

The Re-education of Adam Fisher

Screenplay by

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Fade in:

EXT. CHICAGO SKYLINE - EARLY EVENING

A panoramic shot of downtown Chicago as we zoom in...

EXT. DOWNTOWN CHICAGO STREET

... on Adam Fisher(40), standing curbside, arm raised. A cab immediately slams to a stop. He hops in.

INT. CAB - CONTINUOUS

Adam's on his way to meet up with three long time friends for a boys' night out.

Strikingly handsome with a subtle, bespoke style, Adam radiates a natural, easy confidence. The kind that women notice out of the corner of their eye and men envy from a distance.

As successful as he is handsome, Adam is on the fast track at one of Chicago's A-list law firms. He's also in his own words..."a pathetic, twice divorced casualty of love".

CABBIE

Where to?

ADAM

Gravity, on North Broadway.

The cab takes off.

Close on Adam, lost in thought. He's not really in the mood for a night with his boys, but he's not one to cancel.

The streets of Chicago whirl by as the cab weaves through rush hour traffic, coming to an abrupt stop at the entrance to Gravity. Adam hands the Cabbie a twenty, gets out...

EXT. STREET/GRAVITY BAR - CONTINUOUS

...and enters the bar.

INT. GRAVITY BAR - CONTINUOUS

The Hostess, late 20s and beautiful, flashes a warm, suggestive smile.

HOSTESS

So nice to see you again, Mr.
Fisher.

ADAM

Nice to see you as well, Nicole...

Leaning in.

ADAM (CONT'D)

...and it's Adam.

Her eyes light up, loving the suggested intimacy.

ADAM (CONT'D)

Have my boys arrived?

NICOLE

Yes, just.

She gestures to a table close to the bar.

NICOLE (CONT'D)

Have a wonderful evening, Adam.

He locks eyes with her and smiles. From her POV: her gaze stays on him as he makes his way through the near capacity crowd.

Women smile as he passes, hoping to catch his attention.

Politely, he returns their smiles and moves on.

QUICK CUT TO:

INT. JUST A ROOM - TESTIMONIAL INSERT #1

A 40-something MAN (Man #1), sits uncomfortably on a stool.

An everyman, a bit pudgy, balding and dressed in what looks like his work uniform: cheap blue blazer, white shirt, gray pants, loafers. He's about to be interviewed.

MAN #1

How do you want me to begin?

INTERVIEWER (O.S.)

I'll ask you a couple of questions
and just tell me what you think.

MAN #1

Okay.

INTERVIEWER (O.S.)

Ready?

The Man Nods.

INTERVIEWER (O.S.) (CONT'D)

So tell me, when were you last in love?

MAN #1

(smiling nervously)

Wow...you're starting with an easy one.

(Beat, searching)

Well, it's hard to say exactly. Can you define what you mean by love?

QUICK CUT TO:

INT. GRAVITY BAR

As Adam winds through the bar crowd, he spots his friends. They wave him over.

There's Cam(39), advertising type, once divorced, resurrected romantic, set to propose to soul mate; Josh(38), tech consultant, single, never married, a love cynic, yet desperate to start a family; and Stephen(38), single, pudgy, middle management type and active on multiple dating sites.

Adam motions to the waitress for a round as he joins the table and conversation. She smiles, suggesting that she's familiar with Adam's preferences in drinks and other matters.

JOSH

(conspiratorially, to Adam)

Perfect timing as usual. A warning... the inner, raging Cam is with us tonight.

Adam smirks and sits back to enjoy the show.

CAM

(to Stephen)

Three? You can't be fucking serious.

STEPHEN

Hey, it's a numbers game. Each site is specialized.

STEPHEN (CONT'D)

(a smirk)

As they say in the lottery commercial, you can't win if you don't play.

Stephen holds up 3 fingers, touching each for emphasis as he describes...

STEPHEN (CONT'D)

One, is for Committed Relationships, which means that you can forget about scoring quickly. At least until you prove that you're not a psycho.

The waitress appears with the round. She smiles as she catches part of the conversation.

STEPHEN (CONT'D)

The second, Casual Dating, increases the odds considerably, because they're a bit confused and could go either way. And the third...Close Encounters...

CAM

(interrupting, laughing)

...Yeah, close encounters of the third kind.

The guys think this is very funny.

CAM (CONT'D)

Sex with the wife while hubby jerks off in the corner.

The guys laugh hard, except for Adam, who sits back, listening, enjoying his beer.

CAM (CONT'D)

Shopping online is just sad man. It's a numbers game all right. A numbers game of freaks, psychos and penicillin resistant STD's.

Cam and Josh laugh and fist bump, Stephen appears miffed, then smiles. He's used to Cam's aggressive ribbing. Adam sits quietly, listening, taking in the banter and the bar scene.

CAM (CONT'D)

I tried it once. I hate to admit it, but I did.

CAM (CONT'D)

During a bout of psychopathy and demonic horniness.

(laughing)

CAM (CONT'D)

Met a girl with hair so dirty I could have planted corn. I swear. Another one had a great profile pic, slim, attractive, said she liked to hike. I thought...perfect. I can learn to like hiking if the sex is good.

(enjoying this)

CAM (CONT'D)

We meet and she looks like Winston Churchill in drag.

They all laugh uproariously.

CAM (CONT'D)

You think I'm exaggerating? Round, pink and nearly bald. The only thing missing was the cigar.

(laughing)

She said she didn't have any current photos.

Cam and Josh clink beer bottles and drink.

STEPHEN

You should talk asshole, didn't you meet Julie on the subway?

CAM

I did, and it was the greatest day of my life. Our eyes met and it was fucking magic. Serendipity of the gods.

JOSH

Serendipity, yeah that's it. She probably thought you were some fucking nut-job off his meds.

Stephen thinks this is very funny.

CAM

As a matter of fact, she smiled first and that was it. I just knew.

JOSH
Knew what? That you wanted to bang
her.

Stephen and Josh are enjoying Cam's discomfort.

CAM
Laugh all you want. You pathetic
fuck heads wouldn't understand.

Pausing. Gesturing at the now packed bar.

CAM (CONT'D)
It's called real life. The way God
intended for man and woman to meet.

Cam turns his fire on Josh.

CAM (CONT'D)
And what about you? You're so
desperate to have a little Joshie,
you'd marry your fat cousin, or...

He points toward the bar.

CAM (CONT'D)
...her.

An overweight, self-conscious girl is standing at the bar,
surrounded by a pack of more attractive girlfriends.

JOSH
Hey, be nice. She's somebody's
daughter.

STEPHEN
Yeah, somebody's fat daughter.

CAM
(to Stephen)
You should talk.

Cam reaches over and pats Stephen's considerable belly.

Stephen doesn't appreciate it, swatting his hand away.

JOSH
Hey, I'm not looking for magic or
any serendipity bullshit, because
it DOESN'T FUCKING EXIST. Divorce
rates for first marriages are
nearly fifty percent and...are you
numb nuts listening... fifty-two
percent for second.

JOSH (CONT'D)

And of the forty-eight percent or so who actually stay married, how many are really happy?

He looks around the table. No takers.

JOSH (CONT'D)

I'd guess maybe, twenty percent. I'm not looking, hoping or waiting for fucking magic. I just want someone with good genes, a tight body, a decent bank account and a 'get along' personality. Forever love is a myth. A cloud that disappears before your eyes.

He flutters his fingers in the air.

CAM

That's very poetic.

Josh takes a long pull on his beer.

JOSH

And you know what? It lasts about as long as the warranty on a used car.

They all look at Adam, sitting quietly, nursing his beer.

CAM

(to Adam)

You're awfully quiet tonight. Don't you have anything to say?

ADAM

I'm amusing myself listening to you idiots.

CAM

Spread your wisdom or buy the next round.

Adam sits quietly, contemplating the challenge.

ADAM

Okay. I'll share if that will make you losers happy.

Adam looks around at the smirking faces.

ADAM (CONT'D)
 I'd rather masturbate... AND...
 I'll buy the next round.

The guys look at one another before breaking into uproarious laughter, while Adam casually gestures to the waitress for another round.

JOSH
 You'd rather what?

ADAM
 You heard me. I *said*, "I'd rather masturbate".

CAM
 That's it? That's all you've got to say? I'd rather masturbate. What... here?

The guys think this is very funny. Adam doesn't.

ADAM
 Yeah, here you moron. I'm just saying, I'd rather masturbate.

They boys are silent, waiting, as Adam leans back and casually sips his beer. From Adam's POV: we see the amused, bewildered faces of Cam, Josh and Stephen.

ADAM (CONT'D)
 What? I think it's self-explanatory.

They continue to sit and stare. Not a word.

ADAM (CONT'D)
 I'm just saying, that for me, I'd much rather masturbate than ever get involved with another woman.

He calmly takes a sip of his beer.

ADAM (CONT'D)
 As a matter of fact, after drinks tonight, that's exactly what I'm going to do...

From Adam's POV: cringing faces all around.

ADAM (CONT'D)

...and then, I'm going to go to sleep for eight glorious, uninterrupted hours. Alone and happy.

The guys look at one another concerned that their friend, their hero, may be losing it.

CAM

So, you're telling us that you, Adam Fisher, who every man secretly wants to be and who every woman wants to fuck, would rather masturbate...

Cam looks as though he's tasted something foul.

CAM (CONT'D)

...than taste the sweetness of a beautiful woman, ever again.

Cam points to the bar.

CAM (CONT'D)

You would rather go home alone and do the nasty than have one of these lovely honeys in your bed tonight?

The guys all look toward the bar.

Close on a few stunners.

Adam locks eyes with one seated at the bar. He smiles and she returns it.

She's seated just a few feet away, close enough to catch the table banter. (Her name is Chiara; we'll meet her later).

ADAM

Yes. Absolutely.

STEPHEN

You're fucking with us, right?

ADAM

(growing frustration)
You guys are all looking for true love or that special woman who ticks off all your boxes.

Growing more impassioned.

ADAM (CONT'D)

That soul mate who will stand by
you and love you no matter what.
Give you perfect, beautiful
children, tell you you're brilliant
and that she orgasms every time you
touch her. Well, I hate to shatter
your pathetic, cotton candy dreams,
but it's a con. It's not real and
never has been.

Adam sits back and sips his beer.

They stare at him in silence, wanting more.

ADAM (CONT'D)

(still irritated)

By believing in this crap, you're
setting yourselves up for a
lifetime of financial ruin and soul
destroying pain. You might as well
flush your money and your manhood
down the toilet.

The guys continue to sit in stunned silence. The waitress
arrives with more drinks. Adam smiles and mouths his thanks.

She gives him a seductive smile. The guys notice and roll
their eyes. Adam takes a long pull on his beer.

ADAM (CONT'D)

Are you guys going to sit there
with your mouths open all night or
are we going to enjoy ourselves?

CAM

Oh no you don't. You're not getting
off the hook that easy. You can't
say something like that and just
sit there.

Adam stares at a waiting Cam.

ADAM

Alright.

With a look of playful disgust.

ADAM (CONT'D)

I'll play. What do you borderline
defectives want to know?

CAM

All of it. You're either shittin'
us or there's a very disturbed man
impersonating our friend Adam.

STEPHEN

Not one of these lovely ladies
would look twice at me...

Gesturing toward the packed bar area.

STEPHEN (CONT'D)

...whereas you, Adam Fisher, could
have any one of them. If you've
dropped out, then I give up.

Adam sighs, looks into the demanding, hungry eyes of his
boys, then leans forward in his seat.

ADAM

I've been married twice for a
combined total of 6 years. Lost
probably a million and an apartment
in each divorce and am literally
starting over at the age of forty.

Pausing to gather his pain memories.

ADAM (CONT'D)

Both of my wives hit the lottery
when they married me. Each was
stunningly beautiful. Neither had a
real career or income to speak of
and today...

Looking off.

ADAM (CONT'D)

...they're living their dream. On
to the next fool.

(looking to the heavens)

Thank God we didn't have kids...
otherwise I'd be chained to them
for the rest of my pathetic life.

He takes a long pull on his beer and sits back in his seat.

ADAM (CONT'D)

That pretty well sums it up.

The guys look at one another, smirking, amazed. They're
having fun, because their friend, their hero, Adam Fisher,
never gets personal. They can smell blood.

ADAM (CONT'D)

If I hadn't gotten married, the sex would have been better and definitely more plentiful and I'd still have my money. I've learned to spot the insanity.

He gazes at the beauties at the bar.

ADAM (CONT'D)

I used to look at a beautiful woman and want her desperately.

Pausing. Gathering memories.

ADAM (CONT'D)

It was powerful, irrational really.
 (remembering)
 I'd undress every inch of her with my eyes. The image in my mind was so vivid. I could feel the coolness of her skin. Now...
 (Beat)

ADAM (CONT'D)

...I only see the bat shit insanity hiding behind her eyes.

He looks around the table. The guys are so riveted they've stopped drinking.

ADAM (CONT'D)

That insanity will ruin you. And it always comes out. Always. With some women it's immediate. The desperately needy can't hold it back. On the third date they're asking you where the relationship is headed.

Smiling at a memory.

ADAM (CONT'D)

I remember one asked me that on our third date, and I looked into her eyes and calmly replied...
 "tonight, this relationship is headed to the movies".
 (laughing to himself)

ADAM (CONT'D)

She didn't appreciate my attempt at humor and burst into tears.
 (Beat)

ADAM (CONT'D)

With others, it's three months, six months, or at the airport on the way to Cabo.

Adam takes an easy sip of his beer, grabbing the memory.

ADAM (CONT'D)

Now that's a treat. You've just spent ten grand on a week in paradise and you're looking into the eyes of an unbalanced, needy, raving lunatic, and you haven't cleared customs.

Flash to the face of a beautiful, yet very angry woman.

Back to Bar.

ADAM (CONT'D)

You ask her what's wrong and she just glares at you with those unhinged, watery eyes. You know, those Hilary Clinton killer eyes.
(thoughtful pause)

ADAM (CONT'D)

It's there. It's always there. It's just a matter of when.

JOSH

Hey, man. You're just going through a phase. You'll snap out of it.

ADAM

(irritated)

I'm not going through any phase. I've just finally opened my eyes.

Looking around at the bar patrons.

ADAM (CONT'D)

I bet half the men in this bar have given away more to women than they're worth today.

Becoming more impassioned.

ADAM (CONT'D)

The new hidden poor that the stats don't catch. Divorced, middle-aged men.

(gesturing toward bar)

Take a good look at them.

ADAM (CONT'D)

They make a respectable six figures, pay nearly half in taxes, drive expensive cars, look good and go to all the right places. But, they're cash poor and probably deeply in debt. They're two paychecks away from ruin, but the worst thing is, they don't know who they are anymore. They've given away their manhood. They've chosen a life that will chip away at them, day-by-day, until there's nothing left. Not a trace left of what might have been...

(looking off)

ADAM (CONT'D)

...what should have been.

From his POV: his stunned, speechless friends, hanging on every word.

He points to a well-dressed, good looking Guy(mid- 40's) standing at the bar.

Close on Guy.

ADAM (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Take that guy for example. Looks good, dresses well, probably works out with a personal trainer a couple times a week at a hundred a pop. But I guarantee you, he's a shell of the man he should be.

Back to table while Guy remains in b.g. A knowing look crosses Adam's face.

ADAM (CONT'D)

I'd wager he's divorced at least once with a second in his future. Probably has two kids in private school at a minimum of twenty thou a piece and headed for college in three or four years.

Calculating in his head.

ADAM (CONT'D)

Let's see, that's another fifty grand a year for each kid, and that's if they go to a state school.

(MORE)

ADAM (CONT'D)

And an ex-wife who's taken him back
to court two or three times for
more. Look at him.

Back to guy at bar, on the prowl.

ADAM (O.S.) (CONT'D)

He's still hustling. His life is
slipping away and the really sad
thing is, he doesn't see it.

Just then the Guy at the bar makes his move on a beautiful
thirty-something woman standing nearby. He walks up to her
and smiles; she returns it and they begin to talk.

He takes out his credit card and hands it to the bartender.

Martinis appear like magic and the hustle begins.

Adam and the guys watch the unfolding hustle. Adam sits back
and smiles.

ADAM (CONT'D)

See ...once again, the dance of
personal destruction begins.

He takes a long pull on his beer.

ADAM (CONT'D)

Just think of all the money and
time we waste because our needy
pathetic selves can't control our
dicks.

He sips his beer and sits back reflectively.

ADAM (CONT'D)

It starts at thirteen and doesn't
stop until we die, broke and filled
with regret.

Just as he says this, a beautiful woman standing at the bar
throws him a suggestive smile. The guys see it and react.

Adam returns it.

ADAM (CONT'D)

See what I mean. When I look at
her, all I see is the insanity
behind the beauty.

CAM

What I see is a gorgeous woman
wanting to jump your bones.

ADAM

(sadly)

A year ago, I would have moved
heaven and earth to get her into
bed. Now...?

A world weary shake of his head.

ADAM (CONT'D)

A woman like that will destroy you.
She's in here trolling for that
special guy who will change her
life.

Adam finishes his beer, then signals the waitress for another
round. The guys sit silently, waiting for more.

ADAM (CONT'D)

You're not gonna leave me alone are
you?

He looks into the eyes of his smirking, eager friends.

ADAM (CONT'D)

Okay, I'll tell you a story.

A far away look crosses his face as he gathers memories.

ADAM (CONT'D)

The dance started when I was
thirteen and madly in love with
Monica Dobkin. She was the most
beautiful girl I had ever seen.

EXT. SCHOOLYARD PLAYGROUND - PAST - DAY

ADAM(13) and friends TREVOR(13) and KEVIN(13) are astride
their bicycles hanging out and talking when a group of young
girls walks by.

Kevin and Trevor awkwardly try to look cool as the girls
pass.

Adam, without a trace of boyish shyness, locks eyes with one
of the girls (strawberry blonde hair and bright red sweater)
as she gives him a sweet smile. The girls head to the nearby
swings and jump on.

KEVIN

Should we go over?

TREVOR

Are you nuts. What are we going to say to them?

Adam looks at the girls who are now beginning to swing and laugh as they look over at the boys.

ADAM

Who's the one in the red sweater?

TREVOR

I think her name is Monica or something. She's new I think.

Without further discussion, Adam, with bike in tow, walks over to the girls. In b.g. his buddies watch in amazement.

When Adam reaches the girls, they all stop swinging, one giggles. He locks eyes with Monica and leaning on his bike, strikes up a conversation.

ADAM

Hi.

MONICA

Hi.

ADAM

I'm Adam.

MONICA

Monica.

Adam gives her a confident, sweet smile.

ADAM

See you around Monica.

He then casually walks back to his buddies who look at him with a new found respect.

Angle on the girls who sit in silence taking in what they just witnessed, then start giggling.

TREVOR

So?

KEVIN

What'd she say?

ADAM

Nothing much. Just, "hi".

KEVIN

Just, "hi"? I can't believe you did that. Holy shit.

ADAM

You were right, her name is Monica. Let's get outta here.

With that, they hop on their bikes and pedal away at full speed.

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - PAST - NEXT DAY

A busy Junior High hallway between classes with students horsing around, opening lockers and rushing off to the next class.

Adam is walking with Kevin when he spots Monica and a group of girls approaching. He locks eyes with a smiling Monica as she passes.

KEVIN

Did you see that? She smiled at you.

Kevin turns to look at the girls.

KEVIN (CONT'D)

I think she likes you.

ADAM

You go ahead. I'll see you in class.

Adam turns and heads in the direction of Monica.

KEVIN

(yelling)

You're gonna be late.

Adam catches up to Monica and taps her on the shoulder.

She turns and faces him, smiling sweetly. The other girls stand speechless, holding their breath, waiting.

ADAM

Hi, Monica. I was wondering if you'd like to catch a movie with me on Saturday?

Monica's girlfriends are wide-eyed, silent.

MONICA
I'd like that, Adam.

ADAM
Great. There's a matinee that starts at one. Can I pick you up at noon?

Monica and Adam are eye locked.

MONICA
Okay. But you don't know where I live.

ADAM
(smiling)
That was my next question.

MONICA
946 Highland Avenue.

ADAM
I know where that is. So, I'll see you Saturday then.

MONICA
See you.

Adam turns and walks away. Close on Adam. A satisfied smile crosses his face. In b.g., Monica stands smiling, watching Adam as he walks away, while her girl friends squeal and giggle with delight. The late bell RINGS.

INT. BAR - PRESENT

The guys sit silently, waiting.

JOSH
So? Is that it?

Adam looks at Josh with annoyance.

ADAM
No, but that's the day the destructive power of so called love entered my life.

A full face shot of a smiling 13 year-old Monica.

ADAM (V.O.)
 I fell head over heels in love.
 Monica was the most beautiful girl
 in the world and she wanted to be
 with me, Adam Fisher.

EXT. RESIDENTIAL STREET - PAST - DAY

MONTAGE of young Adam with V.O. by older Adam.

Young Adam on his bike delivering newspapers.

ADAM (V.O.)
 I quickly realized I needed to earn
 some cash. I had a paper route and
 I cut a few neighbor's lawns, but
 it wasn't enough.

Adam cutting a neighbor's lawn; the neighbor handing a \$5
 bill to a smiling Adam.

INT. YOUNG ADAM'S HOUSE - PAST - DAY

Mom showing Adam how to operate the washing machine and fold
 laundry.

ADAM (V.O.)
 So I asked my mom how I could earn
 a few extra bucks. She showed me
 how to do the laundry and vacuum. I
 even did the dishes and I hated
 doing the dishes.
 (Beat)

Adam vacuuming the living room rug, washing dinner dishes.

ADAM (V.O) (CONT'D)
 I wanted to be with Monica every
 waking minute. Take her places, buy
 her things. What the hell did I
 know. I was thirteen and head over
 heels in love.

INT. DINER - PAST - DAY

Adam and Monica sharing a plate of fries and a Coke. Looking
 into each other's eyes as Adam puts a \$5 bill on the table.

ADAM (V.O) CONT'D
Male survival instinct baked in
after fifty-thousand years of
chasing our dicks. I knew I had to
prove myself. It was a test of my
manhood.

EXT. MINIATURE GOLF PARK - PAST - DAY

Adam and Monica playing miniature golf. She makes a put and
hugs him. Close on a smiling Adam.

INT. MOVIE THEATER - PAST - DAY

Adam and Monica at ticket wicket. Adam puts a \$5 bill down
and grabs the tickets.

ADAM (V.O)
It was magical. I'd never felt
anything so powerful. I was out of
control in love.

INT. HOUSE, LIVING ROOM - PAST

Adam and Monica sitting close on the couch. He hands her a
small gift wrapped box. She looks at it, excited, then opens
it. Close on box: it's a gold heart locket necklace.

She throws her arms around a beaming Adam.

ADAM (V.O)
I had a real girlfriend and we were
going steady.

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - PAST - DAY

MONTAGE of young Adam with V.O. by older Adam.

Adam and Monica walking down the hall holding hands.

ADAM (V.O)
It was like, one day I woke up and
the world was different. Suddenly,
the whole school thing was easy. I
was no longer invisible.

Adam standing with a group of boys/girls laughing.

ADAM (V.O) (CONT'D)
 People talked to me. I was invited
 to parties. Girls that used to
 ignore me, now smiled at me.

A cute girl walking by flashes a smile.

ADAM (V.O) CONT'D
 I felt like I was in an alternate
 universe until one day, just before
 Christmas break, my world came
 crashing down. I'll never forget
 it. December 19th, three o'clock.

Adam and Kevin are walking down the bustling school hallway.
 Christmas decorations hang on the walls.

ADAM (V.O)
 Classes had just let out for the
 day and I was walking with my buddy
 Kevin.

From Adam's POV: he sees Monica walking toward him with the
 arm of a much bigger 9th Grader(15), draped around her neck.

ADAM (V.O) (CONT'D)
 That's when I saw her. She was with
 a ninth grader, a football player.
 When she passed, she didn't even
 look at me.

Close on Monica, then on her heart necklace as she passes.

Adam stands stunned as she walks by without a glance. He
 watches her back as she walk away, heartbroken, devastated.

ADAM (V.O) (CONT'D)
 But I looked. She was wearing my
 necklace with another guy's arm
 draped around her neck.

INT. BAR - PRESENT

Adam pauses in his story. A faraway look in his eyes.

CAM
 So, what'd ya do?

ADAM
 Nothing. What could I do? She
 ignored me after that.

(MORE)

ADAM (CONT'D)

I heard that she said she just didn't like me anymore. She said older guys were 'cooler'.

QUICK CUT TO:

INT. ROOM - TESTIMONIAL #2 - DAY

A WOMAN (Woman #1), 30-something, attractive, stylish, sits on a stool about to be interviewed. She has a confident, no-nonsense air.

INTERVIEWER (O.S.)

So tell me, what are you looking for in a man.

WOMAN #1

Well, first off, he has to be good looking and fit. If he starts out good looking, he has a better chance of not turning into a fat slob. You know what I mean.

Pausing, thinking.

WOMAN #1 (CONT'D)

Also, he has to be successful. Maybe not rich, but that would be nice. He has to make enough so that we can travel and have a nice place in the city. Maybe even a country home.

INTERVIEWER (O.S.)

What about you?

WOMAN #1

What about me?

INTERVIEWER (O.S.)

Do you also need to be successful? Contribute to the travel fund, the place in the city, the country retreat?

WOMAN #1

(not liking the question)
Well, of course. But to be honest, I don't want to work forever. I expect my man to take care of things. I'd like to have the time to enjoy life.

INTERVIEWER

So, what would happen if it didn't work out that way? Say, he lost his job, went broke, had to start over.

WOMAN #1

I have no interest in being a martyr. I watched my mother sacrifice all her life, grow old and die unhappy.

(thoughtful pause)

That's not for me.

QUICK CUT TO:

INT. BAR - PRESENT

Adam takes a sip of his beer.

ADAM

I never got the necklace back.

JOSH

Wow. Tragic. What a way to pop your love cherry.

ADAM

(smiling)

Yeah, but there was justice in the end.

Pausing to savor the memory.

ADAM (CONT'D)

Little did I know then that Monica Dobkin would peak at thirteen.

Chuckling to himself.

ADAM (CONT'D)

I've since learned that for most women, beauty has an expiry date. That rare woman gets more beautiful with age. Most don't. By the time we graduated, Monica was two hundred pounds, had a face full of pimples...

Close on an unsmiling 200 pound Monica.

Back to bar.

ADAM (CONT'D)
 ...and I, Adam Fisher, was off to
 Princeton.
 (smiling)
 Cosmic justice.

He raises his glass to the the gods.

STEPHEN
 Wow. I was still picking food out
 of my braces at seventeen.
 (smiling)
 My mother says I was a classic late
 bloomer.

CAM
 (to Stephen)
 I always liked your mother's sense
 of humor.

All laugh. Cam leans forward to challenge Stephen.

CAM (CONT'D)
 So, Mr. Close Encounters, tell
 us...when was your first, real, hot
 kiss date? And cousins don't count.

STEPHEN
 (looking at his watch)
 How much time do I have?

All laugh at a smiling Stephen.

STEPHEN (CONT'D)
 What can I say? I've been saving
 myself for the perfect girl.

ADAM
 See! I rest my case. Brainwashed
 and stupid.

Adam takes a pull on his beer and takes notice of the
 beautiful woman sitting at the bar (Chiara), just a few feet
 away.

She locks eyes with him, studying him, then smiles.

JOSH
 (to Adam)
 Okay, so you're a jaded, broken man
 and it's all because of Monica.

Josh stands, beer in hand.

JOSH (CONT'D)

I'd like to propose a toast to
Monica, now living with Jimmy Billy
Bob in a double-wide with four kids
and a fridge full of beer and pizza
pops.

The guys laugh and raise their beers.

JOSH (CONT'D)

To Monica, wherever you are, with
your trail of crushed hearts and
broken box springs.

Looking down at Adam.

JOSH (CONT'D)

Thank you for humbling this man,
otherwise he would have grown up
even more obnoxious than he is.

All laugh and raise their beers in toast, even Adam.

ALL

To Monica.

They all lose control with laughter, including Adam. People
standing at the bar look over.

STEPHEN

I want more. This is just getting
good.

Adam sits grinning. He's beginning to enjoy this.

STEPHEN (CONT'D)

(pleadingly, to Adam)

We'll sit absolutely quiet and
listen. Right guys?

He looks at Cam and Josh for agreement. All enthusiastically
Nod yes, grinning.

ADAM

Alright, you assholes. But I'm not
sure your pathetic, 'love me,
please love me' ears will be able
to handle the unvarnished, raw,
painful truth.

He looks around the table at the smiling, eager faces.

Stephen, Josh and Cam begin to chant.

ALL
More... more...more.

The ruckus attracts the attention of bar patrons. Adam gestures for his boys to keep it down.

ADAM
The mob has spoken. It's bread and circuses time.

INT. PRINCETON UNIVERSITY, LIBRARY - PAST - DAY

MONTAGE WITH V.O. BY OLDER ADAM

A spacious Study Hall with rows of tables. A young Adam(19), sits alone studying, books open, absorbed in his work.

The Hall is filled with students and dead quiet except for the occasional cough, whispered voice.

ADAM (V.O)
When I went off to Princeton, my world changed overnight. I felt like I'd landed on another planet. At first, the hardest thing to handle was that I was no longer the smartest kid in class.

A packed lecture hall with Professor lecturing, Adam and another 100 students busily taking notes.

ADAM (V.O) (CONT'D)
Everyone was smart, really smart. Well, except maybe for some of the rich legacy guys.

A Porche convertible speeds by with a smiling, handsome guy at the wheel and beautiful co-ed.

ADAM (V.O) (CONT'D)
Dumb as stumps, but they had great cars and if they liked you, lots of daddy's money to spread around.

Campus setting: Close on two cute, smiling co-eds walking by.

ADAM (V.O) (CONT'D)
The other thing I immediately realized was that really smart girls love to fuck. Who knew?

One of the same 'walking girls' going down on Adam amidst the library stacks.

Close on a euphoric Adam as he looks around for prying eyes.

ADAM (V.O.)

I wish I'd known that in High School. I soon realized that they were as curious as they were horny. One girl, from Wisconsin, used to study my penis like it was an artifact she'd just dug up.

A wholesome looking girl in bed with Adam, glasses on.

ADAM (V.O) CONT'D

A new discovery that would change mankind.

Wisconsin girl pulling the sheets off Adam for a good look, smiling.

ADAM (V.O)

She went on to med school. Stanford, if I remember. I read somewhere that she's a top plastic surgeon in Los Angeles, teaches at UCLA.

Wisconsin girl under covers smiling at a happy Adam.

ADAM (V.O) (CONT'D)

I told her to look all she wants. At nineteen, when a girl wants to study your cock, well, you never say no.

(thoughtful pause)

I think undergrad was the last time I really felt free.

A happy Adam in a campus pub with friends.

ADAM (V.O) (CONT'D)

It was four years of uncomplicated. No shit, no real world demands...

Young Adam digging spare change out of his pocket, counting it, looking discouraged.

ADAM (V.O) (CONT'D)

...except for the inconvenience of always being broke.

(MORE)

ADAM (V.O) (CONT'D)
 Thankfully, I discovered that most girls just wanted to have fun. Their daddies had money. They didn't need mine.

Adam catching the eye of a beautiful co-ed in a lecture hall.

ADAM (V.O) (CONT'D)
 If you delivered, you were in demand. Word got around.

Adam in bed with that same co-ed. We only see her happy face as Adam is at work under the sheets. She orgasms with a loud squeal. Adam's head pops up from down under, damp and triumphant.

ADAM (V.O) (CONT'D)
 Most of the girls had even bigger plans than the guys. They were off to study law or medicine or Cal Tech for a PHD. They wanted to run the world.

Close on a Female Student in packed lecture hall. Big glasses and furiously taking notes.

Same Female Student in chem lab, wearing lab coat and protective glasses.

ADAM (V.O) (CONT'D)
 The last thing they wanted was a clingy, needy boyfriend. It was fucking perfect. One of the best fucks I ever had is now Under Secretary of State for Asian Affairs.

Adam and Co-Ed (Under Secretary) vigorously fucking.

ADAM (V.O) (CONT'D)
 Every time there's a crisis in China or North Korea, she pops up on CNN or Morning Joe.

Same Woman (older) on T.V.

ADAM (V.O) (CONT'D)
 She still has that look. They never lose that look.

INT. BAR - PRESENT

The guys are on the edge of their seats, afraid if they move or speak, he might stop.

Lost in his memories, a wistful smile crosses Adam's face.

ADAM

One of these days, I just might
look her up. See how she's doing.

Adam sits back. He's done.

CAM

So?

ADAM

What?

CAM

You can't stop there. Those were
the good years. We want to hear
about the shit, the carnage, the
tears.

Adam looks at his watch, gives a look of playful disgust,
then signals to the waitress for another round.

ADAM

(sighing, then smiling)
I don't know why I waste my time
with you guys. I feel like I'm
teaching a ninth grade Special Ed
class.

The guys are excited. This is much more than they expected.

INT. CHICAGO STREET - PAST - DAY

MONTAGE of 20-something, law student Adam, walking down a
busy street, briefcase in hand.

V.O. By older Adam.

ADAM (V.O.)

After undergrad, I came back to
Chicago for law school. I loved it
and I was good at it. The law came
naturally to me.

Adam in a packed lecture hall taking notes on laptop.

Adam in law library.

Adam in suit, shaking hands with a dapper, silver haired man.

ADAM (V.O) CONT'D

Third year I was recruited by
Cresswell Marks. Life was sweet. I
went from broke student with one
suit to my name, to working at the
best firm in Chicago. And when I
wasn't pulling a seventy hour week,
I was having a blast.

Adam sitting at a big conference table with other young
lawyers and piles of documents.

Adam out at a Bears game with friends.

Adam at dinner with a beautiful woman, then, in bed with the
same woman.

ADAM (V.O)

My life was exactly where I wanted
it to be. Then one day, when I
thought I had life all figured out,
I turned left when I should have
turned right, and everything
changed.

INT. SAKS DEPARTMENT STORE, COSMETICS DEPT. - PAST - DAY

30 year-old Adam is strolling through the aisles.

As he passes the various sales counters, attractive sales
reps smile, hoping to catch his attention and pull him in.
Adam politely returns their smiles, but continues browsing.

Then, he comes face-to-face with the most beautiful woman he
has ever seen. And she smiles.

A cross between Rita Hayworth in her prime and Gal Gadot:
tall, brunette, big eyes and stunning.

ADAM (V.O.)

I remember the first time I spotted
Claire. My first wife if any of you
have forgotten. I'd never seen
anything so beautiful.

Close on her beautiful, gleaming, sincere smile.

ADAM (V.O)

She smiled at me with those
gleaming white teeth and the
biggest brown eyes I had ever seen.
I was powerless to turn away.

CLAIRE

(to Adam)

Are you looking for something
special?

Adam pauses, considering his response.

ADAM

Yes... I hope so.

ADAM(V.O.)

I was really there to buy something
for a woman I was seeing, but I
wasn't going spoil my chances with
this one.

CLAIRE

Something for your wife? Your
girlfriend?

ADAM

(pausing, searching)

No, actually for my Aunt Sylvia.
She's alone now and has been so
kind to me over the years. I'm
worried about her. I just want her
to feel alive again.

Claire looks into his eyes.

CLAIRE

Oh, that is so beautiful. She's
lucky to have such a loving nephew.

Claire is genuinely moved; her eyes glassy with tears.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

I think I know what she might like.

She reaches below then places two sample fragrances on the
counter.

ADAM (V.O.)

For a second I actually felt
guilty. My little lie had brought
tears to her eyes.

CLAIRE

Both of these are for the mature woman, but still sexy and fun.

Adam is captivated. Claire seductively sprays one on her left wrist and delicately waves it in the air before presenting it to Adam for a sniff.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

See if you like this one. It has hints of citrus, light, not overpowering.

Adam leans over and smells her wrist, lingering longer than necessary.

ADAM

Oh yes, that's very nice. I think Aunt Sylvia would love that.

She sprays the second fragrance on her right wrist and waves it around, then extends it toward Adam.

CLAIRE

Now try this one. Flowery, but still light and fun.

Adam leans in for a lingering sniff.

ADAM

You're right. I can smell the flowers. You certainly know your fragrances. I don't know what I'd do without your help.

He flashes a smile and she returns it.

ADAM (V.O.)

That was it. I bought the flowery one for Aunt Sylvia. It cost me five hundred, but it was worth it.

Adam hands his business card to a smiling Claire.

ADAM (V.O.) (CONT'D)

I gave her my card and said if she felt comfortable having lunch at a restaurant of her choosing, to call.

(Beat)

ADAM (V.O)
She did, the next day, and it was
fucking magic. Life was sweet, very
sweet.

INT. BAR - PRESENT

The guys are hanging on Adam's every word. Adam has paused, smiling at the memory when Stephen breaks the silence.

STEPHEN
So, what about your Aunt Sylvia?
Did she like the perfume?

Everyone looks at him like he's the most clueless guy in the world.

STEPHEN (CONT'D)
What? What'd I say?

CAM
There is no Aunt Sylvia you moron.

STEPHEN
Why? What happened to her?

Adam looks at him in disbelief and laughs. The guys all join in including Stephen.

STEPHEN (CONT'D)
I don't get it. What's so funny?

The guys settle down, Adam continues.

ADAM (V.O.)
The first few months with Claire
were amazing. She wasn't just
beautiful, she was wonderful. Life
was good. Sunsets were more
beautiful. Hallmark cards had
meaning. And sex was a religious
experience.

MONTAGE with V.O.

Adam and Claire holding hands, watching the sun set.

Adam selecting a Hallmark card and smiling as he reads it.

Adam and Claire in bed, spent, sweaty, happy.

ADAM (V.O)
I thought I'd hit the jackpot.

Adam in a crowded meeting at Cresswell Marks. Files stacked on boardroom table.

ADAM (V.O) (CONT'D)

I'd just made partner, barely into my thirties. The youngest ever at Cresswell Marks and, I had the girl of my dreams. I remember actually thanking God for my good fortune.

Adam and Claire out for dinner. Close on a very happy Adam.

ADAM (V.O) (CONT'D)

So I did what every stupid man does...I proposed.

Adam down on one knee. Close on the BIG ring.

ADAM (V.O) (CONT'D)

The ring cost me thirty grand and the wedding, she wanted a big one, you were all there so you remember. It cost me another fifty.

Adam and Claire at the alter tying the knot in a big church wedding.

Adam and Claire's first dance at lavish wedding reception with smiling guests looking on.

ADAM (V.O) CONT'D

But I thought it was all worth it because it made her happy.

(thoughtful pause)

'Happy'. Now that's an interesting word. What the hell is 'happy' anyway?

INT. BAR - PRESENT

Adam pauses. Thinking.

ADAM

Everybody expects that someone else is going to make them 'happy'. The ruination of all relationships.

He takes a sip of his beer.

ADAM (CONT'D)

And then, like clockwork, six months after the wedding, the insanity started.

Close on an angry, watery-eyed Claire.

INT. ADAM AND CLAIRE'S APARTMENT - PAST - NIGHT

Adam enters after a long day at the office, briefcase in hand. He sets the briefcase down, hangs up his raincoat and calls out.

ADAM
Honey, I'm home.

Not getting an answer, he walks into their beautiful, modern kitchen to find Claire standing at the island, in the dark, wineglass in hand.

ADAM (CONT'D)
There you are.

He turns on a light and he walks over to give her a kiss, she turns her head, causing his lips to brush her cheek. Adam looks at her quizzically, wondering what's up.

CLAIRE
Where were you? You're sixty-three minutes late.

He looks at her, concerned, then smiles playfully.

ADAM
Exactly sixty-three? You're sure it wasn't sixty-four?

She doesn't like the playful sarcasm.

ADAM (CONT'D)
I got side-tracked at the office. It happens. A Partners' meeting went a bit late.

CLAIRE
You have a cell phone.
(Beat)
This is the seventh time you've been late this month. The first time it was ten minutes, then fifteen...today it's sixty-three.

ADAM
(Treading carefully)
Okay. Hey, I apologize. It's New York. Everybody's late; it's in the water.

He smiles trying to crack her anger, but she continues to look at him with dagger eyes. She drains her wine glass.

CLAIRE
(losing it)
And this kitchen, it's
embarrassing!

She looks around, distraught, her anxiety accelerating.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)
What am I supposed to do with this
island? It's only six feet long.
It's useless. Everyone knows that
you need at least ten feet for
entertaining.

Tearing up.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)
We can't have people over with a
six foot island.

Her hysteria is growing.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)
We'd be the laughing stock of New
York.

ADAM
(smiling, playful)
Well, maybe not all New York.

She glares at him, not appreciating his attempt at humor.

Adam feels like he stepped into an episode of the Twilight Zone. He gently takes her hands, forcing her to look into his eyes.

ADAM (CONT'D)
Hey, it's just a silly island.
We'll redo the kitchen if that will
make you happy. You're my wife.
I want you to be happy. That's all
I want. This measly six foot island
is gone, vamoose, good riddance.

He looks into her eyes. She lightens, flashes a kitten smile and moves in to kiss and hug a bewildered Adam.

CLAIRE
Thank you. I knew you'd understand.
See what a little talking can do.
These things are important.
(MORE)

CLAIRE (CONT'D)
We're not just any couple you know.
We're Claire and Adam.

With that she gives him another kiss, then turns and leaves the kitchen.

Adam stands stunned, wondering what in the hell just happened.

Montage with V.O.

ADAM (V.O.)
That was my first, up close
experience with the crazies.

Claire at kitchen island chopping vegetables with a big knife in hand.

Adam, standing close, says something she doesn't like. She stops chopping and glares at him. He looks down at the knife.

ADAM (V.O.)
Everything would be going along
fine and then, she'd get what I
came to call the 'wild eye'. When I
saw it, I knew that I'd be in for
at least a week of nuts.

Claire supervising contractors ripping out the kitchen island.

ADAM (V.O) (CONT'D)
Our first kitchen remodel ended up
costing me thirty grand. And when
it was done, she found what she
thought was a blemish in the new
ten foot granite island top.

Claire inspecting the new 10 ft. island top, smiling, happy, when she suddenly spots a blemish(an irregularity in the pattern).

She studies the blemish from every angle then grabs a cloth and frantically, irrationally, begins to rub it, hard, then stops.

Tears of frustration fill her eyes.

ADAM (V.O) CONT'D
She obsessed about it for weeks.
Finally, I couldn't take it any
longer. It cost me another six
grand to replace it.
(Beat)

Claire stands watching, as workers install a new granite top.

ADAM (V.O)

I kept telling her that natural granite had imperfections. That's what makes it beautiful, one of a kind, just like her. She didn't buy it. That was the beginning of what I now affectionately refer to as my first deep dive into self-destruction.

Claire supervising and directing a workman as he hangs wallpaper in the bathroom. He glances at her like she's nuts.

ADAM (V.O) CONT'D

After the kitchen remodel, it was the bathroom, then the bedroom, then back to the kitchen.

Claire roaming the apartment looking for things that needed doing. Claire watching workmen as they rip out the kitchen cupboards.

ADAM (V.O)

She decided she had to have white cupboards. Apparently someone told her that white would make the room look bigger, more New York. What ever that fuck that means. After six months, she'd want to do it all over again.

A very serious Claire inspecting the new kitchen cupboards and island, wineglass in hand.

ADAM (V.O) (CONT'D)

She'd see something in a magazine. A new 'in' color, or fucking designer wallpaper she just had to have.

Claire on the couch looking through a decorating magazine, attaching post-it notes as she scans pages.

ADAM (V.O) (CONT'D)

It was nuts. I was going broke. It began to affect my work. I couldn't focus. She'd call or text me every hour to check up on me or suggest new ways to spend money.

Adam at work in his office when his cell phone rings. Close on phone...it's Claire. He lets it go to voicemail.

ADAM (V.O) (CONT'D)
 A bed and breakfast weekend; a
 summer rental for only twenty thou
 a month. A "bargain" she said.

Adam and Claire standing on a beach looking back at a
 magnificent summer rental. Claire smiling; a worried looking
 Adam.

ADAM (V.O) CONT'D
 And to top everything off, when
 she'd have one of her episodes,
 there'd be no chance of sex.

Claire and Adam lie in their king sized bed, far apart.

ADAM (V.O)
 I was married to a crazy woman,
 going broke *and* not getting laid.

INT. BAR - PRESENT

The guys are on the edge of their seats.

JOSH
 So, what'd you do?

ADAM
 I filed for divorce.

JOSH
 Shit. We know that. I mean, what'd
 you do next?

Adam shakes his head at the memory.

ADAM
 Well...stupid me. I thought we
 should try marriage counseling. It
 seemed like the mature thing to do.

Looking off. Thoughtful.

ADAM (CONT'D)
 You know, sit down with a neutral
 professional and see what happens.
 What could possibly be wrong with
 that?

INT. ROOM - TESTIMONIAL #3

A young married Couple (Couple #1, mid-20's), are seated on side-by-side stools, smiling and holding hands, obviously in love.

INTERVIEWER (O.S.)

So, how long have you been married?

MAN

Six months.

WOMAN

We were engaged for a year though.
We wanted to be sure.

INTERVIEWER (O.S.)

So, are you? Sure?

They look at one another and smile.

WOMAN

Absolutely. We were meant to be together. He's the love of my life. My lobster.

MAN

(sweet smile)
And she's mine.

INTERVIEWER (O.S.)

So, you're newlyweds, both in your twenties. Everything must be new and exciting. Your vows, 'til death do us part', still fresh in your minds. But here's an interesting fact: the average life span for a man today is seventy-eight years and for a woman, eighty-two.

The Woman smiles and giggles, looking at her husband.

WOMAN

I always tell him we're the stronger sex.

INTERVIEWER (O.S.)

That means, if you both make it to the average age, you'll have fifty plus years together.

He pauses to let it sink in.

INTERVIEWER (O.S.) (CONT'D)
 Fifty years of conversation with
 the same person, sex with the same
 person, meals with the same person.

The Woman smiles at her husband, then lovingly rests her head
 on his shoulder.

The young Man's expression, as he digests this sobering
 information, goes from calm, to mild concern, to quiet panic
 behind the eyes.

INT. CAR - MOVING - PAST - DAY

Adam and Claire are on their way to their first counseling
 session.

CLAIRE
 I don't know about this. Telling a
 stranger about us, Claire and Adam.
 About our secrets.

ADAM
 Sweetie, he came highly
 recommended. Hey, if you don't like
 him, we'll find someone else.
 I think it'll be good for us. A
 professional, objective
 perspective. How can it hurt?

Claire looks at him, smiles sweetly and rests her head on his
 shoulder.

CLAIRE
 You're so good to me. I found my
 prince and I'm never going to let
 him go.

Close on Adam: he smiles, followed by a flash of anxiousness.

INT. MARRIAGE COUNSELOR'S OFFICE - PAST - DAY

Adam and Claire are seated in the waiting room holding hands.

Suddenly, a door opens and DR. Klopperfield enters. He's in
 his 50's, short, balding and radiates a nerdy, self-absorbed
 confidence.

DOCTOR
 Mr. and Mrs. Fisher?

ADAM

Yes.

DOCTOR

Please come in.

Dr. Klopperfield holds the door as they enter his office.

Once inside, he introduces himself.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)

Miles Klopperfield or Doctor for short.

Klopperfield smiles at his playfulness. They shake hands.

ADAM

Thank you for seeing us Dr. Copperfield.

DOCTOR

Klopperfield.

ADAM

Sorry?

DOCTOR

It's Klopperfield. A common mistake. The Klopperfields have roots in Austrian royalty dating back to the fifteenth century. Not to be confused with the Vegas magician.

Pausing for effect.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)

Although, I have been accused of being a magician from time to time.

The Doctor giggles at his cleverness and motions for them to sit.

As Claire settles into her chair, she crosses her spectacular legs and flashes the Doctor a warm smile. He returns it.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)

(getting serious)

I've been doing this for over twenty years. Six hundred and fifty-two couples to be exact.

Pausing to make eye contact with an attentive Claire and Adam.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)

You are my six hundred and fifty third couple and I assure you, I'm as excited by the healing process today as I was with my first.

Claire smiles while Adam looks uneasy, getting a weird vibe from the doctor.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)

And over that time, I've developed my own revolutionary techniques. I don't tip toe around issues or play games. I like to dive right into the deep end and see who can swim. I'm actually writing a book about my methods which I've called The Klopperfield Experience.

He pauses to let that sink in.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)

So, let's dive in, shall we? Mrs. Fisher, why are you here?

Claire looks at Adam and immediately begins to tear up. The Doctor hands her a box of tissues; she takes one, smiling her thanks.

CLAIRE

I feel like I'm married to a stranger.

Adam looks at her, surprised, then as he begins to say something...

...the Doctor holds up his hand.

DOCTOR

Mrs. Fisher, please continue.

CLAIRE

He's mad all the time. I'm afraid to say anything. He comes home late without even a phone call and, he hasn't touched me in weeks.

One minute into the session and Adam is already uncomfortable. This is not going as hoped.

Claire adjusts herself in the chair, uncrossing and recrossing her spectacular legs as she dabs at her eyes.

DOCTOR

Mr. Fisher, how do you respond to your wife's feelings?

ADAM

(a bit defensive)

Claire, come on. You know that's not right.

DOCTOR

(a scolding tone)

Mr. Fisher, let's take that word... 'right'...

Pausing for effect.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)

...right out of our discussion. It's not a matter of right or wrong. It's about 'real'. So Mr. Fisher, being 'real', are you often late without calling?

Adam pauses, locking eyes with the Doctor.

ADAM

If I'm being 'real', then yes, occasionally, I am late.

Looking over at Claire.

ADAM (CONT'D)

I'm a partner in a busy law firm and it's New York. Who isn't late once in a while?

Claire continues to dab at her teary eyes.

DOCTOR

But we're not talking about what other people do. We're talking about Adam and Claire.

A bit scolding, patronizing.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)

Congratulations on your partnership Mr. Fisher, but does being a partner mean that you've forgotten how to use your cell phone?

CLAIRE

That's all I ask Adam. Just a little consideration.

Adam glares at the smug, pinched face of Dr. Klopperfield, who again passes the box of tissues to Claire.

As she leans over to take one, she exposes a bit of cleavage.

The good doctor notices.

ADAM
(calm, direct)
You're right, honey.

Then glaring at the Doctor.

ADAM (CONT'D)
Or should I say 'real'.
In the future I'll call if I'm
going to be late. Even five
minutes. I promise.

Claire reaches over and squeezes his hand.

DOCTOR
Now, that wasn't so difficult.

Adam stares at the Doctor, who is very pleased with himself.

ADAM
Worth every penny.

DOCTOR
It's often what we consider the
small things that are trigger
moments in a marriage. We all carry
a deep well of unease or discontent
within us. It's unavoidable. It's
life. But, its the little things...
like being chronically late,
unnecessarily abrupt or
uncommunicative that trigger the
explosions. If we can control the
triggers, we can reduce the
explosions, allowing us to dive
deep into the well. Into the pain,
the anger, the resentment.

The Doctor grabs a pad and pen from a side table and writes something. Adam looks at him like he's a certifiable nut job.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)
Sorry, sometimes what I say
surprises even me.

Writing madly.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)

My editor insists that I write down what he calls 'flashes of brilliance' for my book. We plan to begin each chapter with a flash.

Adam glares while Claire smiles.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)

Now, where was I? By being 'real', we get to the heart of what I call the three W's. The What...the Who...the Why. Now, let's talk about your anger Mr. Fisher.

Close on Adam: cold, killer eyes.

INT. BAR - PRESENT

The guys look at one another. They're enjoying this.

ADAM

The fucking Klopperfield Experience cost me three grand before I pulled the plug. That smug little pervert couldn't take his eyes off my wife's legs. Claire thought he was empathetic and brilliant, so I did what all weak men do, I kept my mouth shut and went along. Anything to calm the crazy.

(thoughtful pause)

ADAM (CONT'D)

It taught me a hard lesson.

Looking off toward the bar at a group of beautiful women.

ADAM (CONT'D)

When something isn't right, it just isn't, and never will be. There's absolutely nothing you can do to make it right.

CAM

I just have to say, crazy maybe, but she was an absolute stunner. I envied you, man.

ADAM

Another piece of advice. Never envy anyone.

(MORE)

ADAM (CONT'D)

If you knew the truth about their lives, the shit behind the curtain, you wouldn't want it. Believe me, most people spend their whole lives trying to hide the shit.

JOSH

But you had a prenup, right?

Adam pauses, a flash of embarrassment.

ADAM

No...I didn't. Stupid, I know. I'm a lawyer for fuck sake. I learned later, the hard way, with my second marriage, that even so called 'air tight' prenups can be broken or 'reworked' by a five hundred dollar an hour matrimonial lawyer. But no, I didn't ask Claire for one.

Sitting back. Frustrated by the memory.

ADAM (CONT'D)

Why would I, I was in love. I didn't want to hurt her feelings.

INT. LAW OFFICE BOARDROOM - PAST - DAY

Adam, Claire and their Lawyers sit across from one another.

CLAIRE'S LAWYER

Just to summarize. My client gets the apartment, valued at \$1.5 million, a lump sum of \$250,000 and a monthly sum of \$6,000 for a period of one year, to provide her adequate time to freshen her workplace skills and get back on her feet.

Adam's lawyer looks over at Adam, who Nods his agreement.

Adam and Claire lock eyes. She smiles with a tear in her eye; he sits stone faced.

ADAM (V.O.)

I felt as though I'd been royally fucked, rolled through the dirt and fucked again, and she just sat there, smiling innocently, with a tear in her eye.

(MORE)

ADAM (V.O.) (CONT'D)

It was quite a performance. She was set and she knew it.

They sit in silence as the lawyers pass documents between themselves.

ADAM (V.O)

The winning lottery ticket for women is to marry well. Put up with three or four years of marriage to the right guy and walk away financially independent.

Claire and her Lawyer get up and exit the room without a word or goodbye. Adam just sits, pissed, numb, unbelieving as his lawyer begins to pack up. Close on Adam: his sad eyes dance with emotion.

INT. BAR - PRESENT

ADAM

She was a sale's clerk for God's sake and she gets a monthly allowance so that she can freshen her workplace skills? On top of the apartment and a quarter mil.

(Beat)

She sold perfume for fuck sake.

Adam stares at nothing in particular, remembering. The guys are silent, affected by Adam's emotion.

STEPHEN

That's brutal man. I had no idea. She seemed so nice.

Adam gives him a 'if you only knew' look.

ADAM

'Nice'. Now that's an interesting word. I've learned that 'nice' is a conditional state of mind. Make me happy and I'll be nice. Make me happy and I'll blow you...maybe. Make me happy and I won't drive you insane. The impossible task is figuring out what makes them happy. Clothes, cars, trips, flowers, sex? Ten foot islands?

He takes a sip of his beer.

ADAM (CONT'D)

I'll give you one more example of
bat shit crazy.

A sour smile at the memory.

ADAM (CONT'D)

I used to bring flowers home every
Friday night.

MONTAGE with V.O.

Adam shopping for flowers at an outdoor market, carefully
selecting just the right ones.

Adam happily walking down the street with briefcase and big
bouquet in hand.

ADAM (V.O) (CONT'D)

You know, a nice bouquet, usually
ran about fifty bucks. It was my
thing. I enjoyed it. Friday night
in Manhattan, a beautiful woman
waiting, the promise of great
things. I guess I must have missed
a few Fridays. You know, you get
busy. Stressed out from a tough
week. Bottom line, I forgot the
damn flowers.

Claire turning here cheek as Adam goes in for a kiss.

Claire and Adam silent at the dinner table.

ADAM (V.O) (CONT'D)

She just stops talking to me. Not a
word. I ask her what's wrong and
she says 'nothing', absolutely
nothing'. I came to hate that word
'nothing'.

Claire, distant, chin pulled in, lips tight, uncommunicative.

ADAM (V.O) (CONT'D)

When she said it, she always pulled
her chin in and pursed her lips.
So, like the weak, pathetic fool I
was, I kept asking her what was
wrong. Please tell me what's wrong.
Did I do something to upset you?
She kept saying 'nothing', so I
dropped it.

Claire with distant, glassy eyes.

ADAM (V.O.)

Then one night she gets that look
in her eyes and I know something's
coming.

Claire losing it on Adam, then locking herself in the
bathroom. Adam knocks on the door. In frustration, he rests
his head on the closed door.

ADAM (V.O)

From not talking to me for weeks,
she explodes. Starts screaming that
I don't love her anymore. That I've
lost interest. That I'm cold and
heartless.

INT. BAR - PRESENT

ADAM

I was stunned. I'd just booked a
trip to Paris for her birthday.
Five star all the way and she goes
homicidal on me.

The guys look at one another, smirking. They're really
enjoying this.

ADAM (CONT'D)

You think this is funny? I learned
to hide the big knives when she got
like that. After an hour of off the
charts crazy, end of the world
hysterics, she finally tells me
that she was devastated that I
forgot to bring home flowers. That
I didn't love her any more. Can you
believe that shit? I forget two
weeks out of fifty-two and...

Emotional, he pauses before proceeding.

ADAM (CONT'D)

...you guys just keep looking for
some nice girl to love and make
happy. My advice to you is
simple...

ADAM (CONT'D)

...good fucking luck. But be sure to hide your manhood, your wallet and whatever self-respect you've managed to hold on to, because she'll take everything. And you won't notice until it's too late.

Cam attempts to lighten the mood.

CAM

So what. You made a mistake.

Cam looks at the other guys with a smirk.

CAM (CONT'D)

Well, maybe 'mistake' is the wrong way to put it. Let me rephrase it. You made a ginormous cluster fuck of a mistake and wasted the best years of your life. Hey, it happens.

The guys all laugh. Adam smiles.

ADAM

Gee, thanks.

CAM

My pleasure. It's what I do.

JOSH

From what I remember, you didn't waste any time moving on. Wasn't there a Miranda?

CU image of a stunning redhead.

STEPHEN (V.O)

Yeah, Miranda. Wow. Beautiful. Like, really beautiful. Red hair, tall.

Looking off at his memory.

STEPHEN (CONT'D)

Man, I was jealous. Every time I saw you, there was a new beauty on your arm. I think that's when I stopped thinking that life was fair and that God loved me too. It isn't, and He doesn't.

Adam laughs. The mood at the table has returned to fun. He signals the waitress for another round.

CAM

That was touching, but it only takes us to two-thousand twelve.

CAM (CONT'D)

We still have six years and another 'love of my life' marriage to cover.

Adam looks at the guys, who are demanding more.

ADAM

(Playfully disgusted)

God, this is painful.

(smiling)

I'm teaching a master class on Shakespeare to a bunch of illiterates.

He takes a long pull on his beer, gathering his memories.

ADAM (CONT'D)

After Claire, I got back to basics.

INT. ADAM'S OFFICE - PAST

MONTAGE with V.O.

Adam at his desk working late into the night. The lights of Manhattan are seen in the b.g.

ADAM (V.O.)

I also worked my ass off. After Claire, I had to rebuild my client roster and my reputation within the firm.

Adam speaking at a Partners' meeting.

ADAM (V.O)

She'd been such an emotional vampire that I'd lost my focus. I also made the decision to get back in the game, so I fucked as much as humanly possible.

Adam in bed with a beautiful blonde woman.

Adam in bed with a beautiful Asian woman.

Adam in bed with a beautiful black woman.

ADAM (V.O) CONT'D
I had to find out if I still had
it. Thankfully, I did. She hadn't
stolen that in the divorce.

Adam lying back in bed with a sleeping woman, smiling after a
job well done.

Adam at a bar ordering a drink as a beautiful woman glances
his way.

ADAM (V.O)
Looking back, it was as close to
perfect as a man's life can get. I
made a shit load of money and got
back in shape.

INT. FITNESS CLUB - PAST - DAY

Adam working out in spinning class.

A contorted Adam smiling at a dripping wet woman in hot yoga.

ADAM (V.O) CONT'D
What could be better...right?
Claire got the apartment so I
decided to shake things up. I moved
to Brooklyn.

Adam viewing an apartment with Real Estate Agent and shaking
hands.

ADAM (V.O)
It was perfect.

Adam casually dressed shopping for groceries and wine.

ADAM (V.O) (CONT'D)
I was back. I felt like a man again
and it was fun.

Adam entering his apartment with wine and groceries in hand,
placing them on the kitchen island. Opening the fridge,
grabbing a beer, popping the cap and taking a long,
satisfying pull. Smiling to himself. Life as it should be.

ADAM (V.O) (CONT'D)
My mojo, my brain, my desire to
kick ass was back. Adam fucking
Fisher was back.
(MORE)

ADAM (V.O) (CONT'D)
 That pathetic fool who'd been
 missing in action, wandering around
 trying to please, make people
 happy, was back.

Adam alone on his apartment balcony overlooking Brooklyn. A
 look of wistfulness.

ADAM (V.O) (CONT'D)
 But, as time passes, you begin to
 forget about the shit.
 (laughing)
 There's a great Star Trek episode,
 at least I think it's Star Trek,
 where this guy is all alone flying
 around in space...

Star Trek footage to play.

ADAM (V.O) CONT'D
 ...I can't remember exactly how it
 goes, but every time he gets
 lonely, weepy and stupid, thinking
 about how much he misses his sweet,
 beautiful wife, he plays a video to
 remind himself of exactly what he's
 left behind on planet earth.

Laughing.

ADAM (V.O) CONT'D (CONT'D)
 It's of his wife in curlers, with a
 cigarette hanging from her mouth,
 screaming and telling him that he's
 a pathetic loser.

Adam walking down a busy Manhattan street, perfectly dressed,
 briefcase in hand. A man in supreme control.

ADAM (V.O)
 The truth is, as time passes, you
 get soft, lazy. That's the danger
 point, because that's when you
 begin to remember only the good
 parts. You forget the shit.

He grabs a newspaper from a street vendor, glances at the
 headlines and puts it under his arm. Continues walking.

Happy.

ADAM (V.O) (CONT'D)
 You believe that you've learned
 your lesson.

Adam walks by a beautiful woman. She smiles. He casually returns it.

ADAM (V.O) CONT'D
 That you'll never again be seduced
 by beauty or the touch of cool skin
 under the sheets. That your
 'insanity' meter has been fine
 tuned to detect danger and that
 you've tamed the stupid in you.

Adam enters an office building through a revolving door, greets the security guard, confidently walks through the busy lobby and enters a waiting elevator.

ADAM (V.O)
 Let me give you the most important
 piece of advice you will ever hear.

Adam in a crowded elevator. Close on a confident, happy Adam.

ADAM (V.O) (CONT'D)
 If you forget the pain, the shit,
 the insanity, you will repeat it.
 And when that happens, you will
 have no one to blame but your
 sorry, pathetic self.

As we pull back to reveal a smiling, confident Adam surrounded by blank faces.

ADAM (V.O) (CONT'D)
 That pain that you try to run away
 from... is your best friend. Keep
 it close and keep it alive.

He exits the elevator into the reception area of Cresswell Marks...

INT. RECEPTION - CRESSWELL MARKS - PAST - MORNING

...and greets Tara(20s), the Receptionist.

ADAM
 Morning, Tara.

TARA
 (smiling)
 Good morning, Mr. Fisher.

TARA (CONT'D)
 You're nine o'clock is in
 conference room B.

Adam smiles his thanks and without breaking stride, continues down a long hallway and enters his large, corner office.

He sets his briefcase down, looks at his watch and exits, walking down the corridor to Conference Room B. As he grabs the door handle: FREEZE Shot.

ADAM (V.O.)

There are moments in life that you wish you could do over or just cancel altogether. For me, entering Conference Room B that morning was one of them. The meeting was with a new client prospect.

UNFREEZE shot.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM B - PAST - CONTINUOUS

Adam pushes the door open and enters. Three people are seated around a conference table: Adam's Partner(Male, 40s), the Prospect(Man, 50s) and his Assistant, Stephanie(28).

Close on Stephanie.

ADAM (V.O.)

That was the day I met Stephanie. She was stunning. Also a bit shy. You know, one of those rare women who isn't really aware of just how beautiful she is. She shakes my hand and smiles and I was lost. The smarter, wiser, tougher Adam Fisher turned into a drooling, horny, love sick little boy. It was Monica Dobkin all over again.

Stephanie is tall, blonde and stunning, with the innocent freshness of a young Christie Brinkley and the exotic heat of Gigi Hadid.

Handshakes all around and the meeting begins. Adam's Partner and the Man converse as Adam and Stephanie lock eyes and smile.

QUICK CUT TO:

INT. ROOM - TESTIMONIAL #4

A Woman, early 60s (Woman #2), sits on a stool.

Confident, well put together. The look of money with a little too much botox.

INTERVIEWER (O.S.)

Ready?

WOMAN #3

I'm ready if you are honey. Fire away.

INTERVIEWER (O.S.)

O.K., let's begin.
Can you tell us how many times you've been married?

WOMAN #2

(matter-of-fact)

Three.

INTERVIEWER

Can you tell us a little about each?

WOMAN #2

Sure. The first was Anthony or Tony. Tony was old school. He believed that women should know their place and stay there. He was in construction and by the time he passed, he'd built up a sizable business.

She crosses herself.

WOMAN #2 (CONT'D)

Tony had a massive heart attack on the toilet. Can you beat that? Just like that Sopranos episode. He was a prick, but left me in good shape. I sold the business for a couple mil.

(thoughtful pause)

The second was Carl, a dentist, who, as I discovered on the honeymoon, liked to role play..if you know what I mean. A nice enough guy, but I got bored and the weirdness just got weirder. I ended that one. Did okay financially.

WOMAN #2 (CONT'D)

The third was Kevin, a real estate broker, very successful, full of life. I really liked Kevin, maybe even loved him.

She crosses herself again.

WOMAN #2 (CONT'D)

He died in a skiing accident. Collided with a tree. You know...just like Sonny Bono. I'm still in court with his three shit head kids. They're trying to take my share. They don't have a chance. I had him rewrite his will the day we got married. It's iron clad and my lawyer's a pit bull..

She sits smiling.

INTERVIEWER (O.S.)

So, will you do it again?

WOMAN #3

What? Marriage?

(laughs)

I'm set money-wise, so this one would have to be for love. If love walked into my life, even at my age, who knows. No one wants to be alone. I've learned to never say never.

CUT TO TO:

INT. BAR - PRESENT

Adam pauses in his story. His buddies look at one another then at a silent, reflective Adam.

JOSH

Hey, if this stuff is too painful, we can just forget it.

CAM

No way. You can't stop there. That'd be like turning off Titanic right after they hit the iceberg.

Adam looks at him for a long moment before a big grin appears. The guys all wait in anticipation.

ADAM

Stephanie and I began dating. God,
we saw each other almost every
night.

INT. RESTAURANT - PAST - NIGHT

Adam and Stephanie seated in an intimate cafe, talking,
drinking wine with love in their eyes.

ADAM (V.O.)

She had a freshness, a lightness
that was all her own. Like she'd
never been touched by
disappointment or pain. I'm telling
you, it was intoxicating.

INT. BEDROOM - PAST - NIGHT

Adam and Stephanie in bed. Close on Adam. Gently, then
passionately kissing her.

ADAM (V.O.)

When I kissed her it was cool and
hot at the same time.

Adam and Stephanie in bed, spooning on Sunday morning.

ADAM (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Sunday was our day. We'd lie in bed
until noon and then go for a late
brunch.

INT. RESTAURANT - CONTINUOUS

The two enjoying a bistro brunch with a bottle of white wine.

ADAM (V.O.)

And the great thing about Stephanie
was that the relationship didn't
take away from my work. Not a first
anyway.

INT. CRESSWELL MARKS - PAST - DAY

Adam and a young Female Lawyer seated at a conference table
covered with files.

ADAM (V.O)

I was actually more focused. Happy. People at work began to notice. One of the junior female lawyers said that Stephanie had turned me into 'less of an asshole'.

Adam smiles at a junior female lawyer seated across from him.

ADAM (V.O.)

I thanked her for the compliment. I was a happy man, so I did what all happy, needy, stupid, insecure men do, I proposed.

INT. CHURCH - PAST- DAY

Adam and Stephanie being married. The church is packed.

Adam is a happy man as he raises her veil for a kiss.

ADAM (V.O) CONT'D

Once again, fool that I am, I insisted on paying for the wedding. She came from a working class family. I knew the wedding would break them.

(pause)

A piece of advice, resist the urge to be the hero. It will cost you. After the wedding, we were off to Bora Bora for what I thought would be a magical two weeks.

INT. PLANE - PAST - DAY

Adam and Stephanie seated in 1st class, sipping champagne, goo-goo eyed, in love.

ADAM (V.O.)

I booked one of those huts over the water. You know the ones you see in the commercials.

INT. BORA BORA - PAST - DAY

Adam and Stephanie enter their Bora Bora hut on the water.

ADAM (V.O)

I thought we'd wake up each morning, dive off our balcony and swim before breakfast.

Adam looks around excitedly then walks onto the balcony, taking in the breathtaking view. He flashes a mischievous smile at Stephanie, strips off all his clothes and dives in, excitedly motioning for her to join him. She waves him off and re-enters the hut.

ADAM (V.O) (CONT'D)

What could go wrong? The ocean at our doorstep, a spectacularly beautiful, sweet wife. Nothing to do but swim, fuck, eat and fuck again.

Close on a disappointed Adam as he treads water.

ADAM (V.O.)

Treading water, alone in that beautiful, idyllic, magical lagoon, that was my first 'oh shit' moment. Every marriage has hundreds of 'oh shit' moments, but they shouldn't happen on the first day of your fifteen thousand dollar honeymoon in Bora Bora.

INT. BAR - PRESENT

Adam sits quietly. The guys are barely breathing, waiting.

ADAM

On that trip I discovered that Stephanie really doesn't like the water. I guess it never came up in conversation. A girl from Iowa. She said water was for irrigation. You'd think she would have said something when I booked fucking Bora Bora.

(sighing)

ADAM (CONT'D)

Then, she caught some intestinal crud the second week and spent the remainder of our magical love fest in bed. Not her fault I know, but still...

Stephanie in bed. Adam, not happy, looking in from the balcony.

ADAM (V.O.)

...over the next year, I learned that she was a hypochondriac, always thinking she had the latest malaise. Zika, shingles, IBS. When she thought she might be coming down with Ebola, I knew I had a serious problem on my hands.

Stephanie on the couch watching a pharmaceutical commercial on TV and taking her temperature. Not liking the result, she shakes the thermometer and repeats.

ADAM (V.O)

She'd see one of those stupid drug ads on TV, you know the ones where everyone is happy and running through a field of poppies. She was convinced she had whatever disease they were pitching.

Adam and Stephanie in bed reading, Adam reading a thick history on Franklin Roosevelt, Stephanie reading US magazine with Star Magazine and Enquirer scattered on the bed. Adam looks over at an engrossed Stephanie, then resignedly, resumes reading.

ADAM (V.O) (CONT'D)

I also figured out that she hadn't read a real book in years, pretended to like sushi for my benefit and used the word 'like' to start every other sentence. And, she quit her job. She said she wanted to do something to help people. Her humanitarian ambitions lasted about a month... she never worked again.

INT. BAR - PRESENT

Close on the sympathetic faces of his buddies.

ADAM

I know what you're thinking. How could I not see these things before I closed the deal?

Looking off.

ADAM (CONT'D)

I've asked myself that same question a thousand times and the only answer I can live with is...I was stupid in love. The key word there, stupid.

Adam finishes his beer. Cam signals the waitress over.

CAM

Four bourbons. Make them doubles.

The waitress smiles and exits. Silence around the table.

ADAM

Getting married is like cliff diving without looking to see if there are any rocks below.

INT. ADAM AND STEPHANIE'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - PAST

Close on a beautiful, smiling Stephanie to...

ADAM (V.O.)

She went from being this sexy, happy person to...

...Stephanie on the couch, thirty pounds heavier, eating from a big bag of chips and watching TV.

ADAM (V.O)

...a couch potato who binged watched British crime shows and compulsively stuffed her face. She said she liked the British shows because the actors were, to quote her, "realer". In a period of one year, she went from a fit, hundred and thirty pounds to one-seventy and rising. I didn't recognize the woman I'd married. She also became an agoraphobic, compulsive shopper. The more isolated she became, the more clothes and shoes she needed.

Stephanie in bathrobe standing in the middle of her large, walk-in closet surveying the inventory.

ADAM (V.O) (CONT'D)

I quickly learned that you can hire people to shop for you. These people actually exist.

Stephanie in bathrobe, answering the door to her Personal Shopper (Female, 35), who bursts in excited and overloaded with high-end boutique bags. The Personal Shopper walks into the living room, sets the bags down and opens each, laying outfits out on the couch for Stephanie to view.

ADAM (V.O) (CONT'D)

I was afraid to go to work. Each day was a step closer to financial ruin.

When the Personal Shopper finishes the display, Stephanie stands almost trance-like, looking at the clothes, her fix for the day.

ADAM (V.O) CONT'D

Clothes, shoes, twenty-four hour gourmet cup cakes at fifty dollars a dozen. Whatever the fuck you want. Just hire a Personal Shopper and clothes from the best stores are delivered to your home and if you're lucky, your Personal Shopper has a cousin who can get you anything from botox to ecstasy. Who knew?

INT. STEPHANIE'S CLOSET

Adam standing in Stephanie's packed walk-in closet, looking through racks of clothes, many still with dangling price tags. He stands before a wall of shoes, stunned, amazed.

INT. ADAM AND STEPHANIE'S APARTMENT, LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Stephanie is on the couch with a bowl of what looks like ice cream watching TV. Adam sits next to her with concern in his eyes.

ADAM

Sweetie.

She ignores him as she stays fixated on the TV.

ADAM (CONT'D)

(more forceful)

Sweetie.

She looks at him, annoyed.

STEPHANIE

What? It's the final episode of
Broadchurch, season two, and---

ADAM

That's great, but we need to talk
about your shopping... and eating.

She snaps a look at him.

STEPHANIE

This is frozen yogurt I'll have you
know. It has no fat and it's filled
with those biotics that are good
for you.

ADAM

You mean probiotics?

STEPHANIE

That's what I said.

ADAM

Okay.

He clicks off the TV.

STEPHANIE

Hey!

ADAM

We need to talk.

She stares at him, angry.

ADAM (CONT'D)

I just went through your closet and
you have thousands of dollars worth
of clothes with the price tags
still on them. We're going to go
broke if you keep it up.

He looks at her, hoping to see a light go on. Something.

ADAM (CONT'D)

And why do you need a hundred pair
of shoes? You never leave the
apartment!

She stares at him, not giving an inch.

STEPHANIE

I know what you spent on Claire,
because remember... you told me.

If looks could kill.

STEPHANIE (CONT'D)

I'm entitled to a few nice things.
So leave me alone.

She grabs the clicker out of his hand and flicks on the TV.

Adam sits, not knowing what to say. From his POV: we see Stephanie, staring straight ahead, angry, back to her show and frozen yogurt. Adam gets up slowly and leaves the room.

We see Stephanie alone, back to Broadchurch.

INT. BAR - PRESENT

ADAM

I cancelled her credit cards and
banned her Personal Shopper or
'dealer' as I started calling her.
(smiling)
She threatened to sue me for
slander.

The guys sit silently, listening.

ADAM (CONT'D)

Two people in love. What could
possibly go wrong?

Adam sits back, smiling. He's spent, done. Cam's phone DINGS, startling the guys out of their stupor. Cam looks at the text.

CAM

Hey guys, sorry, I gotta go.

STEPHEN

The little lady beckons?

CAM

Nobody is beckoning dip shit. I
have an important engagement.
Absolutely no beckoning involved.

He texts a quick reply. Within seconds his phone DINGS again.

He looks at it. A worried look crosses his face.

CAM (CONT'D)

Gotta go.

STEPHEN

Yeah, no beckoning there.

Cam throws down a few bills as he gives Stephen a 'fuck off' look, grabs his coat and leaves in a hurry.

Adam smiles to himself.

ADAM

I rest my case.

Just then Stephen's phone DINGS. He looks at it and smiles, punching in a reply.

ADAM (CONT'D)

Are you also being beckoned?

STEPHEN

(smiling, a little
excited)

I just got a reply from Close Encounters. From this girl named Scarlett. Her profile says she's into exploring her wild side and she wants to meet me. Tonight. Now, if possible.

Stephen looks at Adam for validation, permission. Adam smiles and raises his glass.

ADAM

Well, what are you waiting for? She sounds like a great girl. A keeper.

With that, Stephen jumps up, grabs his coat, throws down a few bills, leaving with a big smile on his face.

Only Josh and Adam are left.

JOSH

Okay, now that we're alone, you can tell me.

ADAM

Tell you what?

JOSH

Come on. That you've been punking us tonight. That all this M talk is a joke. That the Adam Fisher we know to be a cool, unflappable dude is playing us.

ADAM

Sorry to disappoint you buddy, but for one, I don't punk, and, I meant every word.

Josh just looks at him with a sly smile.

JOSH

Okay.

Josh glances at his watch.

JOSH (CONT'D)

I have to run. You alright?

ADAM

Absolutely. I'm great...really. You're looking at me like I've just announced that I have a month to live. God willing, I have a long fruitful life ahead of me and will die at a ripe old age with my hard earned fortune and manhood intact.

JOSH

Okay then.

Josh gets up, leaving a few bills on the table.

JOSH (CONT'D)

(Still looking concerned)

I'll see you Saturday? At the game.

Adam Nods yes. Josh kisses the top of Adam's head as he leaves. Adam smiles to himself.

He sits for a moment then empties his glass, grabs the pile of cash from the middle of the table, gets up and walks to the bar...

INT. BAR - CONTINUOUS

...where he takes a seat. The Bartender, Female, attractive (30s), greets him.

BARTENDER

What can I get you?

Adam pulls out his credit card.

ADAM

A bourbon and the bill for the table.

She pours a generous bourbon and takes his card.

Adam sits for a long moment, surrounded by bar patrons, but uninterested in the action. The bartender presents his tab and they settle up.

He finishes his drink and as he's about to call it a night, a beautiful Woman, Chiara(late 30s), (the Woman who's been sitting close and listening in all night), takes the vacant seat next to him. He looks her way and smiles politely then begins to get up. She faces him.

CHIARA
 (to Adam, smiling
 mischievously)
 So tell me, are you left or right
 handed?

Adam looks at her with a quizzical, then amused smile.

ADAM
 Right. Why?

The Woman breaks into a wide grin. She's stunning when she smiles.

ADAM (CONT'D)
 (chuckling)
 You were eavesdropping.

He gives her a scolding look.

ADAM (CONT'D)
 Didn't your mother teach you that
 it's not polite to stick your nose
 into other peoples' business.

WOMAN
 She did. She also taught me that
 every once in a while, a rule can
 be broken for the good of humanity.
 And you guys weren't exactly quiet.

ADAM
 I'm not sure this qualifies on the
 humanity scale and I guess we were
 a bit loud. It was an unusual
 evening.

He takes a good look at her.

ADAM (CONT'D)
 I'm being rude, can I buy you a
 drink?

WOMAN

Why not. Balvenie, neat.

Bartender walks over.

ADAM

A Belvenie neat for the lady and
another for me.

The Bartender flashes a smile and leaves. Within seconds, two
glasses appear.

WOMAN

So, did you mean it?

He looks at her and smiles, not sure if he wants to get into
it with this stranger.

ADAM

Yes, I meant it...absolutely.

WOMAN

So, if I wanted to take you home
tonight, you'd say no?

Adam looks into her eyes.

ADAM

Yes, I would... but politely.

She studies him, then extends her hand.

WOMAN

Chiara Townsend.

ADAM

Adam Fisher.

They shake.

CHIARA

You're a fascinating man Adam
Fisher. From what I could hear,
when I was so rudely eavesdropping,
is that you're a severely jaded
romantic and a reformed horndog.

ADAM

Horndog? That's not a word you hear
often.

CHIARA

It was a favorite of my Nana. My
grandmother.

She smiles at the memory.

CHIARA (CONT'D)

She used to say, "watch out for users, liars and horndogs. They'll say anything to get down your pants, especially the bible thumpers". She believed the more pious, the bigger the liar. The Jimmy Swaggart rule.

(laughing at the memory)

Before I'd go out, she'd say..
 "they'll get you pregnant, leave as fast as a summer rain and ruin your life". Then she'd leave it with...
 "But if you want the whole world knowing about your bits and bites and wanting your number, then go ahead. You're a big girl. It's none of my business".

Adam laughs. He's beginning to enjoy this.

ADAM

I think I'd like your Nana. Hell, I'd vote for her.

CHIARA

She passed away ten years ago, but somehow I think she would have liked you, horndog and all. She liked honesty. The blunter the better.

ADAM

So where does Chiara Townsend come from?

CHIARA

Originally, North Carolina. Then med school at Johns Hopkins, then Residency here in Chicago. And after four years of hating Chicago winters, I decided to stay. I've even become a Bears fan. Lost friends over that one.

ADAM

Wow. A doctor and a Bears fan. I'm impressed. What's your specialty?

CHIARA

Cardiology. The workings of the heart.

ADAM

So you're a champion eavesdropper,
a heart doctor and you like
football. You sound almost perfect.

CHIARA

Yup. That's me in a nutshell.
Another expression from Nana. She
liked to fit the world into an
understandable 'nutshell'.

Adam smiles at that.

CHIARA (CONT'D)

How about you?

ADAM

Well, in a nutshell, born and
raised in Chicago. A fanatical,
chronically disappointed, but newly
hopeful Bears fan. Went to
Princeton for undergrad, lit major,
economics minor. Law school at
Northwestern and here I am, talking
to you.

She looks into his eyes and smiles sweetly.

CHIARA

I find the lit major thing really
interesting. You don't meet many
men with an interest in the
classics...your top three American
authors.

ADAM

Let me see, there's a bunch, but my
answer tonight is Thomas Wolfe, not
Tom Wolfe, although I've always
admired his writing. Mailer and
Roth.

CHIARA

Interesting mix. Most people have
never heard of Thomas Wolfe...

Thinking. Remembering.

CHIARA (CONT'D)

'Look Homeward Angel', 'You Can't
Go Home Again'. Beautiful style,
but wordy by modern standards.
Southern boy. Nineteen-thirties New
York.

(MORE)

CHIARA (CONT'D)
 Mailer I barely know, but Roth I
 love, especially 'The Human Stain'.

She studies him as he sips his drink.

CHIARA (CONT'D)
 We may never see one another again,
 so I have to ask...

Touching his right hand.

QUICK CUT TO:

INT. ROOM - TESTIMONIAL #5

A married Couple(Couple #2, Early 70s), sitting uncomfortably
 on stools. She's overweight, he's rail thin.

INTERVIEWER (O.S.)
 So, how many years have you two
 been married?

WOMAN
 Well, if you add them together,
 forty-five years.

INTERVIEWER (O.S.)
 Together?

WOMAN
 (smiling)
 We were married the first time for
 twenty-five years, then divorced
 for three and married again. And
 here we are.

MAN
 (smirking)
 She couldn't live without me. I'm
 pretty good you know.

WOMAN
 (giggling, slapping his
 leg affectionately)
 Stop it. Don't encourage him. He
 thinks he's the world's greatest
 lover. He never leaves me alone.

INTERVIEWER (O.S.)
 What's your secret?

MAN

No secret really. She tells me she loves me every day even if she doesn't and she's a great cook. I'm a simple man.

(thoughtful pause)

She loves me and feeds me. What more does a man need?

She looks at him lovingly.

WOMAN

He's my guy, always has been. The second time around we learned to be nicer to one another. Every woman should be as lucky as me.

QUICK CUT TO:

INT. BAR - PRESENT

Chiara's hand resting on Adam's.

CHIARA

(serious)

...why would you rather masturbate?

Adam smiles, locking eyes.

ADAM

How would Nana feel about you asking me that question?

CHIARA

To be honest, she wouldn't have let you leave the room until you answered.

ADAM

I'm assuming you overheard some of my pathetic story.

CHIARA

A lot actually. Sorry. Matters of the heart, no excuses.

He hesitates, not sure if he wants to go down that road, especially with this beautiful, intelligent creature.

CHIARA (CONT'D)

Okay, so let me ask you this. How can such a smart, good looking, accomplished man, screw things up so badly.... that he's giving up at what, forty?

ADAM

Just turned.

He sips his drink.

ADAM (CONT'D)

I wouldn't call it 'giving up'. I look at it as the scales falling from my eyes. I've come to the conclusion that modern relationships are doomed from the start. That they eventually suck the life out of most men.

CHIARA

Wow. The end of manhood. I'd better restock my drawer full of sex toys.

He likes her sense of humor.

CHIARA (CONT'D)

Can I make a few assumptions without you getting up and leaving?

ADAM

Hey, go for it. I don't get mad any more. You see, masturbating on a regular basis calms me. And, I'm enjoying my drink.

CHIARA

(smiling)

From what I learned from my eavesdropping is that you've been married twice. Both times to strikingly beautiful women and at the beginning of each relationship, you were madly, passionately in love. That breathless, almost out of control kind of love.

She looks at him for some sort of acknowledgement.

ADAM

You were listening.

(Beat)

(MORE)

ADAM (CONT'D)

I'm not sure I'd categorize it as 'out of control'. But yes, I admit it, I was deeply in love and I believed they were as well.

CHIARA

And what did they do, from a career standpoint.

ADAM

I'm not sure that's relevant.

Hesitant. A bit defensive.

ADAM (CONT'D)

Claire was a cosmetics salesclerk at Saks or Beauty Specialist as she liked to call herself and Stephanie was a paralegal.

CHIARA

Interesting.

ADAM

Interesting?

CHIARA

Yes, interesting. Why does a smart, ambitious man, I'm making assumptions again...
(smiling)

CHIARA (CONT'D)

...and good looking on a global scale, find himself drawn to comparatively unaccomplished women? Beautiful yes, but inferior in terms of smarts, ambition, perspective, experience.

She sips her drink as she looks into his eyes.

CHIARA (CONT'D)

In my opinion, you set yourself up for failure.

She studies him.

CHIARA (CONT'D)

You're a mystery. You graduate from Princeton and Northwestern, two of the best schools out there. At both schools, the girls were probably smarter than the boys. Am I right?

ADAM
 (a chuckle)
 Yeah, they were.

CHIARA
 Yet, when you get out into the real world, you go after what's easy. The pretty girl who will be grateful to have Adam Fisher. Someone who can't possibly become an equal partner.

She pauses, leaning in.

CHIARA (CONT'D)
 Would you go into a business partnership with someone who wasn't up to your smarts or ambitions? I doubt it. But you're willing to enter a matrimonial partnership for life with someone who will bore you within 6 months. Sorry, I'm not being fair.

Chiara backs off - afraid she's pushed to hard - letting Adam consider the question.

ADAM
 No need to apologize. Hey, why start now?
 (laughing)
 So you think you've got me all figured out. A man who dates beautiful, dumb women so that he's always in control. The smart one in every conversation, every argument. I admit, I've been a sucker, a fool for beauty. Especially the kind that takes your breath away.

Closing his eyes for effect.

ADAM (CONT'D)
 That soaking wet, just out of the shower, unadorned, vulnerable beauty.
 (smiling to himself)
 It's always been a weakness, a personal flaw. Which to date, has cost me upwards of three million hard earned dollars.
 (thoughtful pause)
 (MORE)

ADAM (CONT'D)

Maybe I'm just a silly, superficial fool. It could really be just that simple you know.

He drains his glass and waits for a response.

CHIARA

First off, I don't have you all figured out. And superficial is not a word that comes to mind. Silly maybe.

(smiling, enjoying this)

CHIARA (CONT'D)

And I never called them dumb. Maybe somewhat dim, but not dumb.

He smiles, waiting, listening intently.

CHIARA (CONT'D)

Knowing you...well..really knowing you, would take at least a couple of weeks of intense intimacy. And since you only 'do the nasty' as your friend so beautifully described it, I'll never get that opportunity.

(smiling, pausing)

Maybe it's time I told you a little about me and why I find all of this so fascinating.

She finishes her drink and motions for the bartender to bring 2 more.

CHIARA (CONT'D)

I think, objectively speaking, that I'm an attractive woman.

ADAM

(taking a good look)

I would agree. Striking actually.

CHIARA

I'm also an athlete. Swam competitively in college. A cardiac surgeon of some repute, will earn an average of a million a year over the next twenty years, and, I never get asked out. And if I do, it rarely gets to a second date.

The bartender sets 2 drinks down. Chiara immediately takes a sip from hers. She's feeling a bit uncomfortable with her revelation.

CHIARA (CONT'D)

You, Adam Fischer, have probably been a player since the day your voice changed. So tell me... what's wrong with men or.. what's wrong with me?

ADAM

I don't know you...
(smiling to ease her discomfort)

ADAM (CONT'D)

...but, from what I can tell, you probably scare the hell out of them. I would guess that most men would sit across from you at dinner and after an evening of stimulating conversation, career comparison and lifestyle expectations, would do the sixty second analysis.

A playful smile crosses his face.

ADAM (CONT'D)

The video would play in their minds something like this...they would see a beautiful, brilliant and accomplished wife who over time, would get bored with them, disappointed that they couldn't measure up, compete. They would see themselves always trying to keep up, always trying to please and failing...falling into a pitiful life of irrelevance and man shame.

CHIARA

Wow. Man shame. And all that in just sixty seconds.
In your insightful analysis, you used the word 'compete'.

She looks at him questioningly.

CHIARA (CONT'D)

Do you really believe that in a relationship it's natural for men and women to compete?

ADAM
Did I say that?

CHIARA
You did.

Pausing to consider.

ADAM
Well, don't they? Doesn't it always
boil down to who's right, who's
wrong, who's smarter, who's
contributing more. The way I see
it, most relationships end up being
passive aggressive cage matches.

CHIARA
Fascinating.

She looks into his eyes. They're beginning to really connect.

CHIARA (CONT'D)
I remember after a challenging
break-up, a girlfriend gave me her
dog-eared copy of the book, Men are
from Mars, Women are from Venus.

ADAM
Standard reading at Johns Hopkins?

CHIARA
Not quite, but, I have to say, that
book, laughed at by the so called
'serious people', had some great
insights. And it sold millions of
copies. For example, the one that
stood out for me was that for a
marriage to survive and grow, you
need to eliminate the need to win.

She sips her drink.

CHIARA (CONT'D)
Because, as the author so
brilliantly and simply put it..if
you need to win every argument,
every point.. then the most
important person in your world,
your spouse, your partner, always
needs to lose. Just think about
that for a second. For you to win,
to feel good about yourself, you
need for your lover to lose.

She locks eyes with him. He sits quietly for a moment before responding.

ADAM
(smirking)
Interesting. Can I get it on
Amazon?

She laughs, shaking her head, amused at his ability to deflect.

ADAM (CONT'D)
No. Seriously. A powerful insight.
Really.

CHIARA
So charming. You are you know. I've
learned that charm is a very
effective tool for deflection and
covering up stupid. But you're
certainly not stupid, are you?

He shrugs and smiles.

ADAM
Well, I'm sitting in a bar with a
stranger, a very beautiful and
accomplished stranger, admitting
that I'm a twice failed husband,
financially destitute and a
compulsive masturbater.

Looking into her eyes, playfully.

ADAM (CONT'D)
You be the judge.

He flashes his best charming smile.

ADAM (CONT'D)
And if you overheard even half of
what was said tonight, then you
know that I can be insensitive,
heartless and capable of dumb ass
decisions on a grand scale.
I plead guilty to everything.

He flashes a big smile as she continues to lock eyes,
studying him, trying to get inside.

ADAM (CONT'D)
Enough about my miserable failings
as a human being. Tell me something
deep and dark about you.
(MORE)

ADAM (CONT'D)
How about your last real
relationship. Why did it fail?

She hesitates before answering the challenge, gathering memories.

CHIARA
(serious)
His name was Ben. He was kind, a
successful mortgage broker, earned
great money, was handsome by most
standards and I think he loved me.
No, I'm sure he loved me. I
certainly loved him.

Adam sips his drink, listening.

CHIARA (CONT'D)
We moved in together; into my place
because it was bigger. It just made
more sense than selling both our
places and buying a new apartment.
You know, fees, taxes, all that
stuff. Things were great for about
a year, then he began to disappear
within himself.

A look of deep sadness crosses her eyes.

CHIARA (CONT'D)
I began to notice the change every
time we were out with a group of
people, especially new friends or
business acquaintances. You know,
dinner parties, gallery openings,
receptions. That kind of thing.

INT. RESTAURANT - PAST - NIGHT

Chiara and BEN(both Early 30's), are seated at a table with 3
other couples. Everyone is talking, enjoying.

CHIARA (V.O.)
When people find out that I'm a
cardiologist, they immediately lock
onto me. I guess they're impressed,
curious, whatever.

All eyes at the table shift to Chiara.

CHIARA (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 Everyone seems to have a brother or
 uncle with a heart condition, so
 they ask questions. You know...my
 Dad has afib, my brother had by-
 pass surgery, should I be taking
 CoQ10 for my heart? You know, the
 usual stuff. At first, Ben was
 great about it. Said it didn't
 bother him; he was proud of me. But
 then things began to change. I
 could feel him retreating,
 disappearing.

Chiara answering questions at the table. All eyes on her.

Close on Ben: he sits quietly, politely listening.

INT. CHIARA AND BEN'S APARTMENT - PAST - NIGHT

Chiara and Ben enter their apartment. Ben takes Chiara's coat
 and hangs it in the closet. The apartment is big and
 beautifully appointed. Chiara walks into the kitchen,
 followed by Ben.

CHIARA
 How about a nightcap? Wine? scotch?

BEN
 Scotch. A big one.

She gives him a questioning look, takes two glasses from the
 cupboard and pours.

CHIARA
 Everything alright?

BEN
 Yeah. Why wouldn't it be?

CHIARA
 I don't know. How about because you
 didn't say a word on the way home.

He drains his scotch and pours another.

BEN
 Everything's great. Why wouldn't it
 be? Great friends, interesting
 conversation about high blood
 pressure and the heart benefits of
 kale.

She looks at him, concerned.

CHIARA
Please, not this again.
(upset)
I can't control the conversation.
I did try to steer it to real
estate. You heard me. I tried.

Ben looks sad and distant, avoiding eye contact.

BEN
Yeah, I know.

He finishes his drink.

BEN (CONT'D)
I think I'll go to bed.

CHIARA
Ben. Please. Let's talk about this.

BEN
Then what? I know I'm being
ridiculous, as you've reminded me
more than once, but I can't help
it. I can't live like this.

He heads to the bedroom. Chiara remains in the kitchen; tears begin to pool in her eyes.

CHIARA (V.O.)
Eventually, we stopped holding
hands, then we stopped making love.

Chiara and Ben walking down the street, not touching, not talking.

Chiara and Ben sleeping on separate sides of their king size bed.

INT. BAR - PRESENT

CHIARA
I knew he felt diminished. I tried
to compensate, make him feel
important. The sad irony is that he
was important...especially to me,
but that wasn't good enough. He'd
already left me.

She takes a sip of her drink.

CHIARA (CONT'D)

He moved out two months later.
He's now married...to a school
teacher. Less complicated. Has a
two year old with another on the
way.

Adam looks at her questioningly.

CHIARA (CONT'D)

Facebook. I know, it's a demented,
self-destructive way to check up on
your ex. But effective.

ADAM

I'm sorry. Sounds like it was
difficult.

CHIARA

Yeah, it was. But over time I've
come to realize that I did nothing
wrong except work hard, do what I
love to do and succeed. When we
were dating, he said that my brain
and ambition turned him on.

(A sad ironic smile)

It's funny, but what men - and I'm
not talking about all men - what
men are attracted to in the
beginning, is what they often
resent in the end...intelligence,
ambition, beauty. For a long time I
blamed myself. Maybe I didn't show
enough interest in his work or
praise him enough. Or tell him what
a good lover he was. And he was.
Then one day, I woke up and it was
clear.

She takes a sip of her drink.

CHIARA (CONT'D)

The only way we would have made it
was if I had allowed myself to
become less.

She looks into his eyes.

CHIARA (CONT'D)

And I'm not prepared to do that for
anyone.

She sips her drink, shifting her eyes away from Adam. Nothing
is said for a long moment.

ADAM

We're quite a pair aren't we?
Since you're being so honest, I
guess it's my turn.

Thoughtful, playing with his glass.

ADAM (CONT'D)

I have thought about things. I'm
really not a knuckle dragger you
know. Maybe an aging frat boy, but
not a knuckle dragger. At least not
during daylight hours.

He looks off, half smiling, thinking.

ADAM (CONT'D)

Why am I attracted to beautiful,
and to be kind, uncomplicated
women? Who over time, bore and
irritate me more than interest and
excite me. Why have I, for the
first half of my adult life, put my
personal life on a crushing path of
self-destruction?

He locks eyes with her, searching for an answer.

CHIARA

Maybe, just maybe, you're afraid of
women like me.

Playing with her drink.

CHIARA (CONT'D)

Not saying that you're
interested...but in general, not
comfortable with women who are as
intelligent and accomplished as you
are.

Adam looks into her eyes for a long, thoughtful moment.

ADAM

Maybe. But then again, it's
complicated. You're complicated.
I'm complicated. Love and
relationships are complicated.
Today, it's more about make me
happy, make me feel special twenty-
four hours a day, than..let's work
together to survive famine,
starvation and ruin.

(Beat)

ADAM (CONT'D)

Maybe I just see post-modern relationships as more destructive than rewarding. And if the woman is really smart...well...

He flashes an impish smile.

ADAM (CONT'D)

...and that's all I have tonight, Doc. Your poking and prodding have exhausted me. I came out tonight for a relaxing drink with a few friends and I end up baring my soul to a beautiful woman who has a real job, loves football, and is without question, much smarter than me.

CHIARA

There's that charm again.

Looking into his smiling eyes.

CHIARA (CONT'D)

Lovely and irritating at the same time. I like you Adam Fisher...

(smiling)

...and I think, with lots of work and the patience of a remarkable, superior woman, there's hope for you.

She affectionately taps the side of his head with her finger.

CHIARA (CONT'D)

Because in there, there's a very intelligent, sensitive man trying to make sense of his life. I'll leave you with one more saying from my Nana. She once said that "some men have a special talent for turning sweet into certifiable". I never fully understood that until recently.

(thoughtful pause)

I don't believe you're that kind of man.

They sit looking into each other's eyes for a long moment, before she finishes her drink and gets up to leave.

CHIARA (CONT'D)

It's been a truly educational evening.

CHIARA (CONT'D)

And once again, sorry for the eavesdropping. I just can't resist matters of the heart, especially broken ones.

She stands for a moment looking into his eyes as though she wants to say something, then turns and leaves. Adam goes back to his drink.

Close on Adam: he sits for a moment looking into the bar mirror, his mind buzzing. Suddenly, he bolts out of his seat and runs toward the bar exit.

EXT. SIDEWALK IN FRONT OF BAR - CONTINUOUS

Adam bursts out of the bar looking for Chiara and spots her getting into a cab a half block away. He runs after her.

ADAM

Chiara! Wait!

She turns to look at him, flashes a big smile, gets in and closes the door.

As he watches the cab pulls away, he stops running and stands for a long moment, watching her exit his life. He's upset with himself, though he's not sure why.

Running after a woman he doesn't know breaks all his rules.

He turns and heads back in the direction of the bar, shaking his head and smiling at his silliness.

INT. BAR - CONTINUOUS

Adam re-enters the bar and takes his seat. He looks down at his remaining drink, plays with it, drains it and studies his reflection in the mirror.

As he's about to leave, the Bartender approaches him.

BARTENDER

(smiling)

She wanted you to have this.

She hands him a business card.

Close on card.

It reads: Dr. Chiara Townsend, Dept. Of Cardiology,

Northwestern University Hospital, 818-203-5525 ex. 245, email:
ctownsend@NorthU.com

Written at bottom: 'If you find your manhood. Chiara xo'

Adam smiles, looks at the card for a long moment, then pockets it and exits the bar, smiling at the bartender on the way out.

EXT. SIDEWALK OUTSIDE BAR - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Adam hails a cab. One stops. He opens the door, then has a change of heart.

ADAM
(to cabbie)
Sorry buddy. I think I'll walk.

He shuts the door. The cab speeds off.

Close on Adam: As he walks a mischievous smile appears. Two beautiful women passing by smile at him; he doesn't notice.

We watch him as he fades into the evening crowd.

CLOSING MONTAGE OF TESTIMONIALS

TESTIMONIAL #1

MAN #1 (FROM EARLIER)
Love...that's a hard one. I'm not sure I've ever understood it. I guess from my experience, limited as it is, it's a combination of being happy, enjoying someone, always looking forward to seeing them. It's kind of a feeling that you're exactly where you should be.
(smiling uneasily)
Is that Okay?

INTERVIEWER (O.S.)
Sure...that's great.

TESTIMONIAL #2/ WOMAN #1 (FROM EARLIER)

INTERVIEWER (O.S.)
Do you think you've become hardened to love?

WOMAN #1

The reason there are so many failed relationships is because people don't know what they want. They marry for all the wrong reasons and then they're surprised they're unhappy.

A sour look crosses her face.

WOMAN #1 (CONT'D)

Most people get married out of fear...fear of being alone, fear of not having someone to take to the office Christmas party, fear of what people will think. That's not me. I'd rather be alone.

TESTIMONIAL #3/ YOUNG COUPLE #1(FROM EARLIER)

WOMAN

I've found a man who is kind, generous and I know will make a great father. He's also smarter than he knows. There's no one in the world I'd rather be married to.

She looks at her husband lovingly. He has tears in his eyes.

TESTIMONIAL #4/ WOMAN #2(FROM EARLIER)

WOMAN

I'm a romantic at heart. But I've also always believed in being practical. Marry your high school sweetheart, have four kids and stagger through life together. Not for me. Never was. To me, that's a definition for insanity.

TESTIMONIAL #5/ OLD COUPLE(FROM EARLIER)

WOMAN

Yes, I can honestly say I'm happy. We've developed a routine that I love. Nothing exciting, although we still manage to surprise one another.

MAN

I really started to enjoy life when I stopped being an asshole. When I stopped feeling trapped and started appreciating what I had...

Smiling at his wife.

MAN (CONT'D)

...my beauty. It took two marriages to the same woman, but then, nobody's perfect.

TESTIMONIAL #6 (NEW PEOPLE)

A young Black Girl and White Boy (both 8), climb up and sit on side-by-side stools. They smile innocently into the camera.

INTERVIEWER (O.S.)

Tell everybody your names.

GIRL

(taking over)

I'm Cassandra and this is Marco.

MARCO

(waving, smiling)

Hi.

INTERVIEWER (O.S.)

We've asked a lot of grown-ups about love. What do you think of when I say the word 'love'?

CASSANDRA

(confident)

Well, I think of my dog Mimi, my mommy and daddy and sometimes my brother. And of Marco.

(smiling sweetly at him)

We're in love. We're getting married when we grow up.

Marco smiles innocently.

INTERVIEWER (O.S.)

What about you Marco? Do you want to get married someday?

MARCO

I guess so. But I want to be a soccer player first. That could take awhile.

Cassandra gives him a stern look. Marco wide-eyed, knows he's said the wrong thing.

Cassandra smiles, leans over and kisses Marco on the cheek.

He flashes a big smile, embarrassed and happy.

FADE OUT:

THE END