLYDE
That would've looked suspicious.
Be patient. Improvement will come.

Brett lets the logic roll around in his head. He maintains his grip on Clyde.

CLYDE
If you don't mind.

BRETT
What do you want?

CLYDE
Protection. Position. You supply
me with those, I supply you with an
education.

BRETT
For how long?

CLYDE
As long as I need.

BRETT
And if I don't?

CLYDE
I'll expose you.

BRETT
Yeah, what if I expose you?

CLYDE
You wouldn't know where to begin.

He goes inside.

INT. THE OLD MAN'S HOUSE - MORNING

The Old Man sits at his desk. Coughs up phlegm. Spits it into an ugly, green handkerchief. Clyde scrubs the floor.

THE OLD MAN
What did I teach you about gambling?

CLYDE
"Only bet if you either know you're going to win, or have nothing to lose."

THE OLD MAN
Which one applies?

CLYDE
Both. I know he'll honor our agreement simply because he gave it his attention.

THE OLD MAN
That's a risk.

CLYDE
A calculated one, yes.

THE OLD MAN
What about the other?

CLYDE
There's nothing he can take from me, so I have nothing to lose.

THE OLD MAN
Interesting. You seem to be applying your lessons well.

CLYDE
And there's one more that applies.

THE OLD MAN
What's that?

CLYDE
"Everyone fears something."

The Old Man coughs.

THE OLD MAN
What does this boy fear?

CLYDE
Getting caught.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL

The second Clyde shows up, Brett rushes to greet him. High-fives him. Walks Clyde over to his buddies. They welcome Clyde. Everyone else is stunned. Clyde, Brett, and Brett's buddies go inside.

FADE OUT:

INT. THE OLD MAN'S HOUSE - AFTERNOON

Clyde, now 18, enters. The Old Man gives him a small, shiny, black package. Clyde opens it. Nothing but black. Clyde reaches in. Pulls out a deep black eye patch. Handles it curiously.

CLYDE
What am I supposed to do with it?

THE OLD MAN
You really can be trying sometimes,
you know?

CLYDE
But... my eye isn't broken.

The Old Man snatches the eye patch, grips Clyde by the shoulder, shoves the eye patch in Clyde's face, and, in an almost hypnotic tone:

THE OLD MAN
Without this, you will always be a
victim. Wear it, and you will
always be a hero.

Clyde accepts it. Places the patch over his eye without actually putting on the string.

CLYDE
What'll I say when people ask?

THE OLD MAN
You earned it in the war.

CLYDE
Which war?

THE OLD MAN
Does it matter?

EXT. MELODY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

A comfortable home on the better side of town. People everywhere. Clyde, Brett, and Brett's buddies arrive.

Crossing the line of social acceptance, the instant Brett and his buddies step onto the property with Clyde, the crowd outside stops and stares. Brett grabs the next guy he sees.

BRETT
What the fuck are you lookin' at,
bitch?!

He shoves the guy back into his group of friends. With Brett's social dominance restored, everyone goes back to partying.

INT. MELODY'S HOUSE

Clyde leaves Brett and his buddies. Finds himself a beer. Stares out the window at the people playing in the pool. Turns his attention back inside. Spots Melody in the kitchen.

INT. KITCHEN

Clyde goes straight for Melody. She doesn't notice at first, then she straightens up. An arrogant smirk curls at the edges of her lips.

CLYDE
Hello, Melody.

Melody says nothing. Looks down at him as if his ridiculous charade were about to end.

CLYDE
Lovely party --

MELODY

You don't belong here.

CLYDE

I assure you, I was invited --

MELODY

I didn't say you weren't invited,
you ugly little shit. I said you
don't fucking belong.

She takes a step toward him. Gestures to the gathering crowd.

MELODY

Get it through your head, Clyde.
Everyone hates you. Sure you get
Brett to bring you, but that won't
make us like you.

She looks him square in his monstrous eye.

MELODY

You're nothing, Clyde. Nobody.
You won't contribute anything to
this world, and then you'll die.
Know what the best part is?

CLYDE

What's that?

MELODY

Less than a year after you're dead,
no one will remember that you ever
existed. Even if someone does,
they won't give a fuck.

Clyde smiles, not about to admit social defeat.

CLYDE

I will have you, Melody. Some day.

MELODY

Only in the murk of your midnight
knuckle fuck.

She gives him the gesture. Struts off. Clyde eyes the crowd around him. Brett meets Melody at the other end of the kitchen. She whispers something in his ear. He whispers back.

BRETT

No fuckin' way!

MELODY

Then forget about pounding my pussy
ever again, bitch!

Clyde backs away to the door. Brett steps up. Looms over him. Frowns. Picks Clyde up. Slings Clyde over his shoulder. Carries him out. Clyde's scared, but doesn't say anything.

EXT. MELODY'S HOUSE

Brett marches straight for the pool. The entire party watches with gleeful anticipation. Everyone in the pool climbs out.

BRETT

Drink up, Dunkeldorf!

He dumps Clyde in.

INT. POOL

Clyde struggles to swim, surface, breathe.

EXT. POOL

Clyde comes up for air. Wipes his eyes. The whole party laughs and laughs and laughs. The sound of the laughter blurs into white noise in Clyde's ears.

Clyde climbs out. Walks straight up to Brett. Spits some water out. The crowd quiets down. Waiting.

MELODY

Do it, motherfucker!!

Clyde shakes his head. Brett nails him in the face. Blood sprays out in a thin line across the pavement. Clyde hits the ground. Brett beats Clyde. Punch after brutal punch. Blood everywhere.

MELODY

Hard.

Brett beats harder.

MELODY

Harder!

Brett beats Clyde as hard as he can.

MELODY

HARDER!!!

Brett jumps off Clyde. Faces Melody. Glares at her. Silence. Clyde lifts his pummelled head. Drags himself to the pool's edge. Hoists himself up against the diving board. His bloodshot eyes find Brett.

CLYDE
You're through.

Now to Melody. Clyde's face is a monolith of cold hatred. With a smile:

CLYDE
Some day.

He turns away. Stumbles off.

MELODY
You better fucking leave, you
fucking freak!!

INT. THE OLD MAN'S HOUSE - MORNING

Clyde enters, his face covered in bandages.

CLYDE
You were right, sir! The gamble
was a risk. But now, I've tasted
power! Real power!

FLASH TO:

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

A TEACHER sorts his mail. Finds a stuffed manila envelope. No return address. The Teacher opens it. Term papers and on-line transaction records. With Brett's name all over them.

INT. BRETT'S HOUSE

The Teacher and the PRINCIPAL show Brett and his parents Clyde's evidence. The Principal shakes his head. Brett's face falls. His FATHER backhands him.

EXT. BRETT'S HOUSE

Brett cowers as his Father tosses all Brett's shit out on the lawn.

BACK TO:

INT. THE OLD MAN'S HOUSE - MORNING

Clyde stops. Contemplates what he did to Brett.

CLYDE
It was only fleeting, but...

FLASH TO:

EXT. CLYDE'S HOUSE - DAY

Brett kicks the front door in.

INT. CLYDE'S HOUSE

Brett finds Clyde's Mother on her recliner, but no sign of Clyde.

BACK TO:

INT. THE OLD MAN'S HOUSE - MORNING

Clyde suddenly notices that no one's home.

CLYDE
Sir?

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM

Clyde sits with the Old Man in a small, private room. Clyde can't help but get a bit misty.

THE OLD MAN
Never cry, Clyde. It's a sign of weakness.

CLYDE
Yes, sir. I'm --

He catches himself mid-apology. Wipes his tears and nose on his sleeve. Sniffs back more tears.

CLYDE
How long do you have?

THE OLD MAN
A few days at most.

CLYDE
Is there anything I can do?

THE OLD MAN
Most of my affairs have been in order for quite some time. There are, however, two small matters.

CLYDE
Anything, sir.

The Old Man gestures to the night stand. There Clyde finds an envelope addressed to him.

THE OLD MAN
Don't open it yet. Come here.

Clyde scoots closer.

THE OLD MAN
No matter what happens, you must not open that envelope until the moment you have achieved everything you ever desired.

EXT. THE OLD MAN'S HOUSE - AFTERNOON

Clyde races into the house.

THE OLD MAN (V.O.)
The other matter is in my personal safe.

INT. THE OLD MAN'S HOUSE

Clyde finds a small, black safe behind the Old Man's desk.

THE OLD MAN (V.O.)
Inside you'll find what you'll need to get started on the road to fulfilling your desires.

Clyde spins the combination. Pops the safe open. An envelope. Clyde tears it open. A hand-drawn map. And a key.

EXT. THE OLD MAN'S HOUSE

In the backyard, Clyde digs a huge hole. Unearths a suitcase and several locked boxes. Opens the suitcase. A mountain of cash. And some more keys.

Later, Clyde's dug up about a dozen large boxes. Three of them opened. More cash.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

Clyde listens earnestly to the Old Man.

THE OLD MAN
Leave me now.

Clyde nods. Stands. Slips out.

CLYDE (V.O.)
He was dead within hours.

INT. CLYDE'S ROOM - MORNING

Clyde packs some bags. Places a college acceptance letter on top of his high school diploma.

CLYDE (V.O.)
I was gone within days.

EXT. COLLEGE CAMPUS - DAY

Wearing his new eye patch, Clyde looks exactly like every other incoming freshman. Only shorter.

INT. DINING HALL

Clyde sits alone with his lunch. As he puts the first forkful in his mouth --

JOE
The fuck's wrong with your eye?

Clyde turns to find a meathead with a goatee, JOE, glaring at him from a couple tables away. With Joe sits RANDALL, a thin preppie.

CLYDE
Damaged in the war.

JOE
Yeah, which one?

CLYDE
I... can't talk about it.

JOE
What, you all post-traumatic? Did some shit? Signed some forms?

CLYDE
Something like that.

Joe glares at him. Clyde glares right back. Joe laughs out loud.

JOE
I'm just fuckin' with you, man!

He stands. Pulls a chair out. Gestures for Clyde to join. Clyde wrestles with this new experience. Finally, brings his tray over. Joe reaches over. Offers Clyde his hand. They shake.

JOE

Joe. Resident douche. This is Randall.

RANDALL

Resident lush.

CLYDE

Clyde. Resident frosh.

RANDALL

Why were you off sitting alone?

CLYDE

Seemed like the place to be.

INT. LECTURE HALL - MORNING

Clyde sits near the front of a large pack of angry women. Their PROFESSOR, a buzzed cut, middle-aged woman, leads the discussion. A particularly pissed off GIRL wearing a Hello Kitty baby doll rants.

GIRL

The United States is the so-called leader of the free world and we've only had a few women in Congress, and not one female president!

PROFESSOR

An excellent point. Especially considering that we preach so much tolerance and equality. You'll note in Satterwhite's essay --

CLYDE

Women don't vote for women.

All heads turn to Clyde. The Professor encourages Clyde.

PROFESSOR

A little louder, Clyde.

Clyde stands.

CLYDE

Women don't vote for women.

GIRL

That's such sexist bullshit!

PROFESSOR

We are each entitled to our own opinion. Clyde?

CLYDE

It's simple arithmetic. Women make up more than half the population. More than half of those live in the most populous urban centers.

He faces the army of bloodthirsty women.

CLYDE

In nearly every election, there's a higher voter turn out among women than men.

He speaks to the Girl specifically.

CLYDE

If it were truly a priority among women to have a female president, we would have had one by now.

He addresses their Professor.

CLYDE

Women don't vote for women.

GIRL

Fucking asshole chauvinist!

The room erupts in expletive furor. Clyde sits. The Professor struggles to contain the explosion.

PROFESSOR

Ladies! Enough! Quiet down!

The crowd quiets a little.

PROFESSOR

Each of us is entitled to our own opinion, no matter how much others might disagree, nor how flawed that opinion might be.

Despite the Professor's verbal jab, Clyde grins to himself. Quite satisfied.

EXT. COLLEGE CAMPUS

The class lets out. Clyde heads off to his next class. Several of his classmates flip him off and call him names behind his back. Clyde stops. Faces them.

Except for the louder, prouder ones, the girls pretend like nothing happened. Clyde chuckles to himself. Gets on his way.

ELISE, a pretty girl in overalls, heads after Clyde, but not so closely that he'd suspect she's heading after him. She calls to him.

ELISE

Hey!

Clyde stops. Faces her.

ELISE

I liked what you said in there.

CLYDE

Pardon?

ELISE

Women not voting for women. It was right on.

CLYDE

Thank you.

ELISE

It's such a tragedy that in post-feminist America, women use any excuse they can to shirk responsibility for their own vote.

CLYDE

Right.

ELISE

And don't worry about Esther.

CLYDE

Who?

ELISE

The Hello Kitty shirt? Called you a chauvinist?

CLYDE

Didn't even notice.

ELISE
Yeah, she's rich. Can't get a
date. Hates men. Real cunt. And
I never use that word.

CLYDE
I see.

ELISE
I'm Elise.

CLYDE
Clyde.

ELISE
So I heard. Where you headed?

CLYDE
Class.

He turns to go.

ELISE
You always this much of an asshole,
or am I just special?

Clyde freezes. Faces her.

CLYDE
What??

ELISE
You're not gonna ask me to get
coffee or anything?

CLYDE
Was I supposed to?

Elise stares at him.

ELISE
Are you seriously this retarded?

CLYDE
...Yes.

Elise shakes her head.

ELISE
Whatever, dude.

She turns to go. Clyde has no idea how to respond. Says the
first thing that fumbles out of his mouth.

CLYDE
Wait. Please. Elise. I'm...

He pauses, heeding the Old Man's rule, then dares a new direction.

CLYDE
Sorry.

He winces at his apology, not sure if it was the right move. Elise stops. Faces him.

CLYDE
I lack certain social graces.

ELISE
That's a fucking understatement.

CLYDE
Would you like to get coffee?

ELISE
When?

CLYDE
After this class?

ELISE
Busy. How about five?

CLYDE
That'll work.

ELISE
Come find me outside Sanborn.

With that, she grins smugly. Struts off. Clyde stands there, utterly baffled, then gets on his way.

INT. DORM ROOM

Clyde chats with Randall and Joe.

JOE
Let me get this straight. You've never been on a date?

CLYDE
No.

JOE
Not one? Ever?

Clyde shakes his head.

JOE
Shit. What do you think?

RANDALL
They say be yourself, but...

JOE
You don't wanna put her to sleep.
No offense.

CLYDE
None taken.

RANDALL
Be happy.

JOE
Kiss up.

RANDALL
Let her lead the conversation.

JOE
But say stuff. Interesting chick
stuff.

RANDALL
Shopping.

JOE
Gossip.

RANDALL
And promise us one thing?

CLYDE
What's that?

RANDALL
Don't fuck it up.

EXT. COLLEGE CAMPUS

Clyde finds Elise waiting for him outside her dorm.

CLYDE
You look very nice.

ELISE
You rehearsed that.

Caught, Clyde turns red.

ELISE
That's cute. You're trying. But
you're not a Jedi yet, young
Padawan.

CLYDE
Pardon?

They get on their way.

ELISE
Jedi? Vader? Yoda?

The references are entirely lost on Clyde. Elise laughs.
Does her best Yoda impression.

ELISE
Truly retarded you are!

INT. COFFEE SHOP

Elise sips her cappuccino as she regales Clyde with her life
story. Clyde doesn't touch his coffee. Elise takes out a
pack of More 120s and a lighter. Slips a cigarette out of
the pack. Offers the pack to Clyde. He shakes his head.

ELISE
Do you mind?

Clyde shakes his head.

ELISE
So bad, yet so relaxing.

She lights up. Blows a relieved, thin stream of smoke over
Clyde's head. Smiles.

ELISE
Anyway, that's when I realized the
only real way to change anything is
to get involved, even if only on a
seemingly insignificant level.

She stops.

ELISE
I'm boring you.

CLYDE
Not at all.

ELISE
You haven't touched your coffee.

CLYDE
I don't drink coffee.

ELISE
Then why'd you buy it?

CLYDE
Seemed like the thing to do.

ELISE
You mind?

She eyes Clyde's coffee. Clyde passes her his mug.

CLYDE
Be my guest.

ELISE
Thanks.

She sips. Drags deep on her More. Blows another long, thin smoke stream over Clyde's head.

ELISE
Mm. Nicotine. Caffeine. Where would society be without drugs?

She collects her thoughts.

ELISE
Now, where was I? Oh, that's right. I was done. It was your turn. Tell me about yourself.

CLYDE
There's nothing to tell.

ELISE
Bullshit.

CLYDE
Elise, I'm serious. My life has been uneventful.

ELISE
This is a futile pursuit, Clyde. I will find out more about you one way or another. Can I ask you one question?

CLYDE
Anything.

ELISE
Was your eye really damaged in a
war?

Clyde freezes. His mind goes on autopilot. His fingers find his backpack. The words come, but he doesn't know where from.

CLYDE
I have to go.

He stands. Elise can tell she crossed the line, but she plays it casual. Takes a final drag off her More. Stubs it out.

ELISE
So do I.

They leave.

EXT. COLLEGE CAMPUS

Clyde and Elise stroll across campus.

CLYDE
When can I see you again?

ELISE
I thought you'd never ask.

CLYDE
Tomorrow night? I'll take you to
dinner.

ELISE
Mr. Dunkeldorf, are you asking me
out on a real date?

CLYDE
A real date.

ELISE
It would be my pleasure.

They stop. Like the bumbling fool he's become, Clyde gives her a quick, stilted peck on the cheek. Elise smiles.

CLYDE
See you tomorrow.

ELISE
Can't wait.

They part ways.

INT. DEPARTMENT STORE

Clyde pores over suit after suit. Can't decide. Purchases a couple of racks.

INT. DORM ROOM

Clyde fusses over one suit combination after another. Settles on a surprisingly tasteful jacket and slacks combo.

EXT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Elise's in a sexy patterned dress with sandals and her hair up. Dinner's been finished for a while. She and Clyde both sip red wine. Elise smokes casually.

ELISE
And my grandpa's laughing so hard,
he can't even finish the story.
"Slopped her drippers! Slopped her
drippers!"

She laughs. Clyde enjoys the story as well. Smiles wide.

ELISE
You have a great smile. You should
show it more.

CLYDE
As long as I'm around you, I don't
think that'll be a problem.

ELISE
You saying I'm funny?

CLYDE
Hysterical.

ELISE
Do mine ears deceive me, or was
that a compliment?

CLYDE
It was a compliment.

ELISE
Well thank you, Mr. Dunkeldorf. I
do consider myself quite the
raconteur. Now it's your turn.

CLYDE
I told you. I don't have any
stories.

ELISE
You must have one.

CLYDE
Alright, one. I once went fishing
with my dad when I was a kid. We
caught a 30 pound salmon. It was
delicious and lasted a week.

Elise laughs out loud.

CLYDE
That was a story!

ELISE
That you made up!

Clyde opens his mouth to protest.

ELISE
You never caught a 30 pounder
because you never went fishing with
your dad because you never had a
dad.

Clyde looks away.

ELISE
I'm sorry. That wasn't cool. I
shouldn't have pushed you.

CLYDE
No, it's fine.

He looks her in the eyes. Holds her hand.

CLYDE
Shall we?

ELISE
Let's.

EXT. ELISE'S HOUSE

Clyde and Elise arrive at a cute little craftsman bungalow.

ELISE
This is my first semester off
campus. I can't tell you how great
it is. No roommates. No piles of
dirty dishes. Except mine.

They go inside.

INT. ELISE'S HOUSE

It's tastefully decorated with works by local artists. Elise
closes the door behind Clyde. Takes his hand. Leads him
around the house.

ELISE
Now the minute tour. Living room.

INT. KITCHEN

Elise leads Clyde into the small kitchen area.

ELISE
Kitchen.

She points outside to the backyard.

ELISE
Night club.

INT. BATHROOM

Elise points out the facilities.

ELISE
Bathroom.

INT. ELISE'S BEDROOM

Elise closes the door behind them. Clyde finds a cozy,
comfortable bedroom with a nice, roomy bed.

ELISE
And bedroom.

CLYDE
Very lovely.

Elise lets her hair down. Shakes it over her shoulders.

ELISE
I don't know about you, but I'm
pretty tired.

CLYDE
Me too.

He goes for the door. Elise pouts.

ELISE
No good night kiss?

Clyde crosses over to her. Gives her another peck on the
cheek.

ELISE
That was pathetic.

CLYDE
Sorry --

ELISE
Stop apologizing and kiss me.

Clyde clumsily puts his arms around her. Gives her a nervous
smooch with a touch of tongue.

ELISE
Getting warmer.

She grabs his shirt. Pulls him toward the bed. Falls back.
He falls with her. On top of her. They giggle.

CLYDE
Sorry --

He stops himself.

CLYDE
You don't seem tired.

ELISE
You don't either.

Clyde shakes his head.

ELISE
Relax.

She kisses him. With tongue. Finally, Clyde relaxes. They
kiss for a little while. Clyde freezes. Sits up.

ELISE
What's wrong?

CLYDE
Elise, I've never... I don't know
what to do.

ELISE
I'll teach you.

She sits up with him. Eases him out of his jacket. Kisses his face and neck. Clyde kisses her. They kiss each other. She's a great teacher. They take each other's clothes off.

Elise removes her bra. Clyde stares at her breasts. Instinct takes over. He closes his lips around a nipple. Sucks lightly. Elise moans her approval. Stops him. Lies him down on his back.

Elise goes to remove Clyde's eye patch. Clyde whispers.

CLYDE
Not yet.

Elise undoes Clyde's pants. Pulls them off. Reaches into his underwear. Strokes him. Clyde gasps --

It's over. Clyde turns red. Laughs at himself.

CLYDE
I'm so sorry --

Elise kisses him. Smiles. Removes her soiled hand. Grabs a tissue. Wipes off. Gets back into bed. Places Clyde's hand on her underwear. Clyde pulls them off. Scoots down. Buries his head between her legs.

Elise groans. Shouts repeatedly. In a couple seconds, Clyde gets her to orgasm. Clyde slides back next to her.

CLYDE
Did you...?

ELISE
Couldn't you tell?

CLYDE
I wasn't sure.

Elise smiles. Nods vigorously. Clyde sits up.

ELISE
What's wrong?

CLYDE
I have something to show you.

He takes her hand. She sits up with him. He places her hand on his eye patch. Slowly lifts the eye patch. Places it on the bed. Elise's mouth opens just a little.

CLYDE
There was no war.

ELISE
Oh, sweetie.

She touches his face. A drop. Then another. Before Clyde has any idea what's happening, tears stream down his face.

ELISE
Baby, come here.

She rests Clyde's head on her shoulder. Clyde embraces her. Holds on for dear life. His tears become sobs. His sobs become convulsive bursts.

CLYDE
They...!!

FLASH TO:

INT. CLYDE'S MIND

A barrage of images. Trevor and the Associates beat Clyde. Clyde's Mother yells at him. Brett beats Clyde. Trevor rapes Clyde.

BACK TO:

INT. ELISE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Clyde cries and cries. Elise strokes his hair. Whispers.

ELISE
Shhh. It's okay now. I'm here.
It's over.

After a few more sobs, Clyde lifts his face. Elise wipes his eyes and nose. Kisses him. Places his head back on her shoulder. Lies back down. Strokes his hair as he quietly cries himself to sleep.

ELISE
How you made me come like seven
times last night.

Clyde stares into space. Marvels at this amazing new experience. He gets up. Goes to the bathroom. Calls to Elise.

CLYDE
I want to do it again.

ELISE
As much as I'd love that, we should probably get something to eat, and then get to class.

INT. ELISE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Elise and Clyde, dressed as a pirate and parrot, respectively, host a Halloween party.

CLYDE (V.O.)
I'd never known happiness.

He takes Elise's hand. Kisses it.

INT. ELISE'S BEDROOM - MORNING

Elise scribbles in her diary as Clyde gathers his clothes for the day. Elise goes to the next room. Clyde hears the shower start. He goes to the closet. Moves some clothes. Finds the envelope the Old Man gave him.

The envelope.

Clyde turns it over and over in his hands. Slides his right index finger under the envelope flap. Hears the tiniest rip of fiber. Stops. Shakes his head. Smiles. Tosses the envelope back into the closet.

INT. ELISE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Clyde and Elise host a Valentine's Day party. Randall and Joe argue. Clyde takes mental notes.

CLYDE (V.O.)
And I'd never imagined it could be
this... good.

RANDALL

Republicans might be unethical, immoral, election-stealing, press-manipulating cocksuckers, but they know how to win.

CLYDE

Touché.

Everyone faces Clyde. Awkward silence. Joe continues the argument, but Clyde feels Elise's eyes on him.

Elise takes her pack of Mores off the table. Slips one out. Clyde doesn't miss a beat. Clicks open a Zippo. Sparks her up. With a seductive smile, Elise blows a stream of smoke past his face.

INT. ELISE'S BEDROOM

Clyde and Elise fuck like two crazy kids in love. Reach a bedframe-busting climax. Fall away from each other in a panting sweat.

ELISE

Promise me you'll fuck me like that when we're 80.

Clyde reaches under the bed. Comes back with a ring box.

CLYDE

I promise.

Elise sits up.

ELISE

What's this?

Clyde moves to open the box.

ELISE

Clyde, sweetie, I wasn't serious.

CLYDE

I am.

He opens the box. Inside rests a fabulous ring. Shocked utterances tumble out of Elise's mouth. She reaches for the ring. Clyde nods. She slips it on her finger. Eyes him.

CLYDE

Elise. I love you. I want to marry you. I want to spend the rest of my life with you.

ELISE
Are you sure?

CLYDE
I'm more sure of this than anything
in my entire life.

Elise cries.

CLYDE
Will you marry me?

Elise throws her arms around him.

ELISE
Of course!

She covers him in kisses. They fall back into the covers.
Make crazy-hot, betrothed love.

EXT. CHURCH - AFTERNOON

A glorious Spring day at a picture-perfect, steeple-topped
dream. People are just now arriving.

INT. CHURCH FOYER

Randall and Joe, both looking quite dapper, direct traffic
with two of Elise's friends.

INT. DRESSING ROOM

Elise looks fantastic in her wedding dress. Her MOTHER, 50s,
fusses over her. Elise's friends ogle giddily. Nearby,
Clyde, Elise's FATHER, 50s, and Clyde's friends admire Elise.

Realizing something, Elise turns to Clyde.

ELISE
Sweetie, I forgot my phone. Could
you run back to the house?

Clyde's on his feet. Out the door.

ELISE
Thank you!

INT. ELISE'S BEDROOM

Clyde runs in. Locates Elise's phone on the floor. Picks it
up. Smiles to himself. Notices Elise's diary on the bed.
Wide open. Curiosity takes hold. Clyde flips through a
couple pages. Finds a specific date.

CLYDE
The day we met.

He skims. "I met this guy today. Unlike anyone I've ever known." Smiling, Clyde skims a little more, not really paying attention. Then, he spots a few choice words. "Horrible." "Hideous." "Bulging." "Eye."

INT. CHURCH SANCTUARY

Everyone's seated. Waiting.

INT. CHURCH FOYER

On her Father's phone, Elise paces back and forth. Clyde marches in. Elise's phone in one hand. His other hand buried in his jacket. He trembles with rage. Elise notices her phone first...

ELISE
Thank God. I was getting worried --
...then she notices her fiance.

ELISE
Clyde?
Clyde marches past her. Elise chases after him.

INT. CHURCH SANCTUARY

Clyde pulls his hidden hand out of his jacket. Holds the diary up. Picks a passage. Reads aloud.

CLYDE
"The revulsion I felt cannot be described --"
Waves of shocked gasps ripple over the audience. Elise leaps for Clyde.

ELISE
That's my diary!
Clyde dodges. Holds her back. Elise's parents approach. Clyde gestures for them to keep their distance. They obey. So does everyone else. Except Elise. She keeps trying to rescue her diary. Clyde fends her off.

CLYDE
"I first read The Telltale Heart at the tender age of nine."

ELISE
Stop it!!

CLYDE
"The deepest recesses of my
childish imagination could never
have prepared me for the sickening
membrane of his eye!!"

He throws the diary to Elise's feet.

Everyone stares at Elise. Confusion. Then they catch Clyde's drift. Elise's mouth hangs open. Her eyes jump from Clyde to her family, to her friends, to Clyde's friends, to the guests. No words come.

Clyde steps right up to Elise. His voice hangs on the verge of tears, but he fiercely maintains his composure. First with appalled heartbreak:

CLYDE
You...

CLYDE (V.O.)
Fucking!

Next with disbelief:

CLYDE
You...

CLYDE (V.O.)
Vicious!

Then, with cold, detached, finality:

CLYDE
You.

CLYDE (V.O.)
Bitch!

Everyone waits. A wrenching moment passes. Finally, without another word, Clyde calmly leaves. Everyone watches. Then all eyes turn back to Elise. She takes off after Clyde --

She trips over her dress. Eats the floor. Her Mother and several others rush to help.

ELISE
No!

She picks herself up. Stumbles after Clyde.

EXT. CHURCH

Clyde's taxi pulls away. Elise runs out. Screams.

ELISE
Clyde!!!

INT. ELISE'S HOUSE

In a half-conscious frenzy, Clyde throws things into a suitcase. Clothes. Toiletries. His notebook. The envelope.

Clyde reaches for the front door. It bursts open. Nearly smacks him in the face. Elise almost falls again. Outside, two taxis wait. The moment Elise sees Clyde, she reaches for him. He jumps back.

ELISE
Baby, please!

Tears pour down her face. Clyde shakes his head. Losing his grip on his emotions.

ELISE
I'm so sorry!

CLYDE
You wrote that!!

ELISE
Let me explain!!

Clyde regains his control.

CLYDE
Explain?!!

ELISE
It was nothing!!

CLYDE
It wasn't true?!

Elise pauses. No easy way to put it.

ELISE
It was, but it was just, just what
I first saw.

Clyde steps up to her. Elise calms.

ELISE

Please, baby. I love you so much!

Clyde lifts his eye patch. Elise can't help but turn her head ever so slightly away. She moves to kiss his eye. Clyde grips her head in his left hand. Forces her to gaze directly into his eye.

CLYDE

Take a good look, Elise. I promise you. This is the last time you will ever feel such revulsion.

He pushes her away. She grabs him. He shakes her off. She tugs on his legs. Dragging her to the door, he pries her off.

ELISE

NO!!!

Clyde stomps out. His taxi takes off. Elise collapses into a fit of heartbroken sobs.

INT. TAXI

Clyde sits still. Dead inside.

CLYDE (V.O.)

Leaving her that day was the single greatest mistake of my entire life. But it wasn't the last.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

INT. BAR - DAY

Clyde, now mid-20s, sits alone in a corner. Knocks back the latest in a long line of shots. He looks like unshaven, unshowered dogshit.

He doesn't yet notice a small flat-screen at the other end of the room broadcasting an interview on a financial cable channel.

CLYDE (V.O.)

The next couple years shuffled by without incident.

A subtitle identifies the interviewee. "Trevor Winston - Author, 'Easy Money: How I earned my first \$1B and how you can too.'" Clyde's bloodshot eyes snap open.

CLYDE
Motherfucker.

He slaps the shot glasses to the floor. Smash! A few heads turn. Clyde ignores them. Inches toward the screen.

On screen, Trevor's looking great. In his still standard chin-hugging turtleneck.

INTERVIEWER
Some analysts, and celebrities, are calling you the Jagger of Junk Bonds. The Hendrix of Hedge Funds.

He throws in one of his own.

INTERVIEWER
The Fab Four-in-One Fund Finder. Is that accurate? Are you a Wall Street rock star?

Trevor laughs it off.

TREVOR
No, no, no.

Then, with a nauseatingly charming grin:

TREVOR
Not yet.

CLYDE
Motherfucker!

He knocks a stool out of his way. More heads turn. The BARTENDER casts a watchful eye.

TREVOR
Although I do handle Mick's accounts.

Both he and the Interviewer laugh.

INTERVIEWER
How do you explain such a brilliant rise in the financial world at a mere 25 years of age?

TREVOR
It's all in the book, but one reason is my father's advice when he told me, "Go for it."

Clyde picks up a stool. Tosses it at the screen. Bam! The TV crashes to the floor with a spray of sparks and glass.

CLYDE
Motherfucker!!

The Bartender jumps over the bar. Is about to nab Clyde --

Clyde shoves the Bartender out of his way. Slaps a few hundreds down on the bar. Storms out.

CLYDE (V.O.)
It was exactly what I needed to
awake from my post-Elise sorrow and
prioritize.

INT. CLYDE'S APARTMENT - DAY

A tiny, minimally furnished, grey box. Clyde clearly doesn't entertain. Cleaned up, Clyde straightens his tie.

INT. CAFE

Clyde sits alone in a corner. Types on a laptop. Periodically lifts his eyes to watch the stream of people.

INT. THE OLD MAN'S HOUSE - DAY

Clyde, now about 14, and the Old Man have a discussion at the Old Man's desk.

THE OLD MAN
Once you've completed your formal
education, you must exploit...

He pronounces the following as if they were the greatest revelation.

THE OLD MAN
Finance, politics, and religion.

Clyde writes it all down. The Old Man continues his revelation.

THE OLD MAN
Either by your own means, or by the
means of those with whom you align
yourself.

Clyde nods. Writes.

THE OLD MAN

Finance provides the capital that facilitates politics. Politics provide the structure that facilitates religion.

CLYDE

Religions have the greatest financial and political influence with the least accountability.

THE OLD MAN

My God, Clyde. I think you might at last be grasping this.

INT. CAFE - DAY

Clyde stands when he sees Randall and Joe arrive. Trimmed, clean shaven, and dressed for business, Randall and Joe look a bit suspicious.

CLYDE

Gentlemen!

Randall and Joe join him.

RANDALL

Nice to see you, Clyde. Been a while.

JOE

You look good. Real good --

CLYDE

How would you two like to become the second most powerful men in the world?

Randall and Joe gawk at him. But they're intrigued.

CLYDE

Do exactly and only what I say. Joe, you're my eyes and ears. Randall, you're my face.

EXT. ARTISAN MARKET - DAY

Packed with hippies, hipsters, and tourists, booths showcase everything from tie-dyed tees to silverware wind chimes. Joe inspects the collection. Checks notes.

INT. THE OLD MAN'S HOUSE - DAY

Back when Clyde was a teenager, Clyde and the Old Man have another discussion.

THE OLD MAN

All commerce is based on the exchange of two kinds of products. That which people need and that which people feel they need.

CLYDE

What about soda? Completely unnecessary and yet people lap it up like parched poodles.

THE OLD MAN

Such quick judgement. If something lacks a reason to exist, it simply ceases to exist.

Clyde thinks on soda.

CLYDE

The sugar provides stimulation. And the associated advertising provides motivation to consume more of the product.

THE OLD MAN

Every day you come just a little bit closer to impressing me.

EXT. ARTISAN MARKET - DAY

Joe shakes his head at every booth he passes. Homemade jams. Flint and steel survival kits. Wooden jewelry boxes. He passes one, stops, and goes back. Candles. He steps inside.

INT. CANDLE BOOTH

Headed by a HIPPIE in a Rastafarian hat, the establishment boasts candles of all kinds. Joe goes right up to the proprietor.

JOE

How'd you like to become cock-slappingly rich?

The Hippie stares at him.

INT. PRIEST'S OFFICE - DAY

Warm, leathery comfort. Packed bookshelves. Certificates of achievement. And a nice, antique ceiling fan. The PRIEST, 30s, sits behind a mahogany desk.

PRIEST
 Forgive my forgetfulness. Your organization was interested in donating to the parish?

Joe smiles politely. Hands the Priest a manila folder. The Priest opens it. Glossies of the Priest's pedophilic porn parties spill out.

INT. ATTORNEY'S OFFICE - DAY

Brash, sleazy comfort. Photos of handshakes with heavy hitters. Certificates of awards. The ATTORNEY stares open-mouthed at a pile of photos of his own dirty work. Affairs, bribes, the works.

JOE (V.O.)
 You'll terminate your current contracts...

INT. ACCOUNTANT'S OFFICE - DAY

Not as brash as the Attorney's office, but just as sleazy. The ACCOUNTANT goes through the same shocked-at-photos process.

JOE (V.O.)
 ...sign an exclusive deal with us...

INT. PRIEST'S OFFICE

The Priest is absolutely overwhelmed as his trembling hand scribbles his signature on some forms.

JOE (V.O.)
 ...or we will end you.

PRIEST
 I doubt I can get you regional, let alone national distribution.

JOE
 We have complete faith in you, Father.

EXT. CHURCH - DAY

Unmarked vans arrive at not only the Priest's church, but dozens of others. Workmen unload box after box.

INT. CHURCH

The unknowing parishioners pray to Clyde's candles.

INT. CANDLE BOOTH - DAY

Joe hands the Hippie a wad of cash. The Hippie's eyes roll into the back of his head as he faints.

INT. BANQUET HALL - EVENING

An exquisitely decorated stage stands before a large group of the elite of high society. On stage, a POLITICIAN, 30s, commands his audience. Dressed in a respectable, if inexpensive tux, Clyde sits near the stage.

INT. CONVENTION HALL - EVENING

A stage draped in American flags stands before a full room of the middle- and upper-class. On stage, a POLITICIAN, 30s, on the verge of tears, shares with her audience. Dressed in a respectable, if inexpensive suit, Clyde sits near the stage.

INT. MEETING HALL - EVENING

Might as well be a grade school cafeteria. A POLITICIAN, 20s, paces before his audience of 200 or so college students and yuppies. Dressed in a hip suit coat and jeans, Clyde sits in front.

EXT. BALCONY

Clyde mingles with the old guard. SENATOR CASCADE, 50s, cigar and martini in hand, waves Clyde over. The Senator speaks with an obviously affected Southern accent.

SENATOR CASCADE
Mr. Dunkeldorf!

EXT. OBSERVATION DECK

Clyde mingles with the mucky mucks. SENATOR WATERS, 50s, wine glass in hand, waves Clyde over. The Senator speaks with a harsh Boston accent.

SENATOR WATERS
Mr. Dunkeldorf!

EXT. PARKING LOT

Clyde mingles with the hipsters. A young FUNDRAISER, 30s, beer bottle in hand, waves Clyde over. The Fundraiser speaks with a West Coast accent.

FUNDRAISER

Clyde!

EXT. BALCONY

Clyde shakes hands with Senator Cascade.

CLYDE

Good evening, sir.

SENATOR CASCADE

I don't believe you've met my daughter, Evelyn.

EXT. OBSERVATION DECK

Senator Waters gestures to his right.

SENATOR WATERS

...my daughter, Nicole.

EXT. PARKING LOT

The Fundraiser gestures to his right.

FUNDRAISER

...my sister, Kyndra.

EXT. BALCONY

Clyde's starting to lose track of what's going on.

CLYDE

No, sir. I don't believe I've had the pleasure.

Senator Cascade waves to someone. A ravishing brunette in a black dress, EVE, 20s, meets them.

EXT. OBSERVATION DECK

A hot blonde in a white dress, NICOLE, 20s, meets them.

EXT. PARKING LOT

A sexy redhead in a green dress, KYNDRA, 20s, meets them.

EXT. BALCONY

Senator Cascade introduces Clyde.

SENATOR CASCADE
This is our newest...

EXT. OBSERVATION DECK

Senator Waters grins at his daughter.

SENATOR WATERS
...gold member...

EXT. PARKING LOT

The Fundraiser grins at his sister.

FUNDRAISER
...Mr. Clyde...

EXT. BALCONY

Senator Cascade finishes his statement with a flush of pride.

SENATOR CASCADE
...Dunkeldorf!

CLYDE
Pleased to meet you, Evelyn.

EVE
"Evelyn"'s my grandmother's name.
I prefer "Eve." What happened to
your eye?

EXT. OBSERVATION DECK

Senator Waters beams with pride.

SENATOR WATERS
Some type of classified ops.

EXT. PARKING LOT

The Fundraiser brags.

FUNDRAISER
Clyde's a war hero!

EXT. BALCONY

Feeling a touch overwhelmed, Clyde shakes his head.

CLYDE

Not when compared to you, sir.

Senator Cascade gives a dismissive wave. Chuckles.

SENATOR CASCADE

Nonsense! I was nothing but a glorified peacekeeper in several small incursions of no historical significance.

EVE

Always so humble, daddy.

Senator Cascade takes his leave.

SENATOR CASCADE

Excuse me you two.

He wanders off. Eve opens her purse. Pulls out a gold-plated cigar box.

EXT. OBSERVATION DECK

Nicole opens a silver cigarette case. Slides out a Virginia Slim 120.

EXT. PARKING LOT

Kyndra places an American Spirit between her lips. Puts the pack back in her purse.

EXT. BALCONY

Clyde clicks open his Zippo. Lights Eve's very expensive cigar.

EXT. OBSERVATION DECK

Nicole drags deep off her 120.

EXT. PARKING LOT

Kyndra blows smoke into the sky.

EXT. BALCONY

Eve holds out her cigar box.

EVE

Care for one?

EXT. OBSERVATION DECK

Clyde shakes his head at Nicole's offering.

CLYDE
I don't smoke.

EXT. PARKING LOT

Kyndra smiles.

KYNDRA
Then what are you doing out here?

EXT. BALCONY

Clyde shrugs.

CLYDE
Seemed like the place to be.

Eve takes a long drag, then, with a seductive smile, blows a thick cloud that barely grazes Clyde's face. He blinks the smoke out of his eyes.

INT. HOTEL ROOM

Sitting up in the very big bed in their luxury suite, Eve and Clyde make out like it's going out of style.

INT. HOTEL ROOM

Making the most of the queen-size bed, Clyde slides on top of Nicole.

INT. MOTEL ROOM

Ignoring their cheap surroundings, Clyde takes Kyndra doggy-style against the footboard.

INT. HOTEL ROOM

While Clyde recuperates, Eve lights up another cigar.

INT. HOTEL ROOM

Nicole drags on another 120.

INT. MOTEL ROOM

Kyndra blows smoke at the ceiling.

INT. CHRISTIE'S - DAY

Priceless, Song dynasty porcelain is up for auction. Clyde raises a bid. Next to him, smoking a cigar, Eve applauds. With a hammer of the gavel, Clyde is the proud new owner of a gorgeous, blue vase. He hands it to Eve. She kisses him.

INT. PALACE - MORNING

Clyde and Senator Cascade meet with some Saudis.

EXT. TASTING ROOM - DAY

Oenophiles and tourists sample the goods at the warm, inviting winery. Clyde tastes with Nicole and her yuppie friends.

EXT. WALL STREET - AFTERNOON

Clyde and Senator Waters meet with some suits.

INT. ARCADE - NIGHT

An ultra-hip retro establishment overflowing with old-school cabinets and microbrew. Clyde plays a fighting game with Kyndra.

EXT. YACHT - EVENING

Clyde and the Fundraiser sail with some Silicon Valley capitalists against a Golden Gate Bridge sunset.

EXT. PARK - DAY

Clyde strolls hand-in-hand with Eve.

EVE
You know, Clyde. We've been
together five years now...

At the exact same spot, but different day, Clyde continues a different walk with Nicole.

NICOLE
...I was thinking you'd want to...

Same place, but now with Kyndra.

KYNDRA
...pop a certain question?

Back with Eve, Clyde parks in front of a fountain. Calculates.

CLYDE

I've thought about this a lot. And
I've come to a conclusion.

Eve smiles wide. As does Nicole. And Kyndra. Clyde goes
for the clean split.

CLYDE

I don't love you. And this is
distracting me from my true
priorities.

Eve goes berserk.

EVE

WHAT??!!

Passersby gather round. Nicole slaps Clyde. Kyndra
collapses into sobs. Eve screams at Clyde.

EVE

You fucking son of a bitch!!

More people watch. Nicole slaps Clyde again. Kyndra cries
some more. Eve backs Clyde up to the fountain.

EVE

No one has ever dumped me!!

Nicole slaps Clyde yet again. Kyndra assumes the fetal
position. Eve grabs Clyde's hair. Shoves his head into the
fountain. Dunks it over and over.

EVE

I dump you!! You fucking asshole!!

She lets him up for air just long enough to knee him as hard
as she can. Then, scraping her dignity back together, she
marches away. The ladies in the newfound audience clap and
cheer.

Nicole turns away in a huff. Marches off.

Still sobbing, Kyndra braces herself against the fountain.
Pulls herself to her feet. Lifts her heartbroken eyes to
Clyde.

KYNDRA

I love you... so much.

She bursts into tears again. Runs away. Ignoring the crowd,
Clyde gazes into the fountain.

A shade of uncertainty clouds his face. A tiny frog leaps into Clyde's reflection. Ripples brush the image out of existence.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

INT. BANQUET HALL - DAY

A big, important lunch. Clyde, now early 30s, sits near the back. He and the crowd of a few hundred listen to a SPEAKER, 30s, finish up. A standing ovation. Clyde notices a woman at a far away table. He can't catch a good look at her face.

EXT. COURTYARD

Clyde locates the mystery woman. Standing alone. She opens her purse. Pulls out a pack of Mores. Fishes out a cigarette and lighter. Clicks. Some sparks, but no flame. Clyde interjects.

CLYDE
Care for a light?

The woman faces him. It's Elise. And despite the years, she looks fantastic.

INT. HOTEL BAR

Clyde lights Elise's cigarette. They sip their drinks.

CLYDE
I'm happy to see you never sold
your ethics.

ELISE
I rent them out sometimes.

Clyde laughs.

ELISE
I've been lucky. Lobbying pays
well and I still get to fight the
good fight.

CLYDE
What's the current battle?

ELISE
Health care bill we've been trying
to get passed for years.

CLYDE
Maybe I can help. I have a few
contacts in Washington.

ELISE
Listen to you! Statesman. Oil
baron. Wall Street king. Tech
guru. What's next? Media mogul?

Clyde laughs at her mocking tone.

CLYDE
Stop.

ELISE
Evelyn Cascade doesn't hang out
with just anyone.

Clyde collects his thoughts. Eyes her.

CLYDE
Listen, it's getting a bit late. I
have several engagements tomorrow.

Elise takes a final drag off her cigarette. Stubs it out.
With a touch of nervous rush:

ELISE
You're right. It's getting late.

Clyde stands. Helps her gather her things. Leads her out.

INT. LIMO

Clyde and Elise sit opposite each other. Hide themselves in
the upholstery. Clyde places his hand on hers.

CLYDE
It was... wonderful to see you
again.

ELISE
You too. You too.

CLYDE
Best of luck in all your efforts.

ELISE
Thanks! You too. Good luck.

Silence. Elise checks the window.

ELISE

This is me.

The limo pulls over.

EXT. LIMO

Elise steps out. Clyde follows, but stays next to the vehicle.

CLYDE

Good night.

He takes Elise's hand.

ELISE

Good night, Clyde.

She goes to turn away. Without thinking, Clyde keeps her hand. Elise stops. Faces him. Clyde musters up a touch of courage.

CLYDE

Elise?

ELISE

Yes, Clyde?

Clyde pulls her back. Elise doesn't resist. They fall into each other's arms. Kiss voraciously. Tumble back into the limo.

INT. LIMO

Clyde closes the door. The limo takes off --

Elise smacks Clyde. He touches his cheek. Then dives in. He and Elise kiss. Hard. Desperate. He goes down on her.

INT. PRESIDENTIAL SUITE

As the hours zip by, Clyde and Elise make love on the floor. On the sofa. In the whirlpool bathtub. Against the bar. In the shower. And finally, in the gigantic bed.

INT. PRESIDENTIAL SUITE - MORNING

Clyde and Elise lie sprawled out in the sweat-soaked sheets twisted every which way.

Elise lights a More. Takes an immensely long drag. Fog drifts slowly out from between her lips.

Then, with an amazingly relaxed sigh, she blows the rest out in a thick cone.

ELISE
I forgot how much I missed that.

CLYDE
So did I.

Elise takes another drag. Sits up. Ashes her cigarette.

ELISE
I should probably make my way to the airport.

CLYDE
Yes. I need to get ready as well.

Elise stands. Clyde takes her hand.

ELISE
Clyde, I can't go again.

CLYDE
Just a kiss.

Elise leans over him. They kiss.

CLYDE
I love you.

ELISE
I love you, too, Clyde.

Clyde leans closer.

CLYDE
No. I'm serious.

Elise smiles.

ELISE
I am too.

Clyde lets her go. In a second, he can hear the shower.

INT. CLYDE'S APARTMENT - DAY

Clyde searches through his things. Locates the envelope the Old Man gave him. Studies it a second. It's been so long. He finds a knife. Slices the envelope open. Stops. Pulls out his cell. Calls.

ELISE (V.O.)
Hello?

CLYDE
Elise. It's me. You'll never
guess what I just found.

He changes his mind.

CLYDE
It doesn't matter. I was thinking.
I have a few meetings this week,
but Thursday, maybe we could take
off. To the Bahamas.

Elise's tone sours.

ELISE (V.O.)
Clyde --

CLYDE
I'm sorry. I'm moving too fast.
It's been years. We should take
our time.

Elise takes a heavy breath.

ELISE (V.O.)
Clyde, I'm married.

CLYDE
What??

ELISE (V.O.)
I was gonna tell you last night,
but things went so fast --

CLYDE
Of course.

ELISE (V.O.)
I'm sorry.

She cries.

CLYDE
Please don't cry.

ELISE (V.O.)
I hurt you so badly!

CLYDE
It's fine.

ELISE (V.O.)
You were so angry!

CLYDE
I was wrong, Elise. I made a
terrible mistake.

ELISE (V.O.)
I tried to find you. For years I
tried.

CLYDE
I know.

ELISE (V.O.)
I hired a private investigator I
was so desperate to find you! But
I couldn't find you anywhere! I
tried. For years!

Clyde nods.

CLYDE
I understand.

Elise cries harder.

ELISE (V.O.)
I'm so sorry. I loved you so much.

CLYDE
Do you love him?

Elise calms.

ELISE (V.O.)
He's a good man. I won't hurt him.

CLYDE
I understand.

ELISE (V.O.)
Please don't hate me.

Clyde smiles.

CLYDE
You're doing what's right. I could
never hate you for that.

ELISE (V.O.)
I won't ever see you again.

CLYDE

I know.

ELISE (V.O.)

Clyde?

CLYDE

Yes?

ELISE (V.O.)

Please find happiness. For me.

Clyde says nothing.

ELISE (V.O.)

I'll never forget you.

Clyde tries to respond, but can't.

ELISE (V.O.)

I'd better go. Good bye, my love.

CLYDE

Good bye, Elise.

Elise hangs up. Clyde sets down his phone. Picks up the envelope. Finds tape. Reseals the envelope. Tosses it in a pile of papers. Finds his old record and player. As the chants begin...

Clyde. Goes. BALLISTIC.

He dismembers his apartment. Rips carpet. Burns papers. Smashes dish after dish. Tears into furniture. Screams. And screams. And screams.

INT. CAFE - DAY

Clyde meets with Joe. A hand-written list rests under Clyde's right hand. He slides the list over to Joe.

CLYDE

Find these people. Don't update me until you've located every last one.

Joe nods.

CLYDE

Contact Randall. We have unfinished business.

EXT. U.S. CAPITOL - DAY

Clyde and Randall step out of a limo. Randall's looking quite sharp with a nice suit, great haircut, and fresh smile. Clyde stops him before they enter.

CLYDE
Image is everything. Fear wins
votes. Admit to nothing.

Randall nods. Clyde leads him in.

INT. U.S. CAPITOL - DAY

Clyde and Randall meet with Senator Cascade. Despite Clyde's history with Eve, the Senator greets them with open arms.

INT. U.S. CAPITOL - DAY

On another day, Clyde and Randall meet with Senator Waters. The Senator also greets them with open arms.

EXT. RESTAURANT - DAY

Clyde and Randall lunch with the Fundraiser. He too doesn't seem to mind the fact that Clyde ripped his sister's heart in two. The three men shake hands.

INT. ELECTION HQ - EVENING

Surrounded by a gigantic crowd, Randall and his wife smile, greet, and shake hands. A Reporter covers the festivities.

REPORTER
With endorsements from all three
major parties and a double-digit
lead over incumbent Governor
Larson, it was a landslide.

The camera zooms in on Randall.

REPORTER
Perhaps more surprising was that
Mr. McCallister ran on one of the
most staunchly conservative
campaigns in recent years.

Randall passes by a woman and the toddler she carries. Ignores the woman's eager hand. Shakes Senator Cascade's instead.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM

Randall steps inside. Clyde stomps over from a monitor he's been watching. Joe and a few others look on, concerned.

RANDALL
That went pretty well --

Clyde backhands him. Randall rubs his stinging cheek.

RANDALL
What the fuck was that for?!

JOE
Not cool, Clyde!

Clyde points a finger at Joe.

CLYDE
Shut the fuck up!

Clyde turns his attention back to Randall.

CLYDE
You shook hands with Cascade!

RANDALL
He contributed heavily to the campaign --

CLYDE
I contributed to your campaign!
The kind senator tossed you some fucking peanuts!

RANDALL
Sorry, Clyde.

CLYDE
Never apologize. And never again greet a contributor, on camera, when you have a constituent right in fucking front of you!

JOE
He already won!

CLYDE
What's this?! Tweedledum suddenly sprouts a sack?! Shut the fuck up and listen!

He addresses Randall.

CLYDE
 All we need is your dopey face
 prancing around cable news with
 pundits whining about you being out
 of touch with the average American!

Randall nods. So does Joe.

CLYDE
 Next time this happens, kiss the
 motherfucking baby!

RANDALL
 Got it.

CLYDE
 Image! Fear! Innocence!

RANDALL
 I said I got it!

CLYDE
 I'll be in touch. Don't fuck up
 again.

He stomps out.

JOE
 Why do I gotta be Tweedledum?!

INT. LATE-NIGHT TALK SHOW - NIGHT

Trevor, as handsome and charming as ever in his traditional
 turtleneck, sits across from the hip comic HOST. The
 audience adores every second.

TREVOR
 So with the show, I'll teach inner-
 city kids how to steal my money.

Laughter.

TREVOR
 Maybe not mine, but they'll learn
 how to make it in business.

HOST
 And the advertising proceeds go to
 which charity?

TREVOR
 Several, actually. Only one of
 them is the Winston Foundation.

HOST
That's fantastic. All the best.

TREVOR
Thank you so much.

HOST
When we come back, billionaire
finance genius, Trevor Winston in
the dunk tank!

The show band plays them to commercial.

INT. CLYDE'S APARTMENT

A pint smashes against the TV. Shards of crystal and a splash of beer spill on the floor. Clyde's bulging eye reflects the TV with cold, blinding rage. His fingers stroke the envelope.

INT. CAFE - DAY

Clyde meets with Joe.

JOE
I found some of those names.

CLYDE
I told you not to update me until
you'd found them all.

JOE
I thought you'd like some good
news.

CLYDE
What's the bad news?

INT. HEARING CHAMBERS - DAY

A group of SENATORS, including Senator Cascade, grumble over notes. Sitting before them are Clyde and a team of attorneys. A middle-aged, combed-over SENATOR leads the proceedings.

SENATOR
I must express how deeply
disturbing I find it that someone
of your stature is even associated
with these allegations.

One of Clyde's ATTORNEYS, 30s, a red-headed hotshot, speaks up.

ATTORNEY

May I remind the committee that my client hasn't yet been officially indicted with anything?

SENATOR

Your reminder is duly noted.

He checks his notes.

SENATOR

If the witness would please state her name for the record.

Now, accompanied by her own attorney, Kyndra sits in Clyde's place before the Senators. She fights back tears every step of the way.

KYNDRA

Kyndra Cox.

Another SENATOR 2, white hair, sagging face, asks Nicole questions. Accompanied by a team of three attorneys, she's more pissed off than teary.

SENATOR 2

How do you know Mr. Dunkeldorf?

NICOLE

We were... involved.

Another Senator, SENATOR 3, young and up-and-coming, grills Eve. Unlike Kyndra and Nicole, Eve is cool and confident. Doesn't even bother consulting with her team of ten.

SENATOR 3

Involved. Romantically?

EVE

We sure as hell weren't playing hopscotch.

She gets a few laughs.

SENATOR

How long were you in a relationship with Mr. Dunkeldorf?

KYNDRA

About five years.

SENATOR 2
And in that time, did he ever
describe his business affairs?

One of her attorneys whispers extensively in Nicole's ear.
She nods a couple times.

NICOLE
No.

SENATOR 3
Even though you accompanied him to
multiple charity events and other
functions, you had no idea what he
was up to?

EVE
None whatsoever.

SENATOR
You'll forgive me if that seems
hard to believe.

KYNDRA
He was always a very private man,
Senator.

SENATOR 2
Were you aware of his
unfaithfulness towards you?

Eve spits her answer.

EVE
Not - at - all.

SENATOR 3
How would you describe Mr.
Dunkeldorf's emotional state at the
end of your relationship?

Eve grins with the satisfaction that she's won.

EVE
Conniving and psychotic.

SENATOR
Would you mind elaborating?

EVE
The only reason he was involved
with me was for my connections.
(MORE)

EVE(cont'd)

The fact that we're sitting here is a testament to his success.

SENATOR

Thank you, Ms. Cascade. That will be all.

EVE

You're quite welcome.

SENATOR

Mr. Dunkeldorf, if you could please describe for this committee the exact nature of your military experience?

Clyde's Attorney jumps in.

ATTORNEY

My client's service record is not only classified, but also has nothing to do with these proceedings.

SENATOR 2

What did you mean by, "You can buy anyone, though not always with money"?

Not expecting this new line of questioning, Clyde's Attorney eyes Clyde. Then scrambles.

ATTORNEY

My client's private journals are not open to public scrutiny.

SENATOR

Neither the Department of Defense, nor the CIA, nor the NSA has any record of your service with anyone at any time.

CLYDE

Hence the term, "classified."

SENATOR 2

"Never underestimate the powers of greed, advertising, and stupidity." Is this some sort of cynical manifesto?

SENATOR

If you could just answer the question, Mr. Dunkeldorf.

SENATOR 2

"Life holds no respect for the weak." If not a manifesto, Mr. Dunkeldorf, what is the purpose of these twisted, nihilistic rants?

ATTORNEY

My client is under no obligation --

SENATOR 3

Mr. Dunkeldorf, you will answer the question.

Overwhelmed, Clyde thinks for a second. Looks to his Attorney. His Attorney's got nothing. Clyde is about to answer, but then he eyes Senator Cascade. Makes a decision.

CLYDE

I was nothing but a glorified peacekeeper in several small incursions of no historical significance.

Recognizing his own words, Senator Cascade explodes.

SENATOR CASCADE

You... you... you were never in no damn war, battle, or... paintball match!! You ugly little shit!!

The press goes nuts. A gavel pounds. Clyde's Attorney stands.

ATTORNEY

No formal charges! No evidence! No due process! Nothing more than the Cascade family's personal grudge against my client!

More gavel.

ATTORNEY

This is a travesty of justice and a charade! I demand an immediate cessation of this blatant, spiteful attempt at character assassination!

EXT. U.S. CAPITOL

Clyde's people rush him to his limo. The press fish for a quote. No one responds.

REPORTER

Mr. Dunkeldorf, any response to
Governor McCallister's comments?

Clyde stops. Faces the Reporter. His Attorney rounds him
up. Barks at the Reporter.

ATTORNEY

No comment!

The Cascade family exit the building. The reporters go after
them. Senator Cascade gets his daughter into their limo.

INT. CLYDE'S LIMO

Clyde's on the phone.

RANDALL (V.O.)

I can't be associated with a lying,
cheating, sociopath!

CLYDE

You never had a problem with it
before!

RANDALL (V.O.)

It wasn't public before! I'm
planning my presidential campaign!
You said it yourself. Image is
everything.

Clyde stops. Considers it. Hangs up. That moment, Joe's
phone rings.

JOE

What is it, Bishop?

INT. BISHOP'S OFFICE

Clyde's Priest-in-the-Pocket, now BISHOP, speaks with the
utmost resolve.

BISHOP

I've been a servant to your
massive, evil, corrupt organization
for far too long. Release whatever
evidence you wish.

INT. CLYDE'S LIMO

Joe can't believe his ears.

BISHOP (V.O.)
I am no longer your marionette.

INT. BISHOP'S OFFICE

The Bishop hangs up. Kicks --

CRACK!! The Bishop's neck snaps from the noose hung from the ceiling fan.

INT. CLYDE'S LIMO

Joe hangs up. Clyde waits.

JOE
Your Church activities have just
been suspended.

Clyde says nothing. Stares out the window.

INT. CLYDE'S APARTMENT - DAY

Clyde finds the envelope the Old Man gave him. Holds it up. Glares at it with fierce determination. Tosses it on the coffee table. Grabs his old record and player. The chants begin.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

INT. CAFE - DAY

Clyde meets with Joe.

JOE
Without your Church revenue or
political allies, just the one
firm.

CLYDE
Did you bring the names?

JOE
Clyde, what about your finances --?

CLYDE
Sell the factory. Give me the
names.

INT. CLYDE'S LIMO - NIGHT

Clyde finishes off a beer. Tosses it in a bucket full of empty bottles. Joe sits silently opposite him.

INT. CEMETERY

With Joe's help, Clyde stumbles to a small, flat tombstone. "Nicholas Janszen." Clyde waves Joe away. Stares at the stone.

FLASH TO:

EXT. FIELD - DAY

Nicholas holds Clyde down while Trevor and Simon beat him.

BACK TO:

INT. CEMETERY - NIGHT

Clyde laughs. Unzips his pants. Whips out his cock. Waits. Shakes his cock. His smile fades.

THE OLD MAN (V.O.)
All that foreplay and now you can't
come.

Clyde freezes. Spins around.

CLYDE
Who's there?!

No one.

THE OLD MAN (V.O.)
You little idiot.

Clyde spins back around. Still no one. He grabs his cock. Tries to shake piss out of it. Not one drop. He shoves his dick back in his pants. Zips up. Kicks the dirt. Stomps back to the limo.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

A Doctor shows Clyde his Mother. In a coma. A bunch of tubes connect her neck and chest to a set of machines.

She looks terrible. Twice the size. Thin, spotted, wrinkled skin. Dry, grey, over-permed hair. Sagging eyes, cheeks, and lips.

Clyde listens to his Mother's wheezing machines. Sits next to her. Scoots up close to her face.

CLYDE
Hello, Mother.

No response. Clyde takes his Mother's left hand. Examines it. Notices the black nicotine stains. Nods to the Doctor. The Doctor goes to one of the machines.

THE OLD MAN (V.O.)
Big man. Offing your defenseless,
comatose mother.

Clyde barks at his Mother's tubes.

CLYDE
Shut up!

The Doctor stares at him. Clyde nods. The Doctor shuts off the machine.

CLYDE
Good bye, Mother.

His Mother gags, chokes, and coughs. Clyde glares intensely. Soaks in every last gasp. Relishes the power. His Mother's hand goes limp. Clyde turns on the faucet. Full blast. Silence as he stumbles away in feigned torment.

INT. BAR

Clyde looks around. Spots a small group at one of the pool tables. Clyde's eyes zero in on...

Simon. Time hasn't been kind to him. The red, unshaven face and bulging gut of a late-stage alcoholic. A ratty trucker's cap hides a balding head. The swirling smoke from a dangling Marlboro red hides the eyes.

CLYDE
Gentlemen! Next round's on me!

Simon and his friends stare at him.

INT. BAR

Simon and his friends laugh and drink. Clyde finishes off his beer. Stands.

CLYDE
Well gentlemen, much as I enjoyed
meeting you all.

Simon and his friends stand too. Say their good byes.
Simon's friends head out.

SIMON
Listen, man, you got a place to
stay?

CLYDE
There's that motel down the road.

SIMON
Ten fuckin' miles. Nah, I got a
couch. Come on.

EXT. SIMON'S HOME

An atrociously dilapidated trailer. Simon opens the door for
Clyde.

SIMON
She ain't much, but she'll keep you
unconscious.

INT. SIMON'S HOME

Simon fishes a beer out of the fridge. Cracks it open.
Guzzles it down. Belches. Offers one to Clyde.

CLYDE
No thanks.

Simon dumps himself into a crumb-crusting chair. Clicks on
his tiny black and white TV. Clyde sits on the couch.

THE OLD MAN (V.O.)
For what are you waiting?

CLYDE
Simon?

THE OLD MAN (V.O.)
You feel sorry for him.

SIMON
Yeah, man.

CLYDE
Do you remember? Years ago, there
was a boy. He was short, awkward.
Kept to himself.

Simon laughs.

SIMON
I'm a fuckin' blackout drunk, man.
Don't remember shit.

CLYDE
Simon, this is very important.

SIMON
Sorry, man. Don't remember no
short kid.

CLYDE
I see.

SIMON
Listen, man. I gotta crash. Got
work tomorrow.

CLYDE
Of course. Good night then.

SIMON
Night.

He lies back in his chair. Conks out. Snores like a bear.
Clyde puts on his gardening gloves. Fishes out a revolver.
Loads it. Stands. Talks to himself.

CLYDE
I would've settled for an apology.

THE OLD MAN (V.O.)
You didn't get one. Now do it!

Clyde listens to Simon. Snore! Clyde stands in front of
him. Carefully lifts Simon's left hand. Fits Simon's
fingers around the gun. Points the gun at Simon's mouth.

CLYDE
You helped them. You never tried
to stop them.

He stops. Really considers it.

CLYDE
I'm going to kill you now.

He cocks the gun. Waits --

Simon's left eye snaps open.

SIMON
Peek-a-boo.

He flings Clyde's gun across the room. Punches Clyde in his patched eye. Clyde hits the floor. Simon stands.

SIMON

After Brookwood Elementary, I never saw those guys again. I thought that'd be it. Then the nightmares started. Every fuckin' night.

He faces the wall.

SIMON

I couldn't finish high school. Fuck, I couldn't even finish jr. high! I couldn't keep what we did to you outta my fuckin' head!

He picks up his TV. Tosses it across the room. His tough guy bullshit washes away. The tears flow.

SIMON

We hurt you so bad. So fuckin' bad. And we enjoyed every minute of it.

He steps over to Clyde.

SIMON

For years I asked myself why. You never did shit to us. Just had that fuckin' eye. But that wasn't your fault!

He turns around. Stares at the opposite wall.

SIMON

I started hearing your name. Seeing your face.

He goes back to the wall by his chair. Tears off a peeling piece of the wall paper.

Underneath, Clyde sees part of a collage of newspaper and magazine clippings. They all feature Clyde. At his charity functions. At his society parties. At his Senate hearing.

SIMON

You - were - everywhere!!

He rips off piece after piece of wall paper. The collage covers the entire surface of the trailer's walls.

SIMON
You wouldn't leave me alone!!

He faces Clyde.

SIMON
Then I knew. Some day you'd come
back. I recognized you the second
you walked in.

He kneels next to Clyde. Rolls up his left sleeve.
Crisscrossing razor blade scars.

SIMON
I tried, Clyde.

He rolls up his right sleeve. More scars.

SIMON
But every fucking time I survived.

He grabs Clyde's hair.

SIMON
I'm gonna kill you now.

He yanks Clyde to his feet. Drags him to the bathroom.

THE OLD MAN (V.O.)
Now you've done it.

INT. BATHROOM

Simon shoves Clyde's head into the toilet. Dunks it over and
over.

SIMON
I tried to end this madness. I
tried to give you my life. Only
one way. You gotta gimme yours.

Clyde puts up a fight, but he's not nearly as strong as
Simon. Water splashes. Bubbles burst. Clyde stops
struggling. Simon waits a second. Lets out a sigh.

SIMON
Release at last.

Clyde slowly lifts his left hand. Locates Simon's family
jewels. Simon notices.

SIMON
What the fuck --?!

He steps back. With a giant gulp of air, Clyde leaps away from the toilet. Lunges for Simon's pants. Clamps both hands on Simon's nuts. Squeezes. Hard.

CLYDE

Never, ever cross a bitter man!!

THE OLD MAN (V.O.)

YES!!!

Simon screams. Clyde squeezes. Simon punches and kicks. Clyde squeezes. Simon falls against the sink. Clyde stands. Keeps his left hand clamped on Simon's balls. Punches Simon in the stomach. With Simon properly subdued, Clyde retreats.

INT. SIMON'S HOME

Clyde finds his gun. Goes back to the bathroom.

INT. BATHROOM

Clyde finds Simon hunkered over the sink. Sweating. Drooling. Clyde turns Simon to face him.

CLYDE

You beat me. You tortured me. You raped me. And you enjoyed it. Now it's my turn, motherfucker.

BAM! He clobbers Simon with the butt of his gun.

CRACK! Simon's nose snaps.

CRUNCH! Simon's teeth break.

Blood. And teeth. Fly. Everywhere.

But Clyde's not even close to done. He flips Simon back to face the mirror. Holds him by the back of his head.

CLYDE

Take a good look, Simon.

He lifts his eye patch.

CLYDE

I promise you. This is the last time you will ever see this fuckin' eye.

He slams Simon's head into the mirror over and over to the repeated rhythm of:

CLYDE
 Mother-fucker! Mother-fucker!

FLASH TO:

INT. CLYDE'S MIND

A barrage of images. The Associates beat Clyde with boards. With broken bottles. The Associates rape Clyde.

BACK TO:

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

The smashed mirror falls off the wall. Clyde slams Simon's head. Rants. Then calms.

Blood and glass everywhere. Simon's face is all kinds of fucked up. Clyde pulls him away from the destroyed mirror. Throws him to the floor. Goes back to the living room.

INT. SIMON'S HOME

Clyde pours Simon's beer all over the trailer. Tears one of the pictures off the wall. It's of Clyde and Senator Cascade shaking hands with the Saudis. Clyde takes out his Zippo. Lights the picture. Drops it on the floor.

EXT. SIMON'S HOME

As Clyde leaves, flames engulf the trailer. Clyde wanders off into the night.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

INT. RESTAURANT - DAY

Clyde eats lunch with a NERD, Clyde's age, balding, glasses. The Nerd cracks open a Mountain Dew. Takes a healthy gulp.

CLYDE
 Thank you for seeing me at such
 short notice --

The Nerd replies in a very irritating, nasal voice.

NERD
 You don't remember me, do you, Mr.
 Dunkeldorf?
 (MORE)

NERD(cont'd)

We were at the same jr. high and high school. I was a victim of one of your pranks.

FLASH TO:

EXT. PLAYGROUND - DAY

With Clyde's five bucks in hand, a Kid beats on the Nerd.

BACK TO:

INT. RESTAURANT - DAY

Clyde nods slowly.

CLYDE

If you'd like an explanation, I'd be more than happy to --

NERD

I hated you. I vowed revenge. Then I realized you were merely exercising power. My hatred turned to admiration.

FLASH TO:

INT. NERD'S BEDROOM - DAY

Chock full of Star Trek models, D&D pewter figurines, and obscure comic books. The Nerd pops zits in a mirror. Sploosh! One of them gushes all over the place.

NERD (V.O.)

I knew I wasn't tall, strong, or pretty. Nor was I dextrous. But there had to be a way.

BACK TO:

INT. RESTAURANT - DAY

The Nerd smiles.

NERD

I taught myself to adapt. To learn. To master. I have to say...

He takes a gulp. Belches.

NERD

...had it not been for your petty prank, I'd probably still be scraping my pride up from off the pavement.

CLYDE

Glad I could help. I can help you even more now. I have a proposal which I think will interest you greatly.

NERD

There are only three things in this world that interest me. Technology, money, and pussy.

He takes another gulp. Belches even louder.

NERD

The first to gain the second, and the second to gain the third. Besides, I'm under contract with Mr. Winston.

CLYDE

You haven't even heard my offer.

The Nerd sighs.

NERD

I might as well at least finish my salad.

CLYDE

I put up the capital, receive a 10% finder's fee, and you keep the rest.

The Nerd laughs mockingly.

NERD

You've got to be joking.

Clyde doesn't respond.

NERD

Mr. Dunkeldorf, I'm very aware of your former financial prowess, the operative word being "former." Now you have nothing.

CLYDE

My resources are less than they were, but I still have contacts. With the IPO, you'd make close to \$10 billion.

He stands. Puts some cash on the table.

CLYDE

My associate will contact you. Do exactly and only what he says.

He leaves.

INT. CLYDE'S OFFICE - MORNING

A Spartan space in NYC. Clyde stares out a window. Behind him waits a conference table populated with young, Armani-clad go-getters, two BODYGUARDS, and Joe.

On the table sits a large Risk game board. The board has been marked into more divisions of territory than the traditional game.

His eyes still on the traffic, Clyde addresses his phalanx.

CLYDE

Ladies and gentlemen, you are the Sumerians, the Romans, the Arabs.

He pauses. Then the explanation:

CLYDE

Before this month is through, you will obliterate a once massive empire.

He faces them.

CLYDE

If you're successful, it won't even know what hit it until long after its blood has soaked the Earth.

Joe places one red poker chip on the NYC territory and one black chip on every other territory.

CLYDE

Let the game begin.

INT. TREVOR'S OFFICE

Photos of his beautiful family brighten Trevor's otherwise undecorated, corner-office desk. In his standard turtleneck, Trevor's on the phone while lazily surfing channels on his prodigious flat-screen.

A hot, brunette JUNIOR EXEC peeks in.

TREVOR

We'll see who wipes whose ass with whose sister's panties when we're on the green, bitch.

He laughs at the caller's response.

TREVOR

Hold on.

He nods to the Junior Exec.

TREVOR

What is it?

JUNIOR EXEC

Someone just bought a controlling stake in Osman Pharmaceuticals.

Trevor stares at her.

JUNIOR EXEC

One of your Midwest holdings. Small start-up.

TREVOR

Who's the buyer?

JUNIOR EXEC

The company's called Remember Media.

TREVOR

Why the fuck are you bothering me with this?

JUNIOR EXEC

Apparently a condition of the deal was that you be notified directly.

Trevor smiles.

TREVOR

Personal touch. I like it.

He waves the Junior Exec out of the room. Goes back to his caller.

TREVOR

Ever heard of a Remember Media? Me neither.

INT. CLYDE'S OFFICE

Joe replaces a Midwest territory's black chip with one of Clyde's red chips. One of Clyde's foot soldiers, a YOUNG EXEC with spiky hair, gets off the phone. Nods to Joe. Another red chip.

YOUNG EXEC

Sir? I was wondering, what's the plan here?

CLYDE

What business school did you go to?

YOUNG EXEC

Yale, sir.

CLYDE

What they didn't tell you at Yale is that all business is a game.

He faces the troops.

CLYDE

I ran over a hundred computer simulations of today's strategy.

Another YOUNG EXEC 2, a cute redhead, speaks up.

YOUNG EXEC 2

You played over a hundred games of Risk.

CLYDE

Don't be absurd. That would never work. I played over a hundred games of Monopoly.

The Young Execs laugh.

CLYDE

In every simulation the exact same strategy worked. Buy little companies, mortgage them, buy the big company.

YOUNG EXEC
Mortgage??

CLYDE
Obviously to the bean counters it's
more complicated than that. But
not to us.

YOUNG EXEC 2
With all due respect, sir, you're
crazy.

CLYDE
So some have said.

He goes back to window-staring.

INT. TREVOR'S OFFICE - AFTERNOON

On the phone, Trevor watches financial news.

TREVOR
Fuck you, man. You're the
douchiest douche who ever douched a
douche! Oh, hold up! We're on!

He clicks up the TV's volume. The ANNOUNCER wraps up.

ANNOUNCER
...And Brookwood Timber purchased a
controlling stake in Winston
Industries' Brazil-based Crassus
Electronics.

TREVOR
You see this Crassus deal? Me
neither. No matter how many times
my net worth grows, so does my
trouser trunk.

His Junior Exec comes in.

TREVOR
Hold on.

He nods to the Junior Exec.

TREVOR
What's up?

JUNIOR EXEC
Crassus Electronics was just
purchased --

TREVOR

Yeah I know. Brookwood Timber.
They wanted me to know directly?

The Junior Exec nods.

TREVOR

Wasn't there some other company,
like two weeks ago?

JUNIOR EXEC

Remember Media.

Trevor ponders it. Waves her out. The Young Exec leaves.
Trevor turns to his laptop. On screen is a list of his
companies. Every day of the last two weeks, someone's bought
a controlling stake in at least a handful of them.

TREVOR

What's going on here?

INT. CLYDE'S OFFICE

Clyde watches as Joe replaces more North American, South
American, and now European black chips with red chips.

CLYDE

What are the three most lethal
killers of kings and emperors?

YOUNG EXEC

Enemy commanders?

YOUNG EXEC 2

Siblings?

JOE

Poison?

CLYDE

Hubris, complacency, and time.

He replaces one of the chips himself.

CLYDE

Leaders who believe themselves
invulnerable become vulnerable.
Leaders who lose interest in their
empires lose their empires.

JOE
 We've got 40% of his assets. But
 he's just re-gotten nearly half
 that value in African and other
 European firms.

CLYDE
 Mortgage 20%. Distract him with
 Asia.

INT. TREVOR'S OFFICE - EVENING

Trevor stares at his laptop. Hammers his fist on the desk.
 His intercom beeps.

TREVOR
 What?!

A SECRETARY chimes in.

SECRETARY
 Mr. Haskell is on the phone.

TREVOR
 Tell him to fuck off!

SECRETARY
 He says it's urgent.

Trevor hits a button on the intercom.

TREVOR
 Hey Jim!

He gives the intercom the jerk-off gesture.

MR. HASKELL
 Stop banging your assistant and pay
 attention to your fucking
 holdings!!

TREVOR
 Everything's fine --!

MR. HASKELL
 You've lost control of two-thirds
 of your assets!!

Trevor's quiet.

TREVOR
 Two thirds?

MR. HASKELL
Yeah, you fucking moron!

TREVOR
What about Basil?

MR. HASKELL
Sold yesterday.

TREVOR
Amenophis??

MR. HASKELL
Sold three days ago. You haven't
seen any of these??

TREVOR
I thought it was just Osman and
Crassus!

MR. HASKELL
Yank your head outta your ass,
Trevor! Our board's meeting in
ten!

Click.

INT. CLYDE'S OFFICE

Clyde watches as Joe replaces a few more black chips with red
ones.

JOE
You're almost outta capital.

CLYDE
Liquidate more assets.

JOE
There aren't any more.

Clyde stares at the board.

YOUNG EXEC
What was that about hubris and
complacency?

CLYDE
You're assuming that I'm trying to
build an empire.

YOUNG EXEC 2
But you said --

CLYDE
I said by the end of this month you
would obliterate an empire.

He faces Joe.

CLYDE
Time for the beau coup.

INT. TREVOR'S OFFICE

Trevor's in the middle of a frantic video conference call
with a dozen other guys.

TREVOR
Let me just think for a fucking
second! It's almost as if someone
planned this! Can you guys float
me a couple? Three, maybe five.

EXEC 1
Trevor, our boards are furious as
it is.

EXEC 2
Don't you have any... private
equity?

TREVOR
Not enough.

That moment, his Junior Exec steps in.

JUNIOR EXEC
Sir?

TREVOR
What is it?!!

JUNIOR EXEC
Bolkih Systems was just bought out
by Elementary Electronics.

Enraged, Trevor turns to his screen.

TREVOR
Bolkih??!!

EXEC 3, a fat, bald guy sheepishly answers.

EXEC 3
They offered three times the stock
price.

TREVOR

You weren't even gonna fuckin' tell me?!!

EXEC 3

It's just business, Trevor.

Trevor stomps over to his desk. Clicks off the screen. Turns to his laptop. Sure enough, his former empire of hundreds of companies is down to just a couple.

TREVOR

Who were those other two companies you told me about?

JUNIOR EXEC

Remember Media and Brookwood Timber.

TREVOR

Remember Media, Brookwood Timber, and Elementary Electronics. Where are they headquartered?

The Junior Exec checks her notes.

JUNIOR EXEC

They're all based in the same... building.

She points out the window. Trevor goes to the window. Across the way, a figure stands in a near-empty office with a bunch of young executives at a conference table.

TREVOR

Remember. Me. Brookwood. Elementary. Turn off the lights. Leave me alone.

The Junior Exec obeys. To Trevor's horror, he sees Clyde staring right back at him. Clyde lifts his eye patch. The deformed eye gleams in Clyde's shadow. That second, a UPS GUY runs into the office.

UPS GUY

Urgent delivery for Mr. Trevor Winston?

Trevor holds out his hand. The UPS Guy gives him a letter. Trevor tears it open. Inside, a simple, handwritten note. "It's so much fun to hurt you."

INT. CLYDE'S OFFICE

Clyde replaces his eye patch. Turns away from the window.

INT. TREVOR'S OFFICE

At his desk, Trevor holds a picture of his wife and kids. A familiar voice seizes his attention.

NERD

You know, Mr. Winston. You should be nicer to people. Then they won't fuck you.

Trevor faces the voice. Finds Joe holding up an iPhone. The Nerd's face lights up the screen. The video file ends. Joe fiddles with the iPhone.

TREVOR

Oh my God.

Clyde and his Bodyguards enter.

CLYDE

Not quite. But if I were you, I'd definitely start praying.

Trevor stands.

TREVOR

Dunkeldorf.

CLYDE

You remember.

TREVOR

I'm begging you, Clyde --

CLYDE

That usually involves genuflection.

Trevor kneels.

TREVOR

Do whatever you want to me --

CLYDE

Oh, I will.

THE OLD MAN (V.O.)

Very nice.

Clyde blinks at the voice in his head, but otherwise maintains control.

TREVOR
Don't hurt my family.

Clyde crouches.

CLYDE
Nicholas and Simon got off easy. I intend to spend the rest of my life making sure that the rest of your life is the epitome of misery.

He pats Trevor's cheek.

CLYDE
Love to the wife and kids.

THE OLD MAN (V.O.)
YES!!!

Clyde stands up. He and his associates leave --

Trevor jumps to his feet. Runs after them. Clyde's Bodyguards hold him back. Clyde waits for it.

TREVOR
I'm gonna fucking fuck you, you fucking fuck!!!

Clyde smiles, satisfied. Leaves for real this time. Trevor screams more obscenities after them.

INT. ASSISTED LIVING CENTER - DAY

Clyde chats with a DOCTOR, 30s, in the stuffy community area.

DOCTOR
It's a very severe form of Alzheimer's.

Clyde heads over to a woman with salt and pepper hair amusing herself with a half-finished puzzle.

DOCTOR (V.O.)
She has lucid moments, but they only last two, maybe three minutes.

The woman is Clyde's nurse, Ms. Klein, from his grade school years. The moment Clyde reaches Ms. Klein's table, she smiles up at him.

CLYDE (V.O.)
How long does she have?

MS. KLEIN
Hello there.

Clyde sits.

CLYDE
Hello.

DOCTOR (V.O.)
Weeks. Months.

MS. KLEIN
Did you just get here?

CLYDE
Yes.

DOCTOR (V.O.)
I doubt she'll make it another
year.

MS. KLEIN
Wanna help me with my puzzle?

CLYDE
I'm not very good at puzzles.

Ms. Klein laughs.

MS. KLEIN
You don't have to be good! You
just put one piece next to another.

She places a piece. Clyde touches her unoccupied hand. She smiles at him. He finds it suddenly difficult to maintain his composure.

CLYDE
I came here to thank you. You
helped me once. When no one else
would.

MS. KLEIN
You're very welcome.

Clyde can't hold it back. Can't stand seeing her like this. Tears drip down his cheeks.

CLYDE
I'm sorry. I'm so sorry.

Ms. Klein drops her puzzle piece. Touches his wet cheek.

MS. KLEIN
Whatever for?

CLYDE
I've done... terrible things!

MS. KLEIN
There there. I'm sure they weren't
that bad.

Clyde calms a bit. Stares at her. Desperate to connect. He reaches for his eye patch. Flips it up. Ms. Klein regards his eye with curiosity.

MS. KLEIN
You poor man.

Then Clyde can see it in her eyes. A spark in the recesses of her brain. Faint recognition. It takes seemingly forever, but with great caution, she ventures forth.

MS. KLEIN
Clyde...?

The spark fades. Clyde flips the patch back down over his eye. Ms. Klein smiles.

MS. KLEIN
Hello there. Did you just get
here?

Clyde nods sadly.

MS. KLEIN
Wanna help me with my puzzle?

Clyde stands.

CLYDE
I'm not very good at puzzles.

EXT. ASSISTED LIVING CENTER

Clyde meets Joe at the limo.

CLYDE
Get her out of this... shit hole.
Find her the best care available.

Joe nods. They get in. Drive away.

INT. CLYDE'S LIMO

Clyde watches financial news. Analysts discuss Trevor over footage of Trevor's rant. The subtitle reads, "Trevor Winston: The Mighty Has Fallen. Dunkeldorf Phoenix: Renaissance IPO rises from previous ventures' ashes."

Clyde's phone buzzes. He answers.

RANDALL (V.O.)
Hey, Clyde! Look, I know it's been
a while --

CLYDE
Spit it out, Randall.

RANDALL (V.O.)
I had to fire my campaign manager.
Dipshit banged an intern. I'll do
anything to get you back.

CLYDE
You'll do exactly and only what I
say.

RANDALL (V.O.)
You got it!

Clyde thinks on it. Makes a soul-selling decision.

CLYDE
There's a certain health care bill
that's been floating around
Congress for years. Attack it with
everything you've got.

He hangs up.

INT. DINER - NIGHT

A good-looking, but haggard, blonde serves the last customer. Joe finds a seat. The blonde, Melody, from Clyde's high school days, crosses over to Joe. Pours him some coffee. Smiles politely.

JOE
Ms. Melody Singer of 746 SE
Whispering Willow Lane, I presume?

Melody drops the coffee pot. Smash!

MELODY
How did you know --?

JOE
I represent someone who has a
proposal.

EXT. DINER

Joe lets Melody into Clyde's limo.

JOE (V.O.)
You'll agree to an arrangement of
marriage.

INT. CLYDE'S LIMO

Melody and Joe sit opposite each other. Melody waves off
Joe's offer of wine.

JOE (V.O.)
If you don't, we'll ruin your
husband.

EXT. MELDODY'S APARTMENT - MORNING

With bags packed, Melody stomps out to Clyde's limo. Her
husband, Brett, in sanitation coveralls, watches with tired,
lined, tear-stained eyes.

JOE (V.O.)
You won't tell him why you're
leaving him.

Joe opens the door for Melody. She pauses. Stares at Brett.
Then she faces this terrible situation. Gets in.

EXT. CLYDE'S MANSION

Clyde's limo pulls up to a gate outside a dark, shaded
fortress of stone and iron.

JOE (V.O.)
You'll remain in the arrangement
until we end it.

The gate opens. The limo rolls in. At the front door, a
BUTLER greets Melody.

JOE (V.O.)
If you try to leave at any time,
we'll ruin your husband.

INT. CLYDE'S MANSION

The Butler leads Melody into a marvelous foyer. In a brand new silk robe, Clyde meets her there.

CLYDE
 Good evening, Melody. It's been
 far too long.

Melody smacks him as hard as she can. Clyde's Butler moves to restrain her. Clyde holds up a hand.

MELODY
 You soulless son-of-a-bitch!!

CLYDE
 I told you I'd have you some day.

MELODY
 I'll play your little game. I'll
 fuck you so hard you'll praise the
 day you discovered your dick. But
 I will never, ever love you.

CLYDE
 Good to know. Shall we?

He leads her into the rest of the house. Despite the absence of a record and player, the chants begin...

INT. CLYDE'S MANSION

As the hours drag on, Clyde fucks Melody with a vicious vengeance. She plays her part with aplomb. Feigns ecstasy with every thrust. It's not rape because she never says no, but it's not far from it.

Clyde takes her on the king size, four-poster bed. On the giant, silk-upholstered sofa. In the Olympic size pool. In the Japanese-inspired sauna. And finally, back in the bed.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM

Scratched up and sore, Melody sleeps uneasily. Trembles. Weeps. Clyde gets up. Wraps himself in his bathrobe.

INT. WATERFALL ROOM - NIGHT

An awe-inspiring, serene sanctuary. Clyde sits on a marble bench. The bench rests atop a steaming waterfall. The water pours down twenty feet into a reflecting pool. Outside lie sprawling gardens. Clyde admires the view.

He pulls out the envelope the Old Man gave him all those years ago. Opens it carefully, as if the slightest out-of-place tear could set off an atomic blast.

THE OLD MAN (V.O.)
Dear Clyde, if you're reading these lines, it means you've finally achieved everything you ever desired.

Clyde stands. Paces.

THE OLD MAN (V.O.)
You've mercilessly crushed those who crossed you. You've possessed the woman after whom you once pined.

Clyde stops.

THE OLD MAN (V.O.)
You've achieved wealth, power, and glory beyond that of which most men dare to dream.

Then, the voice is no longer in Clyde's head.

THE OLD MAN
But you are alone.

Clyde drops the letter. Faces the Old Man. The figment looks just as he did before he died in the hospital.

THE OLD MAN
You might have found love once, but you tossed it aside, most likely due to some pathetically trivial matter.

Clyde tries to speak, but can't.

THE OLD MAN
You probably had friends as well, but you couldn't let them get in the way of your ambition.

He goes to the edge of the waterfall. Peers into the pool below.

THE OLD MAN

You definitely constructed a grand palace for yourself, but in truth, it's nothing more than a cave in which to hide.

He faces Clyde.

THE OLD MAN

You've more than likely wasted half your life in order to achieve such staggeringly impressive solitude.

Clyde shakes. Fumbles.

CLYDE

But... but... but... you taught me to --!

The Old Man smacks him.

THE OLD MAN

You profoundly stupid little idiot!!

He takes Clyde by the shoulders. Shakes him vigorously.

THE OLD MAN

I taught you how to survive, not how to live!!

He throws Clyde onto the bench.

THE OLD MAN

Look at you now! Had I known you'd waste your life like I'd wasted mine, I never would have bequeathed you my fortune!

CLYDE

You said life holds no respect for the weak!

THE OLD MAN

I also said a true student of wisdom must not receive such wisdom, but rather discover it for himself!

Clyde's face goes blank.

THE OLD MAN

You never wrote that down, did you?!

Melody wanders into the room. Finds Clyde alone. Cowering on the bench. The Old Man's letter dangles in Clyde's trembling fingers. Clyde pleads to the silent, steaming darkness.

CLYDE

I'm sorry, sir!

Melody is taken aback. She waits for more. Doesn't see the Old Man smack Clyde again. Only sees Clyde shrink away.

THE OLD MAN

Never apologize!! It's a --!!

CLYDE

Sign of weakness!!

THE OLD MAN

Never interrupt me!!

Fascinated with Clyde's delusions, Melody makes herself comfortable.

CLYDE

Yes, sir!!

The Old Man calms. Sits next to Clyde.

CLYDE

What do I do now, sir?

THE OLD MAN

You've certainly made an awful mess of things.

Clyde nods.

THE OLD MAN

You'd best get some rest. You have many, many long days ahead.

CLYDE

Yes, sir.

He stands. Heads back to the bedroom.

THE OLD MAN

Clyde?

Clyde stops. Faces him.

THE OLD MAN

I've been dead for decades. Do yourself a favor and make damn sure you never see me again.

CLYDE

Yes, sir.

Melody gets up. Sneaks back to the bedroom. Clyde follows soon after. The chanting fades away.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM

Melody's in bed. Pretending to be asleep. Clyde shuffles in. Stands before her. Hands her a letter. Melody sits up. Accepts it.

CLYDE

I'm releasing you. This should explain everything. Pray your husband's more forgiving than I am. The limo's waiting.

Melody stands. Gathers her things. Hesitates at the doorway. Watches Clyde. Pitiful. He doesn't look at her. Finally, she leaves.

INT. BATHROOM

Clyde stares at his miserable reflection in the mirror. Splashes water on his face. Opens the medicine cabinet. Grabs some Ibuprofen. Pops two. Puts the medicine back. Closes the cabinet door --

Trevor's right behind him. In an odd, straight-jacket style turtleneck. Clyde's mouth opens.

TREVOR

You really should spend more on security.

He throws a bag over Clyde's head.

BLACK.

TREVOR (V.O.)

You bought me, you bankrupted me, then you built all this on the back of my decades of work. Pretty cold, Clyde.

INT. WATERFALL ROOM

Trevor removes the bag from Clyde's head. Clyde finds himself tied up and gagged at the feet of his marble bench. Trevor sits on the bench.

TREVOR

Thanks to you, my wife left me,
took my kids, and our fortune is
gone. You weren't joking about
that epitome of misery shit.

He chuckles.

TREVOR

I wish I could say I blame you.
How long did you plan it? Months?
Years? Decades?

Clyde muffles "fuck you" through the gag.

TREVOR

See that's the difference between
us. We both went through pain. I
moved on. You didn't.

Clyde muffles again. Trevor removes the gag.

CLYDE

You don't know pain!!

Trevor shoves the gag back in.

TREVOR

That's where you're wrong, Clyde.

He tears off his turtleneck at a hidden Velcro seam.

TREVOR

I AM pain!!!

Even in the dim light, Clyde can clearly see that every last inch of Trevor's body is covered in scars. Down to his waist. Up to his chin.

TREVOR

Most kids are traumatized at the
business end of their dads' dicks!
For me, that was only the fucking
appetizer!

He pulls his pants down. Shows Clyde his backside. A sunburst of gnarled scar tissue twists out from his asshole. Spreads across his buttocks.

TREVOR

When he got tired of using his cock, he'd grab a stick. When he couldn't find one of those, he'd use a crowbar!

He pulls his pants back up. Faces Clyde.

TREVOR

Only reason he was a principal was for the free buffet of fresh, quivering meat!

He sits on the bench.

TREVOR

I know what you're thinking. If it was so awful, why didn't I do something about it? I tried. Nobody ever believed me.

He laughs.

TREVOR

Not even your beloved Ms. Klein. He was eventually caught, jailed, killed. Only ten fucking years too late.

He smiles at Clyde.

TREVOR

When I found you, that was when I realized: life holds no respect for the weak.

He slips off the bench. Kneels in front of Clyde.

TREVOR

Every time we beat you. Every time we spat on you, I was desperate for you to beg us to stop. To hit us back. To prove me wrong.

He scoots closer to Clyde.

TREVOR

But you never did! Not once! And then you had to talk to Ms. fucking Klein! That night, my dear ol' dad and I pulled an all-nighter.

He sits back on the bench.

TREVOR

Know why I became a billionaire?
To pay for the fucking therapy!

He stands up. Sits behind Clyde. Speaks in his left ear.

TREVOR

What we did to you was sick. I thought about making amends. Even tried to find you a few times.

He speaks in Clyde's right ear.

TREVOR

Finally, I realized there was nothing I could do but be the opposite of the man who created us both.

He stands.

TREVOR

Despite your best efforts, my wife and kids will lead long, happy, healthy, prosperous lives thanks to a trust fund you'll never find.

He stands on top of the bench.

TREVOR

You were right about the rest of my life being the epitome of misery. But you had no idea how brief that'd be. Good bye, Clyde.

With that, he dives backwards off the bench into the pool below...

CRUNCH!!! Clyde scoots over to the edge of the waterfall. Trevor's body floats delicately in a pool of rippling red. The sound of applause rises over the sound of trickling water.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

INT. ELECTION HQ - NIGHT

A huge victory party. By the charts, maps, and talking heads projected on the walls, it's clear Randall won by a huge majority.

Randall, Joe, and the Nerd stand before a cheering crowd. Out of the spotlight, Clyde watches the election results on his own monitor.

ELISE

Clyde!!

Clyde turns around. Searches the crowd. Sure enough, near the back, Elise wades through.

CLYDE

Elise!!

He and Elise have to wrestle countless supporters, but finally reach each other.

ELISE

My God, Clyde. What have you done?!

She points to Randall.

ELISE

Everything I've fought for! The health care bill! What have you done?!

Clyde's at a loss for words --

Hush! Hush! Hush! Clyde stumbles back. Speaks to someone standing behind Elise.

CLYDE

Brett??

Brett steps up next to Elise. A silenced .22 in hand. Clyde looks down. Two red circles in his chest. One in his belly.

ELISE

Clyde!!!

Clyde hits the floor. Elise scoops him up in her arms. Security guards knock Brett to the ground.

ELISE
Hold on, sweetie!! Hold on!!

She screams to the crowd.

ELISE
Somebody get a doctor!!

She looks down at Clyde. He coughs up blood.

CLYDE
I'm sorry, Elise. I'm so sorry.

Everything goes slow-motion. Security guards pull Elise away. In the midst of this immense crowd, Clyde is alone. Elise is... Lost. Forever.

FADE OUT:

THE END