

That's Not How It's Done

written by

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Paul uses a loud pneumatic wrench to tighten the lugnuts on the right front tire on the Johnson minivan. The nuts are already started on the studs. He uses a standard crisscross pattern to tighten them then repeats the exact same pattern to torque them evenly. Bright sun shines on the driveway in front of the Johnson's home. Sounds of kids playing in their yards. A heavy duty floor jack holds the wheel off of the ground. An oil drain pan, oil bucket and other debris from changing the oil are arrayed on the drive next to the van. Paul's car sits in the other half of the open garage. PAUL (a 35ish handsome broad shouldered man wearing a well worn T-shirt with an oil stain or three, and jeans) works hard, plays hard and loves hard. He sits on the ground working on the nearest wheel.

CUT TO

Paul wipes his brow, bangs the wheel cover on and stands up. He lowers the car to the driveway. Paul disconnects the wrench and picks up all of the small wrenches and tools, then walks into a garage full of tools, lawn mower, edger, two bicycles. An ice chest and a bag of bats sit ready to load into the van. Paul puts the tools away, not precisely, but in their generally correct locations. He is not careless, just very comfortable and happy to be working with his tools.

CUT TO

Grease marks his left wrist. He opens the back of the van and slides the ice chest in. He tosses the bag of bats next to the cooler. His cell phone rings. He pulls it out of his pocket, checks the caller name and the relaxes as he places it to his ear.

PAUL

Yeah, Paige! Thanks for calling me back. We're running a bit late. Could you get the team warmed up?

ANN (35ish very put together, but something is a bit off about her dress, not stylish or even flattering...her demeanor is of someone used to be in charge) comes through the garage door...

ANN

Paul, we need to go, NOW.

Ann looks at him expectantly.

PAUL

Thanks. See you in a bit.

Paul closes the phone without seeming to notice Ann.

ANN
Who was that?

Paul ignores her as JASON (10, boy in a Jaguars baseball uniform) and JESSIE (13, girl) come from the house into the garage and onto the drive.

PAUL
Y'all ready to go?

ANN
(to kids)
Yes, get in the van, its time to go!
(to Paul)
Are you wearing that?

JASON
Dad, that's the wrong shirt!

PAUL
(Looks at his dirty,
sweaty clothes)
Give me a minute.

As Paul dashes into the house...

ANN
(with authority)
Do not make us late!

Paul quickly returns. Shoulder surgery scars are evident as he returns pulling on a clean shirt that matches Jason's team uniform. There are other scars that tell us Paul doesn't always play it safe.

Paul hops into the driver's seat. The rest of the family are in their seats. Jessie has her nose buried in a book. Jason plays with a baseball, intently tossing and spinning it. Paul takes the wheel. The grease marks are still on his left wrist. He backs the van out of the driveway.

ANN (CONT'D)
(stares disapprovingly
at the grease on
Paul's wrist)
We're late.

Paul smiles, but we see his frustration and disappointment.

FADE TO

2 EXT. BALL PARK - CONTINUOUS

2

Pan across a ball park where little league baseball games are in full swing. The kids are 9 or 10 years old. Parents are in the stands, some drop their kids off at the last minute with kids running up to get their gear and find their place.

Two average size boys are flirting with two girls. The boys try to look impressive. A smaller boy, JACKIE, in the same uniform as the other boys walks by eating a gooey pastry. The lead bully grabs the pastry as Jackie protests. They corner him and try to smear his face with the pastry. Jackie pulls back and tries to get away. The second bully corrals him and suddenly Jackie unleashes an uppercut on the lead bully that sends him flying. Blood flows and the bully acts like he's been fatally shot. A man wearing the same team uniform rushes up and grabs Jackie roughly and begins yelling at him. He shoves the boy away as he orders him to leave.

3 EXT. BALL PARK - CONTINUOUS

3

Crushed, Jackie walks in a daze through an empty parking space as the Johnson Van pulls into the parking area. Paul stops suddenly as the boy walks into the van's path. Paul looks concerned.

JESSIE

What happened to him.

ANN

No idea. Maybe he struck out. He'll tough it out.

Paul pulls the van into a parking spot.

The Johnson's clamber out of their van. Paul heads to the rear of the van, Jason takes off for the dugout and his friends. Ann, without looking at anyone else, heads for the bleachers. Jessie meets her dad at the back of the van as he opens it and begins to unload. He looks down the parking lot to see if the boy is still there. He can't see him anywhere.

JESSIE

Need any help?

PAUL

Naah, I got it. You might make sure the boys are all gathered up, though.

JESSIE

(looking around the
van to see the field)

Paige has them rounded up.

PAUL

Ohhh, that's great. So that's what It's like to have a partner...

JESSIE

(looking at her father
curiously)

See ya

4 EXT. BALL PARK BLEACHERS JOHN - CONTINUOUS

4

John and Rosa sit together on the end of one of the bleachers. John (overweight nerdy 50ish engineer) anxiously watches the road, as if anticipating someone. ROSA (very pretty, well endowed, early 20s hispanic girl). She is affectionate in a friendly way. John is uncomfortable with everyone, except Rosa.

A couple with a young child approach the bleachers and need to get past John and Rosa to reach open seats.

John smiles weakly at the family, scoots off the bench and stands aside to let them pass. The mother steps up, slips past Rosa as she makes herself small on the seat to let her pass. As the small child climbs onto the bleachers, John reaches to help them, but doesn't know what to do. The child doesn't need any help and scampers on to the bleachers.

DAD

He's got it.

JOHN

Yeah.

John watches them all pass and waits nervously until they are seated before climbing back on to the bleachers.

5 INT. MARTI'S FAMILY CAR - CONTINUOUS

5

Marti's family drives up in a late model car. MARTI (a handsome African American and slick 40ish car salesman), his wife CYNTHIA (beautiful, perfectly coiffed, but insecure African American woman in her 30s) and their two sons, ADAM and JACOB. Adam wears the Jaguars uniform.

They drive past Jackie sitting on the curb with his head bowed.

ADAM

What's wrong with Jackie!

Cynthia looks concerned, shakes her head, as though to shake it out of her head. Marti glances at Jackie as if making a note.

6 EXT. BALL PARK PARKING LOT - CONTINUOUS

6

The boys immediately bail out of the car and walk to the diamond. Cynthia, walks like a starlet toward the bleachers. Marti walks off in the direction of the boy. When he reaches the boy, he bends over to talk to him, then kneels next to him.

7 EXT. BALL PARK BLEACHERS GIRLS - CONTINUOUS 7

Cynthia waves at her smiling friends, including Ann Johnson, and quickly joins them on the bleachers.

8 EXT. BALL PARK - CONTINUOUS 8

Marti appears with the boy carrying all of his boy's gear piled on top of a cooler. He puts the cooler on the ground against the dugout and calls to his sons.

MARTI

Jackie's going to sit with us during the game until its time for his parent's to pick him up. Jacob, show him where the drinks are.

ADAM

How's Jackie'?

MARTI

He'll be alright. He just needs to be among friends.

Marti kneels by JACOB and places an arm around ADAM.

MARTI (CONT'D)

Son, you've done great in practice. I know you'll do fine today. Let's pray. Dear Lord, thank you for the gift of this beautiful day on which to play this game. Bless my son, Davie, as he plays, help him to hit the balls when it's his turn to bat, and to catch them when they come his way. Most of all, protect him and all the other boys from harm. In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, amen.

Marti pats his son on the back.

MARTI (CONT'D)

You get 'em, son.

Marti looks around and sees Cynthia on the bleachers

9 EXT. BALL PARK BLEACHERS GIRLS - CONTINUOUS 9

Marti walks over to Cynthia and scoots up close to her on the bleachers. He attempts to put his arm around her waist. She pushes his hand away with embarrassment. Marti pulls his arm back, and sighs. Just then his phone vibrates. He digs for it in his pocket. The text message reads, "Guess what I'm not wearing!" Marti can't resist a guilty smile and looks around to see if anyone noticed. He quickly stows the phone back in his pocket. Cynthia has not noticed a thing.

Guilt fights to quench the fire of joy and salvation that comes from the text message.

10 EXT. BALL PARK BLEACHERS JOHN - CONTINUOUS 10

Rosa watches Marti read the text message, smile and look around nervously.

ROSA

Johnny boy, your friend Marti, he's got something cooking on the side!

JOHN

What? Who? Marti! No way. God would smite him down so fast it would put the fear of God in YOU! Except Cynthia would probably beat him to it.

ROSA

You're wrong smarty pants.

11 EXT. BALL PARK - CONTINUOUS 11

Marti spies John and Rosa and waves to them as he heads toward Paul and the team.

12 EXT. BALL PARK BLEACHERS JOHN - CONTINUOUS 12

John's weak smile looks even dimmer next to Rosa's captivating smile as they wave back to Marti. John's son, DYLAN (10), walks awkwardly up to join the gang. Dylan is unkempt, wearing the wrong color jersey only half tucked in and looking quite out of place. A look of relief wipes the furrow from John's brow, he steps down off the bleacher and hurries over to Dylan.

JOHN

Hey Dylan. How're you doin' son?

DYLAN

(unconvincingly)

OK.

John looks awkward mothering Dylan. He hands Dylan a new cap, glove and the correct color Jaguars jersey. Dylan's face brightens while he changes into his new shirt and cap. John stands looking awkward, unsure what to do now that he has delivered his son's equipment.

JOHN

Play well, Dylan.

John gives Dylan a hug and a thumbs up and turns back toward the bleachers where Rosa waits with a smile for him.

DYLAN

Thanks Dad.

The words bring a pained smile to John's face.

13 EXT. BALL PARK DUGOUT - CONTINUOUS 13

Follow Dylan to the dugout as Paul brings the equipment to the dugout. Paul puts the equipment (bat bag, cooler) in its place. Jessie enters the dugout.

Paul hands Jessie a bottle of water

PAUL

There's more in the cooler.

JESSIE

Thank's, Dad. Tell Jason to 'knock 'em dead.'

PAUL

I will.

Paul sees Ann sitting on the end of the bleachers. He pauses to watch her laughing with her friends. A happy smile spread across his face as he walks over to Ann.

14 EXT. BALL PARK BLEACHERS GIRLS - DAY 14

As he walks over to Ann and gives her a warm hug, she does not respond or seem to notice his affection. A disappointed Paul walks back to the dugout to check over the equipment and assemble the Jaguars.

15 EXT. BALL PARK DUGOUT - CONTINUOUS 15

PAIGE (an attractive, tom-boyish 30 something woman) walks up to him, looks over all the gear. Shakes her head.

PAIGE

You carried all that by yourself?

PAUL

(confused)

Why not?

PAIGE

I dunno just... it seems like a lot.

PAUL

No big deal, Paige.

(Grins, shrugs)

Guys tote the big load and girls, well, look nice or something.

PAIGE
 (glaring)
 Ummm... not in my world big boy.

Paige eyes the grease on Paul's wrist and reaches into her fanny pack for some wipes.

PAIGE (CONT'D)
 Come here.

Paige has a teasing smile as she works to wipe the grease off of Paul's hand. Paul smiles from inside for the first time in this film, and then looks around nervously.

PAIGE (CONT'D)
 Doesn't your momma know how to clean
 you up?

Paul shrugs as if uncertain what to say. Paige hangs on to Paul's hand a bit longer than necessary to inspect her work and admire Paul's hand.

16 EXT. BALL PARK BLEACHERS GIRLS - CONTINUOUS 16

Ann sees Paige holding Paul's hand, her nostrils flare and her eyebrows arch.

17 EXT. BALL PARK DUGOUT - CONTINUOUS 17

Paul grins nervously as he pulls his hand back and Paige smiles at him, sheepishly with a shrug.

18 EXT. BALL PARK BLEACHERS - CONTINUOUS 18

Rosa perks ups when she sees this action between the coaches.

ROSA
 Our coaches are sizzling. What is it
 with you baseball dads? This is a
 regular Willow Lane.

JOHN
 Willow Lane?

ROSA
 Desperate Housewives, silly. Do you
 live in a cave? Oh, that's right you
 do!

John frowns and shakes his head dismissively.

19 EXT. BALL PARK DUGOUT - CONTINUOUS 19

Paul and Paige move as if choreographed, handing the boys their helmets, gloves, drinks and, arranging the bats. They have an obvious synergy. Inside the dugout, Paul and Paige stand very close together as they give the team a pep talk.

Dylan stands to the side as if waiting for an invitation.

PAUL

Okay guys, gather around for a second.

PAIGE

Dylan, you too.

With the invitation, Dylan joins the team. Paul and Paige speak almost as one.

PAUL

You hit today like you did at practice Thursday, and this is going to be a great game.

PAIGE

Just take your time and look for your pitch.

PAUL

The Lions have some good hitters, so stay alert in the outfield. Win this game and we're at the top of the standings. This is your game, don't give it back to 'em.

PAIGE

Hey, no matter what you do today you are all winners and I'm already proud of you!

(to her son)

SPENCER, (10, Paige's son) has a catcher's mask in his hands, wearing knee pads, and catcher's mit.

PAIGE (CONT'D)

Spencer, remember to keep your feet moving on those pop fouls. You don't have to be superman, but I love to see you catch the tough ones!

(hugs him, pats him
on the butt with a
big smile)

Make your mamma proud!

Paul stops Dylan as he shuffles by with his head down.

PAUL

Hey Dylan, I'm glad you made it today. Look, the Lions are really good and I need someone out there keeping us on our toes.

DYLAN

(nervously)

Yeah?

PAUL
 (conspiratorially)
 You understand strategy and you know
 the adjustments better than anyone
 else. You're also clever enough to
 say it so they think its their idea.
 (Dylan grins)
 We really need this win and you could
 make the difference.

Paul hugs Dylan.

DYLAN
 Let's go get 'em. I'll keep...

Marti walks into the dugout and interrupts Dylan.

MARTI
 Boys, let us pray, Father

20 EXT. BALL PARK - CONTINUOUS 20

MONTAGE BASEBALL GAME

21 INT. JASON'S ROOM - NIGHT 21

Typical boy's room, trophy's, Legos, and electronic toys all
 around the room. But most of the toys are neatly in their
 place. The bed is shaped like a race car. Paul tugs the
 covers around Jason's shoulders and gives him a kiss on the
 cheek.

PAUL
 Good night, man. You did great today.
 I'm so proud of you!

JASON
 Thanks, Daddy...

Paul heads toward the door, and as his hand moves to close
 the door Jason speaks.

JASON (CONT'D)
 Daddy?

PAUL
 Want some water?

JASON
 No, Daddy, I just want to tell you I
 love you.

Paul walks back to Jason and hugs him like a treasure.

PAUL
 Love you, too, hot shot. Now get to
 sleep!

22 INT. JOHNSON HOME HALL - CONTINUOUS

22

Paul comes out of Jason's room and walks down the hall. Jessie steps out of the bathroom heading to bed. Paul gives her a hug.

PAUL

Jessie, you off to bed?

JESSIE

I wish! Biology test second period. She's really an English teacher and her tests don't make any sense.

PAUL

Precious, you know that stuff inside out. You need to get some sleep. Promise me you'll crash in half an hour.

JESSIE

Okay. But what I need is a real biology teacher.

PAUL

You know, I'd love to go back to school, get certified to teach... But your mom really needs me at the office.

Jessie gives him a long hug, as they start to pull away.

JESSIE

I know. I love you Daddy.

PAUL

I love you, too. Remember, lights out in half an hour!

Jessie nods her head yes, but the look on her face is grinning "no". Paul, full of pride in Jessie, smiles and shakes his head and grins as Jessie moves off to her room.

23 INT. JOHNSON HOME KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

23

Paul goes to the kitchen which is well organized and neat, though a bit out of date. They've been living here a while. The decor is simplistic and not quite right. He pours himself a short glass about 2/3 full of Tequila, then adds to it until it is too full. He bends down to slurp it before it spills. Ann is in the living room and hears him.

ANN O.C.

Are you drinking?

PAUL

Yes, yes, I think I am!

24 INT. JOHNSON HOME LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

24

Paul steps into the living room with drink in hand. The room is sparsely decorated with out of date furniture and the colors and styles don't quite match, but is well kept. Ann stares at him in disbelief.

PAUL
It's one drink, Ann.

Paul pushes open the sliding glass doors, steps through and closes it behind blocking Ann's attempt to follow. Ann's brow furrows with determination as she pushes the door back open.

25 EXT. JOHNSON HOME EXTERIOR DECK - CONTINUOUS

25

Paul chooses a plastic deck chair drawn up close to the pool, and sits, drink in hand. Paul looks up at the stars and releases an annoyed sigh. Ann stands for a moment at the door looking at him. He gives her a look that clearly says she's not welcome. Ann walks over to a chair next to Paul.

ANN
So, what's with the drink?

PAUL
It's just a drink, Ann.

Ann sits, stares at him accusingly.

They sit in awkward silence for a moment until Paul breaks the silence.

PAUL (CONT'D)
By the way, I gave Margaret Thursday and Friday off. The girls are covering for her.

ANN
That's... you... Why would you do that? I already told her she couldn't have the time off, Paul. She's my technician, why would you undermine me like that?

PAUL
Ann, look, the girl's aunt died. I'm not about to keep her from the funeral!

ANN
The funeral is Friday, Paul. She doesn't need Thursday off, too. I only took one day off when your uncle died.

PAUL

You didn't know my uncle! She saw her aunt every day when she was growing up.

(pause)

This woman matters to Margaret. They are... were... close.

ANN

She's just an aunt, Paul. No one is that close to an aunt!

Paul looks disbelieving.

ANN (CONT'D)

Still... you should've asked me. I'm the doctor. No one can question my orders. It's not safe for the patients.

More awkward silence. Ann looks irked and pensive. Paul stares at the pool.

ANN (CONT'D)

You're not thinking about going back to school again, are you.

PAUL

Maybe.

ANN

We've already talked about this. I need you at the office.

PAUL

(taking a big drink
from his glass)

Whatever.

More awkward silence. Finally, with resolution, Ann looks up at him.

ANN

I don't want you coaching any more.

PAUL

(alarmed, turns toward
her)

What? What are you talking about?

ANN

And that Paige person, She's not very good with kids, is she?

PAUL

What are you talking about?

(MORE)

PAUL (CONT'D)

She's great with kids! Who's going to coach them? You? You don't know baseball and you're not so great with kids either.

Paul glares at her. Ann stares awkwardly at his feet, then back to his face.

ANN

I won't have it.

PAUL

Won't have what?

ANN

This thing, with you and Paige.

PAUL

What? What thing?

Ann leans toward Paul, looming in his body space.

ANN

I saw you, I saw the way she touched you. Do you think I'm stupid or something?

PAUL

(Sighs)

Ann, look, there is nothing going on. So we bumped into each other. What of it?

ANN

It was obvious to EVERYONE.

PAUL

You know what? The truth is, Paige touches people like they matter. You feel her. Why can't you touch me like that?

ANN

(jumping up)

I knew it! I knew there was something going on!

PAUL

Damn it, I want you!! You are all I've ever wanted.

(pause)

Ann, why don't you care when I hug you? I mean, when I hugged you on the bleachers, it was like I wasn't even there!

Ann looks nervous and confused, defensive, crosses her arms and looks down at his knees, looming over Paul.

ANN
(disgusted)
You... you're so needy!

PAUL
When I coach with Paige, its like I matter. I'd like to think I matter to you, like I used to?

ANN
What?

PAUL
Why can't you at least pretend that you want to be close, to touch?

ANN
You are so needy, I know you... you'd just want it all the time!

PAUL
What on earth is wrong with that? How do you live without it?

Ann turns her back on him.

PAUL (CONT'D)
You like sex all the time, why not hold me some time, too?

Ann's defensive posture changes to fury. She swings around, glaring.

ANN
Look, Paul, do you think I am really that stupid? There is something going on and it's going to stop, NOW!

PAUL
(Touches her hand)
There's nothing going on! I just suddenly realized I was missing something. And I want that with you. Please!

ANN
(throws Paul's hand off of her's)
Why? Why now?

PAUL

(pause)

Because, well, working with Paige, I realized what our relationship could be, what I thought it used to be. I miss it.

ANN

HA! It's her! This is all about what's going on with you and that... that.... woman!

PAUL

No, its not like that! Yes, I've spent some time with her, but as a friend... not what you are thinking!

He stands as though he might leave and turns to her with his back to the pool.

ANN

You are such a liar! Liar! I can see it in your eyes you son-of-a-bitch!

PAUL

Ann, calm down, this isn't about Paige, it's about US!

Poking him with her finger, she is close to pushing him in the pool.

ANN

You won't get away with this! How could you betray us like this? How?

Ann pokes Paul's chest harder. Paul is teetering on the edge of the pool.

ANN (CONT'D)

I swear to you, Paul, I will take the kids, everything! Everything we have built belongs to me, ME! You understand? You'll get nothing!

He grabs her shoulders to stop her, but she is determined. He pushes harder. Ann is furious and tries to shove Paul into the pool. Paul's quick footwork keeps him from going in, but he can't budge Ann. Ann suddenly looks into Paul's face with a hateful and calculated glare. As Paul struggles to push her aside and get some space, she suddenly relaxes and the sudden imbalance sends her flying across the table and chairs. Paul quickly escapes through the door into the den as Ann screams pitifully and cries hysterically.

26 INT. JOHNSON HOME LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

26

As Paul enters, Jason walks into the den rubbing his eyes.
Ann shrieks in fury from the backyard.

JASON
What's wrong? Is Mommy okay?

PAUL
Mommy's okay, she's just upset.
Come on, I hear there's a meteor
shower or something tonight. Let's
go see.

Paul throws an arm around Jason and leads him toward the
front door.

JASON
(Confused)
Okay.

27 EXT. SIDEWALK ON JOHNSON STREET - CONTINUOUS

27

Paul and Jason walk quietly. Paul occasionally glances at
the sky hopefully. Jason looks anxious.

PAUL
Sure was fun watching Dylan duel
with that pitcher.

JASON
Yeah, I thought he was going to pull
it off. The second baseman nearly
dropped it or we'd have won.

PAUL
But it was a fun fight.

JASON
(smiles)
Yeaaah.

Red and blue lights flash on them as a police car pulls up
behind them and stops.

OFFICER OWENS
Paul Johnson?

Paul stops walking and turns to the officer as the officer
gets out of the car.

PAUL
Yes. Can I help you?

OFFICER OWENS

You are under arrest for spouse abuse.
Put your hands behind your back.

PAUL

What? You've got to be kidding!

OFFICER OWENS

Sir, you need to put your hands behind
your back. You have the right to...

PAUL

Uh.. okay I ... please, can you do
this after we take my son home?

Officer #2 approaches on foot from the opposite direction.

OFFICER #2

This him?

OFFICER OWENS

Yeah.

(turning back to Paul)

Sir, I don't have any other option.
In cases of domestic violence, someone
has to be arrested. DA's orders. She
has the bruises - so it's you.

Paul turns and lets the officer handcuff him. Jason stares,
big eyed at the scene unfolding before him.

Officer #2 puts a hand on Jason's shoulder to steer the boy
away.

OFFICER #2

Come with me son.

JASON

(Over his shoulder)

Daddy? What's happening?

28 INT. JAIL RELEASE COUNTER - NIGHT

28

Paul gathers his personal items (wallet, watch, USB jump
drive, keys, coins, cell phone) from the CLERK as John stands
beside him. Paul smiles weakly at John. They walk off.

PAUL

I really appreciate this, John.

JOHN

Not a problem, man. I owed you a
get out jail card, anyway.

PAUL
 (faint grin)
 Oh yeah, that's right! At least you
 were having fun when you were
 arrested.

JOHN
 Was I ever!

29 INT. JOHN'S HOME - NIGHT

29

John's home is a real bachelor pad. It is sparsely decorated with dark, impersonal furniture, some of it obviously given to him by his parents. John walks in the front door with Paul behind him.

JOHN
 (mispronouncing casa)
 Mi casa is your casa?!

The men walk into John's den where there is an expensive and elaborate media center, a worn leather couch and a wing back chair that must have belonged to somebody's grandmother.

JOHN (CONT'D)
 Just one thing, don't have me arrested
 when I beat you up for drinking my
 beer, okay?

PAUL
 I've seen what passes for beer around
 here and you're safe.

Paul walks over to the wet bar, picks up a tequila bottle and a highball glass, then pours a drink. He notices several hundred dollar bills on the bar, looks at them curiously. John goes to the fridge and gets himself a light beer.

JOHN
 Who'd a thunk, I never took you for
 a wife beater?
 (eyeing the drink in
 Paul's hand)
 Or a drinker.

PAUL
 She totally lost it man. She tried
 to pick a fight so I left. Next
 thing you know, I'm being arrested!

JOHN
 I know, man, I've been there and dun
 that. Seems a woman just has to point
 her finger to get you arrested and
 convicted.

John takes a swig of beer and splays himself on the couch.
Paul takes the granny chair.

JOHN (CONT'D)
You want to know something else crazy?

PAUL
Sure, why not?
(he takes a drink)

JOHN
I just found out Julie is pregnant.

PAUL
Your daughter?
(John nods)
Geesh, she's what? Fifteen?

JOHN
Yeah, turned fifteen last month. I
haven't even seen her in two months.
(pause)
Not sure why her mom called. I guess
she wanted me to know it was my fault.
That stuff happens when you lose
your kids.

PAUL
I can't let that happen.

The doorbell rings. John's face lights up in alarm, then
anticipation.

JOHN
Oh crap, I forgot. I'm expecting
someone.

John rises from the couch and walks to the door

John opens the door. BRENDA (early 20's, drop dead gorgeous,
dressed in very short mini dress with gartered hose peeking
out underneath the skirt and extremely tall heels) stands
smiling and walks in as the door opens.

JOHN (CONT'D)
Hey. Wow, you look great.

BRENDA
Hi. What's up?

Brenda walks by John and turns to face him.

BRENDA (CONT'D)
You got the donation?

Paul stands to meet the new arrival. John walks over to the
wet bar and grabs the hundreds.

JOHN

Here it is.

John hands the money to Brenda.

BRENDA

Cool.

Brenda spins and sees Paul.

PAUL

Hi

BRENDA

(Holding her hand out
to shake Paul's)

Hi, I'm Cassidy. You're cute.

As she spins and struts down the hall, she whips off her one piece dress and tosses it back to Paul with a wink.

BRENDA (CONT'D)

(calling over her
shoulder)Got a couple hundred bucks? You can
party, too.

Paul catches the dress. Brenda disappears into John's room wearing just the hose and heels.

PAUL

Uh.. no...

JOHN

Good, 'cause I'm not sharing.

John hurries down the hall behind Brenda.

PAUL

(Shrugs, to no one)

Sure... you kids have fun now, ya'
here? Don't mind me...

Paul sits back down and drapes the dress across the arm of the chair. He begins to relax in the peace and quiet of the room and the alcohol.

30 INT. JOHN'S HOME FRONT DOOR - NIGHT

30

Doorbell rings, Paul goes to the door, looks through the peep hole.

PAUL

Uh, Oh...

Opens the door. Marti stands on the porch with a large suitcase.

PAUL (CONT'D)

Hey, Marti? You looking for John?

MARTI

Well, yeah. This is his house.
What are you doing here? Where's
John?

PAUL

Long story....Well, umm John is...
preoccupied at the moment. It's...
well... not a good time.
(looking quizzically
at the suitcase)

MARTI

You are right, it's not a good time.
I really need to talk to John, is he
here?

PAUL

Well, he's not really available right
now. Wanna go grab a beer?

Paul starts out the door.

MARTI

Seriously? You know I don't touch
alcohol. Can I just, you know, come
inside?

PAUL

Um... now's really not a good time,
Marti. Maybe tomorrow?

MARTI

Paul... I've got no place else to
go.
(pause)
Cynthia caught me with someone.

PAUL

Geez, Is it a full moon or something?

Paul shrugs and walks back into John's house, followed by
Marti.

31 INT. JOHNSON HOME - EVENING

31

Ann sits alone in a big chair in her den, looking out the
window, crying, with a stack of used tissues on the table
beside her and spilling on to the floor She holds the tissue
box in her hand.

The phone lies on the table beside the pile of tissues, Ann
looks at it for a moment, hesitating to pick up.

She wipes at her eyes, stiffens her posture and picks up.
Her voice is suddenly cheerful.

ANN

Hi. Cynthia, what's up? Everything
okay?

32 INT. JOHN'S HOME DEN - CONTINUOUS

32

The men walk into the den.

MARTI

Thank you. I never imagined I'd
find myself in these circumstances.
I'm grateful I have friends to call
on.

Paul collapses into his chair.

PAUL

Well, um... you'll have to talk to
John when he comes out.

Marti sees the dress and looks at Paul curiously.

PAUL (CONT'D)

(quickly to draw
attention away from
the dress)

So what do you mean by she "caught"
you with someone?

Marti sits down in the recliner across from Paul.

MARTI

With, you know... with someone.

PAUL

She caught you in bed with someone?

MARTI

Well, not exactly.

PAUL

And... exactly??

MARTI

I "butt dialed" her on my phone and
she heard everything. Banging into
the armrest, bumping the horn, all
of it. Everything.

PAUL

Armrest? Horn?

MARTI

We were in Sherrie's mini van.

The sounds of things heating up in the bedroom. Marti's gaze returns to the dress on the arm of Paul's chair. Looks quizzical, then offended, then self-righteous, then guilty and defeated.

PAUL

At least it was a woman!
 (pause, follows Marti's
 gaze to the dress)
 There is a side to John we don't
 know about.

MARTI

(shrugs)
 He has a girl friend. I saw her at
 the game.

Awkward silence. Then the faint sounds of Brenda moaning and encouraging John. Paul looks toward the bedroom.

PAUL

(under his breath)
 Not exactly.
 (picks up his drink
 and turns back to
 Mart)

33 INT. CYNTHIA & ANN ON THE PHONE

33

For Cynthia and Ann's dialog, Cynthia is in her bedroom and Ann sits in her living room. Cynthia, on her bed, ensconced in a pile of pillows, with blankets pulled up around her, also has a pile of tissues, on her bed in front of her and a box of tissues on her lap. Cell phone to her ear.

CYNTHIA

No, no its not, Ann!
 (choking the words
 out)
 It.... Marti... he... Ann, he's having
 an...a.a.a.affair!

Ann falls back in her chair.

ANN

NO! I don't believe it! Are you
 sure? I mean how...

CYNTHIA

Oh, Ann
 (blows her nose)
 He butt dialed me, I could hear this
 woman moaning like a 2 bit whore.
 And suddenly I heard my Marti.
 (MORE)

CYNTHIA (CONT'D)

(sobs)

I never want to hear that sound again.
Then there was this car horn...?

34 INT. JOHN'S HOME DEN - CONTINUOUS

34

PAUL

So, the minivan driver? Who is she?
I mean, you, of all people, having
an...

MARTI

It just... happened..

PAUL

Give me a break. Nothing just
"happens".

More moaning from the bedroom. Marti blushes, then looks at Paul.

MARTI

So if she isn't his girlfriend??

PAUL

Seriously, man, don't ask. So you
and minivan girl? What's up with
that?

MARTI

We met at a conference and Sherrie,
she just swept me away. I've never
felt like that... at least not with
anyone besides Cynthia. And it's
been so long since anything "just
happened" with her, that, God help
me, I didn't see it coming.

PAUL

I know. When you find something you
didn't even know you were missing,
it's pretty...

(Paul admires the
drink in his hand)

intoxicating. But still, man, you?

MARTI

I know... its a sin. I just lost my
faith. God will forgive me. I don't
know about Cynthia.

35 CYNTHIA & ANN ON THE PHONE - CONTINUOUS

35

CYNTHIA

I swear, I will NEVER forgive him
for this!

(MORE)

CYNTHIA (CONT'D)
 (picks up another
 tissue and blows her
 nose again)

ANN
 No, no, of course not!
 (pause)
 Cynthia? Can I tell you something?
 I, I am pretty sure Paul is having
 an affair, too.

36 INT. JOHN'S HOME DEN - CONTINUOUS

36

Soft banging sounds and loud sighs coming from the bedroom.

PAUL
 Nooo, I...
 (pause)
 I mean, of course she will, Marti.

MARTI
 So.. what are you doing over here?
 Drop by for the atmosphere?

Marti looks around with amusement at the furniture, just as a slightly louder than usual moan comes from the bedroom. He snoops around, opening drawers and shuffling papers. One drawer opens and he see's a handgun, Marti's eyes widen as he quickly closes the drawer.

PAUL
 Yeah, the decor's a little tacky,
 but the sound system is amazing!

The two men sit and listen to the sound of fun and pleasure coming from the other room. Eventually, Paul resumes the conversation.

PAUL (CONT'D)
 Ann thought she saw something with
 me and Paige. I left and the next
 thing I know I'm handcuffed in the
 back seat of a Crown Vic with Jason
 staring at me through the window.
 God he was scared. humh So am I.

MARTI
 Paige? Really? I'd ask what you see
 in her, but I think I already know.

PAUL
 It's not like that. I just... I feel
 close to her is all and Ann thought...

37 CYNTHIA & ANN ON THE PHONE

37

CYNTHIA
No, I don't believe it. Paul, is
just not the type. I can't imagine...
well there was the thing at the
game...

38 INT. JOHNS HOME LIVING ROOM

38

MARTI
Oh, the hand thing, at the game. I
saw that, too.

PAUL
Really? Geesh, it wasn't anything...
I just wish...you know... Ann could
touch me like that.

MARTI
I get it, trust me, and now I am
going to hell.

The sounds of banging escalate and the sighs turn into sexual
screams of pleasure.

PAUL
Apparently you aren't the only one!

39 CYNTHIA & ANN ON THE PHONE

39

ANN
You saw it too? I knew it! You
see? I've always known you couldn't
trust men. They think with one thing.
Now here we both are, betrayed by a
man, again!

CYNTHIA
Ann? What do you mean, again?

ANN
(suddenly appearing
quite vulnerable)
Oh, Cyn, you know... my grandfather..
He...

CYNTHIA
Oh, honey, this isn't the same
thing... it's...

ANN
(suddenly back to
being under control)
Oh yes, it is. It's exactly the
same. You can't trust them!
(MORE)

ANN (CONT'D)

You think they're there for you, but
hang around long enough...

40 INT. JOHNSON HOME KITCHEN - NIGHT

40

Jessie is wearing the same night clothes she wore before.
She sits on the floor with her back to wall. Her arms around
her knees. Out of focus we see Ann talking to Cynthia.
Pain and tears pour from Jessie's face as she hears her mother
talk in the other room.

41 INT. JOHN'S HOME DEN - CONTINUOUS

41

Marti reaches into his suitcase and pulls out a Bible almost
as big as the suitcase. He holds the Bible on his lap, under
his palms. Marti closes his eyes and silently mouths a prayer.

PAUL

I don't think that's going to help.

The sounds escalate into orgasmic release between John and
Brenda /"Cassidy". Awkward silence between Paul and Marti.
They look at each other with barely held back grins.

John and Brenda come out of the bedroom. Marti's eyes are
like saucers, glued to the naked goddess walking behind John.

JOHN

Church man!! Paul, a little help!

Paul tosses the dress that Brenda slips on as fast as it
came off and before the camera sees too much.

BRENDA

Hi, boys, I'm Cassidy. John's got
my number any time you feel like a
party... just ringy-dingy...

John see's Marti and his face flushes, he looks at the ground
and quickly walks Brenda out.

JOHN

(Whispering in her
ear)

Thanks. I had a really great time.

Brenda stops and turns to John in the doorway. John slips
folded bills into BRENDA's hand.

BRENDA

(whispering)

Mmm, I always did like your big tip.

JOHN

I really had a good time.

BRENDA

Me, too

Brenda starts to give him a peck on the cheek, changes her mind and gives him a long kiss on the lips.

42 EXT. JOHN'S HOME FRONT YARD - CONTINUOUS

42

Brenda's smile lasts all the way to her Mercedes, until her phone rings. She reaches into her purse and pulls out her phone:

BRENDA

Hello?

Brenda listens as the caller identifies himself.

BRENDA (CONT'D)

Hi, Craig. I just got out of the shower and I'm sittin' here all alone playing with myself. I hope you're calling to party.

Brenda listens as the customer says he is interested. Whatever smile was left leaves her face, but not her voice.

BRENDA (CONT'D)

(pause)

Great, let me put something on...give me 20 minutes.

Brenda puts her phone back in her purse and pulls out a small box. She opens her car door and hops in. She sits in the dark, opens the box, removes a vial, and pours white powder on to a shiny surface in the box. She arranges the powder in lines...

FADE TO:

43 INT. JOHN'S HOME DEN - NIGHT

43

A dazed John closes the door behind her. Turns to the two men. John is a little bedazzled.

MARTI

I thought prostitutes didn't kiss ... on the mouth?

JOHN

They don't ... usually. I'm not sure... sorry... I...

PAUL

Quite alright. I enjoyed every second. So did Marti...

MARTI

Uh... no, I did not... I..

PAUL

It's okay, buddy. I know you didn't mean to look, and I'm quite sure God knows that, too. Cynthia, well .. I'm not so sure about her.

JOHN

What are you doing here church man?

Marti looks helpless and tongue tied.

PAUL

Apparently you aren't the only one with bedroom secrets. That is if you count the back of a minivan as a bedroom.

JOHN

Oh, really. Marti? You're cheating on Cynthia? So Rosa was right!

MARTI

Rosa?

JOHN

My friend at the game. She said you had something going "on the side."

MARTI

We met at a conference. It just happened. I don't know. It's all so wrong and I'm so screwed.

PAUL

So everyone is screwed here and John's the only one smiling about it.

Close up on John, grinning ear to ear.

44 INT: ATTORNEY'S OFFICE - AFTERNOON

44

Paul sits at a large conference table facing JILL (40's), his attractive, and very proper, successful looking lawyer.

JILL

I can handle the criminal case for you, but we'll have to find someone else for your divorce.

PAUL

I want you, Jill.

JILL

Look, Paul. If you are convicted of domestic violence, it doesn't matter how good your divorce lawyer is. Let me handle the criminal case. But keep in mind, you are going to need to really keep yourself on the straight and narrow. Plus, and write this down...

Paul takes a pen out of his sport coat pocket and prepares to write on a notepad as JILL talks.

JILL (CONT'D)

Odds are against you, but if you want any chance at custody, or even good visitation, you'd better have these three things. You have to have a job, a car, and a stable home.

PAUL

Well, at least I have a car.

JILL

You don't have a job?

PAUL

I work for Ann, Jill. I'm her office manager. It's her business, but I created it, hired the staff, trained 'em. All she has to do is walk in every morning.

(Pause)

And it's all hers... I'm thinking I probably shouldn't show up for work in the morning.

JILL

Yeah, probably not... Well, we're putting the cart before the horse. A domestic violence conviction will cancel out everything else... This is a serious crime Paul.

Paul nods.

JILL (CONT'D)

I'm assuming you don't have any other assault convictions?

PAUL

NOO!

JILL

Good, then your sentence will be less than a year.

PAUL

A year, my God, what about my kids?

JILL

The judge will think they are better off without you. Do you own any guns? Hunting rifle, shotgun?

PAUL

A shotgun for dove hunting.

Jill puts her palms on the table and looks at him intently.

JILL

If you are found guilty, you'll have to get rid of it.

PAUL

But I didn't do it! This is crazy!

JILL

And...they probably won't let you coach baseball anymore, either.

PAUL

My god, Jill. My kids... , I'm the one who stayed home with them. She's never stayed up with a sick kid in her life. I send them off to school in the morning and pick them up at the end of the day. What happens to them?

Jill leans back, then sits up straight, looking him right in the eye.

JILL

Paul, this is the end of your life as you know it. Women don't really understand the impact of these allegations. Sometimes therapists even suggest this as a way to force their husbands into treatment... without realizing that once you call the police, its very difficult to manage what happens. But its out of both of your hands, now. You just have to make sure you do exactly what the court wants you to do do, or you will lose everything that matters to you. Even then, it's a roll of the dice.

Paul reacts to Jill's words with despair and panic.

45 EXT. AUTO DEALERSHIP - DAY

45

Paul and Marti stand just outside the front door of the dealership and watch two potential buyers look over a car.

PAUL

Thank you for getting me a shot at this Marti.

Paul looks around the lot, doubtfully.

MARTI

You know cars. You just need to learn how it's done.

PAUL

I'm more of a hands-on kind of guy. Not much of a talker.

MARTI

Just watch this time. It's easy. Just talking.

Marti puts his hand on Paul's shoulder and bows his head.

MARTI (CONT'D)

Dear Lord, in the name of Jesus Christ, I pray that you watch over your loving son, Paul, today as he learns this business. I know you will hold him in your heart as he starts his new life and career. In Jesus' name I thank you Lord, Amen.

Marti pats Paul on the back.

MARTI (CONT'D)

(winking)

With Christ all things are possible!

Paul shakes his head and follows after Marti as he moves toward the customers.

46 EXT. AUTO DEALERSHIP CAR LOT- "NO SALES" MONTAGE

46

1) Paul pushing a particular car on to a customer, customer gets irritated and walks off.

2) Paul being manipulative and over pleasing, customer gets annoyed and walks off.

3) Paul acting like he doesn't care what happens and is obnoxious, customer walks off

4) Paul again being overly placating and pleasing, customer, a couple, are annoyed, but really want the car.

47 INT. JOHN'S HOME PAUL'S ROOM - MORNING

47

The room is sparsely decorated, Paul's misc. clothes are in the closet, dirty ones in a single pile on the floor. Bed is unmade. A suit jacket hangs on the closet door. Paul picks his tie up off of the bed and begins putting it on when Marti knocks on the door. Paul opens the door and goes back to tying his tie.

MARTI

You coming man?

PAUL

(shaking his head,
"No")

I have to go to court for the hearing for temporary orders. We're putting in a bid to get the kids and the house during my visitation. Its a long shot, but I have to try.

MARTI

Why didn't you tell me? You need someone to go with you?

PAUL

Thanks, no, its okay. Its just a hearing.

MARTI

A prayer then.

PAUL

No need, really, I'm cool.

Paul waves Marti away, but Marti stays.

MARTI

Need to or not, you are getting one...Dear Lord. Help Paul take care of his children. He's a good man and loves them as you do. Please be with him as he does battle for your children. In Christ's name, Amen.

48 INT. COURTHOUSE - DAY

48

Paul rushes in to court. Ann looks at him disdainfully as she leaves the courtroom. Jill stands to one side. Paul crosses over to her.

PAUL

Hey, what's up? Weren't we on the docket for 10?

Jill stuffs his file in her briefcase picks up the orders.

JILL

Oh, hi Paul. Yes, well, it was, but the hearing scheduled just before yours was moved so yours was pushed up. Nothing to worry about. It's all good. They gave temporary custody to your wife... of course, and set the temporary support at \$1,700 a month.

PAUL

This is good?

JILL

(as an afterthought)

Oh, and you can pick up the kids after school on Wednesday until 8.

PAUL

One day! That's it? That's all I get to see them? How am I supposed to give her all of my paycheck and provide a home for them to visit?

JILL

(picking up her
briefcase)

Come on, you knew that's how it was going to go.

Jill touches his sleeve.

JILL (CONT'D)

I know you wanted to try to convince the judge you should have custody, but since they are living with her now, and you don't have a house anyway. It's only logical he would give them to her, for now. You knew that.

PAUL

(Steaming)

But you knew I wanted to have a chance to say why they need to be with me! Couldn't you have put this off?

49 INT. COURTHOUSE HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

49

JILL

(walking briskly out
the court room doors)

I'm sorry. The judge really doesn't care about that.

(stopping momentarily)

And Paul, either you find someone else to handle your divorce case, or

(MORE)

JILL (CONT'D)
I will. I need to focus on your
criminal case.

Paul nods distractedly as he spots Ann walking out of the building. Jill hands him the orders. Paul takes the orders absently and quickly follows Ann.

PAUL
Ann, talk to me. What are you doing?
You know the kids need more time
with me.

ANN
That's not how it's done, Paul.

Ann turns her back on Paul and walks off.

PAUL
That's what I hear.

50 EXT. AUTO DEALERSHIP CAR LOT - AFTERNOON

50

Paul stands next to a car with a leery customer. Paul holds sales materials in his hands.

PAUL
(Reading off the sales
material)
It gets 45 miles per gallon and it
has the highest safety standards of
any car on the market.

CUSTOMER #1
Um hmm... and how about pick up?
Does it have any kick?

PAUL
Um... its a cool color..

Customer # 1 walks off shaking his head. Marti watches this and then walks up to Paul.

MARTI
Paul, this is not going to work if
you just read it!

PAUL
I can't remember anything! I go
over and over the specs, I used to
love that stuff. I'm doing good to
remember it has an engine.

MARTI
Have you made a single sale?

PAUL

Yeah, yeah, I sold that blue sedan yesterday!

MARTI

Oh, right, the one you gave all your commission away on?

PAUL

Did you see them? Did you see those kids? They really needed that car!

MARTI

Okay, you see that couple over there? Forget the brochure.

Marti takes the sales materials from Paul's hand and tosses it into the trash receptacle.

MARTI (CONT'D)

Just talk to them about the car. It's front wheel drive with a great V6 under the hood. Best crash survivability in the world. Like brand new. Then find out what they really want and need. You can do that, can't you?

PAUL

Okay but I absolutely have to be out of here by 4:00 to get my kids.

MARTI

I'm afraid that won't be a problem.

Paul nods and walks toward a couple looking at a car. Marti closes his eyes and looks down, his lips move in silent prayer.

PAUL

Hi. I'm Paul. What do you think?

HUSBAND #1

It looks good, but, wow, I am having some sticker shock.

PAUL

Can't say that I blame you. What were you hoping to spend?

WIFE #1

About five thousand less!

PAUL

I hear that! You've got kids to fill the back seat?

HUSBAND #1
Two, and a dog.

PAUL
Hairy dog?

WIFE #1
You have no idea!

Paul leads the couple toward the car.

PAUL
I don't think that cloth upholstery
is going to work so well with a dog.
I have something back here that just
might work. You like leather?...

51 INT. AUTO DEALERSHIP SALES DESK - AFTERNOON

51

Paul and the couple sit at a desk. Paul pushes a piece of paper and a pen in front of HUSBAND #1. The clock on the wall says it's a quarter till 4:00

PAUL
Okay, this is what we have. Sign
this and you'll drive off in your
new car!

HUSBAND #1
But I told you we can't do that high
a payment.

PAUL
I know, I know, but you also said
you needed to have it paid off in 36
months.

HUSBAND #1
Well, if you can't get the payment
down, we can't do it.

WIFE #1
Honey, he has to eat, too, you know.

HUSBAND #1
Whose side are you on here?

PAUL
Look, I'll go talk to my manager.

52 INT. AUTO DEALERSHIP MANAGERS OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

52

Paul walks to the manager's office behind a glass door where they can't be heard. The MANAGER (30's) keys on the calculator, takes his pen and writes some numbers down, on a paper, looks up at Paul and asks him something, Paul responds, shakes his head, the manager writes down another number.

The clock hands move to 3:55. Paul glances at the clock and starts to sweat.

53 INT. AUTO DEALERSHIP SALES DESK - DAY 53

Paul puts the paper on the desk and looks at Husband #1

HUSBAND #1

Well, we can work with that. Can we get the extended warranty included with it though?

WIFE #1

I appreciate your working so hard to make this work for us.

Paul glances nervously at the clock.

PAUL

I'll go see what I can do.

54 INT. AUTO DEALERSHIP MANAGERS OFFICE - CONTINUOUS 54

PAUL

Come on, we can include this and extend their payments a couple more months, can't we?

MANAGER

Yea, sure, do you think they will go for that.

Nervously, glances at the clock, see's that it's now 4:05

PAUL

I sure as heck hope so. I've gotta get out of here five minutes ago. Can you wrap this up for me?

Manager gives Paul a disdainful look.

PAUL (CONT'D)

Yea, okay, okay.

55 INT. AUTO DEALERSHIP SALES DESK - CONTINUOUS 55

PAUL

Okay, I talked him into shifting the numbers around and you end up getting the extended warranty and keeping the payments the same. And it only adds adds two months to the note.

Husband #1 taking his time looking over the numbers.

HUSBAND #1

Well, let's see here.

Paul looks anxiously at the clock, it's now 4:15

HUSBAND #1 (CONT'D)
Okay, we have a deal.

Paul stands up and shakes each of their hands

PAUL
Congratulations! Josh is the best
paper man we have and he's gonna'
handle the rest of this for you.

56 EXT. JOHNSON HOME - DAY

56

Paul runs up to the door and rings the bell. Ann opens the door. She crosses her arms and glares at Paul.

ANN
So you finally decided to show up
did you? Don't you know the kids are
sitting by the door waiting for you?
You have a lot of nerve.

PAUL
I'm sorry, Ann. I got tied up at
work.

ANN
Well, this will be the last time you
are late. If you do this again, you
forfeit your visit with them. Do you
understand? You cannot do this to
them! If you are late again, we will
simply not be here when you arrive!

PAUL
You'd do that? This isn't about me,
the kids have a right to see me!

ANN
Then you'd better make darn sure you
are on time from now on.

Ann turns brusquely away and the kids come running through the door and hug him.

JESSIE
Daddy!

Jessie and Jason both run up and hug him.

JASON
Daddy!

Paul lifts Jason up as Jason hugs his neck.

57 EXT. PAUL'S CAR PULLING INTO A PARK - DAY

57

Paul pulls out a cooler and a blanket and they head toward a park table. Jason runs off to the playground. Jessie and Paul set up lunch at the table.

JESSIE

(Talking quickly)

So I told Mommy that we understood that parents sometimes can't work things out. Ashley's parents got divorced last year, and she sees both of them all the time. Ashley says she sees more of her dad now than before, so I'm not worried. Really, its okay I mean, I know you guys are doing the best you can. Don't worry about us, Daddy.

Paul pulls her onto his lap and puts his arms around her.

PAUL

Precious, its my job to worry about you.

JESSIE

I know, Daddy. I worry about you, too. It can't be easy, I mean you don't even have a house or anything!

PAUL

I'll be okay. I just have to figure some stuff out.

JESSIE

I know, Daddy, I just love you so much! Mommy can be so mean when she is mad... and she's really mad at you!

PAUL

I can handle her.

(Jessie looks doubtful)

Don't you worry, okay? What about you? Is Mommy mad at you?

JESSIE

No, no, she's not mad... she just...

PAUL

What?

JESSIE

Oh, nothing, really.

PAUL

Come on baby girl, it's something.
What?
(pushes hair out of
her eyes)

JESSIE

Its just that Mommy is gone a lot.
She has her girl scout leader's stuff
she does at night, and then the
medical meetings and her therapy
group... most nights I make dinner
and put Jason to bed. I end up doing
my homework after Jason goes to bed
because I had to help him with his
first. I don't mind, really, but I
don't think I'm helping him that
much since he isn't doing that great
in his classes. He's failing math
right now. Can you help me learn how
to teach him better?

PAUL

You are something, you know that?
If Jason is having problems, it's
not because you are not doing a good
job. It's because we have failed
you. I'm sorry.

JESSIE

No, Daddy, you are the best daddy
any girl could have.

Jessie hugs Paul's neck.

FADE OUT

58 INT. JOHN'S HOME - NIGHT

58

Marti walks through the front door and sees Rosa wearing
glasses, a T-shirt, no bra, and very short jean shorts with
a laptop and college textbooks around her, sitting at the
kitchen table. Marti walks up to her.

MARTI

Hi. I'm Marti. I'm staying here
with John for a few days.

ROSA

Oh, hi, you're one of the guys from
the softball game. I'm Rosa. That
was a fun baseball game. John's so
proud of Dylan.

MARTI

He should be, he's really a good
kid... John here?

ROSA

No, not yet. He's tutoring me in chemistry and math. We meet every Tuesday.

Marti pulls out a chair and sits down next to Rosa.

ROSA (CONT'D)

I usually get here early so I can get started before he's home. I heard you had quite a night last night.

MARTI

Um... yes... well...

ROSA

Oh, that's right. You are the Christian. Sorry, Brenda said you were kinda shy.

MARTI

Brenda?

ROSA

Oh, she probably was calling herself Robin, or maybe Cassidy?

(pause, to herself)

She always did like that name.

MARTI

You know about Cassidy!

ROSA

Duh, Marti, she works for me!

John walks in through the garage and freezes

MARTI

WORKS FOR YOU! Oh my, No. You too? You mean you're ...

Marti pulls his chair back from the table.

JOHN

I see you've met Rosa.

ROSA

Yeah Marti, I'm not just a call girl, I'm a "pimp", too. Give me a few hints and I'm sure I can find you the girl of your dreams, or... maybe you'd like a couple of them?

JOHN

Rosa! Go easy on him.

MARTI

I thought she was your girlfriend
and it turns out she's just another
whore.

Marti stands to leave. John steps toward Marti.

JOHN

Hey, you have no right to...

Rosa motions for John to stand down.

ROSA

Marti, I'm not just another whore.
I have a little girl and I'm one
semester from applying to nursing
school.

JOHN

You don't have to defend yourself,
Rosa, he's just a...

ROSA

Hey, it's cool, John. I can handle
him.

JOHN

She's a good girl, Marti. She's on
the Dean's list every semester. 3.7
GPA! You...

ROSA

...Thanks to John's help.

Rosa stands and puts a hand on John's arm.

ROSA (CONT'D)

And my "whoring" as you so nicely
put it, Marti, think about it
dude..what else am I gonna do?

MARTI

Surely... I mean...

ROSA

No way I could keep up my grades...not
to mention put a roof over my
daughter's head, not working a regular
job.

MARTI

But you are damning yourself. Why?

ROSA

I've been damned my whole life. Mostly
by people like you.

(MORE)

ROSA (CONT'D)

Ya know, most of my guys are married churchies like you. I've even had a few preachers,
(thoughtful grin)
one preacher's wife. How come I'm the one being damned? Besides, I meet some of the best people. Like John, here. He's my favorite "john".

JOHN

I bet you say that to all of the guys.

ROSA

(smiling)
You betcha I do.

MARTI

But, Rosa, you seem like such a nice, smart girl. I don't get it, even if it makes sense financially.
(pause)
But I'm not about to throw stones.

Marti turns to leave.

MARTI (CONT'D)

Well, I'll leave you two to do... whatever it is you do.

JOHN

Sure. See you 'round.

Marti walks quickly out the front door, looking back at them disdainfully just before exiting.

ROSA

I think I made him a bit uncomfortable.

JOHN

You think? Aw, hell, its good for him! No really, I think he woke up uncomfortable.

Rosa turns and embraces John.

ROSA

But... thank you... that was sweet.
(touching his face)
I want to take you out tonight. In fact, Brenda and I both do. Dinner and then bring you back here and do you, together. Our treat, no charge. What do you say?

JOHN
Um.. really?

ROSA
Umm... yea!

JOHN
Well, I'm not stupid enough to pass
on that deal. What time?

ROSA
(pulls away from the
embrace)
I'll drop Corie at my mom's at 6:30,
so sevenish?

JOHN
Sure, okay.

John turns, notices a gift bag on the counter

JOHN (CONT'D)
What's this.

ROSA
Oh, I dunno, something Brenda left.

John pulls out the tissue paper and there is a bizarre looking
rigging of some sort in the bag. John opens the note and
reads, "This is for later. :-)" John grins a big grin, shakes
his head, and turns a bit red faced.

JOHN
She's crazy!

ROSA
Ain't it great?

59 INT. JOHN'S HOME - MORNING

59

John pulls a diet drink out of the fridge and sits at the
table with Marti.

MARTI
So, you responded to some ad to meet
this girl, and you knew she was a
prostitute?

JOHN
Yeah, I mean, why not? I haven't had
a real girlfriend in 10 years... you
know that. Ten years! Not ten months
ten years! Women don't seem to want
to do it with me. It's that simple.

MARTI
What about Angela?

JOHN

Angela? Are you kidding? She didn't want to have sex with me, just wanted me to marry her! The entire time we dated all I did was take her out for expensive dinners - that girl cost me more than one of these hot girls... and wasn't nearly as much fun...they like it. I mean, sometimes I think they are having more fun than I am.

MARTI

I will pray for you, but you are still going to Hell, you know that.

JOHN

I was already in Hell, Marti!

Paul steps into the kitchen from the living room.

PAUL

Is this what I have to look forward to?

JOHN

Naw, look at you, you are a good looking guy, you'll find a sweet girl and do fine. But if you don't... well... this is not so bad. Hell, it's the most bang for your buck anywhere and the things some of these girls do! Mind blowing. I can't believe I lived without it for so long.

MARTI

You are in my prayers, John.

JOHN

Pray for yourself, Marti. I'm doing GREAT.

Paul high fives John, Marti looks disapproving at Paul. Paul pulls a box of cereal

out of the cabinet.

PAUL

So, you going to do it again?

JOHN

Not just, yes, but "Hell yes!". After I caught Maurine selling herself for dope I've had zero luck with women. I'm just making up for lost time.

MARTI

Maurine your ex?

John nods. Paul reaches for a bowl.

JOHN

Y'know, I thought everything was great. I had more sex than any other married guy I knew.

PAUL

How much sex you have is not a great barometer. Trust me.

Paul turns to the fridge and pulls out a carton of milk.

JOHN

Yeah, I know that now. Maurine just wanted to use me, just like she did her dealer, and the pool boy.

MARTI

Your poor kids.

JOHN

You have no idea. I kidnapped them once. Moved all the way across the country.

PAUL

Really?

JOHN

They were doing so great. There was a glimmer of hope for a moment, then the courts stepped in and they've lived on the streets or with whoever Maurine was banging ever since. Almost lost them entirely. Now, Julie is pregnant and I only get to see Dylan at the ball games.

PAUL

You are scaring me, man.
(takes his bowl of
cereal to the table)

JOHN

Sorry. But that's how it is.

PAUL

(sits down at the
table)
It's crazy that you seem so intimate with the hookers, I mean, they really like you!

JOHN

I know! It pisses me off that regular girls won't even go out with me. I can't figure out what I'm doing wrong!

PAUL

Maybe you should take another stab at dating?

JOHN

Funny you'd say that. I swear this woman at the gym was flirting with me.

Marti stands up, takes his plate and utensils to the dishwasher.

PAUL

Really?

JOHN

It's been so long I wasn't sure, but now I'm thinking she was. She's really cute, too. I don't know...

PAUL

Next time you see her, just ask if she'd like to go to dinner that night. You know, casual like. Just so you can get to know her.

Paul glances toward Marti for support when Paul and then, John, notice that Marti stands looking out the window lost in thought. They wait a moment for him to speak.

MARTI

I am so going to Hell.

PAUL

What do you mean?

Marti looks at him like he's an idiot.

MARTI

She loves me, Paul.

JOHN

Cool.

MARTI

It's not cool.

(looking up)

God help me please!

(turns toward Paul
and John)

I don't know what to do. And... my kids! What's to become of them?

PAUL

You'll do the right thing, Marti.
You always do.

(pause, then, to John)

How do you do it? How do you deal
with not being with your kids? This
is killing me. Every time I see Jason,
his eyes, they look like.....

JOHN

You do what you have to do. Not much
choice.

PAUL

(Sighs)

Jessie told me that most of the time
she is taking care of Jason. And
now, Jason is starting to have
problems in school. None of this
would happen if I was there. I don't
get any of it. All these lawyers and
judges are just in it to make
themselves feel good. They pretend
the kids are like potted plants or
furniture.

MARTI

I'll pray for you, my friend.

Marti pours himself another cup of coffee, walks back to the
table and sits.

JOHN

Have you talked to Ann, I mean, really
talked since this whole thing started?

PAUL

Been too scared.

JOHN

Well, you should.

MARTI

Yeah.

PAUL

John, she scares the crap out of me.
What if she pulls that stunt again?

JOHN

That would not be good.

PAUL

She's dangerous right now.

JOHN

I know, I know, but listen, she was upset. Maybe she's calmed down and you can actually talk to her now. You know, give her some of that Johnson charm.

PAUL

..I don't know...

JOHN

I mean, it's worth a shot isn't it?

MARTI

He's right. Come on, Paul, you know God wants you to do everything you can to save your family.

PAUL

I don't know about, God. But I feel like I die a little bit every day I don't see my kids.

FADE TO

60 EXT. JOHNSON HOME - NIGHT

60

Paul walks up to the front door and knocks. Ann opens the door cautiously, and only slightly.

ANN

Why are you here?

PAUL

We need to talk.

ANN

(closing the door
until only a crack
remains)

Paul, my lawyer made it very clear I was not to talk with you about anything.

Paul puts his foot in the door so that she can't close it.

PAUL

This is about us, Ann, not lawyers.

ANN

There is no us - you saw to that.
Now move your foot or I'll...

PAUL

I'm sorry...
(MORE)

PAUL (CONT'D)
(not moving his foot)
I'm sorry, I don't know what I could
have done differently, but I'm sorry
that it hurt you.

ANN
You need help, Paul.

PAUL
We need help, Ann. Let's meet with a
counselor.

ANN
You need help, Paul.

PAUL
Okay, so go with me to help me.

ANN
(opens the door a bit)
Why would I do that?

PAUL
Where's the harm? What kind of Mom
would you be if you didn't even try,
for the kids sake?

Paul pulls his foot out of the door.

ANN
Paul, that's not fair...
(relaxing a bit, opens
the door fully)
well, I suppose that's the right
thing to do.

PAUL
Thata girl. Thank you, you won't
regret it.

ANN
We'll see about that.

Paul reaches to touch her shoulder, she pulls back.

ANN (CONT'D)
Don't, Paul.

PAUL
I just don't understand how it came
to this.

ANN
Ask yourself that, Paul. I'll see
you at the counselor's office. Call
Sharon to set up the time.

Paul nods, backs out the door as she shuts it.

61 EXT. CHURCH PARKING LOT - SUNDAY MORNING

61

Marti gets out of his car. Two parishioners, with their Bibles in hand stand to one side. SAM waves Marti over. Marti crosses to the parishioners.

SAM

Marti, have you got a minute.

MARTI

Blessed morning, Sam.

SAM

Blessed morning to you, Marti.

(solemnly)

Marti, I've been asked to speak with you.

MARTI

Oh, okay. What about?

SAM

Cynthia told us about... you know.. the problems you two are having.

MARTI

Oh.. I ...

SAM

We know the enemy has many faces and they come in the most enticing forms. We love you Marti, and we want the best for you and Cynthia.

WILLIAM

The Lord doesn't give up on you just because you strayed, Marti.

MARTI

(his hands start to shake)

I... I... know... I...

Sam puts his hands on Marti's shoulders

SAM

We are not here to condemn you, Marti.

WILLIAM

We'd like to pray with you.

MARTI

Yes, yes... of course.

Sam closes his eyes as he puts his arm around Marti and they lower their heads

SAM

Dear, merciful Lord, we are here today to pray for your servant, Marti, who has strayed from your path. We ask that you give Marti the wisdom to do what is right, to return to his family, beg forgiveness from them, and from you and put his life back on the path of righteousness. In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, we pray. Amen.

MARTI

I know, I know, I just, I'm so confused.

WILLIAM, who has been standing silently, steps toward Paul and places a hand on his shoulder.

WILLIAM

The enemy is like that, Marti. But we want you to know that we are with you. We will not abandon you. But we ask that you save your wife the embarrassment of having to face you here in church today.

MARTI

(shocked)

Embarrassment? You...you... you don't want me to come in to the church?

William removes his hand from Paul's shoulder.

SAM

Now, Marti, William did not say that. He is just asking you to find it in your heart to save your wife the pain of seeing you here in God's house after what you have done.

MARTI

I...I... I understand.. I just...

WILLIAM

We can come to you, Marti, we can pray with you where you live. Would that be alright?

MARTI

NO! I mean, well, where I am staying is not... well... I mean... I'd rather come to one of your homes, if that's okay?

SAM

Of course. But you do understand about today?

MARTI

Yes... yes... of course, you are good friends.

The men shake hands, pat each other on the back and separate. Marti walks back to his car, Sam and William watch him for a moment, then follow the crowd inside the church, occasionally looking over their shoulder at Marti as he walks to his car.

Marti gets in his car and just sits with a look of disbelief and despair.

62 INT. SOCIAL WORKERS OFFICE - DAY

62

The small waiting room is outdated and decorated with silk flowers. Paul waits anxiously there for Ann. She walks in brusquely and at the same instant that the social worker comes out to take them into her private office. MANDY (50ish, hippyish, nurturing woman) gestures for them to enter. Ann looks around, uncomfortable to see that there is only one small couch for them to sit on. She takes a seat. Paul sits cautiously next to her.

MANDY

What can you tell me about what brings you in today?

ANN

YOU tell her, Paul, you are the reason for this, not me!

PAUL

Ann thinks I'm having an affair.

Ann looks at him accusingly, expectantly.

PAUL (CONT'D)

I'm not. She also thinks I assaulted her when I pushed her off of me to keep from falling in to the pool.

MANDY

Oh, my.

There is an uncomfortable silence for a moment.

MANDY (CONT'D)

Well, we all get reactive at times. Fights like this can bring up all kinds of unexpected emotions, but choosing to forcefully attack your partner is never a reasonable

(MORE)

MANDY (CONT'D)
 solution! Paul, it sounds like you
 need some help with your anger issues.

PAUL
 I DON'T HAVE ANGER ISSUES!

Mandy and Ann look at each other knowingly.

PAUL (CONT'D)
 I'm sorry. I just... You can't
 imagine what it's like to be arrested
 in front of your 10 year old son!

MANDY
 Paul, I know you are hurting and
 confused right now. No one is trying
 to attack you. We are here to help
 you.

Paul looks at Mandy, and then Ann with confusion.

MANDY (CONT'D)
 You need help, that's why you are
 here! I'm sure this isn't the first
 time Paul's anger has gotten out of
 control, is it, Ann?

ANN
 Well... I mean... I don't want you
 to think he's...
 (suddenly seeing the
 angle and running
 with it)
 but yes, it has been an issue before.
 As has his controlling behavior.

PAUL
 What? What on earth are you talking
 about?

MANDY
 (nods her head
 knowingly)
 Yes, those two behaviors tend to go
 together in certain types of
 personalities.

PAUL
 This is crazy. I've never hurt her...
 anyone! Controlling?
 (to Ann)
 Is it controlling you to set up your
 practice for you?

MANDY
 Paul....

PAUL

...To manage your office for you so you don't have to do anything but show up for work?

MANDY

Paul, there is no need for you to be defensive here! This is not about blame, its about understanding what is going on so that we can help you.

ANN

(Tearing)

You have no idea what I've been through, and now, this, this woman!

PAUL

Now wait just a minute, I...

MANDY

(Cutting in)

Paul, I need you to just be quiet for a minute and give Ann a chance to talk. You need to hear how your behavior is affecting her.

PAUL

My... my what?

MANDY

Your behavior, you know, how your anger and controlling behavior affects her.

PAUL

Yeah, okay... let's hear this. It ought to be good.

MANDY

Paul, try to contain your reactivity so that you can just hear what she is feeling, okay?

Paul leans back, puts his arm across the top of the sofa. Paul looks at Ann with a "Try and pull this one off" look.

PAUL

Yeah, sure.

ANN

I'm sorry, its just that, now, with him sitting there all smug like that...

MANDY

(Expectantly to Paul)

Paul?

(MORE)

MANDY (CONT'D)

(to Ann)

Take your time, tell us what happened,
and how it felt the night he threw
you to the ground on the patio.

PAUL

(sitting up, alarmed
and confused)

How did you..? Wait...

MANDY

Really, Paul! Just let her talk,
okay?

ANN

She... she put her hand on his at
the ball game. Everyone saw it. You
couldn't miss it. I was so ashamed!

(pause)

I didn't accuse him, I just asked
him about it and he lied to me.
Straight to my face. He's having an
affair!

PAUL

Ann! That's not...

MANDY

Paul..

(Gesturing to quiet
Paul)

Go on Ann.

ANN

Then, he just got up in my face,
yelling at me, denying everything!

(Sobbing)

The next thing I know, I'm on the
ground with cuts and bruises on my
shoulder and my face.

Mandy pull a tissue from a tissue box, and hands it to Ann.

MANDY

I'm so sorry. No one should ever
throw another human being like that!

Mandy looks intently at Paul.

MANDY (CONT'D)

Well, Paul. Can you respond to her?

PAUL

What can I say?

(MORE)

PAUL (CONT'D)

It didn't happen like that, but that's what she thinks happened, so that's the law isn't it?

MANDY

Paul, we can't help you if you don't face up to what you did!

PAUL

Ann,

(softly)

I can't imagine what you must be feeling if you think I deliberately hurt you. I... I mean... you know how my Dad was! I would never...

MANDY

Good, good work Paul. We can start from here next week.

63 EXT. AUTO DEALERSHIP CAR LOT - AFTERNOON

63

Paul see's a YOUNG MAN wearing a t-shirt and jeans eying a sports car. Walks over to him.

PAUL

It's a beautiful car. You in the market or just looking?

YOUNG MAN

I don't know, maybe in the market.

PAUL

You wanna test drive?

YOUNG MAN

Well.. I don't... I just... I mean, this one? really?

PAUL

Of course. You do have a license don't you?

YOUNG MAN

Sure.

PAUL

Then lets do it! I need to get out of here for a while and its a great day for a drive.

YOUNG MAN

I don't know if I can afford this one.

PAUL

That's okay, let's just go have some fun! I'll get the keys.

YOUNG MAN

Yea, okay!

64 INT. SPORTS CAR - AFTERNOON

64

Young man drives and grins. Paul sits in the passenger seat and enjoys the day and the young man's excitement.

65 EXT. AUTO DEALERSHIP - AFTERNOON

65

Young man pulls the car into the dealership. Paul and Young Man get out of the sports car.

PAUL

What do you think?

YOUNG MAN

What do I think? Man, I'd love to drive this car some day.

PAUL

Yeah, me too!

(pause)

Lets see if we can figure out something you can afford that you might like. What do you say?

YOUNG MAN

Yeah, okay! I kind of like that one.

Young Man points to a sporty economy car.

MONTAGE: Paul and Young man looking at various cars

66 INT. AUTO DEALERSHIP - AFTERNOON

66

Paul and Young Man sit at the sales desk working out a deal. Paul glances at the clock, which shows that its ten minutes until 4:00.

PAUL

I think we have everything you need here. Do we have a deal?

(pause)

Well?

YOUNG MAN

Can we work out the payments so they are a little less? This is about \$50 a month more than I have.

PAUL
(Glancing at the clock,
sighs)
Yes, of course. Let me check with
the sales manager.

LATER

Paul walks back into the Sales Office, shakes Young Man's
hand, smiling.

67 EXT. AUTO DEALERSHIP - AFTERNOON

67

Paul hurriedly gets in his car, his tires squeal as he rushes
out of the lot.

68 INT. PAUL'S CAR - AFTERNOON

68

Paul swerves in and out of traffic, desperate.

PAUL
Crap. Crap. Crap. ... I cannot be
late

Paul is stopped at a traffic light with a long line of cars
ahead of him.

PAUL (CONT'D)
No Please don't let me be late!
Damn it!

The light changes and Paul waits his turn to get through the
intersection. The light changes to red just as the car in
front of him starts through the intersection.

PAUL (CONT'D)
Damn It!....

Paul steps on the gas and charges on through, running the
red light.

PAUL (CONT'D)
I can make it.. I can make it.. I
can....

Another car just coming through the intersection, smashes
into the side of Paul's car.

PAUL (CONT'D)
Nooo! Auuughhh!

DISSOLVE TO BLACK

Crunch of feet on glass. A groggy Paul groans.

GOOD SAMARITAN
 Mister. Mister, you OK? Oh no, you
 don't want to move anything. That
 leg, that just ain't right.

CUT TO:

69 INT. JOHNSON HOUSE - AFTERNOON

69

Ann paces, looks at the clock, which reads 4:35. She goes to
 hall outside the kid's rooms.

ANN
 Come on kids, we are leaving, NOW.

Jason comes to his door and looks out at his mom.

JASON
 Isn't Daddy supposed to...

Jessie jumps up from her reading and peers around the door
 at Ann

JESSIE
 Yes... He is... Mom!

ANN
 Hush. You two are coming with me.
 No arguments!

70 INT. SHERRIE'S APARTMENT - AFTERNOON

70

Marti is on top of Sherrie, (30 something, sweet, average
 looking African American woman) lying together on the bed.
 He takes a deep breath, then rolls over to lie in her arms.
 He buries his face in her shoulder, throws an arm tightly
 across her, and, as she wraps her arms around him, begins to
 shake his head "NO". Marti pulls away and sits up on the
 edge of the bed holding his head in his hands.

MARTI
 God, please forgive me for what I
 do!

SHERRIE
 What? What is it, Marti.

MARTI
 It's just.. I am so happy here, with
 you.

SHERRIE
 Me, too.. I...

MARTI

But it hurts so much to be doing
this to my family. My boys, I don't
deserve them like this. This is not
how God wants us to live!

SHERRIE

I know... I just..

Marti kisses her.

MARTI

You are the best thing to happen to
me, and the worst, you know that?

SHERRIE

I'm so sorry.

MARTI

NO! Do not be sorry. I feel so much
more now, I feel so much more.... I
don't know.... alive.

SHERRIE

I don't know how...
(touching his back)

MARTI

Shh.. I have forsaken my family...
my church... my God... and my faith.
Yet, what I feel for you and with
you... I feel like I have been in a
coma for 20 years and I am just now
waking up...

SHERRIE

Marti...

Sherrie sits up faces him and looks into his eyes.

MARTI

... it's more than I've felt in my
entire life. Yet, something has to
give. I've lost everything, and still
I want you so badly it hurts...

SHERRIE

...you... you have me...

MARTI

But ...

SHERRIE

...Marti!

MARTI

It's wrong! It's a sin, what we are doing!

Sherrie takes his hand and puts it on her face.

SHERRIE

Look, Marti, the God I believe in doesn't condemn you for loving.

MARTI

No? But we are doing more than loving. We have broken the covenant...

(puts a hand on each cheek)

and I can't go back... and I can't move forward...

(painful laugh)

Purgatory!

Sherrie puts her hands over his.

SHERRIE

Marti, you have to honor what your heart is telling you is right for you. Living in that hell with a woman who doesn't know how to show you love and affection is not living! It's not a marriage.

MARTI

No... it's not, in practice. But it is by God's law. How do I reconcile that? Hmm? How?

Marti takes his hands down and pushes back from her just as his phone signals a text message. Marti reads it. "Paul is at Baylor. Bad accident." Marti reacts with fright.

71 EXT. AUTO DEALERSHIP - DAY

71

Paul is on crutches. he has a bandage on his forehead. Crutches up to a couple looking at a car with two kids.

PAUL

Hi, there. I'm Paul.

Paul reaches one hand to shake HUSBAND #2's hand, leaning his weight on the other crutch.

HUSBAND #2

(taking Paul's hand)

I'm Steve and this is my wife Terry.

WIFE #2 takes Paul's outstretched hand. Paul leans in toward her and stumbles in the process.

PAUL

Welcome Steve and Terry. Are you looking to replace an old car or do you just need something different.

HUSBAND #2

I want to get her something nicer.

WIFE #2

What I have is just fine! Say, you didn't get hurt on a test drive, did you?

PAUL

(laughs)

No, that'd make a good story though. I'll have to work on that. Say, what are you driving now?

WIFE #2

An Accord.

PAUL

Then you might be interested in what I have over there

Paul swings his right crutch to point, and hits one of the kids in the ear. The child screams, falls to the ground holding his ear and screaming. WIFE #2 steps quickly to the child and scoops him up. HUSBAND #2 is angry and begins a tirade as we fade out

72 EXT. AUTO DEALERSHIP LOT - DAY

72

Marti talks to Cynthia on his cell phone.

MARTI

He did? Cynthia, honey, I'm so sorry. I..

CYNTHIA (V.O.)

Stop it, don't call me that! I mean it! Yeah, I know, I know, "your sorry". But I'm the one stuck dealing with it, now aren't I? You talk to him, he is out of control. The teachers are talking about sending him to an alternative school. This is what you've done.

MARTI

What? No! Okay, put him on.

(pause)

Son, what is this I hear about your getting into fights at school. This isn't like you. What's going on, man?

ADAM (V.O.)

I don't know.

MARTI

(sighs)

I know its hard with me not being there with you. I'm doing my best to work it out. I'll be home, real soon, I promise.

ADAM (V.O.)

Really?

(his voice cracks,
like he is about to
cry)

I sure miss you, Daddy.

MARTI

Me, too, buddy. I'll see you tonight, for sure. I wont be coming home just yet, but I'll come get you and we'll have a banana split, okay? Just promise me you'll try to be better in school, okay?

Marti looks stricken. Paul walks up, Marti see's him and nods.

MARTI (CONT'D)

I've got to get back to work now, I'll see you tonight. I love you, son.

PAUL

Everything okay?

Marti closes his phone and sticks it in his back pocket.

MARTI

Yeah, I'm OK. The boys are having problems with all of this. Adam keeps getting in fights at school.

PAUL

Reminds me of somebody else I know.

MARTI

(grinning)

Yeah, hard to believe I turned into a car salesman, isn't it. Used to be I couldn't talk to nobody without hittin' 'em.

PAUL

I know, I used to try to talk to you.

MARTI

(pause)

If I can learn to talk nice to people
anyone can. Even you.

PAUL

I don't know.

MARTI

You have to keep control of the
conversation. Bring them back to
what you want to talk about. And
that is their fantasy. SELL IT.
Once they are hooked, that's when
you make the deal. Not before. Got
it?

PAUL

Yeah I got it.

Paul spies CUSTOMER #2 (30ish man) looking at a two seat
sports car. Paul walks up and introduces himself

PAUL (CONT'D)

Hi, I'm Paul. Can I help you find
the right car for you, today?

CUSTOMER #2

I'm Richard. I'm looking for just
some cheap, dependable way to get to
work every day.

PAUL

Okay, let me show you something I
think you'll love.

Paul heads over to a group of higher priced sports cars

CUSTOMER #2

Those look great, but I need something
cheap.

PAUL

I know, I know, a single guy needs
to watch his wallet, but you've got
to have a little fun, too. These are
fun machines.

Customer #2 leans over and looks at the price in the window
of the first car.

CUSTOMER #2

(annoyed)

I need something cheap. Fun's great,
but first I have to eat and pay the
rent.

PAUL

Can't you just see yourself in the driver's seat of this one? Let me get the keys.

CUSTOMER #2

Screw you!
(walks off)

73 INT. SOCIAL WORKERS OFFICE - DAY

73

Mandy sits comfortably in her big, overstuffed chair, looks at Paul invitingly.

MANDY

Last time we were making good progress getting to the anger that threatens your marriage.

Paul and Ann sit pulling away from each other as much as possible on the small love seat.

PAUL

You know, you may be right. I am angry.

(turns to Ann)

I've worked hard to get you what you want. Your own practice. No boss. Two great kids. I want something, too, and I don't think its too much to ask for. Hell, its what women always say they want. I want you to hold my hand and me! To hug me like you might have missed me a little. I need to feel like there is more than just doing for you. Maybe there isn't an us any more. Maybe there never was.

ANN

That's ridiculous.

MANDY

Paul, she's a professional woman. You can't think of her as just your wife. She's also a mother. She has kids to take care of.

PAUL

Really? And I don't? I'm trying to take care of them right now.

MANDY

But they are with her.

PAUL
Then let me help. That's my job,
too. Isn't it? Ann, let me have them
at my place this weekend.

Ann sits up, alarmed.

ANN
You mean John's place? The bachelor
pad?

PAUL
It's a nice house and ...

MANDY
I think that's a great idea. Ann,
I'm sure this has been hard on you.
let's see how Paul does with the
kids this weekend. OK?

ANN
Okay. But there had better not be
any problems. I'm a single mother
and I don't have the energy for any
bullshit.

MANDY
Good, Ann. Alright. Next time we'll
talk about how the visit goes.

74 EXT. JOHN'S HOME - EVENING

74

Marti and Paul pull pull up to John's house, both driving
cars from the dealership. They get out and walk toward the
door. Marti looks at the car Paul drove up.

MARTI
Man, you are one lucky guy. I can't
believe the dealership let you drive
that! It was months before I got a
car.

Paul unlocks the door.

PAUL
Really? I don't know what I'd have
done. I don't have a home, now I
don't have a car. Losing my job can't
be that far behind.

75 INT. JOHN'S HOME - CONTINUED

75

Marti stops just inside the door and turns to Paul.

MARTI

If you don't start sellin' some cars pretty soon, like tomorrow, then what's the difference. You're not getting paid to show up, you know.

PAUL

Painfully aware of the fact.

Marti nods and turns to walk into the den.

MARTI

I'd trade no paycheck for... well for losing... for being cast out.

PAUL

You mean Cynthia?

Marti shakes his head "No".

PAUL (CONT'D)

Then who's casting you out? ... John?

Paul walks through the Den toward the Kitchen with Marti following him. Marti shakes his head.

MARTI

My church. I've been kicked out of my church.

PAUL

WHAT?

(stops in his tracks
and looks at Marti)

How, I mean they can't do that, can they?

MARTI

(stops behind Paul)

Can and did. I've had a church to fall back on my whole life! Now they don't even want me there.

PAUL

What do you mean don't want you? Why do you say that?

MARTI

They met me in the parking lot. Said I was embarrassing Cynthia.

PAUL

It's a church for God's sake. They're supposed to be there for you!

MARTI

This stuff with Cynthia, I was counting on them to pull me through like they always done.

PAUL

But all that stuff, the answer and strength, you know that's not the church, don't you. That's all you and your faith. They can't take that away.

MARTI

Maybe, but all my friends, well the people I believed were my friends, are in the church. I'm really alone for the first time in my life.

Marti looks painfully at Paul

MARTI (CONT'D)

Except for you guys.

(smiles)

A God forsaken fornicator and a man who couldn't sell hot dogs in a famine.

76 EXT. JOHNSON HOME - AFTERNOON

76

Paul walks out the door with both kids, carrying backpacks in tow. Ann follows them to the door.

ANN

Mandy was right, this is good. I'll finally have some time for me. Have them ready at six on Sunday. They both have homework. It's your job to see that they do it.

Paul says nothing. Paul wraps his arms around Jessie, hugs her tight and lifts her off the ground. Then sets her back down, and with one arm around her and the other around Jason, walks to the car. Ann glares at Paul disapprovingly and closes the door behind them.

JESSIE

So, how's the car sales job going?

PAUL

I don't know. Sometimes it's okay, sometimes it's not. I don't really want to talk about it.

Paul lifts the trunk of his car and tosses the kid's bags inside, closes the lid, and turns to Jessie.

JESSIE
I'm proud of you, Daddy.

PAUL
Why? I'm just barely hanging on here.
And, I've let you and Jason down. I
can't believe I've let that happen.

Jason climbs into the backseat of the car and starts playing with his gameboy. Jessie and Paul climb into either side of the front of the car.

77 INT. PAUL'S BORROWED CAR - CONTINUED

77

JESSIE
Daddy, you know it's not all up to
you.

PAUL
That doesn't get me off the hook.
So, what did you make on your biology
test?

CUT TO:

78 INT. JOHN'S HOME - AFTERNOON

78

John sits at the kitchen table cleaning a pistol. He is working over an oil stained towel. The last step in reassembling the gun seems to require three hands. Jessie walks in with Jason and Paul behind her.

JOHN
Hi Jessie.

JESSIE
Hi John. Is that a Ruger Mark three
22?

JOHN
(swiveling and holding
the collection of
gun parts out toward
Paul)
Yeah, Hey Paul, can you push right
here while I push the slide back on?

PAUL
(Reaching a hand into
the parts)
Sure. Right here?

JOHN
Gentle.

The spring loaded mechanism explodes in their hands with parts going everywhere.

JOHN (CONT'D)
DAMN! I hate this gun.

Jessie gathers the parts and piling them on the towel.

PAUL
Sorry.

Jessie takes the gun from John and begins fiddling with the parts.

JOHN
Naah, It's not your fault. Ruger
22s shoot great, but it takes three
hands to put them together.
(turns to Jessie
playing with the
disassembled pieces)
Careful with that.

JESSIE
Here.
(She offers the
reassembled gun to
John)

JOHN
(amazed)
How did you do that?

JESSIE
(Showing John)
See this part here? You can't push
on it at all or it falls all apart.

PAUL
Where'd you learn to do that?

JESSIE
(Changing the subject)
Wow, John, you look good! You've
lost so much weight.

JOHN
Thanks, its nice to know that starving
myself to death is working.

JESSIE
It's working! I mean you are like
hot.

PAUL
It might be time to try dating again.

JOHN
I'm not completely ...

JESSIE
It's true! You look hot!

JOHN
(embarrassed)
No.. I mean... I...

PAUL
Seriously, man, that woman flirting
with you at the gym....

JESSIE
Flirting with you!

Jessie pokes John playfully.

PAUL
The way he tells it anyway. So, how
about asking her out?

JOHN
(meekly, but with an
ear to ear grin)
Actually, we have reservations for
dinner at Moby's tomorrow night.

JESSIE
Mobys! Way to go John!

Jessie "hi-fives" John. Paul grabs his hand as it comes
down and shakes it.

FADE TO:

79 INT. SOCIAL WORKERS OFFICE - AFTERNOON

79

Once again, Mandy sits comfortably in her chair, facing Ann
and Paul sitting uncomfortably pulling away from each other
on the little loveseat.

MANDY
So, how did the visit with the
children go?

ANN
The children were very upset after
seeing their father like that. I
don't think its good for them. Maybe
someplace else...

PAUL
They were just fine at John's house.
We talked about how things are going
for them...even made some headway on
Jason's Math. It's Jessie I'm worried
about right now.

(MORE)

PAUL (CONT'D)

I know its hard to believe, but I think she really misses being held by her daddy.

MANDY

(sits up, alert)
She's 13, right?

PAUL

You know its crazy, but I feel closer to her when I hold her than anyone. We spent so much time together when she was little. I miss that with you Ann.

MANDY

(leaning in toward Paul)
What do you mean Paul?

PAUL

(rapt in his memory)
Holding my kids, its like they are so close, so connected to me. I don't know... sometimes I feel like I'm closer, more intimate with them than with Ann.

Mandy sits up straight, looks at Paul seriously.

MANDY

Paul, do you know what boundaries are? Young girls need you to have clear boundaries.

ANN

You see what I'm up against?
(seeing her chance)
Now he's trying to use our daughter.

PAUL

What? No!, I want that with you, Ann! Wait, what are you talking about? Oh god, no, that's just wrong.

ANN

Yes, yes it ... you are .. sick. You need help Paul.

PAUL

I think we are done today!

Paul storms out and slams the door behind him.

ANN

I don't think he should be alone
with the kids.

MANDY

Ann, I can see you are really upset.

ANN

Me? No, not at all. I'm just
concerned.

MANDY

Of course, but... you seem... Has
something happened to you in the
past, that this reminds you of?

ANN

I have no idea what you are talking
about.

Mandy leans in intently.

MANDY

Ann, when you were a little girl,
did anything ever happen that... you
know... made you uncomfortable... or
scared you?

ANN

Why would you ask such a thing.

MANDY

I'm sorry. I didn't mean to upset
you more. I just, I... you seem
abnormally reactive about Paul and
your daughter. Is there some reason
you think a father shouldn't be
physically affectionate with his
daughter?

ANN

Well... it doesn't seem right to me.
It makes my skin crawl. There is
something just... not normal... about
the way Paul is with Jessie. I'm...
concerned that's all.

MANDY

(looks doubtful)

I see.... Ann, is your father still
alive, do you see him often?

ANN

Well, my mother died several years
ago.

MANDY

Oh, I'm sorry. So your father? You see him much?

ANN

Well, my son spends time with him in the summers.

MANDY

But not Jessie?

ANN

Why no, that wouldn't be right.

MANDY

No?

ANN

It wouldn't be right to leave a young girl alone with a man living on his own, like that.

MANDY

Really? Why is that?

ANN

Look, we are not here to talk about anything except my soon-to-be-ex-husband's violent outbursts. Got it?

MANDY

I see.

80 INT. JOHN'S HOME - AFTERNOON

80

Paul and Jason sit at the couch watching army figures moving on the screen. They hold game console controllers for a video game. They shoot at the bad guys.

PAUL

What are you doing? Where are you?

We hear blasts from their guns, and the guns of the "bad guys".

JASON

I'm over here by the front wall. Man, did you see that guy! He came from no where!

PAUL

Woa.. I'm hit. Better get here quick and heal me! I think he's behind the burning truck.

JASON
Burning truck! Really Dad? there's
a hundred burning trucks!

Jessie walks in, she looks disheveled and sad. She sits beside them, watches them play mindlessly.

PAUL
Hi, Jessie! Did'ya sleep okay?

JESSIE
Not really.

Paul stops what he is doing and really looks at her for the first time.

JASON
Dad? What are you doing? He just
killed you!

PAUL
(gesturing to Jason)
Pause it, Jason.

JASON
But...

PAUL
Sorry Jason. We have to stop for
now. We'll finish later, I promise.

Jason looks unhappily at Jessie.

JASON
Okay.. I'm going to watch TV in
your room.

Jason leaves the room.

PAUL
Thanks, bud.

Paul turns to Jessie

PAUL (CONT'D)
What's going on?

JESSIE
I don't know.

PAUL
Talk to me. Something is wrong.

JESSIE
I don't know. I just... I don't seem
to care about... anything...any more.

PAUL
Precious, I know this is hard. I'm
so sorry.

JESSIE
It's not your fault.

PAUL
I didn't say it was, I just... I'm
sorry for how it's hurting you. I'd
rather cut off my leg than hurt
you. Your mom and I are trying to
work it out.

Paul pulls her onto his lap and she curls around him, she
begins to cry. He strokes her hair as she starts to sob.

PAUL (CONT'D)
I'm so sorry. I'm going to make this
better. I promise!

FADE TO:

81 EXT. JOHN'S HOME - EVENING

81

Ann stands next to her car, loads Jason's backpack and gamebox
into her car, Jason stands next to the car, when Rosa and
"Cassidy" walk up, dressed for "work".

JASON
Hi Rosa!

ROSA
Hi there Jason. How's that new pitch
coming?

JASON
Pretty good.

Jessie walks out of the house, sees Rosa and panics.

ROSA
Hi Jessie. You're looking good!

JESSIE
Uhh. Hi Rosa.

Jessie ushers Jason to the back seat of her mother's car,
and climbs into the front passenger seat. Ann looks Brenda
and Rosa over as she opens the car door to get in. Gears
clicking as she takes in what she sees. She slams the car
door, and pulls off quickly. Rosa walks up to the door and
knocks. Paul opens the door, surprised not to see Ann.

ROSA
Hey Paul! Is John here?

Paul looks anxiously toward where Ann's car just left.

PAUL

Ummm... no... he expecting you?

BRENDA

Well, damn! We wanted to surprise him.

PAUL

Well, it will have to wait. He has a date. An actual date, you know... with a woman?

ROSA

Really? A real date?

PAUL

Yep. He's gone and done it now.

BRENDA

How about that? Hope we are not going to lose our favorite customer!

ROSA

Good for him! Though I'm going to miss the way he ...

She sees the look Paul is shooting at her and stops with an evil grin.

ROSA (CONT'D)

Well, I will.

PAUL

Look, he's not here.

ROSA

We can take a hint.

The women start to turn away, then Brenda turns back hopefully.

BRENDA

Sure you don't want to party?

PAUL

No. Thanks but no thanks.

Paul closes the door and walks off to his room.

82 INT. JOHN'S HOME - EVENING

82

John and KAREN (40-50 something, attractive) walk in the front door, Karen one step in front of John.

KAREN

Moby's was great John. I've always wanted to go there.

JOHN

Yeah, they've always been one of my favorites. Their steaks aren't so hot, but its the best seafood in town.

KAREN

That spicy, broiled calimari appetizer was incredible.

JOHN

Yeah, I always tell myself I'm not going to order that again, but I always do. Can I get you something to drink?

John starts toward the Kitchen. Karen stops.

KAREN

Just some cold water would be great. And... your bathroom?

JOHN (O.S.)

Um.. you might want to use mine, I'm afraid of what you'll find in the "little boy's room". The master bedroom's around to the left.

83 INT. JOHN'S HOME KITCHEN - CONTINUED

83

John gets himself a diet drink and pours a glass of water for Karen. Paul walks in to the kitchen.

PAUL

Hey, John, how'd your date go?

JOHN

Still goin'.

PAUL

Really, She's here?

JOHN

Yeah, she's using the bathroom.

PAUL

Not ours!

JOHN

No way I'm letting her see that! She's using mine.

84 INT. JOHN'S HOME DEN - CONTINUED

84

John walks in to the den, looks for Karen. Karen enters from the bedroom hallway with an amused look and some of the hooker's toys in her hands.

KAREN
Say Johnnie boy, mind telling me
what these are for?

John sees what is in her hand and he looks crushed and panicked at the same time

JOHN
Oh no! I forgot about those.

Paul steps into the den behind John. Paul tries not to laugh, but fails.

PAUL
Lucy, you got some splainin' to do!

Karen just now realizes Paul is in the room, and looks mortified.

KAREN
I'm so embarrassed, I thought we
were alone.

Paul reaches to shake her free hand.

PAUL
Hi. I'm Paul. You must be Karen.

KAREN
Umm... yes..

PAUL
Would you believe those are mine?

KAREN
Well, since they were in John's room,
I'm not so sure that's any better.

John still hasn't moved. Karen looks at him worried.

KAREN (CONT'D)
John, are you OK? I was just teasing.
And, more than a bit confused, I
mean... John, you know... we are not
going to be using anything like
this... at least... not for quite a
while!

Karen hesitantly walks over to John.

PAUL

I'd love to hear you talk your way out of this. And I'm more than a little curious how you're going to explain that without mentioning the hooks in the ceiling.

Karen smiles warmly at John.

PAUL (CONT'D)

(over his shoulder)

I think your luck has changed, John.

Paul returns to his room.

John throws both arms around her like she was the last morsel of food in the middle of a famine.

85 INT. COURTHOUSE - DAY

85

Ann and ANN'S ATTORNEY (60's, stern, conservative looking man) stand before the judge.

ANN'S ATTORNEY

Your honor, we are requesting an emergency change in the orders because we are very concerned about Mr. Johnson's relationship with his 13 year old daughter. The Johnson's marriage counselor believes that Mr. Johnson's visits require supervision due to Mr. Johnson's inappropriate relationship with his daughter. In addition, your honor. Mr Johnson insists on bringing the children in to a bachelor pad with prostitutes and other undesirables. It is no place for impressionable young children. As Dr. Johnson was picking up the children two days ago, two of these 'ladies' were already there. We appreciate that they waited to go to work until the children left, but it is still deplorable.

JUDGE

Granted. Do you have the motion ready?

ANN'S ATTORNEY

Right here, honor.

Ann's attorney hands the orders to the judge.

86 EXT. JOHNSON HOME FRONT DOOR - DAY

86

Paul pulls up to the Johnson Home, gets out of the car and walks eagerly up to the door to pick up his kids. An envelope is taped to the front door. "Paul" is scrawled across it. Paul rings the doorbell as he looks closer at the envelope. He rips it off the door and turns his back to the door and tears the envelope open. Close up of the words on the Temporary Restraining Order that prohibits Paul being around his own children without supervision. He turns back to the door and beats on it and yells.

PAUL

ANN! Ann. You can't do this!

He sinks to the ground, leaning on the door, certain that it won't open. After a few moments he crawls to his knees and stands. Unsteadily, he walks to his car, fumbles with the door and falls into the seat. He starts the car and throws it in reverse without looking. He nearly hits another car. Paul's eyes meet those of the angry other driver and he speeds away recklessly.

87 INT. JOHN'S HOME - NIGHT

87

Paul throws items of clothing into a suitcase and a cardboard box on the bed. John enters Paul's room, looks at Paul quizzically.

PAUL

I can't see my kids any more, thanks
to you and your whores...

JOHN

What?

Paul is on the verge of tears.

PAUL

...you son of a bitch!

JOHN

Paul, please, what are you talking
about?

PAUL

A restraining order.

(pause)

Ann has a restraining order. I can't
see the kids without supervision.
SUPERVISION John!

JOHN

No!

PAUL

It's true.

(MORE)

PAUL (CONT'D)

(pause)

I took care of those babies since they were born. Now, thanks to you, they are ripped from me like, like the head off a chicken.

Paul angrily tosses an item of clothing into his suitcase.

JOHN

I'm really sorry Paul. I didn't call the girls. They just stopped by...

Paul slams the suitcase shut.

PAUL

You know, "buddy", that doesn't make one damn bit of difference to anybody. I have to be better than God to keep the one thing in the world that still matters. Now they're gone, taken from me. I maybe get to see them once a week with some man hating social worker analyzing everything I do or say. Thanks to you and your damned whores, I have nothing. You hear me? Nothing.

JOHN

I'm sorry, I just didn't know they would be here. I don't know how to fix this. God I wish I did. I damn, damn, damn, I ...

PAUL

You know what that means to me?

(pause)

NOTHING! Nothing means anything any more.

Paul picks up his suitcase and box and leaves.

JOHN

Crap.

88 EXT. MOTEL HALLWAY - NIGHT

88

Neon lights flash across the wall of doors. Cars fill the parking lot. Paul walks out of the office to "his" car. He takes his suitcase, a cardboard box, and a paper sack containing a large bottle of alcohol from the trunk of his car. He walks up the stairs to his room, checks the key for the room number and looks for his room. He walks up to the door to his room, he hears a couple talking, and looks up to see Rosa entering a nearby room with a male customer. She sees him, smiles, and follows the man into the room. Paul unlocks the door to his room and walks in to his new home.

Paul sets the box on a chair and drops the suitcase on the floor. Retrieves a glass from the bathroom and takes out his bottle of alcohol, pours the glass 2/3 full of whatever is in the bottle. He plops into a chair in front of the TV and turns it on. Paul holds the TV remote control in his hand and flips a few channels before settling on a military channel special on field shovels.

LATER

As Paul drinks we see the edge of crying, runny nose, wiping away the occasional tear, looking up, etc. He hears voices in the hall, looks up and returns to "A History of Field Shovels" A knock at the door interrupts his drunken pity party. He's startled and it takes him a moment to move, another knock

ROSA
(low whisper)
Paul! Are you in there? It's Rosa.

Paul gets up and opens the door. Rosa slips in to the room with him.

ROSA (CONT'D)
Did you move out of John's house?
Are you OK? ... No you're not.
(she spies the alcohol,
grins)
That's not much of a solution, but I
bet it helps.

PAUL
Uhn...

ROSA
Please, tell me what happened.

PAUL
Ann saw you and Brenda at John's
with the kids and she came unglued.
Rosa, I'm not allowed to see them
any more.

ROSA
WHAT? No, they can't do that!

PAUL
They did, it's done. I'm done
(pause)
They're done!

ROSA
I think I know what you need.

She walks over to the bed and lies down, pats the covers beside her.

PAUL

No, really, I mean thanks, but I ...

ROSA

This isn't an invitation to party, silly boy. At least not yet. Come over here and lie down.

She pats the bed again, Paul walks over and lies down next to her. She puts an arm around him and pulls him closer, he tries to resist, but can't. He almost melts into her.

ROSA (CONT'D)

You know, I see a lot of guys, at their worst and their best. Once you close that door and get naked, they all change, become something you don't expect. Some of them are angry and they get pretty scary.

Paul lifts his head and gives her a worried look.

ROSA (CONT'D)

Oh, I've never really been hurt. Nothing a couple of days of ice packs didn't cure. But mostly, its more like jerkin' off with a life-like visual aid. Sad and pathetic. Then there are those like you, and, like John. It's like, once screwing isn't an issue, you are just as nice and caring as, well, anybody I've ever known. It's weird.

PAUL

John? You're kidding?

ROSA

No, I'm NOT kidding! Why do you think the girls like him so much? I mean, we're all in it for the money, but half the time somebody's giving it away to John. No, we need him to remind us we're people and we matter... and that sex can do more than pay the rent.

PAUL

And that's why you're here?

ROSA

Yeah, I've seen you with your kids. Mister, you matter.

Paul buries his face in Rosa's chest. Slowly, he relaxes into her, begins to shake and cries quietly as she holds him tightly with a bitter smile. Rosa strokes his head soothingly.

ROSA (CONT'D)

Sometimes girls can be such selfish bitches.

90 INT. MOTEL ROOM - MORNING

90

Paul and Rosa are still lying dressed on the bed. Sunlight is beginning to spill through the window. They are spooned with Paul's hand holding Rosa's breast as they sleep. Rosa's eyes flash open with a panicked look.

ROSA

Damn, I've got to get home!

She jumps off the bed and gathers her stuff, starts to leave, as Paul raises up on one elbow, not quite awake and very confused. Rosa turns and walks back to him.

ROSA (CONT'D)

Paul, I know everybody tells you, "that's not how it's done." But they don't know what's right for you. If I did things "how it's supposed to be done" I'd be living in a dump and my baby'd be hungry. This way, at least we'll go down swingin'.

She heads to the door, and just before she disappears she turns back.

ROSA (CONT'D)

Last night, that was good, wasn't it? You needed somebody and somebody was there. Paul, I tried doing it the way you're supposed to. I ended up doing for everybody else and never took care of me. Don't ever forget that you matter, too.

She gives him a warm smile as she closes the door. Paul's hand, that only seconds ago held Rosa's breast now squeezes air. He thinks about who he was holding all night.

PAUL

(softly, to himself)

Damn.

Paul's phone rings. Paul hears it, takes a moment to rub his eyes, and then answers.

PAUL (CONT'D)

What the hell do you want.

JOHN
 Sorry, man. I wouldn't call
 except...it's Marti... he... he just
 shot himself in the head. Or tried
 to.

Paul's reaction shocks even him. Tears swell up and he can't speak.

91 INT. HOSPITAL HALLWAY - DAY

91

John stands with Sherrie, disheveled, wearing P.J's and a jacket, around the corner from Marti's room, anxiously waiting when Paul jogs up to them. Sherrie is obviously uncomfortable being there, but doesn't look like she is willing to leave, either.

PAUL
 How is he?

JOHN
 They say he'll live, and they can
 repair the jaw. But he'll be deaf
 in his left ear. Why did I let him
 use it? He said he just wanted to
 do some target practice, man.

PAUL
 This is not your fault John.
 (shaking his head
 with a wistful smile)
 Only Marti could miss at that range.

Paul looks at Sherrie

JOHN
 Paul, meet minivan girl, Sherrie,
 this is Paul.

SHERRIE
 I know I should have left him alone,
 He.. he just needed somebody so bad.
 So did I... I know this is my fault.
 Ohhh, I'm so sorry.

PAUL
 I don't know, maybe you made things
 worse...but you made him better.
 How could you feel bad about that?
 Its not your fault, Marti did this.
 Not you.

Follow shot: Paul walks into Marti's room

JOHN (O.S.)
 If he lives, he has to clean the
 damn gun.

A huge, happy grin sneaks over Paul's face at John's quip.

92 INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

92

The grin from John's joke still consumes and relaxes Paul's face as he walks into the room and up to Marti's bed. The grin changes to a grimace as he stands next to the bed. Marti lies on the bed, his face bandaged, wires and tubes attached to his motionless body.

PAUL

Marti, Marti, Marti. How did it come to this, man?

Paul puts his hand on the bed next to Marti's arm.

PAUL (CONT'D)

You always did whatever you were supposed to. I could never even figure out what IT was, but you just did it. Like breathing. No matter what it cost, you just bucked it up and did it how its supposed to be done.

(pause)

Now look at you, buddy.

(pause)

How could she do this to you? Just ignore you when you are right there, doing the right thing? If you can't make it... how are the rest of us supposed to?

Paul hasn't noticed Cynthia sitting in a chair.

CYNTHIA

It's that tramp'

93 INT.

93

CYNTHIA

S fault, she drove him to this!

Paul, startled, turns to see Cynthia in the chair.

PAUL

(yelling)

I'm not talking about Sherrie, I'm talking about you, you selfish bitch! Sherrie's standing out in the hall worried about Marti. You're worried about how to spend the life insurance! You won't miss Marti 'cause you were never with him. You starved him to death, he had to find something, someone to live on.

CYNTHIA

You mean someone to have sex with.

PAUL

Sex?? You think that's it? You know
why men want sex all the time,
(coming unglued)
'Cause that's all you got! Hell,
John's hookers are better than you.

Cynthia is outraged and rises to her feet

CYNTHIA

HOOKERS! Whores? John..?

PAUL

Women, Sherrie. Not doin' it the
way we're told its supposed to be
done. But give them half a chance
and some of them are real friends.
They care a hell of a lot more about
people than your liar church buddies
do. I guess it's 'cause they aren't
just doing it because they are
supposed to, Hell, we all think they
aren't supposed to care. But
sometimes THEY do. John has more
quality time with his girls than
I've ever seen with you and Marti
(pause, quieter)
or Ann. No wonder he couldn't resist
Sherrie, even when all he wanted was
you.

(pause... quieter,
almost to himself,
looks away)

All he wanted was to be more than a
paycheck, or a.. a coworker, to be
a friend that made you smile. I always
smiled when I saw her.

(pause)

and then to learn I'm really nothing.
I did this or didn't do that and
suddenly everything I've ever done
is forgotten, meaningless. There's
no room for me in a world like that.
I've got to find a different way to
live.

Paul looks back to Cynthia.

PAUL (CONT'D)

What else could Marti do?

Paul's gaze shifts to the door and he walks out of the room
and passes Sherrie who stands in the doorway, staring at
Marti with tears streaming down her face.

Paul and Sherrie's eyes meet in a moment of compassion, and Paul is gone.

Cynthia sees Sherrie and her face goes blank as she deflates into the chair staring at Sherrie, then her eyes turn to Marti as though its the first time she has seen him.

94 INT. HOSPITAL HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

94

Paul passes John in the hall without stopping.

PAUL

No more. I'm not doing it their way
any more.

95 INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

95

Sherrie still stands in the doorway. Tears stream down her face. She watches Marti. Cynthia stands up as if to speak to Sherrie. Sherrie looks Cynthia in the eyes shakes her head dismissively, and walks away. Cynthia stands next to Marti's bed, stricken.

CYNTHIA

Damn you!

(pause)

I can't believe we have come to
this... Don't you know how much I
care for you?... I don't know why I
don't let you close. It... it scares
me.

(she touches his arm
gingerly)

I have, I've kept you away...Why? I
don't know... I couldn't let you
see how afraid I am, how ... You
did always do what you are supposed
to... always.

(awareness slowly
spreads on her face)

Do you have any idea how scary that
is? I could never be as good as
you. Never. How could I let you
see that? If you ever found out,
you'd leave me.... so I... I...
couldn't let you close. I couldn't...
I couldn't even begin to give you
what you need, what you deserved...
I lived every day, scared to death
you'd find out.

(she puts her hand on
his heart)

And now it's nearly killed you. I
will try not to be afraid, I swear
to our Lord Jesus Christ, I will...

(MORE)

CYNTHIA (CONT'D)
 (pause, her head comes
 down chin to chest)
 I'm so sorry baby. If only...

Cynthia lifts her head to see Marti's eyes staring back at her, a line of tears crawls down his cheek.

96 EXT. AUTO DEALERSHIP - MORNING

96

Paul leans against a car, looks around like he's seeing it all for the first time. He watches the other salesmen work. He holds the salesman day sheet. He looks down at it. We see that the Scion has a special salesman incentive. A couple walks near by and Salesman #3 approaches them, the way its done. Paul can't avoid overhearing.

HUSBAND #3
 ... something for my wife to use
 around town, haulin' kids, groceries.
 Oh and it needs to haul a bike
 trailer.

WIFE #3
 Just something simple.

SALESMAN #3
 Have I got a car for you! Have you
 seen the Scion? It's the hottest car
 on the lot.

WIFE #3
 I don't know... we...

SALESMAN #3
 Handles like a dream with a really
 peppy engine.

HUSBAND #3
 Look we just want to look at...

SALESMAN #3
 It's okay, I'll just go get the key
 ... I'm telling you, y'all will
 love this car.

Salesman #3 takes off briskly to get the key. The couple looks at each other.

HUSBAND #3
 I'm thinking we should leave now...

PAUL
 You don't really want to test drive
 that car do you?

WIFE #3

No, I don't. Who are you?

PAUL

The enemy!

HUSBAND #3

Salesman?

PAUL

Not much of one.

(pause)

You're really looking for a car for her that you can use to take the kids to baseball and motocross?

WIFE #3

Yeah, how did you guess?

PAUL

That's what you told him.

WIFE #3

I'm not the least bit interested in whatever he's trying to sell us. He acts like its the only car on the lot. I don't care if its "peppy" or hot or whatever he called it.

PAUL

What do you haul?

HUSBAND #3

Dirt bikes, kids and dogs. The kids love riding and she goes a little nuts when she puts something powerful between her legs!

WIFE #3

(blushes with an infectious smile)

I can't help it if I like riding powerful machines...

Wife #3 gives Husband #3 a playful look.

WIFE #3 (CONT'D)

...right on the edge of losing it all. That's why I married you!

They hug and share a quick kiss

PAUL

(laughing)

I don't think we have anything with a bed!

SALESMAN #3

Sorry that took so long, I had to get the key from another salesman. There's a lot of interest in this car.

WIFE #3

(points at Paul)

You know, I think we'd rather work with him.

Salesman #3 glares at Paul.

PAUL

Sorry.. I just... I mean... I didn't mean to...

SALESMAN #3

(irritated)

Well, you did.

HUSBAND #3

Hey, its not his fault. We just hit it off, that's all. We don't want to cause problems.

SALESMAN #3

Whatever.

(dismissively)

Good Luck.

Paul rises up on his crutches and apologetically reaches for key in SALESMAN'S hand

PAUL

Sorry... I really didn't mean to..

Salesman #3 begrudgingly hands him the key.

PAUL (CONT'D)

If you'll just follow me.

WIFE #3

(laughing)

You're not really going to show us the same car?

PAUL

Well, yeah, but now you want to see it, don't you? (pausing)

HUSBAND #3

We're in trouble (grinning)

Fade as they walk off

97 INT. PAUL'S APARTMENT - DAY

97

Paul carries boxes into his new apartment. He smiles as he sets up his new ipod and speakers and plays blues loudly while he sets up his new place. Paul pulls textbooks from a college book store bag, and puts them on a shelf. His entire demeanor is more relaxed and freer than before.

98 EXT. PAUL'S APARTMENT - DAY

98

Marti, with his left ear bandaged. Knocks at the door. Paul doesn't hear at first, over the loud music. Marti keeps banging until he does. Paul opens the door.

PAUL

Hey! Well, you look like shit.

MARTI

Gee, thanks, I had no idea.

99 INT. PAUL'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

99

Paul pauses the music.

MARTI

Say, this is a nice place you got goin' here.

(looking at the
textbooks on the
shelf)

Hey, are these college textbooks?

PAUL

Yeah, Jessie's high school needs a biology teacher. All you need is a degree in science to start, and I have that.

MARTI

You're going to teach? I should have thought of that. It's so obvious. Say, you're not going to turn into Mr Tatum? Remember those baking soda grenades we made?

PAUL

You couldn't hit a target then, either.

MARTI

(laughing)

Yeah. It missed Frank Crownover and hit old Marsha Simpson right in the chest. I can still remember that stuff spewing out of her blouse like some ...

PAUL

Man, I forgot about that. I hope I don't have any kids like us!

MARTI

Sure you will. And you'll be just as great as Mr Tatum. He made a big difference to a lot of kids. It's a brilliant idea.

PAUL

Yeah,

(pause)

A great idea that might not happen.

MARTI

Why not?

PAUL

Can't teach from jail. Not kids, anyway.

MARTI

Oh yeah, when's the trial?

PAUL

Tuesday at 10.

MARTI

I'll be there.

PAUL

Ahhh, you don't need to do that.

MARTI

Yes I do. Cynthia, too. You need some people in your corner.

PAUL

Thanks Marti. What brings you over here, anyway?

MARTI

Just wanted to see your new place, and I... I needed to say...

PAUL

Look, I'm sorry...

MARTI

No, I need to tell you. I really appreciate what you told Cynthia.

PAUL

I didn't tell her anything. I was pissed off at everybody and I took it out on her. I owe her an apology.

MARTI

No, you don't. Whatever you said, man, it did something to her.

PAUL

Really? Could'a fooled me.

MARTI

It did, she got it. I mean, she was really scared looking at me there...and then, what ever it was you said, whatever happened... it changed her.

PAUL

Who'd a thunk... yelling like a lunatic gets you heard.

MARTI

She's really different. It's funny how we don't appreciate what we have until we're about to lose it.

PAUL

I wouldn't know.

MARTI

Anyway, we are in counseling at the church now, and I think it's helping. She acts like she wants me again. It's been a long time since we've been like that. And I... I can see my part in it, too.

PAUL

Glad it worked for you, Marti. Really, if it can work for you...

MARTI

It pays to have God on your side. It really does, I've made my peace with the Lord and we are starting over. And... its... well, because of you.

100 INT. CHILD PROTECTIVE SERVICES - INTERIOR - DAY

100

GINA (20's 50 pound overweight, otherwise attractive, cute-as-a-button girl with a sweet smile that belies the judgmental attitude in her eyes) opens the door and lets Paul inside.

GINA

Hi. I'm Gina, you must be Mr. Johnson. Your kids are waiting for you.

(MORE)

GINA (CONT'D)

Its good of you to be here, its important, you know, for your kids to have a relationship with their father. Right this way. I will be just a fly on the wall!

PAUL

Hi.

Gina leads him down the hall to another room. She stops just outside the door and turns to Paul.

GINA

Remember, you can hug the kids, but that is it. There will be no physical touch other than a hug allowed. Oh, and remember, don't talk about anything related to your divorce or your wife. Its upsetting to the children, and will interfere with you building a healthy relationship with them.

(pause)

Okay, now, have fun!

101 INT. CHILD PROTECTIVE SERVICES VISITATION ROOM - CONTINUOUS

101

She opens the door. The room is furnished with small, child sized plastic chairs, discarded and broken toys meant for kindergarteners or younger. The linoleum is old and peeling. Jason is fiddling with an old playstation and controllers trying to make it work. Jessie attempts to read a book in a too-small chair in the corner. The room has a table, an old playstation 2, dismembered Barbies, and a dollhouse. Two worn armchairs are inserted awkwardly among the toys. Jessie and Jason look up when their dad enters.

JESSIE

Daddy!

JASON

Daddy!

Jessie and Jason run to him simultaneously, throwing their arms around him. Gina watches them carefully, relaxes only when the kids let go.

GINA

I'll be sitting right over here, don't mind me!

Gina goes over to a corner chair and sits. She pulls out a needlepoint project and begins threading the needle.

JESSIE

You okay? We've missed you, Daddy.

PAUL
(squeezing her hand)
I'm fine. Great actually.

JESSIE
Yeah?

Paul finds an armchair across the room from Gina and sits, uncomfortably. Jessie, plops herself on his lap, wrapping her arms around his neck. Jason sits on the arm of his father's chair, and wraps his arms around Paul's shoulders.

PAUL
Well, I am now.

Gina looks alarmed.

GINA
Now, sweetie, Jessie, you are too old to be sitting in your daddy's lap.

Jessie's expression drops, not fully comprehending what she is hears. Paul lets go of Jessie and lifts his hands in the air to signal "no foul".

GINA (CONT'D)
You are a young woman now, come on, there is a chair right next to your dad.

Jessie drops her legs one at a time from Paul's lap, and stands next to him, crossing her arms angrily.

JESSIE
It's my daddy!!

PAUL
Jessie, it's okay. Just do as she says.

Jason hugs his dad's neck. Gina shakes her head.

GINA
You, too, Jason. You are a big boy. Let go of your dad and sit in the chair.

Jason doesn't move. Paul removes Jason's hands from his neck and takes his hand. Paul moves to the floor and absent mindedly plays with a set of blocks on the floor. Jessie sits beside him.

JESSIE
(whispering)
I hate her!!!

PAUL

Shh...

(whispering)

We can't do anything about her right now. Just do as she says, okay?

JASON

I want to go home.

PAUL

I just want to be wherever you are.

CUT TO:

102 EXT. CHILD PROTECTIVE SERVICES OFFICE - LATER

102

Paul walks out the front door. Gina's eyes follow him, she looks down at the file she holds in her hand, opens it, and we see her notes on a notepad, "I'm concerned at the level of physical intimacy between Mr. Johnson and his children."

FADE TO

103 INT. CRIMINAL COURTS ROOM - DAY

103

Ann is on the witness stand, testifying for the prosecution. The jury listens intently. JUDGE (50's, male) presides. The PROSECUTOR (50's, slicked back hair, southern accent with a know-it-all, seen-it-all attitude) stands in front of the witness stand. Jurors fill the jury box.

ANN

He had started drinking. It was getting to be a problem, so I felt like I should try to talk to him. He was sitting in the back yard, drunk, with a glass in his hand. Maybe that wasn't the best time, but I didn't want the children around to hear.

PROSECUTOR

What did you talk to him about.

ANN

He had been seeing someone.

Paul looks at Ann, his look says he can hardly believe she is saying this.

ANN (CONT'D)

Some young girl that was helping coach the softball team. It had become obvious and so I confronted him.

Woman juror #1 nods her head in approval.

PROSECUTOR

Please tell the jury what happened when you confronted the defendant with his infidelity.

ANN

Of course he denied everything. Said they were just friends.

Paul shakes his head in dismay. There is no fight in his eyes. He stares at Ann with a bewildered look. Pain and disbelief rising with each new distortion.

ANN (CONT'D)

Nobody who saw the way they were touching each other in the boy's dugout would believe that. So I tried to talk to him about why he was doing this. I mean, we have two kids that need him.

Woman juror #2 looking at Paul, frowning disapproval.

PROSECUTOR

Were you angry, argumentative?

ANN

No, I wasn't angry. I was trying to save my marriage, my family. I was trying to understand what was going on. But Paul got very angry. I can't remember ever seeing him so angry before. I was scared.

PAUL

(shaking his head in disbelief, quietly)
Gawwwd!

ANN

At one point, he got furious and grabbed my shoulders and just threw me across the little table there. I had forgotten how strong he was. I was so startled that I didn't even see him leave.

Man juror #1 shakes his head disapprovingly.

PROSECUTOR

And then what did you do?

JUDGE

Counselors, please approach the bench.

Jill and the Prosecutor approach the bench. They talk for just a moment and return.

JILL
(whispering)
The judge has ordered you to contain
your reactions.

PAUL
OK, it's just that, I...

JILL
Just do the best you can.

PROSECUTOR
Again, Dr. Johnson, What did you do
after Mr Johnson threw you across
the table?

ANN
I was in shock and so I got up off
of the ground and kind of walked,
really stumbled, inside. I didn't
even notice the bruises until I was
inside. I went to go check on the
kids, to make sure they were OK and
hadn't heard their father yelling.
That's when I discovered he had taken
our son, Jason.

Man juror #2 glares at Paul, shaking his head.

PROSECUTOR
What did you think then?

ANN
Well, I was afraid for Jason.

Paul's mouth drops in shock.

JUDGE
Mr Johnson!

Paul jumps at the scolding tone and looks at the judge.

JILL
(whispering while
keeping an eye on
the judge)
You have to control yourself Paul.
He can have you removed.

Paul glances at Jill, then turns his head and stares into
the corner. Pain fills his face.

JUDGE
I'm sorry Dr. Johnson, please
continue.

ANN

(tries not to smile
at Paul's rebuke)

If he had done this to me, I just didn't know what he might do to a child. He was so drunk. I called the police. They came, and when they saw the bruises, they went looking for him. Fortunately, they rescued Jason before he got hurt, too. And they arrested Paul.

PROSECUTOR

Your witness.

JILL

Pass

PAUL

(suddenly alarmed,
whispering)

What? No questions? She's lying!

JILL

Trust me Paul. We're good.

PROSECUTOR

Prosecution calls Officer Owens to the stand.

104 INT. CRIMINAL COURTS ROOM - CONTINUOUS

104

Officer Owens stands at the stand, facing the Bailiff

BAILIFF

Do you swear to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you God?

OFFICER OWENS

I do.

PROSECUTOR

Officer Owens. You were the officer on the scene after the 911 call, is that correct?

OFFICER OWENS

Yes sir.

PROSECUTOR

Tell the court what you witnessed that night.

OFFICER OWENS

Yes sir.

(MORE)

OFFICER OWENS (CONT'D)

When I went to the door at 211 Terryland Drive, Mrs. Johnson answered the door. She appeared distressed, crying and visibly upset.

PROSECUTOR

Go on.

OFFICER OWENS

Well, she proceeded to tell myself and Officer Wilson that her husband, Mr. Paul Johnson, had thrown her down violently, causing bruising and scraping on her shoulder.

PROSECUTOR

Did you see the marks on her?

OFFICER OWENS

Yes sir, I did. I then photographed the marks on her shoulder.

Prosecutor shows the photographs to Officer Owens.

PROSECUTOR

Are these the photos you took?

OFFICER OWENS

Yes, they appear to be.

Jury looks like the trial is over, the defense can't contest these facts. Two jurors look at each other, one shrugs his shoulders, wondering why they are even there while the other sits back and crosses his arms.

PROSECUTOR

Let the court show these photographs as exhibit one. That will be all. Your witness.

JILL

Officer, at the time of the arrest, did Mr. Johnson appear intoxicated.

OFFICER OWENS

There was a slight smell of alcohol, but, no, I wouldn't call him drunk or intoxicated.

JILL

Dr. Johnson told the jury he was angry and out of control. Please tell us how you found the defendant.

OFFICER OWENS

He was entirely cooperative, and coherent at the time of his arrest.

JILL

I have to ask, Officer Owens, do you normally chase someone down and arrest them after the scuffle is over? I mean I've seen bar fights, and as long as the fight's over and someone agrees to pay for broken chairs and such, they usually let every one go.

Woman Juror #2 sits up, curious about the answer.

OFFICER OWENS

This was domestic violence. We can't be sure it's really over, so somebody has to go to jail.

JILL

Thank you, Officer Owens. That will be all.

PROSECUTOR

The prosecution rests, your honor.

JILL

The defense calls Paul Johnson.

105 INT. CRIMINAL COURTS ROOM - CONTINUOUS

105

Paul stands in the stand, facing the Bailiff

BAILIFF

Do you swear to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you God?

PAUL

I do.

JILL

State your name for the court.

PAUL

Paul Johnson

JILL

And what do you do, what line of work are you in?

PAUL

Well, when this happened I built and managed Ann's practice. That and take care of our kids.

JILL

You mean you'd pick them up from school to eat Ann's dinner and so she could get them ready for bed?

PAUL

(weak laugh)

Not hardly, I got the kids up and dressed and fed in the morning. I'd be at Ann's office until about 2:45, then I'd pick up the kids and help them with homework, take them to practice or wherever, and fix dinner. You know, the usual mom stuff.

JILL

You are not their mother, Paul.

Woman Juror #3

PAUL

No, but I've always been the one to take care of them. Ann worked hard all day and came home. It wasn't like she disappeared or anything. She was always there, but I took care of the kids.

Woman juror #1 is more attentive now, looks concerned.

PROSECUTOR

Objection your honor, this has nothing to do with the facts.

JILL

We'll move on, your honor. How long have you been drinking.

PAUL

(confused)

I ... I well, I mean I don't ... didn't drink. Since this all happened, seeing my kids hurt so bad, I've started having a drink before bed?

JILL

I mean before all this, when did your drinking start?

PAUL

I didn't really drink then, I mean, the tequila I was drinking that night, I think we'd had it for a year or so.

JILL

You want us to believe a man with the drinking problem the prosecution has labored on about, took a whole year to go through a bottle of tequila?

PAUL

Well, it was a big bottle.

JILL

(shaking her head)

I don't think you even know what I'm talking about. What other places did you drink? Bars, where?

PAUL

That's it. I see what you mean...
(looking a bit chagrined)
Kind of pathetic, I guess.

Man juror has a twisted, understanding smile and shakes his head.

JILL

So, Mr. Johnson, tell us what happened that night ...

106 INT. COURTHOUSE - DAY

106

Marti walks with Rosa toward John, Karen, and Cynthia who stand down the hall waiting for Paul to come out of the courtroom.

Marti stops Rosa before they get within earshot of the group.

MARTI

Rosa, I owe you an apology. I...

ROSA

No. Marti, you weren't entirely wrong.

MARTI

I was totally off base. I had no right to judge you like that.

ROSA

Thanks, Marti. You are some kind of person, you know that?

MARTI

No. I'm not. I'm as screwed up as anyone.

They start back down the hall.

ROSA

Maybe, but you have something none
of the rest of us have.

MARTI

What?

ROSA

Faith, Marti. I think all of us
could use more of what you have.
Maybe if I'd had it, I'd have found
another way out of my mess.

MARTI

It's not too late, Rosa.

They arrive with the others, look around nervously. Finally
John breaks the silence.

JOHN

(conspiratorially)

Marti, this doesn't look good. I
hate to say it, but I don't think
Paul is going to fare any better
against the system than I did.

MARTI

I know. Did you see that woman in
the flowered blouse? For a minute
there, I thought she was digging in
her purse for a rope to hang him
with.

JOHN

Yeah, she had room for the whole
gallows in there. Hah, that was
gallows humor. Get it?

CYNTHIA

(chagrined)

This is no time to make jokes, John.
Paul's in real trouble.

ROSA

Boys!

John grins sadly and nods. Paul walks out of the courtroom
looking glum.

PAUL

Hey. Well? What do you think?

MARTI

It's cool. Seems to me you've got
them eating out of your hand, man!

Paul, Marti, and John walk out of the building together.
Paul and Marti look very worried.

107 EXT. COURTHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

107

PAUL
Marti, could you take over coaching
the team for me?

MARTI
Why, man? You're the best coach
we've got.

John looks at Paul in disbelief.

PAUL
I don't think you've "got" me any
more. Looks like I'm sleeping
downtown tonight.

MARTI
Naw, man, they don't put you in jail
for this, do they?

John tries to look encouraging.

PAUL
Yeah, they do, Marti. I could spend
a year in jail. Oh, and here are my
keys.

Paul pulls his keys from his pocket.

PAUL (CONT'D)
(indicating one of the
keys)
This one's for the apartment and...
(indicating another)
This is for the car. Could you drive
it back to the dealership for me.
I'm not going to be needing it after
today.
(thoughtful pause)
I wonder if I can call my kids from
jail. I call them almost every day,
now.
(pause)
I don't know what I was thinking...
I signed a damn lease on my apartment.
Can you guys clear my stuff out,
store it in your garage? Some of it
is worth keeping.
(looking at John)

JOHN
Of course, man.

Jill walks up from the courthouse.

JILL
Have you got everything in order,
you know, just in case?

PAUL
Yes, Marti has all my keys.

JILL
Paul, you need to prepare yourself.
This judge handles all of the domestic
violence cases in this county because
he has an agenda.
(shakes her head)
He may not allow a probated sentence.
You could easily end up serving the
entire year.

Paul reacts.

JILL (CONT'D)
But you have to be convicted first.

Jill turns to go back inside the building. Marti stops her
with:

MARTI
Why did you let Ann get by with those
blasphemous lies?

JILL
(takes a breath as
she turns back to
address Marti, pauses)
I've watched some tough attorneys
that fight about everything.
Sometimes they win, too. But that's
just not me. And I win most of the
time.
We all have to figure out which pitch
we can knock over the fence, set up
the pitcher, and wait for it.

JOHN
What if your pitch never comes?

JILL
You hope for a walk.

PAUL
(watching the bailiff
approach)
Did we get the pitch we wanted?

JILL
 (sees the bailiff
 approaching)
 We are about to find out.

The bailiff walks up to Jill, says something and turns around.

MARTI
 That was fast!

JILL
 Sometimes that's a good sign....
 sometimes not so much...

They all rise to walk back in.

108 INT. CRIMINAL COURTS ROOM - DAY

108

Paul and Jill are sitting at their table. Paul's friends sit directly behind them. Ann stands confident at the back of the courtroom, ready for the sentencing phase to begin.

JUDGE
 Jury foreman, has the jury reached a verdict?

JURY FOREMAN
 Yes we have.

JUDGE
 Bailiff?

The bailiff walks over to the foreman and transports the verdict envelope to the judge. The judge reads it and hands it back to the bailiff who hands it to the reporter.

JUDGE (CONT'D)
 Please rise for the reading of the verdict.

Everyone stands. The bailiff moves closer to the defendant's table and puts his hand over the handcuffs on his belt.

COURT REPORTER
 We the jury, find the defendant Paul Johnson... not guilty

ANN
 What!

Ann turns and storms out. Cynthia chases after her.

CYNTHIA
 Ann! Wait!

PAUL
(grabbing the table
to keep from falling)
Thank God!

Jill and Paul cross the bar to his friends(John, Marti, Rosa, Karen) who all gather around him with big smiles.

JILL
The jury didn't believe a word she
said.

JOHN
Well, she was lying.

JILL
Yeah, they usually figure that out
if you don't get in their way.

Marti leans against the rail. His bandages are gone, but the scar is fresh and pink.

MARTI
Everyone else believed her, the judge,
the social worker - the district
attorney - and the jury saw right
through her.

Cynthia returns to the group. She makes eye contact with Marti and shrugs her shoulders.

JILL
That's how it is, Marti. Juries
figure out who is telling the truth.
Trying to be whomever you think you
are supposed to be never fools them.
In the end, they trust the guy who
is just being himself. Do that and
the system works...

MARTI
Well, it looks like the kids are
going to get their biology teacher
after all!

JILL
What's that?

PAUL
Yeah, I'm going to start teaching.

JILL
Well, then something really great
came out of all this!

Jill smiles, a very relieved Paul gets a small piece of his life back, surrounded by his friends.

109 INT. PAUL'S APARTMENT - DAY

109

Paul sits in a chair in his sparsely furnished apartment watching TV. It's something funny or entertaining and he smiles. A knock at the door. He goes to the door and opens it to find Jessie standing there.

PAUL

Precious!

He puts an arm around her and ushers her in.

PAUL (CONT'D)

What is it?

They move to the couch and sit together with his arm cradling her.

JESSIE

I can't take it any more. I just hurt all the time and I don't want to .. to anything anymore.

Paul is distressed as he picks Jessie up and puts her on this lap.

PAUL

I know honey. I love you so much. I know you hurt, but I'm so proud of how you are doing ... and how you are taking care of Jason.

Jessie is relaxed and safe on her daddy's lap and begins to open up.

JESSIE

That's just it, I can't, not anymore. Mommy says SHE wants to do it. She's taken over, at least, she tries, but it's not the same. He's in trouble at school all the time. I don't know what's wrong. And nothing I do is right any more. I want to stay here, with you.

PAUL

I want you here, too, but I don't get to decide that. I'm sorry. I want to do better, but this is all I can do.

They hold each other tighter.

A knock at the door startles them both. Jessie has a look of fear - she's cornered.

Paul gently separates from her and heads to the door as

JESSIE

No...

Ann bursts in as he opens the door.

ANN

Jessie had better not be here buster!

She sees Jessie, whips out her phone and dials 911. Paul notices she carries their temporary orders that say Jessie is not supposed to be with him now.

ANN (CONT'D)

Yes, I want to report a child abduction. My estranged husband has kidnapped my daughter and has her in his apartment. The address is

Ann steps outside the door to finish the call. Jessie and Paul stand just inside in shock.

JESSIE

Daddy, I can't take it. Please don't make me go home right now.

Paul puts his arms around Jessie's shoulders, she puts her head on his shoulder and cries.

CUT TO:

110 EXT. PAUL'S APARTMENT - LATER

110

Ann stands resolute at the railing outside Paul's apartment smiles when she hears a siren.

111 INT. PAUL'S APARTMENT - LATER

111

Paul sits on the couch with Jessie in his lap, arms wrapped around his neck.

PAUL

Precious, you have to go. Let's not make this harder than it has to be, okay?

JESSIE

(crying softly)

Okay... I... I'm sorry... I don't want to...

PAUL

No, no, don't be sorry munchkin.

There is a knock at the door. Paul picks Jessie up and puts her on the couch. He goes to the door and opens it to find Officer Owens. Ann stands, gloating, behind him.

OFFICER OWENS

Mr. Johnson, is your daughter, Jessie,
here with you?

PAUL

Yes?

OFFICER OWENS

Sir, I've examined your custody orders
and she's not scheduled to be with
you right now. I'm sorry but having
her in your possession without your
ex-wife's permission constitutes
kidnapping.

PAUL

What do you mean? Kidnapping?

OFFICER OWENS

I need to come in right now and return
your daughter to her mother.

PAUL

Yes sir.

Officer Owens enters the apartment and looks around.

OFFICER OWENS

And then I'll need you to turn around
and put your hands behind your back.

JESSIE

(screams when she
sees Officer Owens)

Noo! Nobody kidnapped me! I walked
over here by myself.

(weaker)

I just wanted to see my Daddy!

Jessie breaks into sobs.

ANN

I didn't say you could do that!
Officer, arrest him!

(pointing at Paul
with pleasure)

OFFICER OWENS

Wait just a minute....

ANN

Jessie get your butt in my car!
(looking at Officer
Owen with disgust)

She is in my custody and he took her
without my knowledge or permission.

OFFICER OWENS
That's not what your daughter says.

ANN
She's just a child. She has no say
in this!

PAUL
Ann! She's upset about something.
Give us some time to talk and I'll
bring her home in a bit.

ANN
Officer, I'm ordering you to enforce
these orders and arrest him.

OFFICER OWENS
Your daughter walked over here by
herself. I don't have any reason to
arrest him.

ANN
My car, now, little lady!

JESSIE
No.

ANN
Yes you will!

Ann pushes past Officer Owens, grabs Jessie's ear and twists
it as she drags her toward the door.

JESSIE
Owww! Owww! Mommy, stop!

OFFICER OWENS
Wooah! Wooah! Stop that right now!

A furious Ann stops and turns to Officer Owens in shock, but
doesn't let go of Jessie's ear.

ANN
Are you blind? He is inappropriately
intimate with my daughter. This has
to stop!

OFFICER OWENS
Let go of her. Now!

Ann defiantly lets go of Jessie's ear, but just drops her
grip to Jessie's collar. Officer Owens casts a hesitant and
unsure look back and forth from Ann to Jessie. Paul steps
over to Jessie and places one hand on her opposite shoulder
and one over Ann's hand.

PAUL

Let go of her Ann. You are hurting her. Just settle down so we can talk.

ANN

There is nothing to talk about, mister.

Jessie begins to sob and suddenly collapses. She weighs too much for Ann to hold up. Paul crouches and catches Jessie before she hits the floor. He swoops her up and turns his body between Ann and Jessie. This tears Ann's grip from Jessie's collar.

PAUL

Its OK Jessie. I've got you. It's OK, she's not mad at you.

ANN

Put her down! Now!

OFFICER OWENS

Ms. Johnson, what happens next is up to you. I have several choices here. One of which, is to arrest you for child abuse.

ANN

What! You can't do that!

OFFICER OWENS

Maam, I might just ignore this whole thing if you'll leave peacefully. But the DA has rules and I'm not really sure I can get away with NOT arresting you.

(turns to Paul)

What do you think I should do?

PAUL

I .. I don't know. I... no one's ever asked me... I want Jessie to stay here, tonight. I'll get her to school in the morning.

ANN

NOOO!, That is not what the orders say.

OFFICER OWENS

Maam, after what I've just seen, I'm not sure I can release your daughter back to you. I may have to call Child Protective Services to take care of her tonight.

PAUL

Noo, don't do that! Whatever you want. Just don't do that!

OFFICER OWENS

So, which is it? Do I call child protective services...

(looking pointedly at

Ann, and reaching

for his radio mic)

And don't you think I won't! Or we can just drop this whole thing.

ANN

FINE.

Ann starts to leave.

OFFICER OWENS

Wait. You have a son, too, where is he?

Paul shrugs his shoulders

PAUL

I don't know, with her mother, except...

(he turns to her)

ANN

He's in the car.

OFFICER OWENS

Would you please bring him in here?

Ann turns angrily as if to leave, then spins back, brighter.

ANN

Wait! I have a protective order, he is not allowed to spend time with the children unsupervised! You have to release them to me.

OFFICER OWENS

Do you have the orders?

ANN

No! Don't you?

OFFICER OWENS

Mrs. Johnson, if I can't see them, they don't exist.

ANN

What? No!

OFFICER OWENS

Remember, I can still arrest you for
child abuse and take the children to
protective services...

Ann storms out and the officer moves to the door to keep an
eye on her.

OFFICER OWENS (CONT'D)

Do they have any clothes here for
school tomorrow.

PAUL

Yeah, we can find something around
here.

OFFICER OWENS

I, I'm sorry I had to arrest you.
When we see marks or bruises, the DA
says someone has to go to jail.

PAUL

You could have asked me what happened.

OFFICER OWENS

She had the bruises, who do you want
me to believe?

PAUL

Yeah, just doing your job.

OFFICER OWENS

Some days it sucks.

Ann appears at the door, shoving Jason in front of her. She
is obviously verging on tears and hysteria. She shoves Jason
into the room. Her eyes focus on Paul and Jessie for a moment
and she flees in anguish and fear.

JASON

Daddy?

OFFICER OWENS

Ma'am! Ma'am?
(exits quickly,
following Ann)
Are you alright?

PAUL

Come here Jason.

JASON

Is mommy OK?

PAUL
(hugging his children
and staring concerned
at the closed door)
I hope so Jason. This is just hard
on all of us.

JASON
Yeah.

112 EXT. JOHNSON HOME - DAY

112

Paul stands at the door to Ann's house. Ann stands stiffly
in the door. He is confident and relaxed.

PAUL
What are you all pissed off about.

ANN
The disposal isn't working again.

PAUL
(pushing past her
into her house)
Yes it is.

113 INT. JOHNSON HOME - LATER

113

Paul reaches into the disposal and pulls out a bent fork.
He flips the wall switch to start the disposal, but nothing
happens. Without hesitating, Paul crouches under the sink
and resets the disposal overload switch. He flips the wall
switch again and the disposal starts.

PAUL
There, that will work as long as you
don't try to grind up any more
silverware.

ANN
(No response to having
her problem solved)
Hmmm, Kids, your father is here!

114 INT. JOHNSON HOME - CONTINUOUS

114

Paul walks to the front door, where Jason appears, dressed
in his baseball uniform. He gives his mother a hug, but its
like hugging a steel post. She puts her arms around him,
but, somehow they barely touch.

JASON
Bye Mom. I love you

Jessie comes in to view and gives her Mom a hug that goes
just like Jason's.

JESSIE

Bye Mom.

Ann closes the door as the trio leaves.

115 EXT. JOHNSON HOME - CONTINUOUS 115

Paul, Jason, and Jessie get in the car and drive off.

116 EXT. BALL PARK BLEACHERS - DAY 116

John and Karen, sit close together on the bleachers chatting about all of the things going on around them.

117 EXT. BALL PARK - DAY 117

Marti, Cynthia and their boys arrive in the car. They get out. Marti's scar is healing. Marti goes to the back of the van to get the ice chest and equipment. As he rounds the back of the car Cynthia is opening the hatch. Jackie, the boy Marti helped in the opening, this time in a Jaguar's uniform, snatches the bag before Marti can grab it.

BOY

I got it!

Marti's sons grab the rest.

JACOB

We got it dad.

Cynthia and Marti are intimate now, the distance between them is gone. They talk with each other and even laugh as they walk to the dugout. This time, Cynthia stays in the dugout and helps Marti.

Paul pulls up with Jessie and Jason. They get out and Paul unloads the gear and closes the car door. Paige appears with Spencer.

SPENCER

Hey Jason, wait up!

Spencer runs off to catch Jason.

Paige pulls the bat bag out of the trunk and throws it over her shoulder, grabs one end of the ice chest with a happy smile at Paul. Paul hesitates, relaxes, and smiles back at her.

118 EXT. BALL PARK BLEACHERS JOHN - CONTINUOUS 118

Dylan walks up with the correct uniform on. John doesn't see him, but Karen does and smiles at Dylan. John spins around,

JOHN

Hey Dylan, you look great.

KAREN

Say, Dylan, your Dad and I are going
out to eat after the game. You wanna
come?

John gives Karen a look like "Hey, why didn't think of that"
and turns with a hopeful look to Dylan.

DYLAN

Sure! Where are we going?

KAREN

Any place you want!

JOHN

(happy, almost glowing)
You ready to show'em how it's done?

DYLAN

(huge grin)
Nawh! I'm gonna' show them how I do
It!

119 EXT. BALL PARK DUGOUT - CONTINUOUS

119

At the dugout, Marti and Cynthia stand with an arm around
each other. They are smiling and talking to Paul and Paige.
Jessie stands nearby, staring at Paige with a concerned smile.

PAIGE

So, Paul, what are you doing after
the game.

PAUL

I was hoping to go somewhere quiet,
with you.

PAIGE

REALLY? How did you plan on pulling
that off?

PAUL

I'm waiting for the right pitch.

PAIGE

Seriously?
(flashing an inviting
smile)
How's this?

PAUL

That'll do.

PULL BACK ON PAUL AND PAIGE SMILING AT EACH OTHER