

Good-Bye Johnny Boy


Written By

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&

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“A brilliant carpentry foreman “Johnny Savage” fights off alcoholism and nightmares of a tragic past to win his life back.”

A silhouette of a man standing next to a white van with a cargo box, set against a bright sunset sky. The man is on the left, touching the front of the van. The van is on the right, facing left. The background is a bright orange and yellow sky with some clouds.

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EXT. COUNTRY STORE BUILDING SITE -- LATE AFTERNOON

The late afternoon sun races to close out the day. It casts golden rays of light on this under construction store-front. The building crew hustles to finish the store's entrance facade. The foreman, JOHNNY SAVAGE, is a ruggedly handsome man in his forties. His piercing eyes accent his well tanned face and work hardened body. Wielding a hammer, Johnny waves his lanky buddy PETE WILKES away from the window frame. Johnny steps in with speed and precision, knocking ten nails into the window frame. After inspecting the perfect line of nails, Johnny whips the hammer six-gun like into his tool belt. CARLMAN, a pot bellied southern administrator and his partner, BUSTER, hurriedly approach with blueprints in hand.

CARLMAN

I checked the specs. The rain runoff could flood the parking lot...

BUSTER

(calculator in hand)

The PSI pressure will rupture the internal piping. We don't have any dampers.

Johnny takes the blue prints. He waves his hand over the prints gauging a solution.

JOHNNY

(pointing)

Change the drain angle here... add one more overflow grid here and the lot will stay dry as a bone. Forget the dampers. At this elevation, calculate a twenty percent pressure drop. The PSI should be in sync with flow regulations.

Buster calculates the new equation. He looks up at Johnny in awe. Johnny winks and walks past the still to be hung country-store sign which has an enormous biscuit attached to it.

JOHNNY

We'll finish on budget and on time
or my name isn't Good Boy Johnny
Savage.

Carlman and Buster hustle off, cell-phones in hand.

EXT. COUNTRY STORE BUILDING SITE -- LATER

Johnny sits in his battered Ford truck with Pete. The setting sun illuminates the finished country store facade and the newly hung biscuit sign. They admire their work.

INT. JOHNNY'S TRUCK -- CONTINUOUS

Johnny reaches under the seat and pulls out a bottle of whiskey. He cracks it open and takes a swig.

JOHNNY

That there is a job well done, Petey Boy. Let's hit the Giant.

EXT. MINI MALL BUILDING SITE -- AFTERNOON

The bare beginnings of the mini mall site are apparent. One area has a recently poured foundation. Another area includes an underground garage still under construction. Johnny directs cement pouring trucks. SAMMY TURNER, an African-American worker, is a huge bull of a man. He prepares to drive a tractor. Pete waves him out of the machine. Sammy jumps down from his perch.

PETE

I'll move the tractor. Check the site lines for the garage wall.

SAMMY

Watch where you drive this thing, the roof's concrete's not set yet...

PETE

Don't worry about it. I know what I'm doing.

Pete drives off. The tractor is blocked by debris. The only way to get around the blockage is to take a short cut over the roof of the garage. Pete looks around.

PETE

Ahhh, fuck it.

Busting through some yellow tape, Pete drives across the roof.

CLOSE UP: Support beams set in concrete underneath the roof start to shift from the tractors weight.

The tractor starts to sink into the now sagging roof. Pete tries desperately to back the tractor off the sinking roof. The roof collapses plunging Pete and the tractor into a gapping hole. The tractor hangs from the roof suspended by its back wheels. Johnny and the crew run over. Johnny sees the precariously dangling tractor with Pete trapped by rubble.

JOHNNY

Richie Boy, call an ambulance. Sammy. get me a jack-hammer on the double.

Another area of the roof collapses. Sammy drags over the jack-hammer. Johnny eases himself onto the roof with the hefty jack in tow and moves towards the unsteady tractor.

SAMMY

Johnny, it's too dangerous! The roof is unstable.

JOHNNY

Well, then I'm going down with it. Get me some rope to help pull him out.

Johnny starts the jack-hammer and enlarges an opening around the tractor. Climbing through the hole he removes the concrete trapping Pete. A rope is thrown through the hole and Johnny secures it to himself. Johnny holds onto a semiconscious Pete and yells to his crew above.

JOHNNY

Get us the hell out of here!

As they are pulled up through the hole to safety, the entire roof collapses. Johnny checks on a grateful semi-conscious Pete.

JOHNNY

Goddamn it, Petey Boy. Next time, take the long way around.

INT. GIANT BAR - NIGHT

A seedy local country bar with sawdust on the floor. A huge neon light of a COWBOY GIANT chugs a mug of beer in the front window. The regulars are a mix of working class truckers, cowboys and construction workers. A juke box blasts out Bruce Springsteen while a couple of the good ol' boys play pool in the back. Johnny and Pete are swilling shots of whiskey with beer chasers, both are smashed.

JOHNNY

Petey-boy, that was some crazy shit on the roof today.

PETE

Hey no biggie, I'm no worse for the wear and the insurance will cover the re-pour on the roof.

JOHNNY

Look, I'm sick and tired of pulling your bacon out of the fire.

PETE

(hurt)

God-Damn ingrate. I saved your ass and took the DUI that would have put your ass under the jail!

JOHNNY

Hey, I'll never forget you what you did for me. All I'm saying is that it's time to pull your own weight.

JOHNNY

If you screw up again I can't bail you out.

Johnny shoots. Pete broods and gets hostile.

PETE

You didn't call the seven in the corner.

JOHNNY

We've been playing slop counts all night. Now you're playing Marcus of Queensbury rules? Bullshit!

PETE

I said no slop counts before the game.

JOHNNY

The hell you did.

Pete reaches for the money on the pool table. Johnny rushes Pete and tackles him.

Johnny and Pete slug it out, inadvertently hitting other bar patrons who get involved in the fight. Eventually the whole bar is a brawling chaos.

Johnny punches Pete's lights out and reaches into his shirt pocket removing a twenty dollar bill. Johnny rubs his jaw.

JOHNNY

Nice uppercut.

EXT. GIANT BAR PARKING LOT -- CONTINUOUS

Four wailing police cars screech up to the bar entrance. As the eight officers exit their vehicles a man comes flying through the front window. The human projectile smashes the window and the blinking Giant neon sign into a thousand pieces. Some of the officers stop and arrest the badly injured cowboy. The rest of the officers rush into the bar.

INT. GIANT BAR -- CONTINUOUS

Johnny is still hovering over Wilkes when the police rush in. He helps Wilkes up and they both jump out a back window. Several other patrons follow his lead.

EXT. GIANT BAR REAR -- CONTINUOUS

Johnny jumps out the window followed by Wilkes. The others who followed them arrive in a heap outside the window. Much to everyone's dismay there is a flank of officers waiting for them. Some of the patrons charge the officers and a melee ensues. Officers are knocked down. More police rush in to assist with the arrests. They begin to cuff everyone.

JOHNNY

Out of the frying pan and into the
fire.

INT. POLICE DRUNK TANK -- LATER

This holding tank is a smelly refuge for nightly drunks. Johnny inhales deeply on a Marlboro while Wilkes nurses his shiner. Johnny checks the cracked face plate on his watch. It reads 4:58 am.

Daylight begins to filter through the lone dirty window.

INT. COURT ROOM -- MORNING

The CAMERA follows the feet of a large man. He drops some paper work and bends to pick them up.

JOHNNY (V.O.)

Ever notice how fat people breath?
They bend over to tie their shoes
and come up gasping for air. Watch
when King comes in. He'll be huffin'
like a steam shovel.

JUDGE KING is an obese gentleman in his 60's. He breathes heavily with labored breath and a hacking cough as he reviews some paper work.

Johnny and Wilkes struggle in vain to contain their laughter.

JUDGE KING

Something funny, gentleman?

JOHNNY

No, sir.
(pulling themselves together)

JUDGE KING

So you don't mind if we proceed?

JOHNNY

Not at all.

JUDGE KING

Good. Let's begin.

He motions the bailiff. The bailiff stands and addresses the motley crew in the court room.

BAILIFF

All rise. Let the record show the Honorable Judge King is presiding. You have all waived your rights to trial and pleaded guilty to one count of public intoxication. The Judge will hand down his sentence now.

JUDGE KING

Alcohol is as bad or worse than any of the drugs I have to deal with, in this court. Your actions last night injured a number of police and caused extensive property damage. We're a small town and we don't need this kind of reputation.

Judge King lets out an unintentional snort as he takes a deep breath. Johnny and Pete try not to laugh too obviously.

JUDGE KING

That being said, most of you know I enjoy an occasional cocktail myself, so I'll refrain from further sermonizing and fine each one of you the standard twenty-five dollars for public intoxication. Pay the cashier on the way out. Case dismissed!

The Judge bangs his gavel and stands to leave. The bailiff leads the disgruntled men out of the court room.

The Judge exits huffing and wheezing into his chambers.

INT. JUDGE KING'S CHAMBERS -- MOMENTS LATER

The Judge walks to his desk and removes a pint of gin. He takes a long swig and sits down. His nose and cheeks are now bright red. His breathing and hacking cough are worse.

EXT. COURT HOUSE -- MORNING

Johnny and the others exit the courthouse. Church bells ring in the distance. Wilkes stops on the steps and searches for a light for his cigarette. Johnny lights him up.

PETE

I'll see you later. Poker or pool tonight?

JOHNNY

Both. But no slop.

They slap each other on the back and laugh.

INT. PETE'S HOUSE - LATE NIGHT

A small room is filled with smoke and six card players. The clock shows 2:58 am. Empty beer cans and a few liquor bottles litter a table with the remnants of pizza and deli food.

It's the last hand of the night. Johnny is so smashed he can barely keep his eyes open. The players show their hands.

JOHNNY'S POV: The cards in his hand are blurred and distorted.

PETE

It's a sad night when three lousy
duces wins the pot.

JOHNNY

Got nothin' to do with a the hand,
Petey Boy. It's the man behind the
hand. A master builder can build a
hand out of a foot.

EXT. PETE'S HOUSE - LATE NIGHT -MOMENTS LATER

Johnny is having difficulty opening his truck door. He eventually gets into the cab of the battered Ford and starts the engine. He looks to move forward but accidentally puts the car in reverse, smashing into Pete's white picket fence.

JOHNNY

Oh, shit... Wouldn't want the garbage
cans to feel left out.

Johnny tears out of the driveway and nails the garbage cans.

EXT. HIGHWAY - LATE NIGHT

JOHNNY'S POV: The highway is doubling and tripling as he attempts to focus his vision.

A police car pulls up behind Johnny's truck.

OFFICER HOPKINS'S POV: Johnny's truck is weaving all over the road.

HOPKINS, a young, clean cut officer in his late twenties, turns his bubble lights on and forces Johnny over to the side of the road. When Hopkins reaches the truck Johnny is slumped over the wheel. He knocks on the window.

OFFICER HOPKINS

Johnny!

Johnny struggles to roll down his window.

JOHNNY

Hey, Hopkins.

OFFICER HOPKINS

Maybe you'd better let me give you a
ride home, partner.

JOHNNY

That's probably not a bad idea.

Hopkins helps Johnny out of the truck and over to the police cruiser. He opens the door for him.

OFFICER HOPKINS

Just got this baby today! Brand new
with all the bells and whistles.

Hopkins's beams. Johnny enters the car and pukes all over the front seat.

INT. JOHNNY'S TRAILER- MID MORNING

Johnny's trailer is an unkempt pig sty. The floor is littered with dirty clothes, beer cans, fast food and pizza boxes. The one redeeming aspect in the trailer are the different types of toy ships, planes and buildings made from Budweiser cans. His mother's picture and a small butterfly made of stained glass hang on the wall. In the picture, Johnny's mother wears a butterfly hair-clip.

Johnny is on the phone in his boxers drinking beer.

SAMANTHA (V.O.)

Where the hell were you last night?

JOHNNY

Poker.

SAMANTHA (V.O.)

We have a date and you don't even call? I'm through being taken for granted.

JOHNNY

Hey... Alright already. I get your point. I'm sorry. I'll make it up to you tonight... Around eight.
Bye.

Johnny hangs up before she can get a word in. He shoots his empty beer can into an overflowing garbage can and grabs another one from the fridge. He slugs it down.

INT. JOHNNY'S TRAILER- THAT NIGHT

SAMANTHA is a buxom blonde with a high pitched squeaky voice. She lays with Johnny in his bed.

JOHNNY

I'm sorry about last night, babe. I was winning and just got caught up.

SAMANTHA

That's okay. You made up for it.

She snuggles closer.

SAMANTHA

I was thinking about my birthday last year. I was working at the diner and when I got home...

FLASH BACK: Samantha arrives home and walks up the stairs to her apartment door. In front of the door is a steel wash-bin filled with a case of iced Budweiser and a bouquet of flowers sticking out of the middle of the iced beer.

SAMANTHA (V.O.)

I walked up the stairs and what do I see, but a bouquet of flowers sittin' atop a case of iced Bud.

FLASH BACK ENDS

SAMANTHA

Those were good times... We've had some good times Johnny, haven't we?

JOHNNY

Sure have.

SAMANTHA

I think we make a good couple. Wouldn't you like a little Johnny Jr.

JOHNNY

(uneasy)
Not particularly.

SAMANTHA

Aren't you sick of living like some bohemian refugee in this trailer?

JOHNNY

Here we go...

SAMANTHA

We could get something cheap and you could fix it up. We could have a home, start a family.

JOHNNY

That's it.

Johnny grabs Samantha by the arm and unceremoniously throws her out of the trailer in her panties. He follows up by tossing her clothes out the door to her. Samantha is furious. She curses him while she starts to dress.

SAMANTHA

You son of a bitch! We're through. Don't you ever fucking call me again.

She puts a boot on then grabs her pants pulling one jean leg on. Samantha tries to pull the other jean leg on but it won't fit over her boot. She hops around on one foot trying to take the boot off with one leg still in her jeans. She spins around, falls down and then starts to cry. Johnny slams his trailer door. Samantha throws a handful of dirt at his door.

SAMANTHA

You heartless bastard.

INT. JOHNNY'S TRAILER - EARLY MORNING

Johnny's alarm clock starts blaring country-western. The time reads 5:00 a.m.

His eyes open wide. He hits the snooze button and closes his eyes. After about ten seconds the radio comes back on louder than before. Johnny jumps up.

We see pieces of his morning ritual: Shit, shower and shave. Finally, he rakes a comb once or twice through his hair and is out the door.

After five seconds, he returns and grabs a beer downing it.

JOHNNY

Ahhh... Breakfast of champions.

EXT. MINI-MALL CONSTRUCTION SITE - MORNING

Outlined wood frames show the progress of the mall. Workers enter the site from all directions. Workers head over to the main trailer office where Johnny is drinking coffee and holding court. (Clearly in charge), he greets the workers warmly.

JOHNNY

Hey, Danny Boy! How are you partner?
Stevey Boy. Say hey, fella. Richie
Boy, what's the good word?

Johnny hands Pete a cup of coffee. Pete puts it down.

JOHNNY

No coffee? How do you expect to
think?

Sammy walks by the group.

JOHNNY

Hey, Sammy Boy!

Sammy stops in his tracks and gives Johnny a deathly stare. The entire job site goes silent with tension. Johnny nonchalantly saunters over to Sammy and faces him off. Eventually Johnny smiles.

JOHNNY

You have some of the best lines in
the business. That work you did on
the arcade-wall last week would have
made Frank Lloyd Wright proud.

Sammy breaks into a huge grin. Johnny slaps Sammy on the back and calls over to the stunned workers.

JOHNNY

Alright, lets get in gear! Richie
Boy, get those frames in by noon.

JOHNNY

Danny, I want those floors perfect.
Petey, check with the mill on that
plywood delivery. They were short.

PETE

Let Sammy do it. I...

JOHNNY

I have other plans for Sammy.

Johnny takes off with Sammy in tow. The other workers hustle to their assigned tasks. Disgusted, Pete smacks the coffee cup, spilling the contents into the dirt.

EXT. MINI-MALL CONSTRUCTION SITE -- DAY

COLLAGE SHOTS: Johnny working with an almost meditative inspiration. Lining up a large piece of sheet-rock he expertly pounds twenty nails into the wall frame and then whips his hammer six-gun like into his tool holster.

Richie is lining up flooring. Johnny re-measures and corrects him.

Danny is fitting a window but can't seat it in the frame properly. Johnny is on the spot, re-angling the frame so it seats correctly.

Sammy is setting mortar and slate atop an entrance for Video Kingdom. Johnny uses a sight-line tool and gives him a thumbs up. Johnny finishes up as a work siren blows.

JOHNNY

Alright, lunch everybody!

INT. RANCHER BAR AND GRILL -- AFTERNOON

Johnny, and his seventy-five year old white haired boss MIKEL RICHMOND, sit with two business executives, LARRY and KEVIN FRAISER. They all gorge on huge steaks.

LARRY

We make the bid on the land next week. Kevin and I want **Richmond Construction** to build the apartment complex.

JOHNNY

What about all those EPA reports?
They say the land-fill could be toxic.

KEVIN

That's all environmentalist crap.
Our studies show it's perfectly safe.

LARRY

We'll send you our report. Just
keep and open mind.

KEVIN

We know you'll come in on time and
on budget.

A woman with naturally stunning beauty approaches the table.
LINDA RICHMOND, greets the table with a warm confidence.
Mikel stands.

LINDA

Hi everybody, sorry I'm late. Daddy.
(kisses and hugs Mikel)

MIKEL

(introduces table)
My daughter Linda. This is Larry
and Kevin Fraiser, and you remember
Johnny Savage.

Johnny and Linda exchange nods with a subliminal electric
tension. Linda sits down. Mikel picks up the former
conversation.

MIKEL

We can do the work, but I have to
let you know I'm going to retire.
My daughter here will be taking over.

Astonished, Johnny almost chokes on his beef.

JOHNNY

Mikel what gives?

MIKEL

Linda finished architectural school
a couple years ago. She's just
finished the Larson building in...

LINDA

Dallas.

KEVIN

That was a hundred million dollar
deal.

LARRY

What position did you have on the
team?

LINDA

Team leader. I managed the entire
project.

MIKEL

Look John, sorry for the surprise.
I'm getting older and she wants in.
I just decided this yesterday.

JOHNNY

(incredulous)

She's never run multiple job-sites
or had inter-connected delivery dates.
Suppose a client changes the specs?

LINDA

(confident)

Mikel can bring me up to speed on
what's current and I'll learn what I
don't know.

MIKEL

You're still in charge as company
supervisor. You're foreman on
everything Richmond builds. Give
her a chance.

Johnny reluctantly agrees. Mikel goes back to the Fraiser
brothers.

MIKEL

We'll do the spec building report
after you set the bid. You have any
problems with me leaving?

LARRY

Not as long as John's on board.
He's always taken care of us. You
got him, you got us. I'm sure Linda
will manage the project in true
Richmond style.

Larry stands and reaches over to shake Mikel's hand. Linda
smiles as Johnny throws his napkin down in disgust.

INT. BAG O' BONES BAR -- LATER

Johnny is drinking beer at the bar three hours later. The
bartender approaches him.

BARTENDER

Can I get you another beer champ?

JOHNNY

No thanks, I have to get back to
work.

The bartender checks the clock on the wall.

BARTENDER

It's almost four. Day's almost done.

JOHNNY

Need to get back. I got to finish
out the day.

Johnny punches out the last of his beer and walks out.

EXT. MINI MALL CONSTRUCTION SITE -- LATER

Johnny pulls up to the site and is greeted by Carlman and Buster.

CARLMAN

Where the hell have you been?

JOHNNY

What's going on?

CARLMAN

The south wall collapsed.

JOHNNY

Shit... Anyone hurt?

CARLMAN

No, thank God. Where were you?
Don't you have a beeper?

JOHNNY

I had a business lunch and I refuse
to be tagged like some goddamn cow!

BUSTER

What the hell are you going to do.
We're going to fall behind schedule!

Johnny blows Buster off and calls Sammy over.

JOHNNY

(calm)

Take the truck and run over to the
Webster job. It's two blocks away.
They have a shit load of extra mortar.
Richie, call over and find out exactly
how much.

Sammy takes off. Richie dials on a mobile phone. Carlman
and Buster stand off to the side grumbling.

JOHNNY

Listen up. We got a situation here.

Johnny calls over the workers. Richie comes running up to
Johnny with a mobile phone. Johnny talks on the phone.

BUSTER

Well, what are you going to do? We
need to get word back to the office.
They're chomping at the bit.

Johnny hangs up. He turns to Buster.

JOHNNY

I don't like to make decisions unless
I have all the information.

RICHIE
What's the plan boss?

JOHNNY
They have five tons of mortar on site. Get a crew together and help Sammy pick up everything they got.

Johnny sees Pete packing up to leave.

JOHNNY
Where the hell you think your going?
We're all going to overtime. Get your ass over to Websters and give Sammy a hand.

Pete disgustedly throws his gear into the back of his pickup and hops a ride with a truck leaving the compound.

JOHNNY
Buster, we'll have that wall up by sunrise.

EXT. SOUTH WALL - DAWN

ANGLE ON: SUNRISE

Johnny and his crew are exhausted. They stand near the rebuilt fifteen-foot wall and look on with pride.

EXT. SAVAGE FARM HOUSE -- DAY

It's raining. The front of the house has an ancient picket fence with a dangling front gate. The dilapidated house structure is woefully in need of repairs. The roof has several large holes and various windows are broken. The porch has many missing planks and the railing has rotted away. Johnny pulls up to the gate in his truck.

INT. JOHNNY'S TRUCK -- CONTINUOUS

Johnny stares at the house intently, as if he is waiting for someone to come out of the front door. Closing his eyes he rubs the night's work from his throbbing temples. The sound of the windshield wipers begins to intensify and echo in his imagination. Johnny's eyes snap open and he peels off from the farmhouse with reckless abandon.

INT. JOHNNY'S TRAILER -- AFTERNOON

Johnny is kicking back drinking a beer and watching a baseball game. There is a knock at the door and his brother GARY SAVAGE enters. Gary is a clean cut yuppie lawyer in his late thirties. He notices the garbage and unwashed clothes.

GARY
Johnny Boy in all his glory, ensconced
in the lap of luxury.

JOHNNY

Put a sock in it. I work hard. I deserve a little rest.

GARY

How come you're not over at the job site?

JOHNNY

Took off early, little cold. No big deal.

GARY

If you have a cold why are you drinking?

JOHNNY

Hey bro, Dad's dead. He took the position with him.

Gary looks around for an open seat. Johnny clears a space on the couch with a swipe of his hand.

JOHNNY

You want a beer?

GARY

No thanks. I don't want to encourage you. You've been getting out of hand.

JOHNNY

What? Are you still pissed about the picnic? Or is it your wife?

GARY

You ruined Shelley's birthday. Falling into the cake was not funny.

JOHNNY

Hey, I didn't mean anything by it. Just some harmless...

Gary gets up to leave.

GARY

That's the problem with you. Nothing is ever serious. Later.

Gary gets up and leaves.

JOHNNY

Asshole.

EXT. MINI-MALL CONSTRUCTION SITE -- AFTERNOON

The site has evolved. Many of the store-front logos have been placed atop the perspective buildings.

Video Kingdom, Space Burger, Fantasy Ice cream and several other facades are being completed.

Johnny cuts some plaster board with skilled precision. He has acquired several days facial hair complemented by a searing headache. He walks over to Pete.

JOHNNY

Lets get some lunch.

Pete wrinkles his nose.

PETE

Might think about gettin' a bath partner. You stank.

JOHNNY

I'm a working man Petey Boy.

PETE

Don't smell like work to me.

Pete sidles away from Johnny's funky brogue. Linda approaches. Johnny is momentarily stunned by her beauty.

LINDA

Hi, Johnny! Dad got me up to speed on the current projects.

Her smile could melt the Antarctic. Linda extends her hand.

LINDA

I just wanted to thank you for what you did for the company the other day.

Johnny gives her a quick hand-shake.

LINDA

You saved us three weeks turn around time by getting that wall up on time. The inspectors passed it with flying colors. The Randall bid should be a piece of cake.

JOHNNY

Ahhh, thanks a lot.

Johnny is surreptitiously checking his arm pits for stink. She moves closer to him. He backs off in a hurry.

LINDA

Is something wrong?

JOHNNY

No, I'm... I mean, I'm fine, fine. I just have to get back to work.

LINDA
Well, certainly I...

Johnny hurries off leaving her open mouthed.

EXT. MINI-MALL SITE - DAYS END

Johnny sits in his truck and takes a long swig from a bottle of Jack Daniels. Linda walks past the truck, seeing him through the window she checks her watch and shrugs.

INT. GIANT BAR -- NIGHT

Typical Giant customers at the bar. A dart game is in progress at one end of the bar. Johnny sits with Pete at the middle eyeing a moderately attractive young high school-esq brunette. Samantha strolls up wearing tight jeans and a revealing silk midriff blouse.

SAMANTHA
How ya doin' Johnny? Buy me a drink?

Johnny signals the bartender for two beers.

JOHNNY
I thought you weren't talking to me?

SAMANTHA
I'm not. Just drinking your beer.

Samantha is being coy. Johnny turns away and eyes the brunette. The young girl flirts with a smile and a wave.

SAMANTHA
Shame on you John Savage. She's young enough to be your daughter.

JOHNNY
For someone who's not talking your lips sure flap a lot.

Samantha lovingly rakes her nails along Johnny's face.

SAMANTHA
When you're through with the school girls and ready for a real woman in **a real relationship...** I won't be available.

She turns and struts away sidling up to a guy at the other end of the bar. CAPPIE is a big muscular trucker. Samantha cuddles next to him. Smiling she blows a kiss to Johnny.

PETE
I'm gonna call it a night, partner.

JOHNNY
Sit your ass down. There's an eight drink minimum here.

PETE

Dude, I'm tired.

JOHNNY

Don't pussy out on me. The night is still young.

PETE

Hey, I worked all fuckin' day. I'm beat.

JOHNNY

So did I you wimp.

PETE

Yeah, right. You take breaks all day long.

JOHNNY

What? That's bullshit. I break my back with everybody else. No other foreman gets down and dirty like me.

PETE

You take four hour lunches and give me all the shit details.

JOHNNY

What shit details? Is it your time of the month or what?

PETE

I give you my blood, sweat and tears on that fuckin' site and Sammy gets the cake walk. Fuck you.

Pete takes Johnny's half empty beer glass and throws it towards the dart game. It explodes against the board screwing up the game in progress. Cappie has splattered beer on him.

CAPPIE

You little prick.

Cappie runs straight for Pete. Pete backs up in a hurry. Johnny sticks his arm out and clothes-lines Cappie across the throat. Cappie jumps up and tackles Johnny from his bar stool. He proceeds to beat the crap out of Johnny.

The bar cheers Cappie's mauling of Johnny. Pete is undecided whether to jump in and help. He leaves.

PETE

(under his breath)

It's your fire, hop out of the pan yourself.

The bar patrons pull Cappie off of Johnny. Hopkins, now in his civilian clothes, helps Johnny up.

OFFICER HOPKINS

Damn Johnny, five years ago you would have kicked his ass.

JOHNNY

Five years ago you were still in high school.

OFFICER HOPKINS

I can't believe Uncle Pete didn't jump in to help you.

JOHNNY

The hell with Pete. Why didn't you jump in?

Hopkins looks at Johnny in disbelief.

OFFICER HOPKINS

Me? I'm off duty!

Johnny shakes his head and limps out of the bar.

EXT. MINI-MALL SITE FRIDAY -- EVENING

The mall is almost finished. All the facades are up and painted. Johnny heads for his truck. Pete walks by and he grabs his arm.

JOHNNY

Petey Boy, lets get paid, laid and made.

Pete looks at Johnny's diminishing bruises.

PETE

(smugly)

Looks like Cappies tattoos are wearing off.

JOHNNY

I'm a fast healer. I got to check in at the office. Then we'll hit the Giant.

EXT. AUGUSTUS-GRANT OFFICE BLDG. PARKING LOT -- LATER

Johnny's truck pulls into the parking lot. The parking lot exhibits upscale automobiles. They exit the battered truck and walk to the entrance. Johnny admires the architecture.

JOHNNY

This is a real beauty, huh Petey?

PETE

If your into steel, glass and high rent.

They enter the building.

INT. ELEVATOR HALLWAY AUGUSTUS-GRANT BLDG. -- MOMENTS LATER

Johnny and Pete exit the elevator and walk through the archway for RICHMOND CONSTRUCTION. Pete perks up when he spots a busty blonde named LEXUS. She is crammed into a short skirt, tight top and chews gum while bending over using a large xerox machine. She pays the boys no heed.

PETE

Howdy, Lexus. How are you?

LEXUS

Just fine.

PETE

Every time I come up here, I see you at the copy machine. You like this stuff?

LEXUS

Yes. I just love destroying trees, damaging the environment...getting sexually harassed at the copy machine every five minuets. That's what I like. That's what I really like.

Lexus grabs her copies and storms off past them. Pete doesn't understand her message. He watches her butt swish off.

PETE

That's what she likes?

JOHNNY

Petey Boy, you don't go fishing with a baseball bat. When you go hunting for woman you need to use the right bait.

PETE

Bait?

JOHNNY

We'll work on it later. Come on.

They walk down a hall past a sign that points to "payroll office". Johnny passes Linda's office. Her door is open and she's on the phone. Johnny stops and contemplates what was and what could be. He waves Petey on to the payroll office and eavesdrops on her conversation.

INT. LINDA RICHMOND'S OFFICE -- CONTINUOUS

LINDA

Mary, the company picnic has been a Richmond tradition for over thirty years... I'll get a chance to mingle with my staff and all my builders...

Linda toys with a butterfly paper-weight.

LINDA

Yesss... there are plenty of hunks to go around. I never mix business with pleasure, but I'll save you one. See you there tomorrow.

EXT. LINDA'S OFFICE HALLWAY -- CONTINUOUS

Johnny is intrigued at the possibilities.

INT. JOHNNY'S TRAILER - NEXT MORNING

Johnny drinks a beer. He primps his hair in the mirror.

JOHNNY

Looking good Johnny Boy.

EXT. COMPANY BARBECUE -- AFTERNOON

The company barbecue is in full swing when Johnny arrives. Children chase each other and play at various game stations. Families are eating and drinking at the many tables set up for the event. A large cow is being roasted over an open spit. Johnny walks up to one of the wet bars.

JOHNNY

Richie Boy! I'll have an iced tea.

Richie makes and hands him a drink. Johnny takes a sip.

JOHNNY

Whoa there! That's a Long Island Iced Tea. I wanted a regular one.

RICHIE

Ha, ha, very funny Johnny.

JOHNNY

I'm serious Richie.

RICHIE

Yeah, right. Hit the road.

Johnny hesitates then and takes a hardy gulp.

Johnny spots Linda talking with some of the staff. She's dolled up in Western attire. Her shirt has two large butterflies on it. She also wears a butterfly hair-pin. Pete comes up behind Johnny with a baseball glove and drags him over to a baseball diamond.

JOHNNY

Anybody got an extra mitt?

SAMMY

I got an extra catchers mitt.

He throws Johnny the glove. A bunch of the guys throw the ball around.

Johnny throws the ball to Sammy who in turn whips it to Pete.

JOHNNY

I wanted to let you know, Sammy Boy,
you've been promoted to assistant
foreman.

SAMMY

You're kidding.

Johnny and the guys congratulate Sammy.

JOHNNY

You'll get a two-fifty a week raise
and I'm expecting you to step up and
earn every cent.

SAMMY

You can count on me, Johnny.

Pete at first disappointed, then becomes pissed. He whips the ball back to Johnny as hard as he can. Johnny takes the glove off to massage his hand. Danny comes over with some bats and the equipment bag.

DANNY

I got some sticks. Let's play ball!

Everyone starts to get ready to play. Johnny throws the mitt back to Sammy and starts to walk off.

PETE

Ahhh, what's the matter? Big foreman
doesn't want to play with us? We'll
take it easy on you.

JOHNNY

Piss off.

Johnny walks away. Pete gives him the finger. Johnny walks back to the wet bar.

JOHNNY

I'll have another Iced Tea.

RICHIE

(wise-ass)

You want a **regular one** this time?

JOHNNY

Yeah. A **regular** Long Island Iced
Tea.

Richie serves him and he downs half the glass in one gulp.

EXT. COMPANY BARBECUE - MUD PIT -- MOMENTS LATER

A corral has been set up and filled with mud. A gaggle of screaming kids are chasing a slippery pig one by one.

Linda is frowning as she watches the delighted youngsters.
Johnny walks up next to her with a full drink.

JOHNNY

(buzzed)

Hi there, boss lady. How's it going?

LINDA

I'm good and Linda will do just fine.

JOHNNY

Okay... Linda. Nice shirt. You
have a thing for butterflies?

LINDA

Yes, I collect butterfly keepsakes.

Johnny looks at her strangely.

JOHNNY

My mother used to collect 'em too. I
still have a few lying around... You
must be happy we finished the Mini-
Mall on time.

LINDA

We went a week over schedule.

JOHNNY

A week over schedule is on time in
this business.

LINDA

Sounds like the thinking of a lush
to me.

JOHNNY

Whoa! Where'd that come from?

Shot of the guys playing baseball.

LINDA

Not out of left field I can assure
you.

Johnny drains his drink.

JOHNNY

Well, it's an irrelevant point because
an employee should be judged by the
merit of their work.

LINDA

And your's is slipping.

JOHNNY

What? Hell, I've been here for close
to twenty. Every major monster that
comes in, they bring it to me.

LINDA

Would you consider the Randall complex a monster? Because they gave it to Ames construction.

Johnny is stunned. He slurs his response.

JOHNNY

Ames couldn't build a Leggo skyscraper.

LINDA

They're not building a Leggo skyscraper, they're building the Randall complex... And we're not. You overbid the material costs.

There is an uncomfortable silence as the two direct their attention to the mud pit where a child chases the frenzied pig barely holding on. The boy falls head first into the mud and the pig goes free squealing loudly.

LINDA

That animal is terrified.

JOHNNY

Are you kidding? The pig is having as much fun as that kid.

LINDA

How do you know?

JOHNNY

How do you know he's scared?

LINDA

Those anguished squeals could have something to do with it.

JOHNNY

Those are squeals of joy...

Suddenly, Johnny jumps the corral fence and goes for the pig with wild abandon. He jumps for the pig and misses ending up covered with mud. Johnny gets up and bolts after the fleeing pig. He drunkenly wrestles the pig to the ground. The surrounding crowd roars their approval. Johnny raises his fist in triumph while Linda looks on in disgust.

INT. JOHNNY'S TRUCK -- NIGHT

Johnny is driving with dry mud caked to his body and clothes. He's weaving all over the road. Johnny swerves hard missing a parked car. He ends up on a lawn passed out behind the wheel. A broken sprinkler sprays the truck with water.

A police cars lights are flashing as it pulls up next to the truck. Hopkins gets out of the patrol car and opens Johnny's door. Johnny wakes with a start. Hopkins drags Johnny out.

They're both getting drenched from the broken sprinkler.

JOHNNY

Oh, Hopkins... Great. Take me home.
I'm beat.

OFFICER HOPKINS

Not this time.

Hopkins spins Johnny around and cuffs him.

JOHNNY

What's all this? Take this shit off
me.

OFFICER HOPKINS

It's time to put a stop to this
nonsense. It's for your own good.
You have the right to remain silent.
You have the right to an attorney...

INT. POLICE STATION -- CONTINUOUS

Johnny is handcuffed to a chair. He blows on a breathalyzer
machine.

ANGLE ON: THE PRINT-OUT READS 2.4 INTOXICATION LEVEL

Johnny is led away to a cell. The empty cell is gloomy and
foreboding. Johnny sits down. The door swings shut and
echoes in his brain. A distraught Johnny is highlighted by
the shadows from the slated prison bars.

INT. JAIL CELL -- NIGHT

Johnny is burned out in the cramped cell. He beckons the
guard, a tough looking jarhead named DIETER.

JOHNNY

Get me a butt, would you, Dieter?

DIETER

Fat chance.

JOHNNY

Come on. Please?

DIETER

You got the cell all fuckin' muddy,
John.

JOHNNY

There was nothing I could do about
it. That pig was slippery.

DIETER

Yeah, well, I got to clean it up.

JOHNNY

Get me a mop and I'll clean it up.
Just give me a butt.

Dieter checks to see if anyone's looking and slips Johnny a pack of Marlboro's. He starts to walk away when Johnny snaps his fingers for a light. Dieter tosses him a pack of matches.

DIETER

(under his breath)
Fuckin' alki.

INT. LINDA'S OFFICE -- MORNING

Linda's office is a tasteful exemplification of minimalist design. A large colorful painting of a butterfly hangs behind her desk. She's busy with paperwork when a clean shaven and apparently well rested Johnny walks in the room. She doesn't look up but motions him to sit. They share a few moments of silence. She puts her work down and addresses him.

LINDA

Aside from all the crap involved here, we have a very simple case. An alcoholic whose life is falling apart.

JOHNNY

That may be true but I'm a master builder and I can rebuild anything.

LINDA

Sometimes things get broken beyond fixing.

JOHNNY

That's never going to happen darlin'.

LINDA

It's happening now! The police test came back with a 2.4 blood alcohol level. That's three times the legal limit.

JOHNNY

You think you know me so well, but I bet I could surprise you.

LINDA

Is that right?

JOHNNY

Have lunch with me.

Linda eyes Johnny skeptically.

JOHNNY

C'mon, I want to show you something and apologize for my conduct.

JOHNNY

I appreciate the firms support and
your bailing me out yesterday.

Making the decision Linda smiles and stands up to go.

INT. TRATTORIA RESTAURANT -- AFTERNOON

Johnny and Linda are seated outside under an umbrella at
this posh cosmopolitan eatery. The waiter approaches.

WAITER

Hi, we have salmon and ceasar salad
specials.

JOHNNY

I'll have the stea... The salmon
will be fine, and whatever's on tap.

LINDA

I'll have the salmon, *and sparkling
water.*

JOHNNY

Ahhh, sparkling water sounds great.

WAITER

I'll be back in a minute with your
Perrier.

The waiter leaves.

JOHNNY

I've got to be honest with you. I
was really hurt when you told me
Ames got the Randall job... I just...
The specs on that project would make
Frank Lloyd Wright proud.

LINDA

(excited)

You read the "Fountainhead".

JOHNNY

Are you kidding? That book changed
my life.

LINDA

Same here. My passion for
architecture is rooted in the language
of that book. I really connected
with the protagonist, Frank Lloyd
Wright.

JOHNNY

That kind of inner reflective stuff
got me into reading all sort's of
psychology, Freud, Carl Jung.

JOHNNY

I thought most of it was a bunch of
crap though.

LINDA

Surprise, surprise. Your a man of
many talents Mr. Savage.

The waiter appears with their drinks.

EXT. MAIN STREET - A LITTLE LATER

Johnny and Linda amble along the sidewalk talking.

LINDA

As an undergrad I majored in
architecture.

JOHNNY

What happened?

LINDA

I felt stifled, more like confused.
Classical, modern, neo-grecco. They
all merged in my brain like some
runny water colors. My true calling
is in application of others people's
designs. I'm good at execution...
Am I babbling?

JOHNNY

No. Not at all, it's an interesting
perspective on the business.

LINDA

So how did you come upon the
"Fountainhead"?

JOHNNY

I was working as a apprentice
draftsman. One day the boss called
me into his office. He told me we
got the bid to take over a half-
finished contract, and that I was
going to design the building. He
threw the "Fountainhead" book at me
and told me to read it. I did.

LINDA

He had an inexperienced draftsmen
design a major contract?

JOHNNY

He had no choice. It was that or go
under.

LINDA

What happened?

JOHNNY

When you're young and hungry you can do things that seem amazing. I got the job done.

LINDA

How did it turn out?

Johnny looks up and motions to the Augustus-Grant building.

JOHNNY

What do you think?

LINDA

Oh my God, you designed this? This is amazing. Why don't you design any more.

JOHNNY

I really didn't like the work. It's so precise and boring. Like being an accountant. I gotta get my hands dirty.

LINDA

(amazed)

This is some really nice work, Johnny. It's... Exceptional.

JOHNNY

Thanks. And thanks for having lunch with me. I have to get back to work.

LINDA

Sure.

Johnny walks off with a skip in his step. Linda admires the front of the building.

EXT. SAVAGE FARM HOUSE -- LATER

Johnny pulls up to the decrepit fence in his truck. He stares at the dilapidated farm house lamentably. After a minute he takes a swig from a pint of whiskey and drives off.

EXT. MANSION CONSTRUCTION SITE TRAILER -- MORNING

Johnny walks into the trailer. Linda sits at a desk with piles of paper work. She uses an adding machine and laptop.

JOHNNY

What's with the change of suppliers and materials?

LINDA

Dunnlop is cheaper. I'm just trying to keep the costs down. And the Lime stone looks great.

JOHNNY

(exasperated)

Cheaper? Yeah. But are they reliable? And you can't just change Slate to Lime stone. Lime's too soft.

LINDA

(overwrought)

Johnny, just give me a chance to get my bearings and navigate through all of this. I appreciate any help you can give me. I'll skimp somewhere else and order the slate. okay?

JOHNNY

Great. I have your back with Dunnlop. I'll *make sure they understand* the delivery time table.

EXT. MANSION CONSTRUCTION SITE -- DAY

The midday sun beats down on Johnny's back while he works fitting windows with Danny. Linda exits the site trailer and observes him taking off his shirt. Johnny's lean hard torso glistens with sweat. He continues to work. Linda scrutinizes Johnny's muscled movements with a girlish grin. The phone in the trailer breaks her contemplation. As Linda returns to the trailer she steals one last glance at Johnny over her shoulder.

EXT. MANSION CONSTRUCTION SITE -- LATE AFTERNOON

Johnny's in his truck drinking a beer going over some paperwork. He spills the beer on some of the paperwork.

JOHNNY

Fuck me!

Angry dark clouds roll in quickly and it begins to rain heavily. Lighting crackles and thunder booms.

Johnny sets his paperwork down and turns on the windshield wipers. He sits back to relax and listens to the bleating rains staccato rhythm. He starts to doze.

INT. SAVAGE FAMILY CAR -- NIGHT

The same rhythmic windshield wiper sound in the stationwagon.

The Savage stationwagon is driving through heavy rain. Lightning lights up the landscape outside the car giving a surreal look to the on rushing view.

JOHNNY, age twelve, and his eight year old brother GARY play rock, paper, scissors in the backseat. Five year old sister NOREEN, sleeps on the other side of them.

JOHN Sr. is in his late sixties. His hard handsome face reflects a worn toughness. He drinks from a pint bottle battling the rain. His wife, DOROTHY, uses the rear-view mirror and attempts to put on her lipstick.

JOHN SR.

Dor, I need the damn mirror. It's raining cats and dogs. I can't see...

John Sr. grabs for the rear-view mirror. The car in front of them has it's rear break-lights suddenly come on. John Sr. swerves the wheel maneuvering into the left lane.

JOHN SR.

See what I mean! Son of a bitch!

DOROTHY SAVAGE

John, just slow down some.

JOHN SR.

Slow down? For Christ sakes Dor, we'd be road kill now...

DOROTHY SAVAGE

If you weren't drinking you would have more time to react...

Dorothy reaches over and turns the rear-view mirror towards her. She starts her lipstick again.

JOHN SR.

That's a bunch of bull. Ain't that right Johnny Boy... Your old man could drive through a goddamn tornado. John Boy, tell your ma. JOHN!

Johnny has stopped playing. He answers meekly.

JOHNNY

Yeah mom, dad can drive through anything.

JOHN SR.

Like father, like son.

John Sr. mischievously pumps the breaks causing his wife to smear her lipstick. He laughs and takes a swig, maneuvering the car back into the right lane.

DOROTHY SAVAGE

Knock it off John. NOW!

JOHN SR.

(laughing)

What... The drinkin' or the driving

DOROTHY SAVAGE

Both!

She wipes her lipstick off and begins again.

Up ahead the light has changed to red. A car cuts in front of the family's station wagon. It reaches the red light and skids to a stop.

John Sr. see's the onrushing break-lights in front of him. He applies the breaks full force and the car begins to skid. John Sr. fights for control as the stationwagon starts to spin.

John Sr. frantically tries to counteract the now spinning car. Her face now a mess, Dorothy hangs on with her eyes wide open in abject terror.

In the back seat, Noreen wakes up and begins to scream. Gary clutches Johnny tightly.

Johnny's POV: As his brother clutches him, Johnny's hearing changes. He can only hear the very fast drub-drubbing coming from the windshield wipers and Noreen's piercing scream.

INT. JOHNNY'S TRUCK - DAWN

JOHNNY'S POV: Johnny's vision is still spinning from the car dream with Noreen's scream and the windshield wipers sounds still echoing in his head.

Johnny clutches the driver's side handle tightly as he fully awakens from the dream. His breathing is rapid and perspiration cascades down his forehead. The storm has ended. He turns off the truck's wipers.

Johnny swipes under the seat and grabs an open bottle of whiskey. Reaching into the glove box he grabs a bottle of aspirin. Rubbing his temples Johnny shoots three aspirin into his mouth and then one more for good measure. He downs all four with a healthy whiskey slug. He puts the truck in gear and drives off.

INT. FOUR ACES BAR - MID MORNING

The Four Aces bar is adorned with gambling memorabilia. A lone bartender reads the sports pages behind the bar.

Johnny stands a few feet from the bar dialing on the pay phone. He sneezes several times while wiping his nose and trying to hold the phone receiver. He motions to the bartender, miming he wants something and continues to sneeze.

JOHNNY

Hey Sammy Boy! Listen, I'm sick as a dog. You go over and deal with the Webster crew and tell Pete to do the north wall today.

(sneeze)

The bartender rummages around through a drawer and comes up with a bottle of prescription pills.

He tosses them to Johnny, who catches the bottle and then pops three pills into his mouth. He sets the bottle down while he talks.

CLOSE UP: The prescription bottle label reads: SINUSET "**Do Not Ingest With Alcohol**". It also has a ban-sign across a Martini glass to indicate the same intent.

JOHNNY (V.O.)

Tell Pete to check his sight lines
and make sure there are no gaps.
Lazy bastard always wants to take a
short cut...

(sneeze)

Alright. I'll check with you later.

INT. JOHNNY'S TRUCK -- MANSION SITE - LATER

Johnny surveys the scene from his truck. The north wall is a half built sloppy mess. The wall is crooked and is filled with large gaps. The gaps have been plugged with mortar in an attempt to make the wall look accurate. Pete and the workers are taking a break eating sandwiches.

Johnny downs the last of his whiskey.

JOHNNY

Ask a boy to do a man's job and he'll
fuck it up every time.

EXT. MANSION - WEST WALL -- CONTINUOUS

Johnny gets out of the truck and starts over to the wall, grabbing a pick-ax on his way. He calls over to the group.

JOHNNY

Look at this mess! What the hell
are you taking a break for?

He tears into the unfinished wall with the ax, ripping bricks out as fast as he can swing.

PETE

Hey Johnny! What's up? What the...

Johnny continues to bring the wall down.

JOHNNY

Do I have to be here every goddamn
second of the day to make sure things
get done right?

Johnny rips at the mortar filled gaps and throws a shower of the offending material at the collected group.

He rips out more mortar with his hand and then takes another swing at the wall with his pick-ax.

JOHNNY

This crap wouldn't last two years.
Bring it down. Now!

The workers stand in place shell shocked. Johnny sneezes and goes back to his demolition.

JOHNNY

We're going to start all over again.
And we're going to do it right.
Seamless straight lines. I don't
care if we lose the whole week.

Pete picks up a sledgehammer. He resignedly joins Johnny. The others pick up tools and join in.

EXT. LINDA RICHMOND'S OFFICE -- NEXT MORNING

Johnny is looking haggard. His eyes are bloodshot and he uses three tissues a minute. Linda toys with a butterfly hair-pin.

LINDA

Why the hell weren't **you** or Sammy
supervising the crew in the first
place?

JOHNNY

I can't be everywhere and I had to
send Sammy back to the Webster site.

LINDA

Sammy I can understand. But my guess
is by your looks, you were out
drinking.

JOHNNY

Hell, aren't I allowed to have a
cold? I took some medication and
yes I had a couple of beers which
didn't interact well with my
prescription. That doesn't change
the facts. That wall needed to come
down.

LINDA

Quite frankly I have a weakness for
talented people. I need you here.
Your talent and expertise are
exceptional. But if you don't clean
up your drinking...

(bluster)

You're out.

JOHNNY

I have every right to do what I want
with my own liver, including soaking
it with alcohol.

LINDA

Not if your self inflicted bull-shit interferes with my business. That wall cost us twenty-five grand in overtime.

JOHNNY

I pull my weight around here! Once in twenty years I fuck up and get called on the carpet? I could drink as much booze as Frank Sinatra and Dean Martin combined and nobody would give a rat's ass. Your busting my chops because I won't sign off on the Frasier deal.

LINDA

(defensive)

It's a good deal! The EPA'S report is full of it.

JOHNNY

You don't believe that crap any more than the Frasier brothers. There's lead, mercury, traces of radon and God-knows what else in the soil. It will...

LINDA

It'll be sealed off by heavy concrete. There's no risk to anyone. I'm making the decision on this.

JOHNNY

You'll probably end up convincing yourself that those phony Frasier reports are legit. I could stomach a truck load of bourbon, but not that.

LINDA

That's your problem. You let your bottle do your thinking. You **always** ran away from your problems.

JOHNNY

You're still mad at me because I blew you off fifteen years ago?

LINDA

I was seventeen...

JOHNNY

You're Mikel's little girl, the bosses daughter!

LINDA

Bullshit! You were to scared to finish what you started.

LINDA

In case you haven't noticed, **I'm the boss now!**

JOHNNY

Your father never should have let you take over. Mikel would have never given up what he stood for. Your father...

LINDA

(yells)

My father doesn't run Richmond Construction anymore... **And you don't work here any more either.**

*

Linda's smashes her hand down on the desk for emphasis breaking the butterfly hair-pin in two. Johnny is beet red. He walks out of the office. Linda holds the broken hair-pin in separate hands while she contemplates her impulsive firing of Johnny.

INT. JOHNNY'S TRAILER -- LATER

Johnny walks into the trailer and grabs a beer on the way to the bathroom. He drinks and then grimaces while he urinates. He zips up his pants and is aghast when he looks into the toilet bowl. It's full of swirling bloody water.

JOHNNY

Oh, shit.
(trembling)

Johnny's shaking and gently lowers himself onto the toilet seat. He stares at himself in the mirror.

INT. LINDA'S OFFICE - NEXT MORNING

Johnny walks in and stops at Linda's desk.

JOHNNY

I came in here to say that uh...
I've given it a lot of thought and I think you're right.
(pause)
I need help. I'm going to get some.

LINDA

(regret)
It's too late for that.

JOHNNY

Rehab is covered in my insurance package. You can't fire me if I complete the thirty day program... I checked.

LINDA

What makes you think you can handle it?

JOHNNY

I can handle it. I can handle anything.

Johnny walks out. Linda is momentarily hopeful. She stares at the piles of work in front of her. Several phones ring at once.

LINDA

Johnny, I really hope you can.

EXT. JOHNNY'S TRAILER -- MORNING

Johnny exits the trailer with a packed bag in hand and locks up. He walks to a van marked "Stafford Clinic". Entering the empty van Johnny takes a seat in the rear. The van drives off and he lights up a cigarette.

INT. STAFFORD VAN -- CONTINUOUS

JOHNNY'S POV: Looking out the back window, his trailer grows smaller until it cannot be seen anymore.

JOHNNY

Well... The worm has officially turned.

EXT. STAFFORD CLINIC -- AFTERNOON

The Stafford van pulls up to a modern looking facility. Johnny exits the van, cigarette in hand and walks to the entrance. A middle aged male attendant named GASPAR, greets him at the entrance.

GASPAR

I'm sorry but no nicotine, caffeine or other stimulants or depressants are allowed during your stay.

Johnny throws the butt into a nearby garbage can. Gaspar gives him a knowing look. Johnny sighs and takes the pack of cigarettes from his pocket. He tosses them into the garbage can too. Gaspar smiles and waves him in.

GASPAR

Welcome to Stafford. I'm Gaspar. It takes a little getting used to but I think you'll find the experience worth it in the long run.

INT. JOHNNY'S ROOM - STAFFORD CLINIC -- MOMENTS LATER

Turning on the lights Johnny enters and inspects his modestly furnished bedroom. Putting his bag on the bed, he walks to the bathroom and peeks in.

Johnny walks back to the bed and sits down. The realization of where he is hits him with a wave of depression. There's a knock at the door. Gaspar opens the door and sticks his head in.

GASPAR

Orientation meeting in fifteen minutes...

Johnny nods his head and Gaspar leaves. He looks up and see's a clock on the wall. It reads 3:45.

INT. STAFFORD CLINIC - ORIENTATION ROOM -- LATER DAY ONE

The orientation is in progress. Doctor NIEL KRITEMAN a short pinched faced man with glasses and a Van Dyke beard talks to a group of five residents with his partner, Dr. SANDRA SEACAT, a warm intelligent woman in her early forties. The group includes A.L. DUKE, a thirty-ish street-wized African-American male, MELINDA BAXTER, a pretty anorexic looking woman, LLOYD THOMAS, a slender aristocratic looking thirty year old man, DOMONIC PIRRONE, a slick twenty-nine year old Italian wannabe gangster and BEATRICE MUMS, an overweight schoolmarm.

Dr. Kriteiman speaks with modulated introspective medical phrases. His learned manner is a mix of thoughtful support and technical expertise. Dr. Seacat exudes a warmer and more genuine quality.

DR. KRITEMAN

We'll work with you here at Stafford in individual sessions with Dr. Seacat and myself. And in group pod-therapy.

DR. SEACAT

Your pod consists of six people living and healing together.

DR. KRITEMAN

These sessions will help you explore ways to eliminate urge by discovering "cause".

Johnny enters the room sheepishly. Dr. Kriteiman checks his watch impatiently while Johnny heads for the sixth and last unoccupied seat. The clock on the wall reads 4:30.

DR. KRITEMAN

Since you have decided to keep everyone waiting, why don't you start us off.

(checks his clipboard)

Mr. Savage? Please tell us who you are and why you're here.

JOHNNY

(cool)

I'm here because I fucked up.

JOHNNY

That's the whole story.

DR. KRITEMAN

We appreciate your candor, Mr.Savage.
Please elaborate.

JOHNNY

Now? I thought we talk about all
that stuff on a couch or something,
in private.

DR. KRITEMAN

The doctors at Stafford feel sharing
your experiences will not only help
you but also benefit everyone in the
group.

Johnny is silently defiant.

DR. KRITEMAN

In order to begin the process of
healing, you must open yourself up
to self reflection.

Dr. Seacat cuts in with a more nurturing approach.

DR. SEACAT

John, if you don't feel ready to
talk right now it's okay. Whenever
you're ready to explore what's
bothering you, we're here. Let's
move on to someone else.

Johnny smirks at his small victory. Looking at his list Dr.
Kriteman continues.

DR. KRITEMAN

A.L. Duke? Please start by telling
us what your initials A.l. stand
for.

A.L. DUKE

Always late.

DR. KRITEMAN

Well you made it on time today. Why
do you think you have a problem with
time?

A.L. DUKE

"I" don't have a problem. I'm a
black man in a white world, living
on CP time.

DR. SEACAT

CP time?

A.L. DUKE

Colored People's time. Generally about two hours behind white people's time.

DR. KRITEMAN

I know there are great racial issues to solve in today's world but I wasn't aware that time was one of them.

A.L. DUKE

That's because you ain't black, doc. The world's a different place if you experience it with a skin tone that ain't white.

DR. KRITEMAN

As a group, you all have to realize that denial is a major defeat mechanism.

A.L. DUKE

I'm black. I don't deny that! You got a problem with black people, doc?

DR. KRITEMAN

A.L., I didn't say that I had a problem with your skin color.

A.L. DUKE

You didn't say it, but you didn't call me Mister, like you did him. Typical, racist shit.

DR. KRITEMAN

A.L., Mr. Duke, hiding behind social stereotyping only adds to your paranoia.

A.L. DUKE

I'm not paranoid but being black, I'm definitely persecuted.

DR. KRITEMAN

You need to take responsibilities for your two DUI'S. Denial is a major reason you're all here.

A.L. DUKE

So says the white man.

Dr. Seacat de-escalates the situation.

DR. SEACAT

Some of you have already begun to feel the withdrawal effects that you'll be coping with for the next few weeks.

DR. SEACAT

Let's end today's session with a thought to remember.

(beat)

One day at a time.

Dr. Kriteiman looks pointedly at Johnny.

DR. KRITEMAN

One more thing. There will be no smirking at your fellow residents during group sessions.

Johnny runs his hands across his face and wipes away the smirk.

INT. BASKETBALL COURT -- MORNING -- DAY TWO

Johnny finishes a sandwich and shoots from the foul line. He misses and throws four bricks in a row. A.L. has been watching from the side lines. Jumping in he rebounds Johnny's last shot. A.L. shoots a perfectly arched shot.

A.L. DUKE

Care for a game Snow-flake? Best of twelve.

Johnny nods and they begin to play. A.L.'s shots hit the net dead center. He dribbles rings around Johnny. None of Johnny's shots go in. By the end of the game Johnny is winded and sweating. A.L. blocks Johnny's last shot and then slam-dunks the ball. Johnny bends over and clutches his stomach. He runs over to a garbage can and pukes his guts out spattering himself with the foul vomit. Finished, Johnny sits back against the wall perspiring.

JOHNNY

Oh shit, I feel like I'm fucking dying.

A.L. DUKE

You're not dead yet. Come on, a hot shower and some clean clothes and you'll be good as new.

A.L. helps Johnny up.

A.L. DUKE

Twelve to none. I guess you're a little rusty.

JOHNN

Just a little out of shape... Name's Johnny Savage.

A.L. DUKE

A.L.

He sticks out his hand and they shake.

JOHNNY

What's A.l. really stand for?

A.l. shoots a perfect swish basket.

A.L. DUKE

(smiles)

Albert Lewis. You know that Doc is going to be a real pain in the ass, John.

JOHNNY

You got that right.

INT. JOHNNY'S ROOM- STAFFORD CLINIC -- NIGHT

Johnny is tossing and turning in his bed. The clock on his wall reads three a.m.

DREAM SEQUENCE JOHNNY'S POV: Johnny's being clutched by his brother while their car spins out of control. Noreen's scream and the windshield wiper sounds build to a crescendo.

Johnny's eyes snap open and he wakes up in a cold sweat, soaked through his T-shirt. He gets up and changes it. Getting back into the bed Johnny stares, eyes open.

INT. GROUP SESSION -- MORNING -- DAY FOUR

The group is seated in a semi-circle with the two doctors at the open end.

BEATRICE

I drink alone... I don't want anyone to know.

DR. SEACAT

Secretive drinking is one of the bench marks of alcoholism. Let's explore the cause. The **reasons you drink.**

BEATRICE

I guess I drink because of my weight.

DR. KRITEMAN

Self image is a major factor in self-destructive drinking.

BEATRICE

I hate the way I look. When all you have in your life is your work, I can't tell you how good it feels to head over to the Oriole Grill and have a few drinks.

(she starts whimpering)

DR. SEACAT

It's okay to cry Beatrice.

DR. SEACAT

These feelings of loneliness and frustration are part of your healing process.

BEATRICE

But I enjoy drinking and it helps me to feel attractive. Just once, I would like someone to call me beautiful.

DR. KRITEMAN

Beatrice, we all know that drinking is not fun. Hangovers, blackouts, physical abuse and other types of debilitating behavior arise from alcohol's use.

(rapid fire)

One half of all crimes are committed when alcohol is used. Half of all homicides have alcohol involved and seventy percent of all fatal auto accidents are a result of alcohol abuse. Romanticizing it's use is spurious and only leads you further from your self image problems. Beatrice, you definitely do not enjoy drinking.

JOHNNY

Wait a second, Doc. She just said she enjoys drinking. If you acknowledge the dread, acknowledge the joy for Christ's sake. Don't have us lie about it.

DR. SEACAT

John, are you willing to tell us the truth?

JOHNNY

Sure.

DR. SEACAT

Before you came here, were you enjoying your drinking?

JOHNNY

Hell yes. I always enjoy it.

DR. SEACAT

Then why did you enroll in Stafford?

JOHNNY

...I was urinating blood.

DR. KRITEMAN

Your liver and kidneys are almost destroyed and you love drinking?

DR. KRITEMAN

Was your DUI fun? I suppose you came to Stafford for enjoyment too.

Johnny sits brooding.

DR. KRITEMAN

Lets dispense with all the romantics and get on with the work.

DR. SEACAT

I think you should all make use of the rec room's facilities. Drawing, painting and some of the other artistic outlets we provide here are very therapeutic.

INT. JOHNNY'S ROOM STAFFORD CLINIC -- NIGHT

Johnny sits in a chair flipping through a magazine. He reaches for a glass of water on the night stand.

Johnny's POV: Taking the glass in hand he sees the glass shaking. Bringing the water to his lips the shaking increases. Johnny spills the water all over himself.

JOHNNY

Damn!

Johnny puts the water down and goes to the bathroom.

He reaches for a towel. His hands continue to shake as he wipes the spilled water off of himself.

Turning to the toilet he tries to pull his zipper down. His hands shake so violently that it takes a supreme effort to get his pants zipper open. Finally his quivering hands get the zipper open. Johnny's shaking hands cannot control the spraying pee. He wets up the bathroom and himself. He vents his frustration.

JOHNNY

Arrrggghhh.

Johnny wearily strips off his urine soaked clothes and enters the shower. His hands shake so violently that he can barely turn on the faucet. Ultimately, he turns on the cold water faucet, freezing himself. Letting out a scream, he fumbles for the hot water spigot. In the process, he turns off the cold tap and is scalded by the hot water. Screaming, he jumps out of the shower pulling the shower curtain down with him. Untangling himself, Johnny wraps a towel around his torso and drags himself back to the arm chair.

Sitting in the chair Johnny inspects his violently shaking hands. He grabs the arm handles of the chair and squeezes the arm rests until he turns red in the face. Relaxing his grip, Johnny brings his hands inches in front of his eyes to inspect them. For the first ten seconds, they're normal.

He smiles in triumph. Gradually, the shakes return in full force. Johnny is discouraged by what he sees.

INT. STAFFORD RECREATION AREA -- AFTERNOON -- DAY FIVE

Beatrice is painting some flowers, Lloyd is sketching some dresses. Johnny walks into the rec area and picks up a magazine with the New York skyline on the cover. He reaches for some drawing material and puts pencil to paper. Johnny sketches a line and stops unable to draw anything.

INT. LINDA RICHMOND'S OFFICE -- AFTERNOON

Linda is working at her desk. There are various purchase orders and bills on her desk. Aggravated she throws a bill down and picks up the desk calendar which has the **last day of the month circled**. Linda crosses out the fifth day of the month and goes back to work.

INT. PRIVATE SESSION STAFFORD -- EVENING -- DAY TEN

Johnny is in a smaller room. The doctors record the session.

DR. KRITEMAN

So your father was an alcoholic?

JOHNNY

My father was a good man. Hard working until he couldn't use his hands anymore. Arthritis took away his manhood.

DR. KRITEMAN

The arthritis only constricted his physical prowess, it was the alcohol that took away his soul.

Johnny fires an angry look at Dr. Kriteiman.

DR. SEACAT

John I want you to close your eyes and relax. Take a deep breath and exhale.

Doing so reluctantly, he closes his eyes and breaths deeply.

DR. SEACAT

That's it. I want you to relax and think back to when you were a child. Tell us about your father.

Johnny's closed eyes squint with concentration.

FLASHBACK: The Savage farm-house is in prime condition. Blue-skies on a sunny afternoon. John Sr. swigs from a bottle of whiskey while he planes shelving on a workhorse. He stops to massage his aching hands. Young Johnny and his brother Gary run over with a baseball and mitt.

YOUNG JOHNNY

Hey dad, teach us how to throw a curve ball.

JOHN SR.

Sure thing Johnny Boy.

He takes the ball and shows the boys how to hold the ball.

JOHN SR.

First, you got to hold the ball with the laces like this. The most important thing about this pitch is the wrist snap. You've got to keep the wrist loose, then snap it on the throw.

John Sr. motions Johnny to back off so he can throw the ball. He throws the ball weakly to his son. Johnny tosses it back.

JOHN SR.

Didn't get much snap on that one. Let's try it again.

John Sr. eyes Johnny as if he were a pitcher on the mound. He pretends to wave off some signals to Johnny, then rears back and wings the ball with all his might. John Sr. falls to the ground clutching his wrist in utter agony. Cursing wildly, he writhes in pain as the worried boys run over.

YOUNG JOHNNY

Daddy, what's wrong? What happened?

JOHN SR.

Goddamn it. Get the hell away from me.

John Sr. violently pushes Johnny away and walks to the house tending to his injured hand. Johnny starts to cry.

YOUNG JOHNNY

I'm sorry, Daddy. I didn't mean to hurt you. I'm sorry...

FLASHBACK ENDS

Johnny's eyes have begun to mist.

JOHNNY

We never played ball after that. Dad's arthritis only got worse. The pain in his hands and arms was so bad he couldn't swing a hammer. He drank to kill the pain.

DR. SEACAT

Your father's condition was not your fault John.

DR. KRITEMAN

His arthritis and drinking set you
up for the fall you're taking now.
We're beginning to get to the cause...

JOHNNY

That's bull. He didn't force me to
drink. I made my own bed and I have
to sleep in it.

Johnny stares down Dr. Kriteiman.

DR. SEACAT

I think we'll continue this tact in
our next session.

INT. GROUP SESSION STAFFORD -- MORNING -- DAY TWELVE

The group session is about to begin. Domonic sits next to Johnny and begins to scratch himself compulsively. Johnny looks on disdainfully. Gradually Johnny gets the itches. Both are trying to be demure about their scratching. Dr. Seacat enters with Dr. Kriteiman and notices the pair scratching.

DR. SEACAT

What you two are experiencing are
the dt's. Detoxifying your body has
caused a heightened nerve sensitivity.
You feel like you have bugs on you.
We call it the beezzly bug.

DR. KRITEMAN

In time the sensation will decrease.
If you need to get some lotion see
our staff nurse. Let us begin today's
session. Lloyd, we left off yesterday
talking about loneliness.

Johnny and Domonic try to control their scratching. Lloyd speaks with a very effeminate voice and mannerisms.

LLOYD

I always feel like such a loner. No
one knows who I really am. When I
drink it lets me... be me.

DR. KRITEMAN

And who is that?

LLOYD

I'm stronger than people think.

DR. KRITEMAN

Who questions your strength?

LLOYD

My parents. They think my dress
designing career is a joke.

LLOYD
 Maybe that's why I drink.

DR. KRITEMAN
 Drinking makes you feel powerful?

LLOYD
 Yeah, it helps me to accept who I am.

Johnny cuts in under his breath.

JOHNNY
 Lloyd needs to come out of the closet and accept the facts he's as queer as a three dollar bill.

DR. KRITEMAN
 Mr. Savage, please.
 (beat)
 Lloyd, acceptance is a state of mind...

Lloyd is miffed at Johnny's suggestion. He defends himself.

LLOYD
 I AM NOT GAY! I had a girlfriend for five years. You don't know anything about me.

JOHNNY
 Come on, Lloyd. Let's call a spade a spade. You're a mud packer, a closet queen, a butt bender...

LLOYD
 Just because I work in the fashion industry, people assume I'm gay. Your stereotyping is offensive.

JOHNNY
 It's not the fashion stuff. It's "who" you are.

LLOYD
 It's not true. I'm not a fag.

JOHNNY
 Okay, if you say you're not, I stand corrected.

Lloyd is overwrought. Standing up he struts out of the room. The group is stone silent. Dr. Krite-man shakes his head.

DR. KRITEMAN
 That will be all for today.

INT. PRIVATE SESSION STAFFORD -- EVENING -- DAY FOURTEEN

Johnny and the two doctors are at it again.

DR. KRITEMAN

What about your mother, John? Did she drink with your father?

Johnny doesn't answer. He fidgets nervously in his chair.

DR. KRITEMAN

John... It's possible your mother helped contribute to your problem.

JOHNNY

Fuck you, Kriteiman.

DR. KRITEMAN

John, I simply will not be talked to in that manner.

Kriteiman stands and walks out of the room.

DR. SEACAT

John, I know memories can be painful, but they can be advantageously therapeutic. We don't have the answers. They're within you.

JOHNNY

My mother was a saint. She took on keeping the family together after my dad couldn't work any more.

DR. SEACAT

John, tell me about your mother.

A phone call interrupts the session. The Doctor moves to pick up the receiver.

DR. SEACAT

I'm sorry John. Would you excuse me for a moment?

Dr. Seacat turns away and talks on the phone, Johnny contemplates her last question.

DISSOLVE TO FLASH BACK:

Johnny is watching TV with Gary and Noreen. John Sr. is sipping whiskey and reading the paper.

JOHN SR.

Gary Boy, get me a beer chaser.

Gary jumps up and runs into the kitchen. He comes back with an open beer can. Gary's about to hand the beer to his father when he stumbles over a toy soldier, spilling the beer all over his dad.

JOHN SR.

Goddamn it Gary. I've told you little shits not to leave these toys out here.

John Sr. grabs Gary and takes his belt off. He's about to spank him when Dorothy walks in the front door.

DOROTHY SAVAGE

What's going on here, John?

JOHN SR.

I'm going to learn this brat a lesson.

DOROTHY SAVAGE

Put that belt down right now!

JOHN SR.

The hell I will, unless you want some?

DOROTHY SAVAGE

You're drunk again, John. Let him go!

JOHN SR.

Oh, so you think because you got a job you wear the pants around here? Goddamn it, I'm still the man in this house!

Enraged, John Sr. charges after his wife and starts to hit her with the strap. Johnny jumps up and gets in between them. John Sr. starts towards her again and Johnny pushes his drunken father over. A furious John Sr. gets up and wails away with his belt.

Johnny protects his mother while his father's belt whips him across the head and back. After ten strokes, John Sr. is winded. Coughing and wheezing, he staggers out of the room. We hear him upchucking in the kitchen.

Dorothy gets up and pulls a crying Johnny to her. Johnny's gentle sobbing is comforted by his mother. She gently pets the back of his head. She whispers into his ear.

DOROTHY SAVAGE

You can handle it Johnny, You can handle anything... You can handle anything.

END FLASHBACK DISSOLVE BACK TO OFFICE:

DR. SEACAT

Your mother was a very brave woman.

Dr. Seacat comforts an anguished Johnny.

DR. SEACAT

Sometimes past behavior acts as a hidden catalyst. It can affect emotional trigger points in our contemporary lives.

JOHNNY

I have a repeating dream.

(beat)

That I never finish.

DR. SEACAT

I promise you, we'll finish it. Together.

She smiles and pulls Johnny's head up.

DR. SEACAT

You're on your way.

JOHNNY

Where?

DR. SEACAT

To wherever you want to go.

INT. STAFFORD RECREATION CENTER -- AFTERNOON -- DAY SIXTEEN

Johnny walks over to a large drawing pad. He picks it up and begins to sketch a building silhouette.

INT. STAFFORD - JOHNNY'S ROOM -- LATER

There's a knock at the door. Gary sticks his head in.

GARY

Hey big guy... I tried to track you down. After some arm twisting Linda said you were here. BRAVO! Thought I'd drop in and check up on you.

Gary enters the room. Johnny's mood immediately brightens. He gets off the bed and the two brothers exchange a hearty embrace.

GARY

You look good. How they treating you?

JOHNNY

Good as could be excepted. You got any smokes?

GARY

John, they read me the rules before I came in. No smokes.

JOHNNY

I'm climbing the fuckin' walls Gar'.

JOHNNY

They put you through all this psycho-crap.

GARY

You think it's helping?

JOHNNY

Nah. It's all that Freud bull-shit. I'm just doing time. They have no idea what makes me tick.

GARY

Hey, this stuff takes time.

JOHNNY

(beat)

I'm thinking of leaving.

GARY

You were always the one who fought dad off and protected me and mom. You're a fighter Johnny.

JOHNNY

I don't need this shit, Gar. Ditching the booze is one thing, but dealing with the **why's and how's** is to close to the bone for me.

Gary takes stock of Johnny.

GARY

I was really proud that you decided to come here and get some help. But either you're too macho or too stupid to deal with your problem. I don't want to attend another funeral but if you don't care about yourself why should anyone else?

Gary walks out and slams the door. A tortured Johnny puts his hand on the door but does not open it.

INT. DR KRITEMAN'S OFFICE -- NIGHT

Dr. Krite-man is talking with Johnny.

DR. KRITEMAN

You're making *some* advances John, but I still think you now need to confront some issues with regard to your father. Forgiveness...

JOHNNY

It is totally unnecessary for me to forgive my father. Only God can do that.

DR. KRITEMAN
Your anger on this issue is holding
up real progress.

JOHNNY
(angry)
I am not angry, doc.

DR. KRITEMAN
Oh really? Listen to this.

The doctor plays the tape of Johnny's session in which he
told of his fathers beatings.

TAPE PLAYER - Johnny's Voice:

JOHNNY (V.O.)
I hated when he drank. Dad would go
on a booze binge and he would...Beat
my mother. I used to fantasize he'd
get hit by a truck.

DR. KRITEMAN
(turns off recorder)
You see John, you still have a lot
of work to do.

INT. JOHNNY'S ROOM STAFFORD -- NIGHT

Johnny is dreaming. He tosses and turns in his sleep.

A funeral is in progress. Two large coffins flank a smaller
casket. Young Johnny and his brother Gary stand side by
side while the three boxes are lowered. Gary turns away and
buries his head into Johnny's chest crying.

Johnny wakes up drenched with sweat and lays staring at the
ceiling.

INT. STAFFORD GROUP SESSION -- MORNING -- DAY EIGHTEEN

The clock on the wall reads 11:50 AM. The session is winding
down. The two doctors are talking with an animated Domonic.

DOMONIC
All I know is after I got capped, my
life wasn't the same.

DR. SEACAT
Capped?

DOMONIC
Banged, greased, you know... Shot.

DR. KRITEMAN
Traumatic events in our life often
affect our behavior.

DOMONIC

Yeah, well, things went from bad to worse. I was drinking a fifth of Whiskey a day... The more I drank, the less interested my girl Janie was in me. One night we were trying to get it on and she says I ain't a man no more. She walked out on me.

JOHNNY

Sounds like all Janie needed was some hard dick.

A.L. and the group burst out laughing. Doctor Krite-man and Domonic overlap their dialogue.

DOMONIC

Hey, fuck you Marlboro man and the horse your moulie-friend rode in on.

A.L. DUKE

Hey bro, don't feel bad. Anybody who drinks a fifth of whiskey couldn't feel a kick in the ass, much less his dick.

DR. KRITEMAN

A.L., John, that's quite enough out both of you.

DOMONIC

I'm not your bro, and you black guys aren't the only hung studs in the world.

DR. KRITEMAN

Everyone, just calm down.

ANGLE ON: DOMONIC'S ASS

Domonic stands up and pulls down his pants. He takes out his penis.

DOMONIC

Pisano, let me dispel the myth. Here is one-hundred percent Italian Prosciutto.

The group is in pandemonium. Dr. Krite-man tries to restore order.

INT. STAFFORD BASKET BALL COURT -- AFTERNOON

Johnny is playing ball against A.L. He shoots a long shot and makes it, whooping with delight.

A.L. DUKE

You ain't out of the dog house yet white man. Score's eleven to eleven.

A.L. inbounds the ball trying to dribble around Johnny to no avail. Backing off, he charges Johnny and knocks him on his ass. A.L. does a lay up and wins the game. Johnny lays on his back panting.

A.L. DUKE

You want to play another game?

JOHNNY

I can't play another game. I'll have a heart attack. Let's just shoot some buckets.

A.L. DUKE

Cool with me.

A.L. helps Johnny up. A wailing siren outside the gym walls penetrates the basketball court, freezing A.L. in his tracks. A moment passes and A.L. tosses Johnny the ball.

JOHNNY

What's up?

A.L. DUKE

It's a long story. I have a problem with cops.

JOHNNY

Hey, I've got at least two weeks...

A.L. DUKE

I'll cut to the chase. About two a.m, I got pulled over by two white cops. After checking my record they knew I had prior DUI's, so they set me up. One cop dumped some booze over me, while the other drank a bunch out of the bottle and blew the breathalyzer. The test came out fucked, and landed me in here. Ninety days.

JOHNNY

(quietly)

That really sucks.

INT. GROUP SESSION STAFFORD -- MORNING

The group is listening to Melinda.

MELINDA

I think I have come to grips with the "**cause**" of my drinking. My father would always comment on my weight. So I drank.

These words trigger an emotional outpouring.

MELINDA

I would binge on junk and throw up.
Then I would drink some more. I
just wanted him to need me. To love
me, like mom. I love him so much...

She sobs uncontrollably. Johnny turns to A.L.

JOHNNY

Classic Oedipus complex.

DR. KRITEMAN

John, your outbursts are not helpful.
Nor are they appropriate.

DR. SEACAT

I think it's a good time for a break.
John, can I have a word with you?

She gets up and motions for Johnny to follow her.

INT. DOCTOR SEACAT'S OFFICE -- MOMENTS LATER

Johnny sits across from the doctor at her desk.

DR. SEACAT

John, in spite of yourself you've
made some progress. Something's
holding you back from a major
breakthrough.

JOHNNY

I don't like that jerk, Krite-man.
People's pain is just a game to him.

DR. SEACAT

Dr. Krite-man is a dedicated
professional.

JOHNNY

Dedicated to breaking peoples chops.
Was I right or wrong about Melinda
and Lloyd?

DR. SEACAT

John this isn't about right or wrong.
It's about you. You have ten days
left here. What are you going to do
with them?

INT. LINDA RICHMOND'S OFFICE -- NIGHT

The wall clock reads nine P.M. Linda's work-pile is growing.
She stops her computer work and crosses off another day on
the calendar.

Insert calendar: Linda's pen crosses out the twentieth of
the month.

INT. STAFFORD RECREATION ROOM -- NIGHT

The group lounges on various chairs and couches. Different areas of the room have been set up for painting, arts and crafts, reading, and television viewing. Johnny, A.L. and Domonic watch a basketball game on a large screen TV. Melinda and Beatrice play checkers. Lloyd reads a fashion magazine sipping an oversized soda.

A series of commercials come across the television. Lighthearted vixens gloriously extol a rich frothy ale. Domonic switches the channel. A group of attractive upscale yuppies rave about a classic red wine. A.L. swipes the remote and changes the channel again. A celebrating baseball team shows the brand of champagne that they use to celebrate their championship. The whole group of residents salivate at the drink toasting players. Johnny turns the TV off.

DOMONIC

I can't stand it any more! I want a drink.

A.L. DUKE

No shit, Sherlock. Me too.

BEATRICE

What I'd give for a Whiskey Sour!

LLOYD

A Vodka Martini, PLEASE.

MELINDA

Just one glass of chardonnay.

Johnny jumps up and clears off a sideboard. He improvises with whatever is in the recreation room, converting the sideboard into a bar. Taking the water jug off it's stand, he pours the water into converted cups and containers. Johnny grabs a scissor from the art area and cuts paper towels into cocktail napkin circles. He takes Lloyd's glass and steals the ice, pouring it into an empty candy bowl. Johnny dons a smock from the painting area and then swings a small towel over his arm. He enunciates an elegant pronouncement.

JOHNNY

Ladies and gentleman. The bar is now open.

The group stares at him stupefied. Johnny turns off some of the overhead lighting, leaving him spotlighted behind the sideboard.

JOHNNY

Lloyd! One very dry Vodka Martini coming up. I figured you for a Stoli-Man.

Johnny takes two miss-matched glasses and sets them on the sideboard.

He plops two ice cubes into the larger glass and then adds a small amount of water.

JOHNNY

Two cubes, a smash of Vermouth...

Lloyd suddenly cuts in, he's hooked.

LLOYD

ABSOLUTE! I... drink Absolute.
(bashfully)
It's drier.

JOHNNY

Absolute it is.

Johnny pours water from another cup into the first. Taking the mismatched glasses, he shakes them "martini-like". Finishing with a flourish, Johnny pours the "martini" into the smaller glass. He holds out the drink to Lloyd who bolts for it.

JOHNNY

"Shaken not stirred".

Lloyd closes his eyes, takes a sip and savors the taste. The residents await the verdict transfixed. His eyes open and Lloyd rates the drink.

LLOYD

Ten out of ten. Best I've ever had.

Johnny is glowing. The group comes alive ordering drinks.

BEATRICE

Give me a Whiskey Sour.

MELINDA

A chardonnay, please.

DOMONIC

Whiskey, on the rocks.

A.L. DUKE

(scornfully)

Man, why you going to bruise the liquor with ice? Whiskey, straight up, John.

Johnny works quickly making and serving the drinks.

JOHNNY

Ladies, Whiskey Sour and a chardonnay.
I'm sorry, miss. We only have the '85 on hand.

Beatrice and Melinda take their drinks and taste them.

MELINDA

Actually it's quite dry, spiced nicely with oak and lemon overtones.

DOMONIC

(impatiently)

Come on already, a man could die of thirst with the service around here.

JOHNNY

How about a double shot on the house.

Johnny fills a dixie cup to the brim.

DOMONIC

That's what I'm talkin' about.

A.L. walks up behind Domonic and slaps him on the back while he's drinking, causing Domonic to inhale some water and start coughing.

A.L. DUKE

Hey take it easy, you might hurt yourself.

Johnny pours A.L. a drink and he downs it. A.L. signals for several more. Johnny obliges.

LLOYD

We need some music.

A.L. DUKE

That's my department.

A.L. pulls a table cloth off a nearby card table and drapes it over a lamp. Johnny catches on and covers another standing-lamp with a red towel. A.L. turns off some overhead lights. He steps in-between the lamps and starts to sing. Melinda, Beatrice and Lloyd sit down with their drinks at the card table. A.L. finishes the song and starts a Nat King Cole slow ballad. Beatrice screams.

BEATRICE

I love Nat King Cole!

Johnny walks up to her and puts his arm out.

JOHNNY

I would be honored to have this dance with a very beautiful lady.

Beatrice, unsure, looks to Melinda for support. Melinda nods her head.

MELINDA

Go for it.

Beatrice gets up and starts to dance with Johnny. She's in Heaven.

After a minute, Domonic walks over to the couple and taps Johnny on the shoulder.

DOMONIC

Excuse me, you're hogging all the action.

(he bows)

May I have this dance?

She is giddy at the offer. Johnny steps aside and Beatrice starts slow-dancing with Domonic.

Lloyd and Melinda start to sing along with A.l., harmonizing behind him. The two stand up and start to get really into their back-up singing. Johnny enjoys the scene.

The lights abruptly come on in the room. Bathrobe clad Dr. Krite-man and Gaspar stare at the group with their mouths agape. The busted group stands petrified.

DR. KRITEMAN

What the Hell is going on here?

EXT. GROUP SESSION STAFFORD -- MORNING

The clock on the wall reads 11 a.m. Johnny sits doggedly in his chair while Melinda broods with dark glasses on next to him. A.l., Lloyd, Domonic and Beatrice nurse psychosomatic hang-overs. Dr. Krite-man gently chastises the group.

DR. KRITEMAN

This is the last thing I'm going to say about the incident. Using a placebo for a social lubricant is irresponsible behavior. The enabling conduct you displayed last night is a definite detriment to your treatment.

The doctor shoots Johnny a knowing look.

DR. KRITEMAN

We're not going to point fingers but the guilty parties know who's responsible.

BEATRICE

But doctor, for the first time in my life I felt pretty.

DR. KRITEMAN

The experience was a romantic mirage, Beatrice. We need to get at the cause for the unhealthy feelings you have towards your self-worth. I suggest you *all* earnestly reflect on you recent behavior.

The doctors eyes bore into the uneasy group.

INT. DR. KRITEMAN'S OFFICE -- LATER

Dr. Kriteiman is smoking a cigarette going over some charts. Johnny walks in and sits in front of the doctor. He eyes Kriteiman's cigarette.

JOHNNY

I thought there was no smoking on the premises?

DR. KRITEMAN

You as a patient, there is no smoking. This is "**my**" office.

JOHNNY

Can I get one?

DR. KRITEMAN

No.

JOHNNY

Why not?

DR. KRITEMAN

John, we seem to have gotten into a dynamic where I'm expected to explain myself to you about every last specific of my work. It's not healthy. I'm the doctor, "you're" the patient.

The doctor enjoys a French inhale.

JOHNNY

Why don't you just cut the crap and give me a cigarette. We can have a smoke together and I'll realize you're a stand up guy.

DR. KRITEMAN

Why don't we talk about your anger, John?

The doctor takes a luxurious drag from his butt. Smiling, he lets the smoke waft from his mouth and nostrils.

DR. KRITEMAN

Personally, I don't believe you have the fortitude to face your problems. Diagnosis... You're a loser.

The doctor inhales again and smiles.

INT. STAFFORD RECREATION ROOM -- NIGHT -- LATER

The group sit's around the TV.

JOHNNY

That son-of-a-bitch is so self-righteous.

JOHNNY

The whole "good book" AA thing is so obnoxious. He gives off that fucking air of superiority.

A.L. DUKE

Definitely a type "A" tight ass.

DOMONIC

Come on guys, so what if Kritekans an asshole. He's still trying to help us.

MELINDA

(cautiously)

I don't know if I should say this but...

The whole group waits on her.

MELINDA

The doctor went into the office bathroom and urinated with the door open.

The group stares at her incredulously.

MELINDA

It's true.

BEATRICE

Disgusting.

LLOYD

Kinky.

JOHNNY

I know that bastard's hiding something.

A.L. DUKE

What?

JOHNNY

Something... weird.

MELINDA

How can we find out what it is?

DOMONIC

Kritekan went to Flagstaff for the night.

JOHNNY

Let's check out his room and see what he's got up his sleeve.

The group mulls the idea. They stand in unison.

INT. HALLWAY OUTSIDE DR KRITEMAN'S ROOM -- LATE NIGHT

The group stands behind Johnny while he removes the door-knob. Melinda and Lloyd start to giggle.

JOHNNY

(whispering)

Shhh, you guys could wake the fucking dead.

Johnny opens the door and they all go into the doctor's room closing the door behind them.

INT. DR KRITEMAN'S ROOM -- MOMENTS LATER

Johnny clicks on the light. The group spreads out and starts to look through the room.

DOMONIC

What do we look for?

JOHNNY

Something, anything... Weird.

BEATRICE

I can't believe we're doing this.

LLOYD

Hey, we can't drink anymore.
Shouldn't we have a little fun?

A.L. DUKE

Amen.

Melinda is looking through a dresser drawer and lets out a gasp. The group rushes over.

DOMONIC

What is it?

Melinda pulls out some silk panties.

DOMONIC

Underwear?

MELINDA

(blushing)

MY UNDERWEAR!

BEATRICE

The little weasel has my bra.

She holds up a D cup.

JOHNNY

He's a Goddamn panty bandit.

EXT. HALL WAY OUTSIDE DR KRITEMAN'S ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Gaspar approaches the doctor's room. He notices the light shining from under the doorway. Checking his watch Gaspar walks closer to the door. He notices the missing doorknob. Surprisingly, Gaspar hears a wave of laughter coming from the other side of the door.

INT. DR KRITEMAN'S ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

The group are in a hilarious uproar when the door abruptly swings open. Gaspar walks in and they freeze. He picks up Beatrice's dropped bra.

GASPAR

You all must be out of your minds.

The whole group bursts into laughter again.

INT. STAFFORD GROUP SESSION -- MORNING

Dr. Seacat sits next to Dr. Kriteiman who frostily grips his chair handles, addressing the group.

DR. KRITEMAN

Trust is one of the most important tenets of AA. Trust is absolutely essential to a healthy sobriety. Trust between each other and trust between your doctors.

(pause)

Last night a number of you broke into my room and invaded my privacy. You continue to exhibit irresponsible alcoholic behavior.

The red faced doctor eyes Johnny and A.L..

DR. KRITEMAN

I don't know who planted those garments in my room or why. But this is the last inappropriate conduct I will tolerate. Is that clear?

The group fidgets uncomfortably. Dr. Seacat starts the session.

DR. SEACAT

We started to explore the friends in our relationships. Lloyd, do you have any friends you can count on for support?

LLOYD

Well, my dog is really my closest friend. Roger cheers me up. Roger's almost human.

Johnny starts to drift off as Lloyd drones on about his dog.

FLASH BACK:

It's dawn. Pete Wilkes bangs on Johnny's trailer door several times. After a minute he opens the door and goes inside. A loud commotion emanates from the trailer.

Pete throws a boxer-clad John out of the trailer. He holds Johnny's clothes in one hand and turns a hose on the half sleeping Johnny with the other. Johnny's so drunk he can barely stand. He submits to the indignity of being washed down. Pete finishes the hose job and throws Johnny his clothes. Pete impatiently manhandles a half-dressed Johnny into his pickup. Pete starts the truck up and takes off while an unbalanced Johnny tries to dress in the flatbed.

END FLASH BACK

Lloyd has finished his dog story. Johnny is half-dozing with a smirk on his face.

DR. SEACAT

John, do you have any friends you
can count on for a support system?
John?

Johnny jolts awake from his dozing.

DR. KRITEMAN

It is perfectly apparent by the smirk
on Mr. Savage's face, he does not
wish to be part of the group today.
You're excused John.

Johnny gets up and leaves.

INT. STAFFORD RECREATION ROOM. -- MOMENTS LATER

Johnny enters the room. He walks over and picks up his partially completed pencil-drawing of a magnificent building complex. He selects a pencil and goes to work.

INT. JOHNNY'S ROOM -- EVENING

A blazing sunset shines through the window. Johnny walks into the room and throws himself on the bed. He looks up.

Johnny's POV: A bottle of bourbon sits atop his dresser, back-lit by the sunset.

He jumps up and inspects the bottle by sight. Johnny is afraid to touch it. Pacing the room he tries not to take the bait.

JOHNNY

Oh shit! This ain't right. This
just ain't right.

He grabs the bottle passionately inspecting it. Johnny's hands start to shake.

He sets the bottle down and backs off from it. Johnny grabs the bottle and dashes out of the room.

INT. A.L.'S ROOM -- MOMENTS LATER

Johnny barges into A.L.'s room. A.L. is naked reading a Playboy magazine. He flips a sheet over his genitals. A towel and some baby oil sit on the bed. A.L. is embarrassed.

A.L. DUKE

Don't white people ever knock? I can't even jerk off without y'all barging in.

JOHNNY

(unhinged)

Someone left this in my room. What should I do?

A.L. DUKE

Don't bring that shit in here. Are you crazy? Get Out!

(he holds up the Playboy book)

I got personal business.

INT. STAFFORD HALL WAY -- CONTINUOUS

Johnny steps out of the room. He turns around and runs through a maze of hallways, ending in front of Dr. Kriteiman's office. He barges in with the bottle in hand.

INT. DR KRITEMAN'S OFFICE -- CONTINUOUS

The doctor is conversing with Gaspar when an enraged Johnny bursts in.

JOHNNY

(screaming)

You set me up you fucking prick.

DR. KRITEMAN

What are you taking about?

JOHNNY

Why'd you do it? Because you knew I put the panty raid together?

GASPAR

Hey calm down. Calm down.

JOHNNY

Well it's not going to work you-son-of-a-bitch.

Johnny smashes the bottle against the wall and steps forward with malice in his eyes. Dr. Kriteiman backs up and nervously presses a security switch on the wall.

Gaspar grabs Johnny and grapples with him. Two security guards rush in and assist Gaspar restraining Johnny.

INT. DOCTOR SEACAT'S OFFICE -- MORNING -- DAY TWENTY-FIVE

Johnny hangs his head sitting across from Dr. Seacat.

DR. SEACAT

Technically, the clinic would normally expel you for your actions. There were extenuating circumstances so I stuck my neck out for you. The powers that be will allow you to stay. Under one condition.

Johnny raises his head.

JOHNNY

Electric shock? Ball and chain?

DR. SEACAT

I want to try induced progressive hypno-therapy with you.

JOHNNY

You mean like... A swinging watch and I spill my guts?

Dr. Seacat eyes Johnny with steely intensity.

INT. DOCTOR SEACAT'S OFFICE -- MOMENTS LATER

Dr. Seacat has just finished lulling Johnny into a hypnotic state. She checks his semi-closed eyes with a flash light.

DR. SEACAT

Tell me about your repeating dream John.

FLASH BACK: Continued interior Savage family car.

JOHNNY'S POV: The car spins wildly out of control while Johnny is being clutched by his brother. The sound of Noreen's screaming and the windshield wipers explode in his eardrums.

The car hits the drivers-side guardrail and is catapulted over. The rear door opens and Johnny and his brother are thrown to the side of the road and knocked unconscious. The car barrel rotates in the air crashing upside down upon its roof, spinning like a top. Johnny wakes up and stands. He witnesses the car bursting into flames and then exploding. He's thrown down by the blast.

WHITE OUT:

FADE IN:

EXT. HIGHWAY CRASH SCENE -- THAT NIGHT

Johnny sits on the curb with his brother wrapped in blankets. Fireman hose down the smoldering car wreck. Paramedics wheel the covered bodies of his father, mother, and sister on gurneys to flashing ambulances. Johnny watches stoically as the paramedics load the gurneys aboard. A fireman walks up to the children. He motions Johnny aside.

FIREMAN #1

I got some bad news for you son.
Think you can handle it?

END FLASH BACK

Johnny is still under hypnosis.

DR. SEACAT

John, I'm going to count to three
and you are going to awake,
remembering all that we've talked
about. One, two, three. What did
you tell the fireman John?

JOHNNY

I can handle it. I can handle
anything. I... Feel so guilty.

DR. SEACAT

About what, John?

JOHNNY

(he starts to cry)
I should have told him. I could
have helped him.

Johnny fully opens his tearing eyes.

JOHNNY

He shouldn't have been driving. I
let him down. It's my fault. I
could have saved them...

DR. SEACAT

John, your family had a tragic
accident. You could not have
prevented it. Any more than you
could have stopped your father's
drinking. You need to forgive
yourself and your father.

JOHNNY

Forgive my father?

DR. SEACAT

Your subconscious reveals a great
deal of underlying anger and

DR. SEACAT

resentment towards your father.
Letting go of those harbored feelings
will help your fight with alcohol.

JOHNNY

(tormented)

I... Never remembered the whole dream
before. Nory... My sister was only
seven.

DR. SEACAT

We often suppress or block out what's
hardest for us to acknowledge. After
the loss of your and parents and
sister you **subconsciously** shunned
intimate relationships. Your greatest
fear is reliving the loss of intimacy
that you once had with your family.
In your short time here you've made
remarkable progress in discovering
the **cause** of why you drink. For the
first time you understand the alcohol
you drink is a placebo to cover the
death of your family. Stop feeling
sorry for sister...your parents...and
yourself. It'll be a fight, but
you're going to be all right John.
You're going to beat your demons.

Johnny stands up and starts to walk out. He turns around
and hugs Dr. Seacat.

INT. LINDA RICHMOND'S OFFICE -- NIGHT

Linda is surrounded with many piles of purchase-orders, bills,
and building schematics. Clearly frustrated she grabs the
desk calendar crossing off another day.

Insert calendar: Only two days remain until the circled end
of the month.

INT. JOHNNY'S ROOM STAFFORD CLINIC -- -- NIGHT

Moonlight shines into the dark room casting eerie shadows
about the walls and ceiling. Johnny lays in bed wide awake
staring at the ceiling fan. The spinning fan blades mesmerize
him.

MIND THOUGHTS:

Linda: "What makes you think you can handle it?"

Dr. Kriteaman: "Your a Loser".

Linda: "Some things get broke beyond fixing.

Fireman: "I got some bad news for you son".

Mikel Richmond: "I'm getting older and she wants in."

Gary: "Either you're too macho or too stupid to deal with your problem".

A.L.: "You ain't out of the dog house yet".

Linda: "You don't work here any more either".

Pete: "I give you my blood, sweat and tears on this site".

John Sr.: "Your old man could drive through a tornado."

Dr. Seacat: "Forgive yourself and your father".

Johnny: "I can handle it, I can handle anything".

Johnny comes out of his hypnotic state. He gets up, grabs a shirt and walks out the door.

INT. STAFFORD RECREATION ROOM -- NIGHT

Johnny adds the final touches to his office complex drawing. Two modern looking towers with a terraced water-fountain in between them are graced with a landscaped botanical entrance. He finishes and inspects the drawing.

INT. GROUP SESSION STAFFORD -- MORNING -- DAY THIRTY

The group irritably watches the doctor attacking Beatrice.

DR. KRITEMAN

Why do you have low self esteem?

BEATRICE

I don't know.

DR. KRITEMAN

Why do you drink so much?

BEATRICE

I don't know.

DR. KRITEMAN

Because you feel fat? Obese?

BEATRICE

(she bursts out crying)

I just want to be pretty. I've always wanted to be pretty.

She is hysterical. The group reacts.

DOMONIC

Doc, take it easy.

A.L. DUKE

Yeah man, just cool out.

Dr. Kriteman silences them.

DR. KRITEMAN
I'm running this session. Therapy
is...

JOHNNY
You sawed off little half-pint Prick.

Johnny gets up and puts his arms around the bellowing Beatrice. He calms her and gives her some tissue.

DR. KRITEMAN
It is fortunate that Mr. Savage's
thirty days are up. This group will
not have to endure...

Johnny stands up and cuts in.

JOHNNY
This group shouldn't have to endure
any more of your ego-tripping
authoritative bullshit.

DR. KRITEMAN
(stammering)
I'm the doctor here. You can't...
talk to me like...

JOHNNY
Sit the fuck down and shut the fuck
up.

The whole group stares malignantly at the doctor. All his authority drains out of him. Ashen, Dr. Kriteman plops back into his chair.

JOHNNY
You're supposed to be healing us.
But your short man's Napoleon complex
has fucked-up your ego so bad, you
can't even see past your own bullshit.

He points to Beatrice.

JOHNNY
Beauty is in the eye of the beholder.
I say she's beautiful.

Lloyd runs over and hugs Beatrice. Followed by Melinda, A.L., and Domonic.

LLOYD
You're beautiful.

MELINDA
You're beautiful, Bea.

A.L. DUKE
You're a hot mama, babe.

DOMONIC
Hell of a slow dancer too!

They group Hug.

JOHNNY
That's healing! What you pass off for therapy is in reality just a short-mans way to manipulate "power" over other people. Getting off on other people's pain makes you feel like a big shot. You'll always be the small fish in the big pond.

Johnny walks towards the door. A.L. high fives him and follows him out of the room. One by one the other residents walk out. Dr. Krite-man is left smoldering in his chair, his veins throbbing.

INT. DOCTOR SEACAT'S OFFICE -- MORNING

Johnny breezes in and sits down across from the doctor.

DR. SEACAT
I think you've made a lot of progress John. But I feel another session would do you some good. Your father...

JOHNNY
Look Doc, I've figured out how I'm going to deal with that issue. There were some pretty good times around my old man. I'm going to hang onto those times and leave the rest alone. That's how I'm going to remember him.

Dr. Seacat signs off on his paper work and hands it to him.

DR. SEACAT
You've officially finished your residency.

JOHNNY
I have something for you Doc.

Johnny whips out his skillfully crafted architectural drawing. He gives it to her. She is impressed.

JOHNNY
I couldn't have done it without you.

Johnny reaches out his hand to shake. She stands and embraces him.

DR. SEACAT
 Goodbye John. And good luck.

INT. BASKETBALL COURT -- MOMENTS LATER

A.L. is shooting hoops. Johnny walks up with his packed bag. The ball gets away from A.l. and rolls to Johnny's feet. He picks it up.

JOHNNY
 Just came to say adios. Best of
 five?

A.L. DUKE
 Hey, give it your best shot.

Johnny drops his bags and a fierce game ensues. Johnny scores the first two shots. A.l. charges back jumping, spinning, and shooting swish-net shots. Johnny regroups and fires off two long range bombs right on target. A.L. rebounds the ball and dribbles intently looking for the win.

A.L. DUKE
 Time for one more ass whipping, white
 man.

He backs Johnny up to the basket, turns and shoots. The shot is rejected by Johnny. Johnny grabs the rebound and fakes a shot, forcing A.L. to prematurely jump. Johnny sets, jumps and fires a perfectly arched ball. The ball is all "net". A.L. can't believe it. Johnny fist pumps the victory.

A.L. DUKE
 Damn. You know it's bad when a white-
 man can beat a bro' in b-ball.

A.L. breaks into a big toothy grin. He high-fives Johnny.

A.L. DUKE
 Nice shot. You must have some brother
 in you.

EXT. STAFFORD CLINIC LOBBY -- AFTERNOON

Johnny walks out of the clinic to the waiting van. He starts to climb in and turns around for one last look. Johnny gets in and the van drives off.

INT. JOHNNY'S TRAILER -- EVENING

CAMERA'S POV: Through the blinds we watch the van pull off.

INT. JOHNNY'S TRAILER -- NIGHT

Johnny opens the door and walks inside the trailer. Turning on the lights he is welcomed by a festering mess. Empty bottles, cans, pizza boxes, fast food containers, newspapers, magazines, clothes and junk mail adorn every nook and cranny of the trailer. Reacting to the stink he opens a window.

JOHNNY
Welcome home, Johnny Boy.

Johnny gets some large garbage bags and starts a whirlwind cleaning session. With a swipe of his arm, he clears off the entire coffee table, dumping the stuff into the garbage bag. Johnny opens the refrigerator and turns away from the stench. Several science projects are germinating. After clearing out the fridge, Johnny moves on to the sink. Crusted pots and pans mingle with dishes, utensils, and cups black and green with mold. All are thrown away. Moving on to a overflowing laundry basket, Johnny picks up a mud splattered t-shirt and takes a whiff. Gagging, he throws away the whole basket. Johnny dumps newspapers and magazines into new garbage bags. With a ruefully smile Johnny picks up the same issue Playboy magazine A.L. had been reading. He thinks about it for a second and then throws it away.

Reaching under the couch, Johnny pulls out two half pints of liquor. After a moments hesitation he walks to the sink and slowly empties each container down the drain.

EXT. JOHNNY'S TRAILER -- LATER

Ten large over-stuffed garbage bags are lined up outside the trailer. We can hear the shower running through an open window with Johnny singing a Nat King Cole song.

EXT. TOWN HOUSE CONSTRUCTION SITE -- EARLY MORNING

The site is two thirds complete. Building material is scattered haphazardly around the site. Machines, tools and materials are mismatched together.

Johnny checks a clipboard on his way to the site trailer office. He waves to the arriving workers.

JOHNNY
Hey, Richie Boy. Stevey. Danny.
Is that supposed to be a mustache?
Petey Boy, you're a sight for sore
eyes.

PETE
Look who's back from the dead.

Workers crowd around and waylay Johnny with site problems. Linda steps out of the trailer and listens to their overlapping dialogue.

PETE
We're short at least fifty sheet-
rock panels.

RICHIE
We're supposed to install pine
flooring but now the clients are
bitching they want oak.

DANNY

The angle on the window frames is too shallow.

JOEY

We got two grades of slate to lay, nobody knows which goes where.

SAMMY

Goddamn compressor's broke. I can't start the insolation blow-fill.

Johnny holds up his hands for silence.

JOHNNY

Whoa now. Everybody will get their shot. Just give me a second here.

Johnny looks at his clip board. The group waits for answers.

JOHNNY

Richie, we got enough oak flooring at the Marlo site. Take Timmy Boy and go get it.

Richie and Timmy walk off.

JOHNNY

Danny Boy, we got enough steel for braces. Anchor all four sides of the frames. It'll hold'em. Sammy, call Ace rentals ask for Bobby and tell'em it's for me, then get another compressor up here pronto.

Johnny checks his clipboard again.

JOHNNY

Joey, the oversize slate-pieces line the driveway, use the rest for the back deck. Petey, I don't know who screwed up on the sheet-rock I'll have to reorder.

Johnny surveys the ruinous work site.

JOHNNY

This site is a hell hole! From my count we got close to twenty pieces of loose rock around here. Petey take five guys and dig'em out, that'll get you started. And then clean up this mess. Alright everybody, mount'em up and move'em out.

The workers take off infused with new direction. Johnny turns to walk inside the trailer, and bumps into Linda.

JOHNNY

Howdy, ma'am.

LINDA

Welcome back. I... We, missed you.
The work is piling up.

JOHNNY

You just have to chip away at it.
It's good to be back in the saddle
again.

LINDA

It's good to have you back.

JOHNNY

Thank you. Listen, I was hoping we
could have dinner some time.

LINDA

(taken back)

That's probably not a good idea.

JOHNNY

Why not?

LINDA

The technical term is "job
impropriety." But beyond that you
have a lot of catching up to do.

JOHNNY

No one can do it alone.

LINDA

Sounds like an AA come-on to me.

JOHNNY

Gotta use everything you have.

A phone inside the trailer rings.

LINDA

I have to get that. The clients are
giving me hell about the entrance
design.

Linda walks into the trailer. Johnny walks over and inspects
the unfinished condo entrance facade.

INT. JOHNNY'S TRAILER -- EVENING

The trailer is spotless. Johnny has artfully hung his toy
beer-can sculptures. His mother's picture, and stained glass
butterfly are wall center pieces.

JOHNNY

(on phone)

Hello, Linda. Johnny here.

JOHNNY

No... It's not about work. It's Friday night and I thought maybe we could get some dinner...

INTERCUT: LINDA ON THE PHONE AT HOME

LINDA

John, I did have an attraction to you. But that was then *and this is now*. You're a great foreman and that's where it ends.

JOHNNY

Yeah, okay I understand.

He hangs up the phone and paces the trailer. Grabbing his jacket, he exits.

EXT. LINDA RICHMOND'S CONDO -- NIGHT

Johnny walks up to the front door and knocks. Linda answers the door, partially opening it. She's surprised.

LINDA

What are you doing here?

JOHNNY

Linda. First, I want to apologize for my unannounced visit. Second, I would like to officially thank you for putting yourself on the line and helping me out. And third, I think it's time to celebrate!

Johnny holds up a bottle. Linda is apprehensive.

JOHNNY

Don't worry it's "Sparkling Apple Cider".

LINDA

I suppose, I should invite you in?

Johnny's face lights up. He walks in closing the door.

INT. LIONS DEN RESTAURANT -- LATER

The Lions Den is a nicely appointed quiet spot with a romantic air. Flickering candles throw soft glowing light around the room. Johnny and Linda sit together dining in a small booth.

Insert Linda's Hair: The Butterfly Hair-Pin has been repaired.

LINDA

So... What was your experience at Stafford like?

JOHNNY

It was, to say the least,
overwhelming. I had to face up to a
lot about myself.

LINDA

It's tough to be honest with yourself.

JOHNNY

I wasn't honest about my condition
with you or myself. My father got
arthritis at an early age. I've
always lived in fear the same would
happen to me.

LINDA

Reality can be a wake up call.

JOHNNY

I never stared reality in the face
before. If the time ever comes I
can't build, I can go back to
designing.

LINDA

(brightening)

How exciting. Our own Frank Lloyd
Wright.

JOHNNY

I don't know about that. At least
it's a viable option.

(muses)

I have a few things I need to rebuild
in my life. How about you?

LINDA

How about me?

JOHNNY

Tell me about yourself.

LINDA

Well, at eighteen I moved to the
city, but always had a yen for the
country life. You know the image.
A horn of plenty, a little house, my
own garden. Eventually a family
would be nice. I don't have any
brothers or sisters and sort of missed
that whole experience.

JOHNNY

(laughs)

Some dessert?

LINDA

What? You never wanted to have a
family?

JOHNNY

I think working on myself is all I
can handle right now.

(raising his glass)

A toast. To a bountiful garden.

LINDA

I'll drink to that... Oops.

They share a chuckle and toast glasses.

EXT. LIONS DEN RESTAURANT -- CONTINUOUS

Linda and Johnny exit the restaurant.

LINDA

Thank you for dinner. It was
wonderful.

JOHNNY

Well... It's such a nice night. I
don't really want it to end. Would
you like to take a drive?

LINDA

I'm not sure we...

(coyly)

I'd love to.

EXT. DESERT - NIGHT -- CONTINUOUS

A starry night illuminates Johnny's truck as they drive along
the desert landscape.

INT. JOHNNY'S TRUCK NIGHT -- CONTINUOUS

Linda takes her shoes off and puts her feet on the dash,
while Johnny drives.

LINDA

Johnny? Why does everyone call you
Johnny "Boy"?

JOHNNY

When my father was in a good mood,
he'd call me Johnny Boy. There was
something so good natured about the
phrase it stuck with me. Kind'a
like my signature now. When I started
out working for your father he was
always telling me how good my work
was so...

LINDA

They called you Good Boy Johnny
Savage.

EXT. JOHNNY'S TRUCK -- NIGHT CONTINUOUS

Johnny and Linda sit on a blanket in the flatbed of the truck admiring the exquisite beauty of the celestial heavens.

LINDA

They have telescopes that can see beyond the Milky Way. Pulsars, Quasars. The magnitude of the Heavens is just unfathomable.

JOHNNY

You want to go out there and explore?

LINDA

The idea of the endless possibilities out there excite me.

JOHNNY

I feel great, Linda. I'm running my life now. It's not running me. Thanks to you I have a piece of Heaven right here on earth.

Johnny tenderly traces the outlines of her face. Johnny pulls her close to him.

JOHNNY

I wasn't ready before... I know what's important to me now.

LINDA

(enamored)

Like I said, I have a weakness for talented people.

Johnny leans over and tenderly kisses Linda. She reciprocates his advance. They lock in a ravenous embrace. Linda moves to unbutton Johnny's shirt. He smiles at the Heavens above.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD -- MORNING

Johnny's truck is leaving a dust trail as he wails along this country road.

EXT. FARMHOUSE -- MORNING

Johnny pulls up past a decrepit gate entrance and stops in front of a run down farm house. The house desperately needs painting, new window frames, front door, roof shingles and the entire front porch and steps replaced.

Johnny gets out of the truck and surveys the area. He begins to walk up a hill.

EXT. GRAVE SITE -- CONTINUOUS

Johnny eclipses the crest of an grass covered knoll. He arrives at a grave site with three headstones.

Using his shirt he wipes away the grime from the headstones, revealing the names of his father, mother and sister. Johnny picks a few wild flowers and lays them across his mother's grave.

Johnny spies a fire-ant hill near his father's grave and swipes the mound away with his shoe.

JOHNNY

Well, dad I'm on my feet. I'm trying not to be you. I don't know if that makes you proud or angry.

(beat)

I'm sorry we couldn't have been friends.

ANGLE ON:

The ants have come out in force and start to climb Johnny's shoes and pants leg.

JOHNNY VO

They say I should forgive you and move on with my life. Well, I hope I'm ready. Holy shit! Mother of Christ!

Johnny falls to the ground knocking off the attacking ants. Like a man possessed, he swipes and stomps the swarming hoard.

JOHNNY

(to his father's grave)

You fucker! You're dead and your still kicking my ass!

Johnny continues to pull ants off him from all over his body.

INT. JOHNNY'S TRAILER -- NIGHT

Johnny has set up a drawing board. He reviews the picture of an ultra-modern entrance facade. Johnny puts the picture down and starts to draw on his artist pad.

EXT. SAVAGE FARM HOUSE -- MORNING

Johnny pulls up to the farm in his truck. The exposed flatbed is full with paint, plaster, wood, nails and tools.

INT. JOHNNY'S TRUCK

Johnny whistles at the daunting task ahead.

JOHNNY

I can handle it. I can handle anything.

EXT. SAVAGE FARM HOUSE -- CONTINUOUS

Johnny is busting nails into the newly constructed front steps and railing. He steps back and admires his expert craftsmanship. Johnny inspects a window frame and attempts to force the window open. The frame disintegrates and the glass shatters, cutting Johnny's hand. He staggers back dirty and exhausted, wiping away the blood.

JOHNNY

Shit. I'm gonna need some help.

EXT. JOHNNY'S TRUCK COUNTRY ROAD -- AFTERNOON

Johnny is driving with his brother, Gary.

JOHNNY

You wanted to know what I got out of Stafford. It's hard to describe. I'm sober now, but God only knows if I can keep it up.

GARY

Hey, one day at a time. Right?

JOHNNY

The thing I think about most, is Mom and Dad. You ever think about them?

GARY

(sullen)

I try not to.

JOHNNY

Mom was a really strong woman. She put up with all Dad's crap.

FLASH BACK:

Young Johnny and his brother are sitting in their parent's bedroom. Butterfly keepsakes adorn the room. Dorothy lovingly brushes their hair.

JOHNNY (V.O.)

I used to love the way she brushed our hair. It was so calming.

John Sr. storms into the room, railing viciously.

JOHN SR.

What the hell is this? Your pawing the boys like an animal. You need a real man. Come 'ere.

John Sr. pushes Gary off the bed and starts to drunkenly maul his wife. Young Johnny tries to get in between them. John Sr. flattens him with a backhand to the face.

DOROTHY SAVAGE
Stop it John. Stop it please!

John Sr. grabs a statute of the Virgin Mary and hurls it at his wife. The statute flies past her head and explodes against a glass framed butterfly picture directly behind her. Dorothy screams holding her ear in pain.

JOHNNY (V.O.)
Mom could barely hear out of her left ear after that. She always had some hurt or bruise, but she never complained.

Dorothy comforts the two crying boys petting their hair.

END FLASH BACK

Gary is holding back tears.

JOHNNY
You remember that, Gary Boy?

GARY
I don't want to remember that.

EXT. SAVAGE FARM HOUSE -- MOMENTS LATER

Johnny drives through a newly constructed gate entrance. He jumps out and calls for Gary to help him unload the truck.

JOHNNY
Come on. Get a move on Gar. We ain't got all day.

Gary tentatively steps out of the truck staring at the house.

JOHNNY
Gar, thanks for helping me out with this. This broken down house is a symbol of my life. With your help I'm going to rebuild the son-of-a-bitch.

GARY
Renovations start up here.

Gary points to his head. They pick up tools and material and walk up to the house.

EXT. TOWN HOUSE CONSTRUCTION SITE -- LATE AFTERNOON

The site looks sharp. Machinery, tools and materials are neatly stacked and squared away. The Town House is almost finished except for the remaining entrance facade. Johnny walks towards the site office trailer. Linda comes running out towards him.

LINDA
Johnny, thank God.

JOHNNY
I knew I was good but...

LINDA
What the hell are we going to do?
The clients want changes to the
entrance facade. They won't pay for
an architect and they won't pay for
the project until it's complete.
I'll have to eat fifty-grand to change
the specs.

JOHNNY
Oh no you won't.

Johnny walks over to his truck and pulls out a cardboard tube. He takes out the drawing, and hands the new facade drafting to her. Linda's eyes go wide with approval.

LINDA
This is awesome. It's exactly what
we needed. I can't believe it.

Linda gives him a passionate kiss.

JOHNNY
What happened to "impropriety"?

LINDA
To hell with impropriety. See you
at nine.

Johnny intently considers Linda's ass as she runs back toward the trailer with the drafting in her hands. Pete and some workers walk up and break Johnny's concentration.

PETE
Johnny Boy, we're going out for some
dinner. How about you joining us?

JOHNNY
Where y'all headed?

PETE
To the Rancher.

JOHNNY
Not tonight, thanks.

Johnny starts for his truck. He stops in his tracks when Pete calls him.

PETE
C'mon, partner. We haven't seen
dick of you since you came back.

JOHNNY

I already told you no. I'm Beat.

PETE

What about all the times you busted my balls into staying out to two or three in the morning on a week-night?

JOHNNY

I was being an asshole. You want to be an asshole too?

PETE

No.

JOHNNY

Too late.

Pete is hurt by the remark.

JOHNNY

Hey, I'm sorry Petey. I shouldn't have said that. I gotta go.

Johnny gets in his truck and leaves in a large cloud of dust. The camera follows the rising dust. The dust dissipates revealing a large billboard advertisement. It displays two laughing buddies drinking beer.

INT. LINDA RICHMOND'S BEDROOM -- MORNING

The elegant bedroom displays butterfly and angel keepsakes, architectural artwork, landscape photographs and house plants.

Linda is on the bed. A lone sheet clings to her suggestive contour. Johnny walks from the bathroom with a towel around his waist. He glides into the bed and takes her into his arms. Kissing her neck and shoulders Johnny finds his way to her mouth. Linda pushes him away.

LINDA

Hey, no fair. If you brushed your teeth I want to brush mine.

JOHNNY

If your that adamant about it, be my guest.

LINDA

(gets up)

You're such a gentleman.

Johnny's POV: He views Linda's magnificent body from behind.

EXT. STATE FAIR -- EVENING

Johnny and Linda walk hand in hand exploring the fair. A mother with six children is fussing with her children.

LINDA

How does she keep up with all of them?

JOHNNY

Valium in their cornflakes?

LINDA

Johnny! Seriously. Don't you want to have children someday?

JOHNNY

(uncomfortable)

I never got over the death of my kid sister. I don't want to relive that kind of pain.

LINDA

I think it's our responsibility in life to work on fixing any negative trends within ourselves. Break out of your emotional insecurities.

Johnny pulls her towards a duck shooting booth. He hands some money to a long haired attendant named LESTER. Taking the rifle he prepares to shoot.

JOHNNY

Let me see if I can "fix" you a stuffed animal.

LINDA

(she backs off)

I'll get us a lemonade.

Linda walks over to the lemonade stand. Johnny shoots a perfect score, hitting a moving target with every shot. His last shot knocks over a moving jackass.

JOHNNY

It's a hot one tonight. Think I'll grab a lemonade.

LESTER

(under his breath)

I can do you one better partner. How about a little snort of corn?

JOHNNY

No thanks. I'm on the wagon.

LESTER

Hell, me too. A little cheatin' don't hurt nothing.

Lester discreetly pours a few shots into paper cups. He hands one to Johnny. Johnny turns around and sees Linda's back is towards him and she can't see what's going on.

LESTER

(drinks)
Bottoms up.

CAMERA'S POV: Johnny licks his lips in anticipation of the corn liquor.

Hesitating, he puts the cup down.

JOHNNY

Like I said, I'm going to pass.

LESTER

You too good to drink with me?

JOHNNY

Listen friend, some other time.

LESTER

Hell, any "friend" of mine wouldn't go home dry. What's the matter, you too good for corn?

Johnny is about to square off with him. Linda sidles up to Johnny sipping her lemonade. Lester takes in her beauty and intuitively knows what the deal is.

LINDA

Did I miss something?

LESTER

Only your man shootin' the hell out of my booth. Here you go!

Lester hands her the biggest stuffed teddy-bear in the booth. They walk off arm in arm with the stuffed bear.

EXT. STATE FAIR -- CONTINUOUS

The couple walk up to an animated gypsy fortune-telling machine. Johnny tries to keep walking but Linda stops him and puts a quarter in the machine.

JOHNNY

You really believe in that stuff?

LINDA

Hey, it's just a fair. Lighten up.

The animated gypsy machine goes into her act. Lights flash, eerie sounds emit from it's speakers and finally a small card pops out. Johnny takes it. He drops a quarter in the machine and the Gypsy repeats it's action. He hands Linda her card. They both sneak a peek at the same time and smile.

JOHNNY'S POV: The card reads, "You will get lucky tonight".

JOHNNY

Well?

LINDA

Well what? My fortune is a secret.
What's yours say?

JOHNNY

Just an old wives tale.

Linda tries to grab his fortune. He deftly sidesteps her and grabs her card. Linda vainly tries to retrieve it while Johnny playfully hides it behind his back. Giving in he hands it over. Their antics have left them in front of The Tunnel of Horrors.

EXT. STATE FAIR - TUNNEL OF HORRORS -- MOMENTS LATER

CUE MUSIC: Bruce Springsteen - "Tunnel Of Love"

A fat man sitting on a little stool eyes Linda up and down. He takes Johnny's money and hands him two tickets.

FAT MAN

(whispers)
Good Luck.

The two lovers enter the tunnel and sit in an empty roller-coaster car built with four seats. The coaster starts off taking them through a maze of pop up skeletons, monsters and goblins. The two relish the ride with whoops and screams. The coaster slows down and Johnny moves in for the mack. The lovers kiss. Linda holds the fortune-machine's card in her hand.

CAMERA'S POV: The fortune card reads, "You will fall in love".

They are kissing unabashedly when the car finally rolls to a stop in front of two other young lovers awaiting their turn.

Johnny and Linda rush out of the coaster. They run around to the back of the building and kiss amorously. Standing up they kiss rolling along the wall for the entire length of the building.

CROSS FADE:

FADE IN:

INT. LINDA RICHMOND'S BEDROOM -- LATER

The lovers continue rolling across Linda's bed onto the floor. With wild abandon, they undress each other and begin nipping and kissing each other all over. First it's playful then passionate. The lovers finally end up climaxing together in erotic ecstasy.

Dawn. The gently wafting curtains accent the soft morning light streaming across the lovers spent intertwined bodies. Awakening simultaneously, Johnny breathes Linda's scent in. She buries her face in his neck imitating him. They hungrily find each others lips and renew their love making

INT. JOHNNY'S TRUCK -- MORNING

Johnny and Linda sip coffee from plastic containers. Johnny is driving like a bat out of hell.

LINDA
Slow down! Where are you taking me?

JOHNNY
It's a surprise.

LINDA
If you don't slow down I won't live to see it.

JOHNNY
There are two kinds of people. Those who like surprises and those who don't.

LINDA
I love surprises.

Linda wiggles across the seat and kisses Johnny on the cheek.

EXT. SAVAGE FARM HOUSE -- MOMENTS LATER

The truck pulls through a newly constructed arch-gateway. The truck stops in the front of the farm house. Johnny and Linda get out.

Linda's POV: The farm house has been impressively renovated: New clapboards cover the facade, the windows frames are all new and reset, fresh paint adorns the walls, the roof shingles have been replaced and new front door has been hung. The repairs are accented by a magnificent newly constructed porch.

Linda takes the house in.

LINDA
It's beautiful.

JOHNNY
And this ain't even the surprise.

Johnny leads Linda to the rear of the house.

Linda sees a freshly tilled plot of land. A scarecrow and gardening tools rest against a tool shed.

LINDA
Oh my God, Johnny. Is this...

JOHNNY
It's your garden.

LINDA
But you've done everything.

JOHNNY

All I did was till it for you.
Believe me that's the easy part.
You have your work cut out for you.

She kisses him and runs over to the plot. Linda gets down on her knees and lets some dirt slip through her fingers.

LINDA

I just realized... I don't know anything about gardening.

JOHNNY

You'll learn.

EXT. FISH FOOD RESTAURANT -- LATER

Johnny, Linda, Gary and his wife Shelley are toasting water glasses. The waiter walks over.

GARY

To the newly renovated house, may it be a gracious home.

JOHNNY

I couldn't have done it with out you, Gar.

WAITER

Would you like to order, or have drinks first?

SHELLEY

I'll have the seafood platter and a glass of Merlot.

The group looks at her strangely. Shelley's embarrassed.

SHELLEY

Oh, I am so sorry... I forgot.

JOHNNY

No, no. You guys enjoy yourselves. I've got to get used to this. I never liked wine anyway.

The tension is eased and they continue to order.

LINDA

(under her breath to Johnny)
Is it all right if I have a glass of wine?

JOHNNY

Sure, go ahead. Enjoy yourself.

The foursome enjoy the meal joking and kidding each other. Gary and Johnny abstain from drinking.

INT. SAVAGE FARM HOUSE -- LATE -- NIGHT

Johnny and Linda sit on an over sized porch swing together. They begin caressing one another. Their lips lock and Johnny abruptly pulls away.

LINDA
What's wrong?

JOHNNY
This is hard for me.

LINDA
What?

JOHNNY
The way you taste.

LINDA
(covers her mouth)
The wine! I'm so sorry. I didn't even think of that.

They sit in silence trying to deal with their conflicting emotions. Without warning Johnny grabs Linda passionately and pulls her close.

JOHNNY
I'm sorry about all this. It's not your fault.

He slips his tongue in her mouth. Linda pulls back.

LINDA
Are you okay?

JOHNNY
I'm more than okay. Babe I'm on fire.

They kiss deeply.

INT. RICHMOND CONSTRUCTION OFFICES -- AFTERNOON

Johnny and Pete walk into the office. Lexus is at the copy machine wearing head phones and dancing a Texas two-step. She calls out to Johnny.

LEXUS
I'll have those xerox's for you in about two minutes.

Lexus goes back to her machine and continues to dance.

PETE
What do you mean we can't hang out?

JOHNNY
I told you. I have a date tonight.

Pete eyes Lexus's dancing ass.

PETE

Damn, you'd throw away our friendship
for a piece of...

Lexus stops her dance and takes the photo copies out of the machine. Johnny spies a country western magazine on her desk and gets an idea.

JOHNNY

Hey Lexus, you two-step pretty good.

LEXUS

Pretty good? I've won competitions!

JOHNNY

Tell you what. Why don't you come
out on a double date and we'll see
what you can do?

LEXUS

Double date?

JOHNNY

Yeah, me and my girl and you and
Pete.

Pete's eyes go wide at the prospect. Lexus looks Pete over and smiles. She writes her address down on a card and hands it to Pete.

LEXUS

Okay, we're on. Pick me up at seven.

She two-steps off. Pete has an ear to ear grin.

JOHNNY

Petey Boy, now that's bait. By the
way can you dance?

Pete has a twinkle in his eyes.

PETE

Would a half blind hound dog
dry-hump his owner if he could get a
woodie? Hell yes I can dance.

INT. MELODY MAKER DANCE HALL -- NIGHT

The dance floor is packed. A Country Western band lays into the ending of their song. Johnny and Linda are dancing. Pete is decked out in his Country Western finest. He and Lexus are having a blast. The band ends the song with a flourish and the audience applauds.

The next song is a slow dance. A majority of couples exit the dance floor, leaving a few couples and the two-somes slow-dancing alone. Johnny looks over to Pete and Lexus.

JOHNNY'S POV: Pete and Lexus grind to the slow ballad.

EXT. BURGER DOG -- LATER

The restaurant is fashioned from a long trailer shaped like a dachshund dog with a large burger in it's mouth.

Johnny and Linda sit among the restaurant's patrons eating enormous dripping burgers, oversized fries and giant cokes.

JOHNNY

I hope you don't mind eating here.

LINDA

(negotiating the burger)

No, it's great. I very rarely eat like this but when I do, I really enjoy it. By the way what happened to Pete and Lexus?

JOHNNY

(knowing smile)

I think they can take care of themselves. I heard you're going in with the Douglas Company on the landfill deal for the Fraiser brothers.

LINDA

I know how you feel about the deal, but Richmond Construction is going to lose money. If we don't do this deal I'll have to lay off over fifty people.

JOHNNY

People will find jobs. That site is unsafe.

LINDA

Fraiser's panel of experts say the site will be up to EPA standards after the clean up. They'll be a disclosure at the time of buyers closing.

JOHNNY

It's too late then, people will buy affordable housing **now** and worry about *the what if's* later.

LINDA

But they'll know the risks up front.

JOHNNY

They deserve to live their lives in peace and not worry what will happen to them in thirty years.

LINDA

It's the only option I have right now.

JOHNNY

Tell you what, go out there look around and see what's been dumped at that site. Then think about building.

EXT. SINGLE FAMILY HOME CONSTRUCTION SITE -- DAY

A top of the line BMW pulls onto the site. Linda walks out of the site trailer and opens the trunk of her car.

STEVEN DOUGLAS, a refined forty-five year old silver-haired business man, steps out of his BMW. He walks over to Linda.

STEVEN DOUGLAS

Hi. Do you know where I can find Linda Richmond?

LINDA

You found her. Steven?

STEVEN DOUGLAS

Yes. It's nice to finally meet you.

They shake hands.

STEVEN DOUGLAS

How about lunch while we talk?

LINDA

Sure. I know a nice place.

Linda closes her trunk and walks to Steven's BMW. They get in. Johnny walks out of the site trailer and watches them drive off.

EXT. TRATTORIA RESTAURANT -- LATER

Linda and Steven are in the middle of their lunch. Both eat salads and sip Perrier. Steven looks out the window at the dark clouds rolling in.

STEVEN DOUGLAS

Looks like it's going to pour.

LINDA

I like the rain. It's good for my garden.

STEVEN DOUGLAS

You like gardening?

LINDA

Just started it a little while ago, but it's exciting. The plants are sort of like my children...

LINDA

(embarrassed)

Now you have my inner secret. If we're going to do business you should tell me something about yourself.

STEVEN DOUGLAS

I'm single, work out, play golf with a passion and I'm involved with Children's Express.

Linda gives him a quizzical look.

STEVEN DOUGLAS

It's a pet project I started with some friends. We help kids define occupational goals and get them enrolled in special university programs.

LINDA

Wow! That sounds great. I love kids.

STEVEN DOUGLAS

Yeah, we also raise capital for grants and scholarships. It's very rewarding, to see the kids grow up and succeed.

LINDA

I'd settle for my tomatoes to bloom.

STEVEN DOUGLAS

So. Are we going to build in Hammock?

LINDA

I think so. But I do have a few nagging concerns.

STEVEN DOUGLAS

(smiles)

Nothing that we can't work out.

EXT. SAVAGE FARM HOUSE -- NIGHT

It is raining heavily. Johnny runs out the back door with some trash. He passes Linda's garden now in full bloom. He opens the garbage can.

Johnny's POV: A bottle of chardonnay is at the bottom of the trash can.

INT. SAVAGE FARM HOUSE KITCHEN -- MOMENTS LATER

Johnny runs into the house and grabs a towel to dry himself off. Linda hums a song while cutting up some vegetables.

JOHNNY

Honey? I couldn't help but notice...
And thought I would ask you about
it.

LINDA

What?

JOHNNY

Did you have a bottle of wine tonight?

LINDA

(beat)

Yes I did. Before you got home.

JOHNNY

I don't mean to preach but did you
know that secretive drinking is one
of the bench marks of alcoholism?

Linda stops cooking and squares off with him.

LINDA

Don't you dare. Don't you dare put
your baggage on me. I was not
drinking in secret. I was enjoying
a glass of wine.

JOHNNY

A "bottle" of wine.

LINDA

That bottle has been open for two
weeks. Don't tell me how to live my
life.

JOHNNY

Don't get all pissy. We can work
this out together.

LINDA

I'm not pissy!
(pissy)
You don't know how to work anything
out as a team. You're a lone wolf.

JOHNNY

What do you mean by that?

LINDA

We have something special together.
I've dropped enough hints.

JOHNNY

Linda, I'm committed to you.

LINDA

What about a family? Children?

LINDA

When are you going to grow up and take responsibility for someone other than yourself?

JOHNNY

(angry)

I already told you my sister died. I don't want to go there again. I pound nails so I don't have to be accountable for anybody but myself.

Johnny tries to hug Linda. She pushes him away.

LINDA

I was hoping for more. A family.

JOHNNY

Linda, I need time for those kind of decisions.

LINDA

Time? Your problem is you don't know how to make any decisions.

JOHNNY

What do you mean by that?

LINDA

Richmond's in trouble. I need you to sign on for the Hammock deal. Your indecision is going to lose me the bid.

JOHNNY

I'm on the fence on Hammock because it's a dirty deal. I can't build on that land.

LINDA

Can't build on it? Or won't?

Linda storms out of the kitchen. Johnny walks into the living room and stares at the stained glass butterfly and the picture of his mother hanging on the wall.

INT. SAVAGE FARM HOUSE BEDROOM -- LATER

Linda is laying in the bed with her back to Johnny. Johnny turns around and starts to kiss her shoulders. Linda shrugs him off.

LINDA

I'm tired.

INT. SINGLE FAMILY HOME CONSTRUCTION SITE TRAILER -- MORNING

Linda is working on some paper work when the phone rings. She listens as the answering machine picks up.

ANSWERING MACHINE (V.O.)
 You have reached Richmond
 construction, site number-four.
 Please leave a message.

STEVEN DOUGLAS (V.O.)
 Hi Linda, it's Steven. I'm going to
 be with one of my kid's tomorrow.
 We're going to the roller derby. I
 figured we could go over the Hammock
 specs and you could meet Zach. He's
 a real bright kid. Give me a call
 if you'd like to go.

The machine clicks off as Johnny walks in the door. Linda
 addresses Johnny while she works.

LINDA
 I have to cancel tomorrow's trip.

JOHNNY
 Why? I already rented the cabin.

LINDA
 I'm sorry. It's business.

Johnny's sour look explains his feelings. He walks out of
 the trailer. Linda picks up the phone and starts to dial.

INT. ROLLER RINK -- AFTERNOON

Blue and Red Roller-Derby teams battle it out in the rink.

Linda, Steven and sixteen year old ZACH THOMAS watch the
 proceedings enthralled. Steve hands Zach some money.

STEVEN DOUGLAS
 Zach, why don't you get something to
 eat?

ZACK
 Great.

Zach runs off with money in hand.

LINDA
 Nice kid.

STEVEN DOUGLAS
 GREAT kid! We've been working with
 him for three years. He just got to
 a scholars program.

LINDA
 So... I've been thinking about the
 Hammock project.

Steven awaits her decision with an uneasy stare.

LINDA

I'm in.

Steven is relieved. Zach walks back and sits between them with his popcorn and soda.

LINDA

(over crowd's roar)

I hear you've got a scholarship.
What do you plan on majoring in?

ZACH

Environmental research.

LINDA

Really?

ZACH

If we kill the planet, we're history.
"End of story".

ZACH jumps up and starts screaming for his team.

ZACH

Yeaaaaah! Go for it!

Zach's POV: The blue team has thrown three of the opposition over the railing and are taunting them. Steven talks above the roar of the crowd.

STEVEN DOUGLAS

Listen, I'm meeting some friends
later. Would you like to join us?

LINDA

Ahhh, I'm not sure.

STEVEN DOUGLAS

(excited)

Let's go dancing. I know a great
place.

INT. MELODY MAKER DANCE HALL -- NIGHT

Linda, Steven and several of Steven's friends dance together on the dance floor. Pete and Lexus are dancing nearby.

Pete's POV: Linda and Steve are dancing with some of his friends. The group is laughing and joking together. Everyone has a drink in their hands. A waitress walks up to the group and ask's about refills. Everyone waves for one more. Linda hesitates and then orders another drink.

Pete realizes Johnny isn't there and looks around the dance floor with concern.

EXT. SAVAGE FARM HOUSE PORCH -- NIGHT

The wind pushes the empty porch swing in the Moon-light.

INT. SAVAGE FARM LIVING ROOM -- NIGHT

Johnny sits in a chair with the phone in his hand.

INT. LINDA RICHMOND'S BEDROOM -- CONTINUOUS

The answering machine light flashes a numerical "ten" for incoming calls.

ANSWERING MACHINE

Hi, it's Linda, please leave a message
at the beep.

INT. SAVAGE FARM HOUSE LIVING ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Johnny hangs up the phone. His hand reaches over revealing a bottle of bourbon. Inspecting the bottle, he starts to shake. His hands play with the screw on cap. He contemplates but does not break the seal.

INT. MELODY MAKER DANCE HALL -- CONTINUOUS

Linda and Steve are slow dancing. Steve starts to get frisky, kissing Linda's neck. She pulls away abruptly.

LINDA

I think you better take me home now.

INT. LINDA RICHMOND'S BEDROOM/INTERCUT SAVAGE FARM HOUSE

The radio clock on Linda's night table reads 3:35 a.m. The answering machine blinks fifteen incoming messages. The phone rings several times. Linda grabs the receiver.

LINDA

Hello? Johnny? Jesus, what time is
it.

Johnny now sits in his chair in the dark.

JOHNNY

Where the hell have you been? I was
worried about you.

LINDA

I told you I had business today.

JOHNNY

Business? It's almost four in the
morning for Christs sake.

LINDA

Look, it's too late for this. lets
talk tomorrow.

Linda hangs up the phone and lays on the bed with her eyes open.

Johnny holds the receiver. The tone changes to the obnoxious repeating operators voice.

AUTOMATED OPERATOR

If you would like to make a call,
please hang up... If you would like
to make a call, please hang up...

Johnny holds the receiver in his hand, eyes transfixed on the bottle of unopened bourbon. He gets up leaving the phone off the hook and walks out of the house, bottle of bourbon in hand.

EXT. SAVAGE FARM HOUSE -- CONTINUOUS

Johnny walks outside and looks up at the full moon. He cracks the bottle and in several large swigs finishes a third of the bottle. Closing his eyes and swallowing, he feels the burning liquor slide down his throat. Opening his eyes he staggers around to the back off the house to Linda's garden.

JOHNNY

Ahhhhhhhhhhh.

He takes a swig and bellows his rage at the moon. Screaming he pours the rest of the bottle into the garden's dirt.

ANGLE ON: MOONLIGHT HIGH-LIGHTING BOURBON CASCADING IN SLOW MOTION OVER THE NOW GROWN TOMATOES.

EXT. SINGLE FAMILY HOME CONSTRUCTION SITE TRAILER -- MORNING

Johnny walks to the site trailer with drawings in hand. Pete waves him over but Johnny ignores him. Steven pulls into the site in his BMW. He honks the horn and Linda comes flying past Johnny with schematics in hand. Grabbing her arm, Johnny spins her around.

JOHNNY

Whoa, there. Aren't we going to go
over these specs?

LINDA

(pulling away)
We'll do it tomorrow. I'm late.

She jumps into the BMW and takes off. Pete walks over.

PETE

That's what I wanted to tell you.
That dandy has been out with your
girl.

JOHNNY

What?

PETE

Me and Lexus, was at the Melody Maker,
and saw her dancing with him closer'n
bee lookin' for pollen.

Johnny reflects on Pete's words and reacts grabbing him.

JOHNNY

That's bull, you're a lying piece of
shit.

He pushes Pete away and walks to his truck. Johnny tears
out of the site leaving Pete forlornly shaking his head.

INT. TRATTORIA RESTAURANT -- LATER

Linda and Steve are having a late lunch. The Hammock
schematics are spread out on a table next to them.

LINDA

I told Johnny, we're going to build
the Hammock project with you.

STEVEN DOUGLAS

What did he say?

LINDA

He... Has concerns.

STEVEN DOUGLAS

Linda, don't get cold feet on me
now. We have the bid in the bag.
You can always get rid of that yahoo
and get a replacement.

LINDA

(snapping)

Johnny Savage is one of the best
foremans in the business. He makes
Richmond tick. I just have concerns
that haven't been answered.

(beat)

Let's go.

Linda rolls up the schematic plans and gets ready to leave.

STEVEN DOUGLAS

Where?

LINDA

There's something I've got to see.

Linda exits while Steven hastily pays the bill.

EXT. TRATTORIA RESTAURANT -- MOMENTS LATER

Johnny's truck is parked outside the restaurant.

JOHNNY'S POV: Steven's BMW wails out of the parking lot.

He starts up his truck and follows the BMW.

EXT. HAMMOCK DUMP SITE -- LATER

Linda and Steven pull up to the dump and get out. Johnny pulls up a discreet distance away from the Beamer and observes. Linda wades into the filthy refuse of the dump.

Linda and Steve make their way through debris and trash. Steven calls after her trying to keep up.

STEVEN DOUGLAS

Linda. Linda! What the hell are you looking for?

LINDA

The truth.

Linda makes her way past some foul smelling trash. She startles a huge flock of seagulls. They take off circling overhead. Linda hears the intense buzzing from thousands of flies. Looking down a ravine, she sees hundreds of decomposing calve carcasses. Vermin and maggots feast on the rotting flesh. Steven catches up to her as Linda bends over and starts gagging, retching up her lunch.

STEVEN DOUGLAS

Linda. What's wrong?

Steven turns to where Linda was looking. He is sickened by the sight.

EXT. HAMMOCK DUMP SITE -- MOMENTS LATER

Johnny is waiting in his truck.

JOHNNY'S POV: Steven escorts a shaken Linda to his BMW. They enter and drive off.

EXT. LINDA RICHMOND'S CONDO -- NIGHT

Johnny pulls up to Linda's condo and pulls over. He see's the BMW in front. There is a paper bag on his front seat with the outline of a bottle inside.

JOHNNY'S POV: His watch reads 7 p.m.

Johnny settles back and waits in the truck. He starts to doze. Waking up in a cold sweat he is hearing the pounding sound of the windshield wipers and Noreen's scream. Waking fully he shakes it off and checks his watch.

JOHNNY'S POV: His watch reads 10 p.m.

The BMW is still there. He starts the truck and reaches for the brown paper bag. The truck takes off.

INT. SAVAGE FARM HOUSE LIVING ROOM -- NIGHT

Johnny sits in the dark drinking bourbon. Car lights pull up and a door slams shut outside. Footsteps are heard coming towards the door. Keys jingle outside the front door.

Linda enters the darkened room.

LINDA

Johnny?

Linda snaps on the lights. Johnny shields his eyes.

LINDA

We have to talk.

JOHNNY

So, talk.

LINDA

We're going through with the Hammock deal.

JOHNNY

You building with "Steve"?

Linda takes the house key off her key ring and puts it on the table.

LINDA

Yes, I am. Douglas-Richmond is a good fit.

JOHNNY

I'll bet.

LINDA

Look... This isn't just about Hammock.

JOHNNY

I thought we had something special?

LINDA

We do have something and it's still special. I care about you, Johnny...But...

JOHNNY

But what?

LINDA

But I work hard and like to be giddy sometimes. I want to loosen up and share a bottle of wine with my lover occasionally. I can't ask that of you.

Johnny holds up a half empty bottle.

JOHNNY

Want a drink?

LINDA

Not now. Not like this. I'm taking the 10 a.m. flight to Dallas to close the deal. I hope we can work things out when I get back.

JOHNNY

Don't let the door hit you in the ass on the way out.

Linda leaves the farm house leaving the front door wide open. Johnny sits in his arm chair and starts to cry. He looks at the bottle and throws it against the wall. The stained glass butterfly falls and shatters on the floor. Johnny screams at the broken pieces.

JOHNNY

I hate you.

INT. SAVAGE FARM HOUSE -- MORNING

Johnny sits in the same chair from the night before. Gary walks in through the open door and sees the mess. Gingerly walking around the broken glass, he sits next to Johnny.

GARY

Bad timing Bro? You don't look so good.

JOHNNY

She's gone Gar. She split.

GARY

What happened?

JOHNNY

Found a more suitable beau.

GARY

It's not my place but I have to tell you. You're full of shit.

Johnny snaps out of his lamentation.

JOHNNY

What do you mean?

GARY

It's never over 'till it's over. Get yourself cleaned up and go after her.

Gary motions to the broken bottle.

GARY

That's not the answer.

GARY

You got your shit together after the clinic. Don't let a bump in the road stop you.

JOHNNY

I love her Gar. I really love her.

Gary stands up and starts to walk out.

GARY

If you want her, fight for her.

He walks out closing the door behind him.

JOHNNY'S POV: Johnny stares at the broken bottle and begins to hear the windshield wipers and Noreen's scream.

He snaps out of the scream and wiper sounds. A gentle breeze blows across the room. Johnny imagines he hears his mother and then Dr. Seacat whispering to him.

DOROTHY SAVAGE (V.O.)

You can handle it Johnny. You can handle anything.

DR. SEACAT (V.O.)

You're going to beat your demons John.

JOHNNY

(to broken bottle)

You're not going to beat me.

Johnny strips off his clothes. He heads to the bathroom and closes the door. The sounds of the shower emanate through the door.

INT. AIRPORT -- MORNING

Linda makes her way to a departure gate. The sign at the gate says "Dallas" 10 A.M. Linda gets her boarding pass and makes her way to the gate. The terminal clock reads 9:50.

She prepares to hand her boarding pass to the gate attendant and Johnny steps in front of her. He's clean shaven and holds two brown bags. She's surprised.

LINDA

Johnny. What are you doing here?

JOHNNY

I have something for you.

Johnny takes some beautiful tomatoes from one of the bags.

JOHNNY

They're from your garden.

LINDA

It's not mine anymore, Johnny.

JOHNNY

Your wrong. It will always be your garden.

Johnny takes some pink and blue baby shoes from the second bag. He holds them up for her.

JOHNNY

I love you Linda. A love like ours comes along once in a lifetime. I don't want to lose you. It's time for me to grow up and have a family. I think we could fill these shoes... Together.

LINDA

(she starts to cry)

It can't work, Johnny. It just can't work.

JOHNN

You're going to Dallas to be with him?

LINDA

Not to be with him. To convince him we need another site... Hammock's not right. Thanks for the insight. Thanks for everything.

Linda hugs him passionately.

TERMINAL ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

Last call for flight 169 to Dallas-Fort-Worth, departing gate 11.

LINDA

Good-bye Johnny Boy.

Linda walks through the departure gate leaving Johnny heart broken holding the baby booties and bag of tomatoes.

INT. GIANT BAR -- NIGHT

The crack of pool balls resonate, mixing with the loud banter of the bar patrons and the juke box. Johnny sits at the bar. The barkeep sets a shot glass down in front of him. The barkeep gets ready to pour him a shot of Whiskey.

CAMERA CLOSE UP: As the whiskey bottle nears the shot-glass Johnny's hand intercedes by covering the glass.

Johnny turns the glass over. He buries his tortured face into his hands. A silk butterfly floats down to the overturned shot glass. A slim hand gently turns him around. Linda stands in front of Johnny.

LINDA

I came back for you... And... For my garden. I had some tests done.

(whispers)

You were right. People need a pure foundation, so their souls can live ***and love in peace.***

Linda leads Johnny out of the bar.

CUE MUSIC: Springsteen "One Step Forward, Two steps Back".

EXT. GIANT BAR -- CONTINUOUS

They kiss beneath the fiery canopy of stars.

COLLAGE SHOTS overlaying the star studded sky: Johnny and Linda on main street, the fortune teller, the coaster in the Tunnel Of Horrors, company barbecue-catching the pig, toasting with Gary, Shelley, and Linda, Linda letting the dirt run through her fingers, Johnny and Linda's first kiss in the pickup truck, slow dancing with Linda at the Melody Maker, kissing rolling along the Tunnel of Horrors, kissing rolling across Linda's bed. Finally, the last shot of soft streaming light waking the two lovers simultaneously in Linda's bedroom.

JOHNNY

One day at a time babe. One day...At a time.

They kiss again.

THE END