

FADE IN:

Snow flakes falling against a black sky. Temperature is below freezing and the air is still.

INT. HIGH RISE APARTMENT-- NIGHT

JACKIE CAROL, 35 looks out the tall window over the city of New York. It's bright lights, warm colors and life contrast to the dark, empty space behind him. His eyes fixated on the city, but the lights don't show color in his face. Stoic stare. He takes a drink of whiskey.

We are unable to see what's lingering in his other hand.

CUT TO:

The door behind him, a light shines under the crease and we hear laughter.

INT. COMEDY CLUB-- MAIN STAGE

Drinks set in the stomachs of the paid patrons of the packed house bumble up to the surface stemmed from the laughs of the great JACKIE CAROL as he stands on stage doing his show. His jokes like a bullet from a gun strike the audience and they nearly fallout their chairs from laughter.

JACKIE

I ain't lying to you. I can't bein'  
sitting all posturie, all  
diplomatic in a fancy restaurant  
with this ladies teeth falling out  
on the table. Waitress comes  
over and asks how's the food. Best  
I can say hey, it's jaw-dropping  
good.

Laughter. Jackie takes a drink and sets it back down on the stool next to him. He scans the audience looking for someone. They aren't there. He continues his routine and laughs grow with the raise of his brow.

INT. COMEDY CLUB-- OFFSTAGE

Clapping follows Jackie as he exits the stage, making his way through groups of people. He waves them away as his lanky, butt-brain of an assistant PAUL closes the stage door to his dressing room.

INT. COMEDY CLUB-- DRESSING ROOM

Jackie sits. His mood changes much different than his on stage personality. Gruff. His dressing room is no bigger than a deluxe closet, on the table is his bottle and glass with a mirror outlined by circled bulbs on the wall.

JACKIE  
Where the hell is he?

PAUL  
Mr. Carol---

JACKIE  
Drop the Mr. Carol. Where is my brother? He should be here.

PAUL  
I called his cell and he hasn't answered.

JACKIE  
How often did you try?

PAUL  
I tried countless times.

JACKIE  
Countless? How many fingers is that?

He shoots him the "bird". Paul moves to the door with grace.

JACKIE  
Get him here! Understand?! Don't try countless times! Get him here in this time!

He turns his back. Paul leaves, closing the stage door. Jackie pours himself a drink and takes a sip while looking at himself in the mirror. The look, if the reflection could speak, it'd call him an ass. He spits at the mirror and finishes his drink. He pours himself another when KNOCK, KNOCK.

JACKIE  
I'm busy! If you want an autograph, I'm selling them twenty dollars a picture, ten for just a photo! And no trickery with the cells, they cost too!

The knocking continues. KNOCK! KNOCK! KNOCK!

JACKIE  
Fine, fine! I'm coming!

He walks toward the door.

JACKIE  
(to himself)  
You can't say Jackie Carol is not  
polite.

He opens the door and his manager KENNY with a two-day old haircut rhinos his way in passing through the crowd. He closes the door behind him and smiles with a Cheshire grin.

JACKIE  
(not psyched to see him)  
Kenny.

KENNY  
That's me, your manager. The guy that found your scrawny butt in a bar, while having my third screwdriver and said to my self, my self said look at this guy, a comedian's comic. One who can say funny things and make the truth funny.

He leans in to kiss Jackie on the cheek, but Jackie blocks it with left arm.

JACKIE  
I swear on the lives of three white men you try that again I'ma give you a new meaning to the word punchline.

Kenny bursts into laughter-- really annoying laughter. Jackie moves back to his chair and pours himself another drink. Kenny looks around the room.

KENNY  
Hey, uh, where's your brother?

JACKIE  
Mystery of the night.

KENNY  
I've never seen him not in here.  
Every show he's here.

JACKIE  
Well, Stevie he's not here.

He takes a drink. A quick one.

KENNY  
Well, I can say this without him.  
I--

JACKIE  
You know the rules.

Kenny stops. Nods.

KENNY  
Okay, I'll wait, no matter. How important this is. We have to wait on your brother, I mean he was just on stage in front of two hundred people. Selling at a two drink minimum, plates starting at fifteen dollars and making the club a revenue of twenty-two thousand dollars for one weekend. Sold out. But I, we have to wait for him so I can deliver the good news. Why not, Christians await Jesus's return, we can wait a few more minutes--

JACKIE  
Cut it, Kenny. What's this good news?

Kenny rubs his hands like two sticks starting a fire. Jackie nurses another drink as Kenny sits next to him.

KENNY  
I talked it over with the network. Twenty four episodes, but I got it down to twenty with a signing bonus if it surpasses the first season. Thirty thousand an episode.

JACKIE  
You're shitting me?

KENNY  
If I am, let my children be held back and my wife be struck by lightning.

JACKIE  
You don't have any of those things.

KENNY  
Then screw them. This deal is  
ready, real and needs your  
signature.

He pulls out the contract: a few pages clipped together and  
a pen. Jackie shakes his head.

JACKIE  
I got to talk it over with my  
brother. Rules is rules.

KENNY  
Rules are made to be broken like  
traffic signals.

JACKIE  
This signal is red so stop.

Kenny moves toward the wall, takes a breathe then approaches  
him with direct forwardness.

KENNY  
When are you gonna make a decision  
without your brother? Not over  
stepping my boundaries here and not  
only am I your manager, but one who  
cares for you and my future you  
need to sign this now. This blue  
bell ice cream is in the truck and  
it will melt away.

JACKIE  
Did you just make that up?

KENNY  
You're not the only creative person  
in the room.

Jackie gives a slight smile when there's knocks at the door.  
It opens and it's Paul again.

PAUL  
Sorry to disturb you, but--

JACKIE  
Did you find him?

PAUL

No.

JACKIE

Then why are you standing in here when my brother is somewhere out there?

PAUL

Mr. Carol, this police wants to see you.

Kenny sharply turns to Jackie. They lock eyes.

KENNY

Do you have drugs on you?

JACKIE

I don't do drugs.

KENNY

Is there a dead hooker in the bathroom? Please tell you don't have a dirty trick OD'd on the toilet.

JACKIE

Who did you represent before me?

PAUL

Mr. Carol, the police.

Jackie tucks away the bottle under the table with the glass. Straightens his clothes and stands up. He looks for the okay from Kenny, who gives him a thumbs up.

JACKIE

Show them in.

Paul disappears then a few beats later, comes back in with two uniformed officers. Paul guards the door as they enter, removing their hats.

KENNY

What can I do for you, officers? If you want a picture with the star, ten percent discount.

Waving Kenny off, the uniform officer takes a step forward.

UNIFORMED OFFICER

Mr. Carol. Sorry to disturb you. I, we bring some news about your brother.

Jackie moves in closer. Silence fills the room.

EXT. ALLEYWAY OF THE COMEDY CLUB- NIGHT

Jackie staggers out the back door. He gets about ten feet, then pauses then leans on hand against the brick wall, the other on his stomach and vomits. A cat scurries down the alley, leaving its footprints in the snow and bits of vomit.

INT. HOSPITAL HALL WAY- NIGHT

Heels click the floor as they make their way into room 306, passing hospital staff. ARETHA mid-50s, professional enters to find...

CUT TO:

Her shocked look.

INT. HOSPITAL- ROOM 306

...Her sister JANET sitting on the bed with an IV in her arm. She looks disheveled and weak.

ARETHA

I'll be... what the hell were you doing driving at this time of night and drunk? You're lucky I got a friend on the force or your butt be in jail.

She sits her purse on the bed.

ARETHA

Janet, you're going to kill yourself or somebody else. Wasn't your license suspended?

She takes Janet's silence as a yes. Janet smacks his dry lips. Aretha gives her a cup of water with a straw. Janet doesn't move.

ARETHA

Sip it.  
(more aggressive)  
Sip it.

Janet does, after a beat. Aretha puts the cup down on the table. She looks around and sees the chart on the wall. She reads.

ARETHA

See they got you on some type of fluid. They gave you diazepam that's generic Valium. No wonder you look like you're out of the Walking Dead.

She looks over, noticing Janet is unresponsive just staring at the wall. Aretha sits and comforts her in her own way.

ARETHA

Janet, you got to snap out of this, not only it isn't healthy, but it's not going to help you forget. Oh, Janet, say something.

Janet continues to stare at the wall. Aretha pulls her close to her bosom and holds her.

CUT TO:

DOCTOR MOORE enters, around 40s, visibly drained from a long shift. Janet doesn't flinch, still being held by Aretha.

ARETHA

I got her sipping on some water. Hope that's fine.

DOCTOR MOORE

That's fine. We want her to keep fluids in her body. We got her on an IV and we were hoping to send her home within the hour. I take it you are related her.

ARETHA

Yes, she is my sister.

DOCTOR MOORE

Ok. In cases such as this we recommend she should be watched for the next twenty four to thirty-six hours.

ARETHA

I understand. My husband and I can take care of her.

DOCTOR MOORE

I'll be back in a few minutes and check on her then she's free to go.

ARETHA  
Thank you, doctor.

Doctor Moore exits the room. Aretha tries to raise Janet, but has a better chance moving a brick house. She tries again, but after another failed effort, she just wraps her arms around her.

INT. ARETHA'S HOUSE- LIVING ROOM

Aretha enters, walking catatonic Janet to the sofa. She sits her down.

ARETHA  
Harold! Harold! You home?!

No answer from Harold. Aretha sits next to Janet.

ARETHA  
I forgot its Thursday night. He must be at poker. Guess it's a girls night tonight. What do you feel like doing?

No response from Janet. Janet continues to stare in the horizon. Aretha grabs the remote and points it at the television in front of her. Turning it on and flipping through the channels.

ARETHA  
Must be something good on television. Maybe have a Diane Carol movie one. You love Diane Carol, which one is your favorite?

A beat. Aretha sets the remote on the table.

ARETHA  
I'm going to make us something to eat.

She leaves the room for the kitchen, leaving Janet alone. A beat. Janet turns her head to the left, looking out from where she entered.

CUT TO:

## INT. ARETHA'S HOUSE- KITCHEN

Cooking in modern-style kitchen, equipped with the latest cooking ware. Aretha adds a little this and a little that in a bowl and stirs it all together. Once mixed, she spreads it a pan and bases it with sprinkles of salt. She talks loud enough for Janet to hear her from the other room.

## ARETHA

Before you came here Janet, after the kids left for school I haven't had the opportunity to cook for anyone. It's nice to make a dish for more than one person. Harold and I usually order out. Not much time to go out and mingle since he made partner. You'd think the opposite, but not with Harold. He sticks to his own kind. You have to admire that in a man, no matter how far he goes up the corporate ladder, he never forgets his friends...especially on Thursdays.

She puts the dish in the oven. She feels silence from the living room and enters.

## INT. ARETHA'S HOUSE- LIVING ROOM

She looks at the sofa. No sign of Janet. She looks out and moves to the front door which is wide open. Her heart jumps 90 miles an hour as she moves the front door.

CUT TO:

## EXT. STREET- NIGHT

Aretha sees Janet, walking as though a string is pulling her to the middle of the street. She calls for her.

## ARETHA

Janet. Janet. What are you doing in the middle of the street? You are scaring me to death.

She starts to walk to get her.... when BOOM. A car comes speeding, crashing Janet's now lifeless body into a telephone pole. Blood sears the scene. Aretha screams. Later, gasping for sound.

THREE YEARS LATER

INT. GROCERY STORE- NIGHT

Jackie walks down the cereal aisle, occasionally picking up a box then putting it back on the shelf.

CUT TO:

At the checking line, he looks over holding a box of cereal and milk at the magazine rack. He sees himself, promoting his newest film "MUNCHIES", all smiling surround by babies. His face reads disgust at the sight.

An eight year old kid in front of him pick up the magazine with his face on it. He looks at it attentively then looks at Jackie. Jackie tries to avoid contact, but too late. The kid's jaw drops recognizing the man on the cover. He tugs at his mom who's busy putting her groceries on the belt, but before she can turn, Jackie is gone.

EXT. GROCERY STORE- PARKING LOT- NIGHT

Jackie walks to his car with his single bag of groceries. He gets in when he feels a buzz in his pants. He answers his cell.

JACKIE

Yeah.

KENNY

Hey, Jackie it's Kenny your manager.

JACKIE

(fake excitement)

Oh I didn't read the screen. Didn't know who it was.

INTERCUT:

10.

INT. GYM- NIGHT

Kenny in workout clothes sweats on the treadmill. Heavy panting.

KENNY

Your sarcasm, man could put on a damper on my day. But I called about Munchies II, my friend. You get the script?

JACKIE

I used it as toilet paper just like the last one.

KENNY

Ha ha. That toilet paper is paying you forty thousand, whereas your manager got them to up it to seventy thousand with three percent of the gross. Get used to ultra absorbent, my friend. I'll see you Monday.

INTERCUT BACK:

EXT. GROCERY STORE- PARKING LOT- NIGHT

Jackie hangs up the phone. Few beats, he starts the car and drives out the parking lot into the street.

FLASHBACK

INT. VIETAMESE RESTURANT- NIGHT

Jackie dips his chopsticks in his pho bowl, catching chunks of beef, noodles and sprouts into his mouth. Uninvited, CHARLIE, Jackie's now-ex girlfriend, pretty sits in front of him and holds the menu up to her face.

JACKIE

If we're playing peek-a-boo, I already saw you.

CHARLIE

(puts down the menu)  
You're never any fun.

JACKIE

Isn't that why you packed your bags and left the apartment?

CHARLIE

How long did it take you to realize I was gone?

JACKIE

I went into the bathroom and realized my razors were missing. Figured you stashed them in the apples so when I bit into one, I'd severe my esophagus.

CHARLIE  
Not a bad idea.

JACKIE  
Did you do it?

CHARLIE  
No, I packed the apples with my vibrator.

JACKIE  
Hm. Wonder what you packed with the baking soda.  
(takes a slurp of pho)  
What do you want? My brother will be here any minute.

CHARLIE  
Always working around his schedule.

JACKIE  
Always interfering with the schedule.

CHARLIE  
I wanted to give you back your keys.

She puts him on the table. Jackie takes another slurp of pho.

CHARLIE  
Are you going to say anything?

Jackie looks from the bowl in time to see his brother enter the restaurant. Charlie turns and sees him too. Immediately she gets up and leaves, passing his brother without looking at him.

BROTHER  
Where's Charlie going?

JACKIE  
Out of my life.

BROTHER  
Well, I warned you it wasn't going to work.

JACKIE  
No, you didn't.

BROTHER

I did so. You are a pain to deal with and when a girl refuses to abide by your schedule, she leaves.

JACKIE

Yeah, yeah. Who put me on this schedule?

BROTHER

Are you suggesting since I bring a shred of order to your life, it's my fault you can't make it with women?

JACKIE

Yeah, it would be easier, yeah.

BROTHER

Yeah, yeah where are you playing tonight?

JACKIE

I got a ten minute spot at Chucky's tonight. You're coming, right, after ten?

BROTHER

I can't make it.

JACKIE

Why not?

BROTHER

I have a life.

JACKIE

No you don't. I need you there. I'm working some new material tonight. I need you to tell me it's funny.

BROTHER

Can't the audience tell you that, that's why they call it a comedy club.

Jackie gives him a look that Brother reluctantly cowers to it.

BROTHER

Fine, I'll be in the second row.

Jackie continues eating as Brother shakes his head at his disgusting display of slurping.

BROTHER  
Do you have to slurp?

JACKIE  
It's pho.

BROTHER  
Fo' sho'.

JACKIE  
Fo' sho' it's pho.

They laugh as Jackie slurps again.

FLASH FORWARD

INT. JACKIE'S APARTMENT-NIGHT

Jackie sits on his sofa nursing a tv dinner and flipping through the many channels he never watches. He flips and flips until he stops at a black and white movie starring James Cagney. He reaches for his glass of whiskey which leaves a wet stain on the Munchies II script.

INT. MALL- FOOD COURT

Shoppers and eaters migrate as three comics EGGY, TOBIAS and GUINEVERE stuff their faces with junk and trash talk around a lunch table.

EGGY  
It's a fucking crapshoot. There's no way I'm getting in the showcase. No f-ing way.

TOBIAS  
Come on, everybody gets in a fight.

GUINEVERE  
But nobody gets drunk and punches the owner of club's son in the face.

EGGY  
The son of a bitch stole my routine!

He quickly looks around. Nobody turns in his direction.

EGGY  
He stole my routine.

GUINEVERE

I'll be honest it wasn't worth stealing.

TOBIAS

I concur.

EGGY

(to Tobias)

Jealous. You're a has been.

GUINEVERE

Ha.

EGGY

First season on Warehouse, you get two lines, a SAG credit and five years later, you can't even afford lunch.

Before Tobias speaks, Jackie comes around Guinevere and sits in the empty chair.

TOBIAS

What's up, Jackie?

Jackie reads the faces at the table. Tobias cools off.

JACKIE

Did I miss something?

EGGY

Nothing, just that my career is ending.

JACKIE

Oh, Egg...when did it start?

Light laughter. A small child points to Jackie. Jackie pretends not to notice, luckily the child's mother pulls him to keep walking. Tobias sees this then looks back at Jackie.

TOBIAS

I see your career is blossoming.

JACKIE

I go from comedian to cartoon.

GUINEVERE

What's the matter with that? At least you're getting paid.

EGGY

I'll do it. I'll do the next  
Munchies.

JACKIE

Take my spot.

EGGY

They offered you the sequel? The  
first one hasn't come out yet.

JACKIE

I guess it tested well.

Tobias senses the stress in Jackie's tone. He leans closer  
to him.

TOBIAS

You don't have to do what you don't  
want to do. Managers, agents,  
studios always try to tell the  
artist what to do. Next thing you  
know you're shaving your head,  
running down Sunset in a wool  
overcoat screaming they are trying  
to kill me.

Eggy makes a face.

EGGY

What?

Guinevere turns to Jackie, pushing her plate to the side.

GUINEVERE

What do you want to do?

JACKIE

That's just it. I don't know. I  
don't have a move, I don't know the  
move I made before the move.

TOBIAS

Your brother knew.

Eggy taps him to shut his mouth. Silence grows into a  
character. Jackie sits back in his chair.

GUINEVERE

Hey, you'll figure it out.  
Meantime, buy us a round. I know  
you got it.

JACKIE  
We're in a mall. I'll buy a round  
of peach smoothies.

GUINEVERE  
Then we should get out of here.

She gets out her chair. Jackie is the last one to follow.

EXT. BEACH- BAR

Guinevere, Tobias and Eggy nurse their paid for drinks while watching the beach action. From the waves to the surfers from the vendors to the tan lines it's the beach. Across the from the bartender approaches them.

BARTENDER  
Wanna refill?

They all turn to Jackie who's not drinking, nods. They nod back at the bartender turns and fixes their drinks.

EGGY  
Not in the mood, Jackie.

JACKIE  
For what?

EGGY  
A drink.

JACKIE  
I prefer not to drink in public.

EGGY  
I feel you. Never know where the paparazzi will be hiding.

GUINEVERE  
Hell with them! I'd take my shirt right now and roll around in the sand if I felt like it. Let them shoot me.

Bartender gives her drink first. She bats her eyes and bartender makes the next one.

TOBIAS  
What are you gonna do with the money?

EGGY

Damn, will you stay off this man's nuts.

TOBIAS

What?

EGGY

Forgive him, Jackie. He's an open mic-er.

Tobias doesn't smile whereas Eggy and Guinevere take great delight.

TOBIAS

I was just, Jackie inquiring that you were going to move out of your apartment and move up to a mansion in West Hollywood.

EGGY

Don't do it. I heard one guy this famous actor guy did that. His next movie tanked and he wound up homeless with tax bills.

He takes the drink from the bartender and drinks it.

EGGY

Mm. That's good. I might just give up comedy and become a bartender on the beach.

TOBIAS

They're not called bartenders anymore. They're mixologists.

EGGY

Whatever. Wait. When is the last time you've been to a college and on the list of majors, mixology was one you could get a degree in.

TOBIAS

It's politically correct now.

EGGY

It's left-wing bullshit. Instead of calling a homeless guy a bum in San Diego--

TOBIAS

I have never seen a homeless guy in San Diego.

EGGY

Ok, a homeless guy in shit-poke San Bernardino you can't say he's a bum, no he's domestically challenged. What sense that make?

He and Tobias debate back and forth until Eddy turns back to Jackie. He's gone. Eddy looks around the beach. Jackie's gone.

EGGY

Hey, he forgot to pay the bill.

Guinevere and Tobias heard the word "bill", they look at their finished drinks then back at the bartender who's eyes warn them not to move.

EXT. JACKIE'S APARTMENT- HALLWAY

Jackie carrying a grocery bag, reaches for his keys turning the corner to his apartment and spots an unfriendly face.

JACKIE

Jaleel.

JALEEL, mid-30s handsome face with malevolent eyes in an attire of a runway model stands waiting for him.

JALEEL

Now Jackie is that anyway to keep an old friend waiting on you. You could've called and told me you'd be home later. Dinner would've been on the table already.

His lack of movement reeks of trouble. Jackie stands firm gripping his grocery bag and keys.

JACKIE

I'm all paid up. Our business is done.

JALEEL

Our business will never be done so long as there is an ace of spades.

JACKIE

You're an enabler.

JALEEL  
Opportunist.

JACKIE  
How ever you want to dress it up  
you shouldn't be here. I want to be  
left alone.

CUT TO

Jaleel peeks in the grocery bag and sees a bottle.

JALEEL  
You keep that up you're gonna be an  
alcoholic.

JACKIE  
I'm not an alcoholic. They got to  
go to those meetings on Wednesdays.

JALEEL  
Or Saturdays.

Jackie moves to his door, his keys gripping in hand. He  
turns back at Jaleel nearly shoulder to shoulder to him.

JACKIE  
You're not getting in.

Jaleel grits his teeth and takes a bold step forward.

JALEEL  
Who says I was asking.

Jackie rolls his keys in his hand. He picks out his  
apartment key and sticks it the lock. He turns the knob.

FLASHBACK

INT. JACKIE'S APARTMENT- NIGHT

Brother enters, rushing in and looking for Jackie. He calls  
for him and Jackie emerges into the room after a toilet  
flush.

BROTHER  
Didn't you hear me calling you?

JACKIE  
Yeah. That's why I'm out here.

BROTHER

I mean, on your phone.

Jackie looks for it. He spots it on the coffee table.

JACKIE

It's over there. Must've went off  
when I was in the bathroom.

BROTHER

For you being in the bathroom  
longer than three minutes is a  
miracle.

Jackie rubs his nappy head.

BROTHER

Did you upload your tape on  
youtube?

JACKIE

I'ma get to it.

BROTHER

Bull. This is how entertainment  
works now. It's not 1984 or '85  
thinking some Jewish guy is gonna  
come waltz in a showroom and hand  
you a tv special. You need  
followers.

JACKIE

That's so stalkish.

He makes his way into the kitchen and prepares a bowl of  
cereal.

BROTHER

Make jokes if you want. Better yet  
put them on social media.

JACKIE

A bunch of idiots sitting on their  
computers that can't pay twenty  
dollars to see me live is not the  
audience I want.

BROTHER

No one is going to pay twenty  
dollars to see you if you're not  
online. It's a numbers game. We  
need a hundred thousand followers.  
Then maybe just maybe you will give  
that shot on Saturday Night Live.

JACKIE

I never said I wanted to be on  
Saturday Night Live.

He takes a scoop of cereal.

BROTHER

Where ever. We need a hundred  
thousand followers and knowing you  
and your lackadaisical attitude I  
already upload your performance  
last night.

JACKIE

Then why ask me to upload my video.

BROTHER

I was hoping for an early Christmas  
present.

JACKIE

Now look who's the king of comedy.

He smiles and takes another scoop of cereal.

BROTHER

I've posted it on every site and  
asked your followers to like or  
comment it. I cropped last night  
performance with previous  
performances and created you a five  
minute tape then sent that to every  
comedy club in the city.

JACKIE

Good.

BROTHER

Are you on tonight?

JACKIE

Not tonight. I'm meeting someone  
tonight.

BROTHER

Ok. Make sure you write down your  
joke today before you leave.

JACKIE

We're staying in.

BROTHER

Then write the joke before the night's out.

JACKIE

I already did.

BROTHER

Let me hear it.

JACKIE

Now?

BROTHER

Yes, now.

JACKIE

It's still in the works.

BROTHER

Work meaning what, you haven't done it?

JACKIE

That's good guess.

BROTHER

So you lied. I'm busting my butt to help you and you're lying to me to get ready to lie with someone else.

JACKIE

All work and no play makes Jackie--

BROTHER

Penniless. Discovered less.  
Apartment less. Brother less.

Jackie puts his arm around his shoulder, locking him in close.

JACKIE

Now you know you'd never leave me.

BROTHER

Yeah.

JACKIE

We're brothers.

BROTHER

(yawns)

You got any milk left?

JACKIE  
In the fridge.

Brother walks in the kitchen, opens the fridge and takes out the milk. Grabs a glass, pours the milk in along with three teaspoons of sugar.

JACKIE  
Why do you do that?

BROTHER  
I need to stay awake. I got lot of videos to edit. I pushed yours ahead of paying customers just don't let my work go in vain.

He downs the glass in one gulp.

JACKIE  
That makes my teeth hurt.

BROTHER  
I'm used to it. Joke a day, remember.

FLASHFORWARD

INT JACKIE'S APARTMENT- NIGHT

Jaleel is looking out the window as Jackie pours himself a drink before sitting on the sofa. As Jaleel walks over to the sofa, Jackie gets up and goes back in the kitchen. Jaleel looks around the room, not much to look at.

JALEEL  
I love what you've done with the place. So bland.

He takes a drink.

JACKIE  
I've succeed.

JALEEL  
You know rumor has it you quit stand up for a film career. Are they true?

A beat. Jackie comes out the kitchen nursing his glass.

JACKIE  
Yes, it's true. I'm turning in the mic for method. And no more  
(MORE)

JACKIE (cont'd)  
punchlines. I'm hitting the gym and  
working with Stallone this Fall.

JALEEL  
You're still the quick-witted  
asshole. Wanna play a game?

Jaleel takes out a deck of cards, taking great delight  
watching Jackie grip his glass. He starts doing tricks.

JALEEL  
Don't feel left out. Sit down.  
Nothing like a shuffle. Holding a  
deck in your hand, feeling luck  
through your fingertips waiting for  
the exact moment when everything in  
your life can change. For better or  
worse.

He holds up the joker.

JALEEL  
Get it?

Jackie eyeballs Jaleel, not blinking looking as serious as a  
district attorney.

JACKIE  
The more you toy with me the worse  
you gonna feel.

Jaleel pockets the deck and stands up.

JALEEL  
I feel nothing. I'll be seeing you  
Jackie soon.

Jaleel opens the door and leaves. Jackie puts down the glass  
and goes into his bedroom.

INT. JAKE'S APARTMENT- NIGHT

Jackie lies down but his eyes open to the ceiling. He  
reaches below his bed and pulls out a flask. Screws off the  
top and takes a long drink, nearly emptying it. The mere  
smell of liquor brings water to his eyes. He puts the flask  
on the nightstand just in time to grab his cell when it  
rings.

JACKIE  
 (on the phone)  
 Hello.

CUT TO

INT. ARETHA'S HOUSE- BEDROOM

ARETHA  
 Jackie. It's your aunt Aretha. How  
 are you doing?

JACKIE  
 I'm ok.

ARETHA  
 I don't know what you're doing  
 tomorrow, but I was going to see  
 your mother and I could use the  
 company.

A beat. Aretha twirls the phone cord.

ARETHA  
 For me, Jackie. Please.

EXT. CEMETERY- DAY

Jackie walks with Aretha passing head stone by headstone  
 through the uncut grass of the cemetery. He stubs his toe on  
 a rock.

JACKIE  
 Ow!

ARETHA  
 Are you okay?

He examines his shoe. It's scraped.

JACKIE  
 Yeah, I'm fine. Just my shoe. No  
 matter I need new shoes anyway.

ARETHA  
 I can't believe it's been three  
 years. Three years.

JACKIE  
 I remember the funeral.

ARETHA  
You weren't there.

JACKIE  
I was there.

ARETHA  
You weren't th--

JACKIE  
I know where I was Aunt Aretha. I  
was there.

Aretha backs off. She looks around for her sister's head  
stone.

ARETHA  
My divorce is final. Your uncle  
Harold's Thursday poker game lasted  
the last eight years of marriage.  
More of a poke her if you know what  
I mean. No matter. My woman's  
intuition knew what was happening.  
I just simply turned a blind eye to  
it. Price one pays for comfort.

JACKIE  
You can do so much better than him.

She briefly rests her head on his shoulder.

ARETHA  
Aren't you the charmer?

JACKIE  
I have my days.

They pass a freshly dug grave.

ARETHA  
I replay that night in my head.  
Spoke with a psychologist and she  
told me you can't change the past.  
Only thing you can do is remember  
it, move on and try no to repeat  
it.

JACKIE  
That will be easy. Mom was your  
only sister so any mistakes you  
made with her you can't make with  
another.

ARETHA

I blamed myself for that night. I shouldn't have left her alone--

JACKIE

Look, we are here to give your respects. We say hello no matter how asinine this is because her body is more than likely decomposed by now.

ARETHA

Her?

They look down and find the headstone. Aretha holding back tears kneels down and sets the flowers down on the grave. Jackie remains standing, watching as everyone else either cry or place flowers on their stones.

ARETHA

You mean you didn't want to come see your mother?

JACKIE

What is there to see? Look down there. It's grass and it grows. There's a headstone with her name, date of birth and departure. I don't see her. I see this a piece of metal and once was enough.

Aretha watches as Jackie walks away then looks down at her sister.

ARETHA

What are we gonna do, Janet?

She puts a kiss down on the letter J.

EXT. GREEN ROOM- PARKING LOT

Jackie parks his car. He gets out and walks to the front entrance of the green room.

INT. GREEN ROOM- LOUNGE/BAR

Jackie walks nothing looking at anyone or the couple in the middle having an argument while the bartenders tend the customers. He walks straight to the back and goes around the corner where a big red light shines around the door. He knocks. Small compartment slides open, revealing lips and a mustache in harsh voice.

HARSH VOICE

What?!

JACKIE

Green room. Jaleel wants to see me.

Smirks. The small compartment closes. A beat. The door opens and the harsh voice belongs to a large men, his arms nearly twice the size of Jackie. Jackie walks pass the doorman and scans the room. Tables with games at play. Women walking around, a few with little to no clothes on. Jaleel pops around the corner like a cat surprising a mouse.

JALEEL

Can I get you a table Mr. Munchie?

JACKIE

That's cute, Jaleel.

JALEEL

I'm sorry. I couldn't resist. Now don't tell me you came in here to promote your movie or tell us some knock knock jokes?

Jackie doesn't stir nor smile. Jaleel laughs again.

JALEEL

I'm sorry again. Bad host. Bad. Bad. Bad. Come in and talk to me.

They walk to a table with two chairs. A topless waitress approaches the table but Jaleel waves her away.

JALEEL

Buy in is six. But since I know you I can give you a line of credit up to ten.

JACKIE

I didn't come here to gamble. I came here to say I'm done. I didn't appreciate you coming to my house and I don't want you to come back ever.

JALEEL

Oh, and you know there's this thing called the telephone. You coulda used it and save us both some time.

JACKIE

I wanted to say it face to face.

JALEEL

Mighty manly of you. This calls for  
a drink. A good bye toast.

He snaps his fingers and the same waitress drinks over two drinks. Jaleel takes them off her tray, tips her with a wink and she leaves. He sets one in front of Jackie.

JACKIE

I don't want a drink.

JALEEL

Would you prefer water? I wouldn't  
want you to dehydrate. From  
watching you come in from the  
parking lot to the door, I bet you  
would've fallen out from heat  
exhaustion.

JACKIE

Yeah, well I rarely sweat in front  
of a crowd.

Jackie pushes the glass back to him and walks out the green room, passing the would-be winners and definite losers.

JALEEL

I'll see you Jackie soon.

Jaleel finishes his drink. The same topless waitress steps over to him without her tray, but holding a smile. She sits on his lap and rides him until the long hand on the clock lands on six.