

# **LIFE DURING WARTIME**

(PILOT EPISODE - NOWHERE FAST)

By

**Mark Bowes**

Rejected by friends, his career in shambles, an alcoholic, gay actor seeks refuge in a Palm Springs trailer park inhabited by Hollywood has-beens, where he struggles with sobriety, HIV, caring for his mentally declining mother, while battling 80's AIDS hysteria.

"The dark night of the soul comes just before revelation. When everything is lost, and all seems darkness, then comes the new life and all that is needed."

-Joseph Campbell

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**FADE IN:**

**EXT. VACANT, BRILLIANT BLUE SKY - DAY**

The gleaming white blade of a wind turbine swoops by. WHOOSH.

The blade swoops by again. WHOOSH. And again. WHOOSH.

Slow, shallow, raspy breathing is heard. In. Out.

Gaps increase between each breath. In. Out.

**EXT. WIND TURBINE FIELD / 300 FEET UP - DAY**

High above the Coachella Valley, a disgustingly-fat, late-Summer fly weaves through a vast field of rotating turbines.

A fierce wind knocks the fly off-course.

Losing altitude, the fly dives toward an indistinct human figure, far below on the desert surface.

**WIND TURBINE FIELD / GROUND LEVEL**

A strong gust kicks up dust, tosses a tumbleweed across the motionless body of...

**PATRICK "PUCK" MACMILLAN** (31), naked, gaunt, sunburned, eyes shut. He breathes heavily.

**CLOSE ON**

The fly swoops in, lands on Puck's sweat covered brow, makes a jagged path toward his mouth, creeps up to his open lips.

Puck stirs, GASPS.

**SUPER: LOS ANGELES 1988 - THREE YEARS AGO**

**INT. MAKE-UP TRAILER - DAY**

Puck (now 28), fit, fuller face, heavily coated in spray tan, awakens on an elevated table in a pair of neon blue Speedos.

**ELENA** (40s, Latina), a make-up artist, big hair, glitter nails for days, grabs a tube of cover-up.

ELENA

Puck! Turn over for me.

Puck GROANS, flips onto his stomach.

She leans in close, dabs the cover-up on a hickey.

ELENA

Less time prowling around at night  
and we could avoid all this.

PUCK

I'd do it all over again. This guy  
had the pecs and biceps of a Greek  
god. As a matter of fact his--

ELENA

- I don't need to hear details.

Puck COUGHS, RASPY.

Elena flinches, pulls back, waits for him to finish.

ELENA

That's a nasty cough.

His COUGH subsides.

She gingerly gets back to work on the hickey.

ELENA

Ever hear of sunbathing?

PUCK

Sunlight's not my thing. I might be  
part vampire.

Her gold crucifix hangs in front of his face.

PUCK

Ever ask yourself if Jesus was gay?  
I mean, think about it; single,  
thirty, ripped, all boy entourage.  
And that Farrah Fawcett hair?

Elena lightly smacks his head.

Puck COUGHS DEEP this time.

ELENA

Okay. That's it. We're done here.

She grabs a towel, furiously scrubs her hands.

PUCK

Are you sure? Marshall better not  
flip out and send me back.

She gestures to the door. He rises, dons a robe, leaves.

Elena wads up the towel, stuffs it in the trash.

**EXT. BEL AIR MANSION / POOL AREA - DAY**

A FILM CREW, assembled around an opulent swimming pool, prep for a shoot.

Puck walks onto the set, drops his robe, crosses to the pool.

**MARSHALL** (55, White), the paunchy director, steps forward.

MARSHALL  
(over a bullhorn)  
Places, people. Let's do this.

Puck steps onto the diving board, COUGHS, notices...

Nearby, Elena attends to **TIFFANY** (20, White), a Barbie-esque, perfectly-tanned, bleach-blonde actress. She adjusts Tiffany's micro bikini strings, WHISPERS in her ear.

They look Puck's way, shake their heads.

MARSHALL  
Places means you too, Tiffany.

Elena nudges Tiffany, who puffs herself up, goes to the diving board, hangs back from Puck.

PUCK  
Uh, your mark's next to me.

He pulls her closer. Tiffany stiffens.

MARSHALL  
Quiet, everyone!... Action!

Puck moves in to kiss her. She recoils, pushes him away.

TIFFANY  
I can't. I'm... sorry. I'll pray  
for you.

PUCK  
My acting's not that bad.

Marshall comes over, pulls them into a huddle.

MARSHALL  
What now, you two?

TIFFANY

He's... gay. I can't kiss him.

PUCK

Wasn't a problem yesterday when your tongue was down my throat.

TIFFANY

It's just... I'd rather we hug. I'm comfortable with that.

MARSHALL

Tiff, come on, it's a mouthwash ad.

PUCK

I know. Let's switch to deodorant. I could do your armpits. You could do mine. Or does spray deodorant make you more comfortable?

MARSHALL

Enough with the snark. Okay? Now, I'd like to get back to work. Can we do that?

TIFFANY

Elena says he has AIDS.

The crew take notice.

PUCK

Does she? And how the fuck would--?

MARSHALL

- Can we bring this down some?

TIFFANY

He's a liability, not me. On page three of the contract, it states--

PUCK

- Look who's read their contract.

MARSHALL

She has a point.

TIFFANY

Yeah. See. I do.

PUCK

Oh. Now I get it. You two are... FYI, he screws any wannabe that crawls out of the LA bus station.

TIFFANY  
Marshall, don't let him talk about--

PUCK  
- Blowing him won't boost your  
career. Didn't do anything for  
mine.

Tiffany, appalled, glares at Marshall.

TIFFANY  
Ewww. Gross.

PUCK  
I thought the same thing.

MARSHALL  
He didn't... You're fired!

PUCK  
Whatever. You're doing me a favor.

Puck starts to go, turns back.

PUCK  
Pay close attention, Tiff. This is  
how you properly kiss someone.

Puck grabs ahold of Marshall's face, plants a sloppy, open-mouthed kiss on him.

Marshall shoves Puck away, wipes his mouth.

MARSHALL  
Fucking hell!

PUCK  
Now you both have it.

Tiffany SCREAMS, lunges at Puck. He stumbles backward.

They fall to the ground. Tiffany wails on him.

**EXT./INT. BEVERLY HILLS STREET / POS VEGA - DAY**

Puck, in his piece-of-shit Vega, cruises through a posh neighborhood of gated mansions hidden behind towering hedges.

He pulls up in front of a grandiose Spanish-style home - Four car garage, peeing cherub fountain, immaculate rose garden.

A moving truck sits parked in the driveway.

**EXT. BEVERLY HILLS MANSION / FRONT PORCH - DAY**

Puck approaches the open door.

MOVERS emerge, carrying a Greek male statue (sans fig leaf).

He slips by the movers, goes inside.

**INT. ENTRY HALL - CONTINUOUS**

Gleaming marble floors lead in all directions.

Puck wanders into the...

**LIVING ROOM**

Floor to ceiling windows look out onto a vast piano-shaped pool lined with even more male Greek statues.

All is in disarray - Homoerotic paintings, Chinoiserie, priceless tchotchkes, crystal and marble phalluses scattered throughout, wait to be packed.

Puck moves to the mantel, picks up a small David statue.

JUN (O.S.)

You're not a mover.

Puck turns to **JUN** (40s, Filipino-American). He wears a pink linen shirt, orange shorts and Huarache sandals.

PUCK

The door was open. Is Harvey here?

JUN

No. Mr. Price is... away.

PUCK

Looks like he's not coming back.

Jun remains deadpan.

PUCK

Harvey said to come by, when I...  
if I ever needed work.

Jun comes over, takes the David statue from Puck's hands.

JUN

Mr. Price's pool boy days are--

PUCK

- I'm not a pool boy. I'm an actor.

JUN

You're all pool boys. Now, if you--

A woman, **DOMINIQUE** (60s, WASP), tacky paisley caftan, Dragon Lady incarnate, storms in.

DOMINIQUE

- Christ. Another one?

JUN

Mrs. Eichmann, he barged right--

DOMINIQUE

- There's nothing here for you.

PUCK

I came to see Harvey. I'm not a--

DOMINIQUE

- Inform your friends Mr. Price's family is in control and to stay away... Jun, see this person out.

PUCK

Can I at least talk to--?

DOMINIQUE

- Haven't you gays done enough? Why can't you let Harvey die in peace?

Puck walks up to Dominique. They stare each other down.

PUCK

On behalf of us gays,... Go fuck yourself, you heartless bitch.

Steely Dominique, doesn't flinch.

Puck strides past her and out the door.

Dominique looks Jun up and down.

DOMINIQUE

Who said you could have Harvey's clothes? Remove them now.

She leaves.

**EXT./INT. - BEVERLY HILLS STREET / POS VEGA - DAY**

Jun, David statue in hand, rushes up to Puck's car.

Puck rolls down his window.



JUN

Take this. Harvey's sister's just going to sell it anyway.

He gives Puck the David statue.

JUN

He's at Cedars Sinai, room 509. Say you're a nephew. Works for me.

**INT. CEDARS SINAI MEDICAL / 5TH FLOOR NURSES STATION - DAY**

Puck slips by the NURSES station and into...

**ROOM 509**

Puck stands at the foot of a hospital bed.

The occupant, **HARVEY PRICE** (60s, White), gaunt, KS lesions, in a morphine haze, gazes at a perfect view of downtown LA.

Harvey, RASPY, struggles to breathe, clasps onto the oxygen mask covering his face.

Puck circles around to the side of the bed.

PUCK

We have to stop meeting like this.

Harvey slowly turns his attention to Puck. A slight smile appears under the transparent mask.

PUCK

I met your sister. Sure doesn't possess the Harvey Price charm.

(sits on the bed)

I'd have come sooner, but you know me. My timing's always off.

He glances around the room.

PUCK

I see you landed a deluxe suite. Oxygen tanks, the works. Gotta say though, your view kinda sucks.

Harvey lets out a tiny GIGGLE, pulls down his mask.

Puck breaks down, grabs Harvey's hand.

PUCK

Shit, Harvey. You said you were being careful.

HARVEY  
 (labored, hoarse)  
 Not careful enough, I guess.

A **NURSE** (30s) enters.

NURSE  
 Who's this? Another nephew?

PUCK  
 (winks at Harvey)  
 His great, great nephew.

NURSE  
 Big family. And so diverse, too.

The nurse comes over, takes Harvey's pulse.

NURSE  
 Strong pulse today. He likes you.

PUCK  
 Well, I was one of his favorites.

HARVEY  
 The boy that got away.

PUCK  
 Except I didn't get very far.

NURSE  
 Still you came back. That's what matters. Right, Harvey?

Harvey nods. Puck kisses his bony hand.

NURSE  
 Hate to break up the reunion, but our boy's due for his bath.

Harvey undoes his Rolex watch, holds it out to Puck.

HARVEY  
 Here... I won't be needing this.

Puck reluctantly takes the watch.

He leans over, kisses Harvey on the forehead.

PUCK  
*"Good night, sweet prince. And flights of angels sing..."*

Puck tears up, hurries out.

**EXT. PACIFIC COAST / STORMY, DESERTED BEACH - DAY**

Torrential wind stirs up the coastline. Huge, murky waves, ROAR, tumble, churn.

Puck, on a rock, stares at the sea. Wind tosses his hair.

Far out, a WOMAN IN A SILVER BATHING CAP furiously swims against the rough tide.

Puck squints, wipes his eyes. Is she real?

She stops swimming, rises and falls with the waves, beckons.

Puck stands, plods against the wind to the CRASHING WAVES.

He enters the ocean, ventures out as far as his chest.

A huge wave breaks over him. He goes under. Resurfaces. Scrambles back to shore.

Drenched, he drops to his knees. COUGHS.

A **SURFER** (20s), in a wetsuit, runs up.

SURFER

Kinda rough out there today.

Puck wipes wet sand from his face.

PUCK

Did you see her? In the water.

He clambers to his feet, looks out to sea, points.

PUCK

She was right... I just saw her.

SURFER

Dude, nobody's out there.

Puck turns, trudges across the beach towards the highway.

**INT. SLEAZY, WEST HOLLYWOOD GAY BAR - DAY**

A dated 70's DISCO HIT THUMPS.

Puck, damp, sits at a dimly lit, deserted bar.

A tattooed **BARTENDER** (30s), in a muscle tee, serves him.

BARTENDER

What'll it be, bud?

PUCK  
A 7-Up for me.

He sets the David statue on the bar, pats its head.

PUCK  
But this guy? He'd like a shot of  
vodka. And keep 'em coming.

BARTENDER  
Big drinker for such a small guy.

PUCK  
Ah, he can handle his liquor.

**LATER**

Puck, a few toppled shot glasses scattered in front of him,  
hunches over the bar.

Under a blue light, a scrawny MALE STRIPPER, in an ill-  
fitting jockstrap, pathetically grinds on a near-by platform.

Puck COUGHS, lifts his head, motions to the stripper.

PUCK  
Does your mom know what you--?

He slips off the stool, hits the floor with a HEAVY THUD.

The bartender comes around, starts to help him up.

BARTENDER  
Alright, buddy. You've had enough.

Puck stands, a bit wobbly, waves the bartender away.

PUCK  
I'm fine... Just lost my balance.  
(motions to stripper)  
Put some effort into it. Like this.

Puck weaves to the dance floor, furiously dances, spins, arms  
flailing, stops, sways, looks like he's about to drop.

BARTENDER  
Okay. Time to call it quits.

The bartender tries to pull him off the dance floor.

Puck swings at him. The bartender pops him in the face.  
SMACK!

Puck hits the floor. BAM!

**EXT./INT. SILVERLAKE APARTMENT COMPLEX / POS VEGA - NIGHT**

Puck pulls up, kills the engine.

The door pops open, he emerges, brushes sand off his clothes, checks his swollen right eye in the sideview mirror.

Unsteady, he heads toward a late-60's apartment building.

**INT. SILVERLAKE APARTMENT / SCOTTY'S LIVING ROOM - SAME TIME**

Mid-80's decor, dominated by a triptych of Joan Crawford B-movie posters - *Berserk*, *Straitjacket*, *Baby Jane*.

A GROUP OF MEN (late 20s - early 30s, various ethnicities, *Silence = Death* t-shirts, Doc Martens, pierced ears) gather around a coffee table, drink beer, eat crudité and hummus.

A birthday cake sits on a nearby dining table, a bunch of balloons with hastily hung crepe paper streamers above.

**SCOTTY SLOAN** (33, White), fit, tight tee, bleached buzz cut, ears double-pierced, leads the group in a discussion.

SCOTTY

ACT-UP New York is staging direct action protests. Their goal is to force local officials to review failed public policy and address the way these failures impact and hurt our community. Next Monday,...

**APARTMENT ENTRY - CONTINUOUS**

Puck stumbles in...

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

ACT-UP LA's plan is to shut down--

- SLAMS the door.

He bumps the entry table, KNOCKS OVER a VASE. It SMASHES on the tile floor.

PUCK

Oops.

Puck stoops down, gathers the pieces.

SCOTTY and **BOY TOY** (20), Scotty's twink, appear in the hall.

BOY TOY  
Told you he'd be wasted.

Scotty moves toward him. Puck draws back.

SCOTTY  
Your eye! And what's with the sand?

PUCK  
I went to the beach. I was told I  
should try sunbathing.

BOY TOY  
It's been cloudy all day.

PUCK  
You got a smart one there, Scotty.

Scotty waves Boy Toy back into the living room.

SCOTTY  
What brought this on? You just hit  
six months of sobriety last--

PUCK  
- I know. Don't remind me!

Puck starts for the other room.

PUCK  
I need to shower. Sand's lodged in  
every crevice.

## LIVING ROOM

Puck enters, abruptly stops.

PUCK  
Oh, shit.

All CONVERSATION ceases. The group of men turn, look at him.

PUCK  
Hey, ladies. I see you're dressed  
for a night of terrorizing beauty  
salons and sweater bars.

Puck spots the birthday cake.

PUCK  
A birthday? And I wasn't invited?

The men stay silent, look at one another with guilty faces.

SCOTTY  
You said you were going to be late.

PUCK  
Surprise, I'm not for once.  
(zeros in on one man)  
I know you. We tricked once.

The **FORMER TRICK** (late 20s, Asian) bristles at his comment.

FORMER TRICK  
You passed out half way through.  
Best night of my life. Not.

Boy Toy SNICKERS.

Puck, raises both hands, gives them both the finger.

PUCK  
Whosever birthday it is, live it  
up. This'll likely be your last.

SCOTTY  
Puck! Enough! Go shower!

He sulks, leaves.

BOY TOY  
Patty Puke's off the wagon again.

PUCK (O.S.)  
I heard that, boy toy!

BOY TOY  
I meant for you to.

Puck storms back in, grabs a chunk of the birthday cake,  
devours it in front of the group.

PUCK  
Happy fucking birthday!!

The men erupt in ANGER.

GROUP 1  
That's why you weren't  
invited! Pathetic asshole!

GROUP 2  
Bitch, apologize! My cake!  
What a shitty thing to do!

### **BATHROOM - LATER**

Puck, showered, in a towel, gingerly inspects his eye.

Scotty enters with a bag of frozen peas.

SCOTTY

Okay. Talk. Who did this to you?

PUCK

My anorexic co-star. The director.  
A bartender. All of the above.

SCOTTY

So, that's why your agent's been  
calling non-stop.

Scotty places the frozen peas over Puck's eye.

PUCK

Ouch. That really hurts.

SCOTTY

Relax, you big baby.

Puck pulls Scotty's hand away from his face.

PUCK

Stop. You shouldn't touch me. Not  
until I know my test results.

SCOTTY

Is this what all the drama's about?

Puck starts to tear up.

PUCK

I don't know. Maybe... I saw Harvey  
today. He's not going to make it.

SCOTTY

You two were safe, weren't you?

PUCK

I'm not your boyfriend anymore. You  
don't need to worry about--

SCOTTY

- I'm still your best friend.

PUCK

Yeah, one you intentionally didn't  
invite to a birthday party.

SCOTTY

It was an ACT-UP meeting. I knew  
you'd be bored shitless.

PUCK

Still, you could have asked.



SCOTTY

I thought about it. But you're not very popular with the boys right now. And demolishing Carlos' cake didn't help. He's out for blood.

PUCK

Carlos? That jealous queen? He still thinks I stole you from--

SCOTTY

- Puck. Stop. I can't do this. You need to move out. You living here is causing too many problems.

Puck is taken aback, but attempts to let the news roll off.

PUCK

Okay... I'll disappear awhile. Get my shit together. Give everyone a break... Absence makes the heart grow fonder. At least, I hope so.

Scotty hands him the peas, pats him on the shoulder, leaves.

**EXT. SILVERLAKE APARTMENT / PARKING LOT / POS VEGA - DAY**

Puck tosses an armload of clothes into the back seat.

He looks up at the second floor window. Boy Toy peers down, smirks, waves.

Scotty walks up with a paper sack, hands it to him.

PUCK

Tell me it's your famous egg salad.

SCOTTY

You got me... Where will you go?

PUCK

My mom's, I guess. The end of the road.

SCOTTY

I'm sorry. I really wanted this--

PUCK

- Don't. Okay?... I should go. It's a long drive and traffic on the 10 is always shit.

Scotty grabs Puck, pulls him close, hugs him hard.

SCOTTY  
I'll miss you. Something fierce.

PUCK  
Boy Toy won't. That's for sure.

SCOTTY  
His name is Michael.

PUCK  
I know.

Puck SLAMS the DOOR, goes to the driver's side. Climbs in.

He buckles up, opens the paper bag, peers inside, pulls out a Silence = Death button.

PUCK  
What's this for?

SCOTTY  
Visibility.

Puck closes the door, starts the car, drives off.

**INT. PUCK'S POS VEGA - DAY**

Puck speeds east on Interstate 10. Out the rear window, Los Angeles fades into a brown haze.

**INT. PUCK'S POS VEGA - 2 HOURS LATER**

The Vega enters the Coachella Valley, traverses the seemingly endless stretch of massive, rotating turbines.

Puck rolls up his window. Turns on the air conditioner.

The A/C kicks ON, makes a GRINDING METAL NOISE, dies.

PUCK  
Welcome to the desert.

**EXT. PALM SPRINGS / TRAILER PARK - DAY**

The POS Vega rolls through the gated entrance into

**CELLULOID SUNSET RETIREMENT PARK**

The deserted streets (with names like Chaplin Court, Pickford Place and Keaton Lane, a nod to old Hollywood) are densely lined with immaculate, vintage trailers, circa mid-50s.

Everything looks artificial, sterile, like a military base, with red, white and blue pinwheels stuck in every flower bed.

**INT. PUCK'S POS VEGA - CONTINUOUS**

Puck stops in front of a run-down, faded pink doublewide with a covered, wrought-iron porch.

The trailer contrasts with its well-maintained neighbors - Peeling paint. Roses, desperately in need of pruning. Crooked porch swing. Garden gnome flat on its face.

**EXT. GWEN'S TRAILER / FRONT PORCH - CONTINUOUS**

He exits the car, sets the gnome on its feet, steps onto the porch.

He RINGS THE BELL, waits. Nothing.

He presses his face to the glass, peers inside, discretely jiggles the door handle.

LUCINDA (O.S.)  
(from behind him)  
Nobody's home.

Puck, startled, turns to find **LUCINDA SHIELDS** (76, White), her pinched face the color and texture of a dried apricot.

Decked-out in a "*Lucinda / Bush '88*" sweatshirt, she sits rigidly behind the wheel of a bright red golf cart festooned like a Fourth of July float. The back is loaded with yard signs that read "*Lucinda for HOA President*".

In her lap sits "Frank", a huge, grey Maine coon.

PUCK  
Thanks. I kinda gathered that.

LUCINDA  
Would you place this in the flower bed? I noticed she needed one.

She hands him a yard sign. Puck eyes it.

PUCK  
Is this you?

She nods, sits back, releases the steering wheel, tugs on the US flag visor covering her gray, slicked-back hair.

PUCK  
Was there something else?

LUCINDA  
My yard sign?

Puck jams it into the dirt.

PUCK  
There. You can run along now.

Puck waves her away.

Lucinda frowns, strokes Frank.

PUCK  
Nice clown car. Did you get it off  
a dead Shriner?

Lucinda's pinched face tightens into a snarl.

LUCINDA  
(to her cat)  
Get a load, Frank. We've got a  
regular smart aleck on our hands.

PUCK  
I'm just trying to find out if Gwen  
Sparks still lives here.

LUCINDA  
She does. But you're in a no  
parking zone. Guest parking is  
located in the lot adjacent to--

PUCK  
- I'm not a guest. I'm her son.

LUCINDA  
Doesn't matter. Does it, Frank?  
Now, please move your vehicle.

PUCK  
Don't get your Bermuda shorts in a  
twist, lady. Do you happen to know  
when she might be back?

LUCINDA  
She's with the garden club. They're  
due back at five. Now, Frank and I  
are holding a fundraiser and you're  
making us late. So, kindly relocate  
your car... I won't tell you again.

Puck, in a huff, leaves the porch, squeezes between her golf cart and his bumper, shoots her a "Fuck You" scowl.

PUCK  
You too, Frank!

Frank HISSES at him.

Puck climbs into his car, STARTS the MOTOR. The RADIO BLASTS.

LUCINDA  
For the love of..., turn that down!

He ignores her, drives away at a snail's pace.

Lucinda follows, aggressively close. LAYS on her pathetic, TINNY, GOLF CART HORN.

Puck thrusts his arm out the window. Gives her the finger.

**INT. PALM SPRINGS LIQUOR STORE - DAY**

Puck, in dark sunglasses, PLUNKS two economy-sized bottles of vodka on the checkout counter.

The **CHECKOUT CLERK** views his items.

CHECKOUT CLERK  
Buy one more and you get another  
one, like... for free.

Puck selects two more bottles, grabs a giant bag of Cheetos and a pack of Twinkies from a nearby rack.

PUCK  
Got a deal on Twinkies?

CHECKOUT CLERK  
Nope. They're full price.

**EXT. TRAILER PARK CLUBHOUSE / POOL - DAY**

Zonked out on a chaise, Puck SNORES. A Twinkie wrapper clings to his cheek.

Nearby, JORGE ALVARADO (19, Latino), a pool boy, skims the surface. A HIP-HOP BEAT pumps from his Walkman headphones.

Jorge, RAPS to "Push It" by Salt-n-Pepa. He drips water on Puck with the skimmer.

Puck wakes, cracks his eyes, peels off the wrapper, blocks the glaring sunlight with his hands.

PUCK  
Dude! You just got me wet!

Puck gestures, "Take off your headphones."

Jorge ignores Puck, continues with his work.

Puck retrieves a paper bag wrapped vodka bottle from under the chaise, drinks. Flips on his side. Closes his eyes.

**ONE HOUR LATER**

No longer shaded, skin now a bright pink, Puck awakens to Lucinda, who looms over him. He recoils.

PUCK  
Thank Jesus I don't wake up to that every morning.

From outside the fence, a cluster of CURIOUS RESIDENTS watch.

LUCINDA  
You can't sleep here.

PUCK  
I wasn't. I was meditating.

LUCINDA  
And I'm Nancy Reagan.

She lightly kicks Puck's paper bag. The half-empty BOTTLE ROLLS across the concrete.

LUCINDA  
I assume that's yours?

PUCK  
Could be Frank's. He was skulking around earlier. Tried to make off with a couple of Cheetos.

LUCINDA  
Leave my pussy out of this.

Puck SNICKERS. Lucinda pokes him with a stick.

LUCINDA  
Come on. Get moving.

PUCK  
Easy there, Nancy. Just say, no!

Puck slowly stands, grabs the vodka bottle.

Lucinda follows him out of the pool area, when...

A van, emblazoned with the trailer park logo (a sunglasses-wearing saguaro shaped like an Academy Award), pulls up.

The VAN DRIVER comes around. SLIDES OPEN the DOOR. A few OLDER LADIES exit the vehicle. Scurry off.

The driver CLOSES the DOOR, climbs back in the vehicle.

**GWEN SPARKS** (71, White), silver-haired, blank-faced, in the passenger seat, turns her head towards Puck, blankly stares.

PUCK  
Mom? What the...?

The van pulls away.

**EXT. GWEN'S TRAILER / PORCH - MINUTES LATER**

**KINGSTON JAMES** (38, Black, in hot pink scrubs and a Hawaiian shirt), Gwen's take no BS, live-in nurse, helps Gwen from the van, guides her to the trailer.

The van drives off.

KINGSTON  
You know what to do, darlin'.

Kingston supports Gwen. Unsteady, she clings to him, musters her strength, slowly steps onto the porch.

KINGSTON  
That's my movie star.

Puck walks up. Lucinda hot on his heels, zips up next to him.

PUCK  
Why are following me?

LUCINDA  
Just making sure you end up where you say you belong.

PUCK  
It's beginning to feel like harassment.

LUCINDA  
Kingsford? Do you know this man?

Kingston turns. Gwen, oblivious, stares straight ahead.

KINGSTON

Lucinda? Are we really back to this? My name isn't Kingsford or Kingsley. And you know it.

PUCK

Ignore her. Who are you?

KINGSTON

Kingston, Mrs. Sparks' nurse. Who are you?

PUCK

I'm Mrs. Spark's son, Puck.

KINGSTON

Really. First I've heard of you.

PUCK

Hey, Gwen. Miss me?

She emits a MOURNFUL GROAN, tightens her grip on Kingston.

PUCK

That's my loving mom, all right.  
(turns to Lucinda)  
Satisfied?

KINGSTON

You two sort out whatever this is.  
My patient needs her supper.

Kingston leads Gwen into the trailer.

Puck faces Lucinda.

PUCK

We're done here. Ba-bye.

LUCINDA

I'll be keeping an eye on you.

Lucinda zooms off.

Puck sits on the edge of the porch, rubs his temples.

**ALVIN PETERS** (85, White), squat, jovial, pads by with his pug, ROCKET. They bear a strong resemblance to one another.

Oblivious of Puck, Alvin WHISTLES, does a little DANCE. Rocket, on his hind legs, does a little dance too.



PUCK

Cute.

Suddenly, Rocket lunges for Puck, viciously BARKS, nearly pulls Alvin off his feet.

ALVIN

Rocket! Mind your manners.

Tugging on the leash, Alvin drags a snarling Rocket away.

PUCK

God. Even the dogs are assholes.

**EXT. TRAILER PARK / UP THE STREET - SAME TIME**

Lucinda, parked behind a hedge, spies on Gwen's trailer.

**LUCINDA'S POV - BINOCULARS**

Puck yanks Lucinda's sign from the garden, snaps it in half.

Kingston emerges, holds open the door, motions Puck inside.

Puck rises, tosses the sign aside, enters the trailer.

**INT. GWEN'S TRAILER / KITCHEN - MINUTES LATER**

Gwen sits at the table. Kingston, at the stove, serves up a steaming bowl of tomato soup.

Puck, sits, removes the vodka from the paper bag.

KINGSTON

Um. I'd rather you didn't drink around Gwen.

Puck returns the bottle to the paper bag.

PUCK

Can I ask what happened to her?

Kingston brings the soup to the table, sits, feeds Gwen.

KINGSTON

Let's clear up who you are before we go any further, shall we?

PUCK

You aren't serious.

KINGSTON  
Patient information's confidential.  
I'm just doing my job.

PUCK  
But, I'm her son.

KINGSTON  
You said that, but for whatever  
reason you're not on her contact  
list.

PUCK  
Go on, Mom, tell him who I am.

Kingston inserts a spoonful of soup into Gwen's mouth.

PUCK  
- Right. Well, an ID's out. Our  
last names aren't the same. Her  
string of ex-husbands puts Zsa Zsa  
Gabor to shame.

KINGSTON  
Okay. And I don't mean this to  
sound judgmental, but why aren't  
you in any family photos? That  
seems odd.

PUCK  
A snot-nosed kid hanging on her  
skirt didn't fit the Hollywood  
image... Wait. Hold on!

Puck jumps up, dashes out. Sounds of RUMMAGING come from the  
living room.

Kingston, curious, follows him.

#### **LIVING ROOM**

Determined, Puck digs through a cabinet.

KINGSTON  
You can't just rifle through--

PUCK (O.S.)  
- It's gotta be in here... Aha!

He holds up a tattered, silver bathing cap.

PUCK  
She wore this as Esther Williams'  
stand-in. It's her pride and joy.

Kingston doesn't respond.

PUCK  
How many times have you watched  
*Dangerous When Wet? Million Dollar  
Mermaid?... Neptune's Daughter?*

KINGSTON  
I can recite them word for word.

PUCK  
See there? I knew it.

**KITCHEN - LATER**

The trio sit at the table with glasses of iced tea.

KINGSTON  
Poor thing had a minor stroke that  
affected her speech and motor  
skills. My job's keeping her fed,  
active and engaged. Right, darlin'?

Kingston lightly pats her cheek. Gwen lowers her head, COOS.

PUCK  
Sure that's her in there and not  
some body-snatcher?

The DOOR BELL RINGS.

KINGSTON  
Sit tight. Both of you.

Kingston rises, goes to the door.

Puck sneaks a sip from the bottle. Gwen GROANS.

**EXT. GWEN'S TRAILER / PORCH - CONTINUOUS**

Lucinda on the porch. Kingston talks through the screen.

KINGSTON  
Evening, Lucinda. Back so soon?

LUCINDA  
Just wanted to make sure all's  
hunky-dory. With Gwen's son, I  
mean.

KINGSTON  
I'm not getting sucked into your  
drama. You can ask him yourself.

Kingston leaves.

Lucinda, broken sign in hand, taps her foot, frowns.

Puck appears, opens the SQUEAKY DOOR, glances at the binoculars around her neck.

She quickly shoves the binoculars inside her windbreaker.

LUCINDA

About before... I feel I need--

PUCK

- Still beating that dead horse?

LUCINDA

As interim President of the HOA, my duty is to respond to disturbances. And after receiving a frantic call about a vagrant sleeping by the--

PUCK

- A vagrant? You need to lighten up and get used to seeing my face. I'm probably gonna be here awhile.

LUCINDA

You're planning on living here?

PUCK

Yeah? Is that a problem?

LUCINDA

HOA rules state that occupancy is limited to two persons per unit. If you and... **Kingston** both intend to reside here you'll both need to petition the board.

Puck steps out onto the porch, forces Lucinda to move back.

PUCK

That's crazy. I'm not petitioning anyone to stay with my mother.

She steps closer.

LUCINDA

My business is to see community standards are upheld. Adhering to the rules is what keeps the peace.

He moves even closer to Lucinda. She holds tight.

PUCK

I'm not planning any naked pool parties, if that's what's making your brain swell. You wouldn't be invited anyway.

LUCINDA

I see my sign has been damaged.

PUCK

It has. Now why don't you go organize Bingo night or trap a rabid chihuahua.

He beats a retreat inside, SLAMS THE DOOR in Lucinda's face.

As she leaves, she replaces the destroyed yard sign with a new one.

**INT. GWEN'S TRAILER / KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS**

Kingston gives Gwen a sip of water. Puck returns.

PUCK

Who does she think she is?

KINGSTON

The queen bee. And you just kicked the hive. So, you best beware.

PUCK

She needs to back the hell off.

Gwen FUSSES, GROANS.

KINGSTON

What exactly are your plans? Is this a weekend visit? A week?

PUCK

I'm here for however long it takes.

KINGSTON

And what does that mean?

PUCK

I'm still figuring that out. Got a rule against drinking on the porch?

KINGSTON

Not at the moment. Just keep it away from your mother.

Puck grabs the bottle of vodka, leaves.

**INT. LUCINDA'S TRAILER - NIGHT**

Lucinda smokes, flips through her directory. She places an index finger on a number, DIALS her wall phone. Waits.

LUCINDA

Virna? It's me.... Alert Betty.  
We're going to war... No, dummy,  
not with the commies.

**EXT. PARKING LOT / PUCK'S POS VEGA - NIGHT**

The setting sun dips behind the San Jacinto Mountains.

He POPS the TRUNK, digs in his clothes, finds a shirt. He removes his soiled t-shirt, slips on the clean one.

Across the parking lot, in the shadows, a SLIGHT PERSON OF INDETERMINATE GENDER with blonde, stringy hair watches.

Puck UNLOCKS his car, grabs another two bottles of vodka, then loads up with a few more pieces of clothing, conceals the vodka inside the dirty shirt. SLAMS the trunk.

He walks off.

**INT. GWEN'S TRAILER / BATHROOM - NIGHT**

Gwen soaks in a sudsy bubble bath. Kingston, on a short stool, sits close at hand, reads *People* magazine.

KINGSTON

Liz Taylor can't keep the weight  
off. Just look at the poor thing.

He holds out the magazine for Gwen to see. Gwen's mouth is just above the water.

KINGSTON

No fancy aquatics tonight.

He slides her up, wipes suds from her chin.

A DOOR CLOSES in the other room.

KINGSTON

Oh, joy. The prodigal's back.

**KITCHEN - SAME TIME**

Puck enters with his contraband liquor, QUIETLY OPENS a few CABINETS. They're packed full.

He opens the under-sink cabinet, rearranges the detergent and paper towels, pushes the vodka to the rear, SOFTLY CLOSES the CABINET. Stands.

Kingston enters.

KINGSTON

Can I help with something?

Puck jumps.

PUCK

Shit. You're a sneaky one.

He slips out.

Suspicious, Kingston glances around the room.

**EXT. GWEN'S TRAILER / PORCH - NIGHT**

Puck leans against a wrought-iron post, smokes.

A GAGGLE OF GOSSIPS huddle down the street. They WHISPER, shake their heads.

PUCK

Pick a little, talk a little,  
ladies?

One GOSSIP taps another woman on the shoulder. Points at him.

GOSSIP

Betty.

**BETTY GUNN** (77, White), helmet-haired, in a US flag hoodie, with a facelift so tight she looks cross-eyed, dismisses her.

BETTY

Don't pay that hooligan any mind.

PUCK

Care to hear tonight's forecast?

The ladies don't respond, but he's piqued their interest.

PUCK

Cloudless skies. Perfect night for  
moon gazing.

And with that, Puck turns his back, drops his pants, jiggles his pale, bare buttocks in their direction.

The gossip GASPS, Betty shields her eyes.

The other ladies ogle Puck, transfixed.

Betty, in a fluster, hustles them away.

BETTY

Let's go, girls! Quickly now!

Puck HOWLS like a wolf.

**INT. GWEN'S TRAILER / GWEN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT**

Kingston helps Gwen into bed. She lies back, worried expression on her face.

KINGSTON

Don't you fret. Kingston's here.

He pulls up the covers, turns off the bedside lamp.

**EXT. PARKING LOT / PUCK'S POS VEGA - LATER**

Puck broods, sits half out of the car, a nearly empty bottle of vodka at his feet.

Sounds of nighttime television fill the air -  
CANNED LAUGHTER, TV ADS, THEME SONGS, GUN SHOTS, SIRENS.

Kingston walks up, hands Puck a sandwich on a paper plate.

KINGSTON

You should eat something.

PUCK

Thanks... How's Gwen?

KINGSTON

Dandy. She had her bath and she's  
in bed. Should be asleep soon.

Puck takes a bite of the sandwich. Kingston observes.

PUCK

Hmmm. PB & J. Interesting choice.  
Is that some kind of comment?

Disgusted, Kingston turns to go, hesitates, turns back.



KINGSTON

May I make an observation?

PUCK

Fire away.

KINGSTON

You turn up out of the blue. You drink far too much. Gwen's uneasy around you. There's a massive chip on your shoulder. Shall I continue?

PUCK

What about you? You appear to have no life besides caring for a frail old lady. Plus you're about as much fun as my first grade teacher, who was a 70-year old nun with a hump.

KINGSTON

You're gonna need to up your game if think you can get under my skin.

PUCK

Noted.

KINGSTON

The bottom line is I'm not sure you staying here is optimal for Gwen's well-being. We follow a strict reg--

PUCK

- I don't have anywhere else to go.

KINGSTON

My mama would find this downright un-Christian-like, but that's just not my concern.

Puck hands back the sandwich.

PUCK

Not really hungry.

KINGSTON

There's other food since PB&J isn't to your liking. Help yourself.

Kingston picks up the vodka bottle.

PUCK

I'm not done with that.

KINGSTON

Bless your little heart, but I  
think you are.

He walks away.

KINGSTON

(over his shoulder)

I'll find you some bedding. You'll  
have a place on the sofa for  
tonight. Some sleep will do you  
good... And consider taking a  
shower. You're awfully ripe.

Puck stands, teeters, SLAMS the CAR DOOR.

**EXT. POOLSIDE - NIGHT - MINUTES LATER**

Puck OPENS the GATE, slips into the pool area.

The reflected light casts shimmering bands of blue onto the  
towering palms.

He goes to the pool's edge, gazes down, loses himself in the  
shifting patterns of light and water.

GWEN (V.O.)

(voice in Puck's head)

Jump in, silly. You'll be just  
fine. Mom's here for you.

PUCK

Liar.

**EXT. TRAILER PARK STREET - NIGHT**

Puck weaves down the street, gazes upward at the moon.

From one of the darkened porches, comes...

CHARLOTTE (O.S.)

Nights like this make the universe  
utterly incomprehensible.

He stops, searches for the source.

CHARLOTTE (O.S.)

Although, this could be a factor.

The flame from a lighter reveals **CHARLOTTE NORD** (93, White),  
petite, spry for her age. Her kind, ancient face glows like a  
plump, craggy orb.

She lights a joint, takes a long drag.

CHARLOTTE  
You're welcome to join me.

Puck moves to her porch.

CHARLOTTE  
My doctor would have a conniption  
if he knew I smoked this doobie all  
by my lonesome. And go easy. It's  
grade-A weed.

She hands him the joint. He takes a PUFF, COUGHS, starts to  
hand it back.

CHARLOTTE  
Hang on to it awhile, honey. I'm  
already flying higher than T.W.A..

They sit, silently take in the peaceful night.

Charlotte SIGHS.

CHARLOTTE  
Now's the perfect time to ponder,  
with the neighborhood biddies glued  
to Carson. The Tonight Show's the  
only thing that stops all their  
incessant caterwauling... So, I  
hear you're Gwen's boy?

PUCK  
That traveled fast.

CHARLOTTE  
Lucinda fired a flare and, in a  
flash, news of your arrival spread  
like wildfire... I'm Charlotte.

She pats the seat next to her. He sits. They shake hands.

PUCK  
I'm Patrick, but I go by Puck... I  
guess I rattled Lucinda's cage.

CHARLOTTE  
That goddam busybody never lost her  
taste for bossing everyone around.  
Still thinks she's on a movie set.  
Landing on her shit list is a badge  
of honor.

Puck smokes the joint like a cigarette.

CHARLOTTE

Whoa fella. You're going after that spliff like Jerry Garcia.

He returns the joint. She takes a hit.

CHARLOTTE

If you'll allow me, some advice... Don't lounge poolside, getting sauced. Said behavior, plus being an under sixty male makes you a prime target for a gaggle of frisky widows. Catch my drift?

PUCK

Yep... I should head back, make sure I'm not locked out... And thanks. This took the edge off.

He stands. Charlotte hands him the joint.

CHARLOTTE

That's on the house. And drop by anytime. I'm always home and happy to receive visitors. If I don't answer, I'm either on the shitter or I've gone to meet my maker.

PUCK

I'll do that. Good night.

CHARLOTTE

Oh, um, keep your drawers up. Although, I hear your cute, little derrière was the highlight of the week. Shame I missed it.

Puck grins, slips off into the night.

**INT. GWEN'S TRAILER / LIVING ROOM - NIGHT**

Kingston, lit by the flicker of the NIGHTLY NEWS, lounges on the sofa, wrapped in a blanket.

Puck enters, quietly CLOSES the SCREEN DOOR.

PUCK

Didn't want to violate my curfew.

KINGSTON

I made-up the sofa for you. Extra bedding is in the hall--

PUCK

- Can I say something?

Kingston grabs the remote, mutes the TV.

Puck perches on the sofa arm.

PUCK

I'm sure you noticed my life's kind of crap. Black eye's a dead give away... But I just need a little time to sort things out... And I promise to cut back on the booze,... if you'll let me stay.

KINGSTON

Let me sleep on it.

Kingston takes his blanket, leaves.

Puck goes to the bookshelf, takes a VHS cassette, slides it into the VCR. It swallows the tape, WHIRS to life.

He retires to the sofa, settles in, UNMUTES the TV.

**INSERT - Million Dollar Mermaid clip** - Esther Williams, "Aqua Musical" goddess, clasps a metal ring. She's hoisted above a fire and smoke-encircled body of water, where fifty swimmers form a swirling kaleidoscope around a huge black bullseye.

Esther beams. Her exaggerated smile barely conceals the terror of plummeting from such a tremendous height.

The ORCHESTRA SWELLS. TIMPANI THUNDERS.

She releases her grip, plunges to the water below, barely makes a splash, disappears into the black of the bullseye.

Puck drifts off to sleep.

**BEGIN DREAM**

**INT. GWEN'S TRAILER / KITCHEN - DAY**

A 1950's, "June Cleaver" version of Gwen (mid-30s), HUMS a CHEERY TUNE, pours pancake batter onto a SIZZLING GRIDDLE.

She effortlessly glides to the fridge, opens the door, grabs a bowl of eggs and a butter dish, nudges the door closed with a slight bump from her hip. CLICK.

She glides back to the stove, drops a pat of butter into a hot skillet. The melting butter LOUDLY HISSES.

With one hand, she CRACKS an egg on the skillet, deftly plops the whites and yolk dead in the center. The perfectly round, FRYING EGG SPUTTERS.

Puck walks in, half asleep, rubs his eyes.

PUCK

Mom? What are you doing?

Gwen talks over her shoulder, while she cooks.

GWEN

(sickeningly sweet)

Making breakfast, you ninny. And I predict a nasty hangover when you wake up. It's a wonder you can function with the copious amount of alcohol you consume. Not to mention the reefer you smoked with that pothead, Charlotte. I suggest you exercise a little caution. She's known for her potent marijuana.

PUCK

What's with the get-up? You look like a Stepford wife.

Gwen stops, places her hands on her hips, looks at him.

GWEN

Well, somebody needs to be your mother. Am I right? And, if you continue down your current path, I'll deliver a swift kick to your behind, just like I did with your drunken excuse of a father. Now sit down. I made your favorite.

Puck sits down to a fully-set breakfast table with a red gingham tablecloth and napkins, vase full of daisies.

Gwen slides a plate in front of him.

A FROWNING pancake face stares back.

**END DREAM**

**LIVING ROOM - DAY**

Puck awakens to the SLAM of the REFRIGERATOR DOOR.

He rubs his forehead, gets up, walks unsteadily to the...

**KITCHEN**

Gwen, in her nightgown, stares at a bowl of oatmeal.

Kingston WHISTLES, pours a cup of coffee, heads over to Gwen.

KINGSTON  
Milk has arrived.

He pours milk over her oatmeal, sits, begins to feed her.

Puck slowly shuffles in.

KINGSTON  
Morning sunshine. Sleep well?

PUCK  
Can we dial down the morning cheer?

Puck goes to the coffee maker, fills a cup.

PUCK  
Coffee. Thank God. There wouldn't  
happen to be pancakes?

KINGSTON  
Aunt Jemima's on strike. You can  
find instant oatmeal in the pantry.

PUCK  
That's okay. Think I'll pass.

He leaves.

KINGSTON  
My mama would have whooped that boy  
within an inch of his life.

Gwen SIGHS.

**EXT. GWEN'S TRAILER / PORCH - MOMENTS LATER**

Puck, sulks on the steps, smokes, his eyes hidden behind a pair of sunglasses.

Betty and her geriatric entourage power walk up the street.

BETTY  
Look away, girls. We don't want a  
repeat of the other night.

They steer clear, quicken their pace, noses in the air.

One lady gives him a wink. Puck toasts her with his mug.  
On their heels, Lucinda SCREECHES up in her golf cart.

PUCK  
Oh, great, Satan incarnate.

LUCINDA  
Your presence is required at  
today's emergency HOA meeting. The  
topic, neighborly conduct, should  
be of particular interest, since it  
concerns you.

Lucinda pulls away.

PUCK  
What time?! And where?!

LUCINDA  
(shouts over her shoulder)  
The clubhouse! One o'clock! Sharp!

PUCK  
Will your pussy be there? I'm not  
coming otherwise.

But she's gone.

KINGSTON (O.S.)  
Making friends and influencing  
people?

Puck turns to Kingston, who lingers inside the screen door.

PUCK  
You heard that?

KINGSTON  
Just can't help yourself, can you?

Puck lifts his mug in the air. Stifles a COUGH.

PUCK  
Any more coffee? I'm fresh out.

KINGSTON  
Do I look like your boy?

Kingston disappears back inside.

PUCK  
There's no place like home.



**INT. GWEN'S TRAILER / LIVING ROOM - DAY**

Puck, splayed on the couch, an ice pack on his forehead.

Kingston and Gwen enter, both in swimsuits. Gwen wears the silver bathing cap. Kingston carries a flashy pool bag.

KINGSTON

If you're sticking around, dispose of the liquor you hid under the sink. And not in a cocktail glass over ice. And don't try hiding it. I know every inch of this place.

Puck responds with a salute.

KINGSTON

Don't blow off the HOA either. If you do, Lucinda will make your life a living hell. And I'm undecided on you staying. So, tread lightly.

Kingston leads Gwen outside, CLOSES the door.

When the coast is clear, Puck dashes for the...

**KITCHEN**

He enters to find the hidden vodka sitting on the counter.

He opens a bottle, takes a swig.

He proceeds to the wall phone, picks up the handset. DIALS.

First a RING, then a CLICK on the other end of the line. A MUFFLED MESSAGE emerges from the earpiece. BEEP.

PUCK

Hola! It's me. I'm not laying dead in a ditch.

**INT. SCOTTY'S APARTMENT / LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS**

Boy Toy, on the sofa, listens to the answering machine.

PUCK (V.O.)

But, like Dorothy Parker once said, I have descended into some kind of "fresh hell", known as my mother's trailer park. And I'm having...

(stops to cough)

... the time of my life. It may as

(MORE)

PUCK (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
 well be Disneyland, except there  
 aren't postcards with Tinker Bell  
 saying, "*Happiest place on earth?*  
*My glittery fairy ass!*"

**INT. GWEN'S TRAILER / KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS**

PUCK  
 Oh, you can take my name off the  
 machine. I'm gonna be here awhile.

He HANGS up the PHONE, takes another swig.

**INT. GWEN'S BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER**

Puck rifles through a dresser, opens drawer after drawer of  
 dated, vacuum-sealed clothes in plastic.

Frustrated, he opens the closet, pushes aside Gwen's clothes.

In the back, he finds a box labeled, "*For Patrick.*"

He takes the box to the bed, opens the flaps.

Inside - baby clothes, a threadbare and misshapen Teddy Bear,  
 grade school photos, drawings, naked G.I. Joes, and...

a framed, water-stained photo of a stunning Gwen (47), **ZEV**  
 (36, White), a mustached, well-dressed man, every hair in  
 place, and **YOUNG PUCK** (6), who holds a grey kitten.

Puck inspects the image. Cracked glass bisects his childhood  
 face. He runs a finger along the crack.

**FLASHBACK**

**EXT. SUBURBAN L.A. STREET - DAY (TWENTY FOUR YEARS AGO)**

Gwen and Zev on the porch of a perfect California bungalow.

Gwen, giddy, all smiles, RINGS the DOORBELL. Zev pinches her  
 rear. She lightly SLAPS his hand, scowls.

The door opens to reveal, **MRS. BREWSTER** (70s, White), an Aunt  
 Bee type in a flower-print housedress and crisp apron.

GWEN  
 Hi, Mrs. Brewster. I'm back. I hope  
 Patrick wasn't too much trouble.

MRS. BREWSTER

Oh, no, he's been a peach. Such a sweet and polite boy.

Mrs. Brewster scrutinizes Zev.

GWEN

Oh. This is my new husband.

He wraps his arm a little too aggressively around Gwen's waist, pulls her close, kisses her neck.

Mrs. Brewster raises an eyebrow.

GWEN

It all happened in a flash.

ZEV

That's Vegas for you.

MRS. BREWSTER

I wouldn't know. I'll get Patrick.

Mrs. Brewster disappears inside.

Gwen squirms away from Zev, straightens her dress.

He goes for her again. She SWATS him.

GWEN

Stop. The neighbors might see.

ZEV

Geez. What's with the prim and proper act?

Young Puck rushes out the door, into Gwen's arms.

GWEN

There's my handsome boy! Didn't I tell you he could be in the movies?

ZEV

Yep. You did. Hey, fella. I'm your new dad. But, you can call me Zev.

Puck suspiciously inspects Zev.

GWEN

There's a surprise in the backseat. But, be gentle, it's delicate.

Young Puck dashes to a sparkling, green '64 Mustang convertible parked by the curb.

**EXT. SUBURBAN STREET / '64 MUSTANG CONVERTIBLE - CONTINUOUS**

Puck peers into the backseat.

Asleep, curled into a fluffy ball, is a Russian Grey kitten.

**END FLASHBACK****INT. GWEN'S BEDROOM**

Puck TOSSES the "family portrait" into a wastebasket. THUMP.

**EXT. POOL - DAY**

Gwen floats on her back, stares serenely at the sky. Kingston guides her through the shallow end of the pool.

KINGSTON

It's just like Neptune's Daughter.  
Still remember your moves?

Just outside the fence, Puck strolls by.

**INT. CLUBHOUSE / HOA MEETING ROOM - DAY**

The HOA BOARD congregate at the far end of the room. Lucinda holds court. Betty, seated by her side, takes the minutes.

LUCINDA

Betty, read that back. I'm not  
quite sure we're being firm--

Puck bursts in. The DOOR SLAMS behind him.

The HOA Board Members turn, look.

LUCINDA

Speak of the devil. You're late!

PUCK

What did I miss? Diabetic bake sale  
plans? Doggie doo-doo violations?

LUCINDA

We're discussing your utter lack of  
decorum, which is on fine display.

PUCK

Oh, look, you saved me a seat.

Puck proceeds to a single chair facing the board, sits.

PUCK

Why does this feel like a parole hearing? Not that I know what that's like first hand.

He slides the chair closer. Slouches. Crosses his arms.

LUCINDA

You were asked here to address your abhorrent behavior.

Puck scans the group.

PUCK

So, are these your lackeys?

LUCINDA

Everyone in this room holds a democratically-elected, esteemed position, which they've earned.

PUCK

By doing your bidding, I bet.

The board avoids his gaze.

LUCINDA

Mr. Sparks, let's dispense--

PUCK

- It's MacMillan. My mom is Sparks.

LUCINDA

Well, Mr. MacMillan, if you think abrasiveness will get you--

PUCK

- I don't like being treated like a criminal, especially when I haven't done anything wrong. I was just having a little innocent fun.

LUCINDA

Exposing your posterior to a group of ladies isn't innocent fun. Lucky for you the board is being generous and has decided a strong warning--

PUCK

- You've already made a decision?

LUCINDA

You are hereby on notice. Any more disruptive behavior, which results  
(MORE)

LUCINDA (CONT'D)  
 in complaints will be brought to  
 the attention of the authorities.

She BANGS a GAVEL.

LUCINDA  
 Meeting adjourned. Good day.

Puck sits up straight.

PUCK  
 Hold on. That's it? I'm not allowed  
 to defend myself? How is that--?

LUCINDA  
 - I said, meeting adjourned.

The board members stand, follow Lucinda out.

PUCK  
 You know what? I should run for  
 President. Then we'll see how  
 things get run around here.

They're gone.

He stays, fumes, looks at the empty seats.

**EXT. POOLSIDE - DAY - LATER**

A few LADIES perform water aerobics to a 60's POP SONG.

Puck enters the pool area. The GATE BANGS SHUT.

He plops under an umbrella, broods, KNOCKS OVER a chair.

The ladies stop exercising, stare.

PUCK  
 Sorry. Don't stop on my account.

The ladies gradually resume their activity.

**PUCK'S POV / SERIES OF SHOTS**

- 1) A pair of golf carts pass, the DRIVERS greet one another.
- 2) A LATINO GARDENER shapes a hedge.
- 3) TWO LADIES GAB under a bright orange awning, sip iced tea.
- 4) Alvin cheerily walks by. Rocket does his business.

Then, Lucinda swiftly pulls up next to Alvin, SCREECHES to a halt. Rocket GROWLS at her.

LUCINDA  
Alvin! Clean up after that mutt.

ALVIN  
Rocket's only peeing.

LUCINDA  
That better be all he's doing.

Lucinda TEARS off, zips up the street, pulls in front of a trailer with a weed-filled flower bed.

The resident, EIKO SATO (70s, Asian-American), stoops to pick up her newspaper.

Lucinda hops out of the golf cart, stomps up to her.

Lucinda gestures to her unruly weeds. Eiko cowers, her face flushed, she starts to cry.

Lucinda returns to her golf cart, drives off.

**END PUCK'S POV**

Puck at the fence, waves to Eiko.

PUCK  
Hey, lady! Are you okay?

Humiliated, Eiko looks over at him, darts inside.

**INT. GWEN'S TRAILER / LIVING ROOM - MINUTES LATER**

Puck enters in a huff.

PUCK  
Somebody needs to stop that evil bitch, HOA President.

KINGSTON (O.S.)  
(from the kitchen)  
Puck. Come in here, please.

**KITCHEN**

Kingston, arms folded, stands by the sink. On the counter sits three bottles of vodka, one nearly empty.

PUCK (O.S.)  
I'll run against her. Then--

Puck enters.

PUCK

- Oh, right... It was a tough morning. I had to face Cunt-zilla and the HOA board... I was gonna get around to it... I swear.

Kingston steps aside, clears the path to the sink.

PUCK

You want me to...? Right now?

KINGSTON

Why not seize the day?

Puck looks at Kingston, smug, defiant.

PUCK

I'll do it, when I'm ready.

Kingston, disgusted, promptly leaves.

PUCK

So, that's it?! You're just gonna walk away? No fight?

No answer. Puck goes after him.

#### **LIVING ROOM**

Puck rushes in, ready to go to battle.

Kingston holds out a grocery bag full of Puck's belongings.

KINGSTON

Feel free to visit Gwen anytime, but you're not staying here. Not on my watch.

(Puck goes to speak)

I don't trust you.

Puck seizes the bag, leaves. The front door SLAMS.

#### **EXT. TRAILER PARK STREET - MOMENTS LATER**

Lucinda, parked around the corner from the Clubhouse parking lot, gets out her binoculars.

#### **LUCINDA'S POV - THROUGH BINOCULARS**

#### **EXT. CLUBHOUSE PARKING LOT / POS VEGA**

Puck opens the trunk, dumps his belongings, SLAMS the TRUNK.



He circles around, opens the car door, plops into the driver's seat, violently COUGHS, leans out. THROWS UP.

**EXT. LUCINDA'S TRAILER / FRONT PORCH - LATER**

Lucinda stews on her front porch, smokes. In her lap, Frank whips his tail.

Alvin strolls by with Rocket, who pees on Lucinda's mailbox.

ALVIN

Evening, Lucinda. I'm on my way to Bingo. Can I save you a seat?

Lucinda doesn't respond, simply glares at him.

ALVIN

Well, um, have a pleasant evening.

She GRUNTS.

Alvin scoops up Rocket, hurries off.

**INT. GWEN'S KITCHEN - NIGHT**

Kingston holds the wall phone to his ear.

KINGSTON

Would you tell her I called?...  
Yeah, I know it's been... Hey, I've got responsibilities too, you know... Yes, I'll come visit after Christmas... I will. I promise... You can call me once in a while. My number hasn't changed... Fine... Love you too... God bless.

He HANGS UP the phone.

KINGSTON

Ugh. Siblings.

**EXT. CHARLOTTE'S PORCH - NIGHT**

Puck walks up to find Charlotte, stoned, in her usual spot.

CHARLOTTE

I was just thinking about you.

She scoots over. He sits. She hands him a joint.

He takes a hit, glumly stares off.

CHARLOTTE  
Just lose your best friend?

PUCK  
Assuming I had one to lose.

CHARLOTTE  
That just sounds like self-pity.

He tries to return the joint. She pushes it back.

CHARLOTTE  
Tell Charlotte your troubles.

PUCK  
I'm a total screw up.

She gives him her best concerned therapist face.

PUCK  
Believe me. Everything I do ends up  
with me in the toilet.

CHARLOTTE  
Oscar Wilde said, "*We are all in  
the gutter, but some of us are  
looking at the stars.*" Or was that  
DeMille? He pontificated, a lot.

PUCK  
I'm in a gutter. Up to my neck.

CHARLOTTE  
There're all sorts of gutters. All  
depends on which one stinks enough  
to coax you from the muck.

PUCK  
My gutter's more of a quagmire.

CHARLOTTE  
Isn't that a Country Western song?

PUCK  
You're just trying to cheer me up.

CHARLOTTE  
Damn straight, I am. Now, whatever  
crap you've stepped in, go find a  
sturdy stick and scrape it off.  
Otherwise you track it everywhere.

He looks at her, questioningly.

CHARLOTTE  
I mean it. Go on. Get going.

PUCK  
Right now?

CHARLOTTE  
This very minute. When you've got  
one foot out the door, like me,  
it's the only motto to live by.

Puck, determined, starts to go, turns back.

PUCK  
Thanks. I really needed to--

CHARLOTTE  
- Pshaw. Thank me later.

He comes back, kisses her cheek.

CHARLOTTE  
Just be sure to come back and tell  
old Charlotte how it all went.

**INT. GWEN'S TRAILER / LIVING ROOM - NIGHT**

Kingston turns on the TV. A CAR CHASE appears on the screen.

Gwen, on the couch, FUSSES.

KINGSTON  
Esther Williams couldn't have made  
one solitary cop movie?

He goes to the bookshelf, searches the library of VHS tapes.

KINGSTON  
Here's one you'll enjoy. Again.

TIMID KNOCK at the door. He answers it.

Puck, head low, meekly raises a hand, gives a pathetic wave.

PUCK  
Hey. Um, ... I'm ready now.

**KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER**

The vodka bottles sit lined up, right where Puck left them.

PUCK

There they all are, lined up like a little boozy firing squad.

KINGSTON

I had a feeling you'd be back.

Puck goes to the sink, POURS the alcohol down the drain.

PUCK

I lived on the street. I'm not going back there again. Ever.

Kingston rests his hand on Puck's shoulder.

**LIVING ROOM - LATER**

Puck and Gwen on the sofa, watch...

**INSERT - Neptune's Daughter clip:** An Esther Williams' spectacle with swimmers in silver swimsuits and caps.

Kingston enters, in a dress shirt and jeans.

KINGSTON

I'm off to play Bingo with the blue hairs. I can't bear another night of saccharine music and bathing beauties. Besides, what kind of Southern Baptist would I be if I didn't indulge in a decadent night of Bingo now and then.

PUCK

You're trusting me with her?

KINGSTON

I'll only be gone a couple hours. If she fusses, restart the movie.

He leaves.

Puck looks over at Gwen, who is transfixed.

**INSERT - Movie Clip** - Esther, in a skin-tight, gold bodysuit and spiked crown, rises on a platform obscured by a gushing torrent. The MUSIC SWELLS. She dives from forty feet up.

PUCK

Was that you on the end? It's hard to tell. Guess that's the point, right? Only Esther got Technicolor.

Puck turns to Gwen. Her eyes are closed, she SOFTLY SNORES.

PUCK

See. Who needs him anyway?

Puck covers Gwen with an afghan, TURNS OFF the TV.

He relaxes, pulls a joint from his shirt pocket. Starts to light up, reconsiders, goes outside.

**EXT. GWEN'S PORCH - NIGHT - MINUTES LATER**

Puck, on the stoop, takes a drag from the joint.

Seconds later, Lucinda approaches in her golf cart.

He quickly conceals the joint, tries to disperse the smoke.

Lucinda comes to a snail's pace, slowly rolls by.

Their eyes lock. Heads slowly turn. No words exchange.

She ACCELERATES. Zips around a corner. Puck chases after her.

**EXT. LUCINDA'S TRAILER - MOMENTS LATER**

Lucinda pulls into her carport, parks, goes inside.

Puck creeps up, slips into the darkened carport.

**EXT. CARPORT - CONTINUOUS**

He stoops low to the ground, slides alongside her trailer, then stands, discretely peeks in a lit window.

**PUCK'S POV**

**INT. LUCINDA'S KITCHEN**

Lucinda, Frank cradled in her arms, enters.

She sets an empty shot glass on the counter, refills it from a nearby bottle of whiskey, tosses it back.

She fills the glass again, gives Frank a taste.

She leaves the room.

**END PUCK'S PO**

Puck crouches down in Lucinda's cactus garden, lowers into one of her yard signs.

He yanks out the sign, gets a giant grin.

**CARPORT - 30 MINUTES LATER**

Puck quietly places a stack of broken yard signs onto a heap of signs in the back of Lucinda's golf cart. He creeps off.

**INT. CLUBHOUSE - NIGHT**

Rows of tables and chairs occupied by excited BLUE HAIRS. Bingo cards spread before them, markers poised.

Kingston, a huge smile spread across his face, marker in hand, sits surrounded by a pack of fawning ladies.

**OTIS BROWN** (90, White), a lively old man with a battery-operated, propellor bow tie, commands the room.

His assistant and wife, **SHIRLEY** (80, White), in a puffy, pink crinoline dress and tap shoes, operates the bingo cage.

She pulls a number, twirls over to Otis, hands him the ball.

OTIS

Keep an eye on those cards. We must be getting close. And here we go... B-Seventeen... Like Olivia Newton-John sang, "*Please, Mister*"--

LAVENDER RINSE LADY

- Otis! That's me! I've got Bingo!

**LAVENDER RINSE LADY** (80s, White), seated in front, excitedly waves her arms.

A HUBBUB OF EXCITEMENT and GRUMBLES fill the room.

OTIS

Shirley, go take a look. Last time she yelled Bingo her hearing aid was off, just like her numbers.

Shirley SINGLE-TIME STEPS to Lavender Rinse Lady.

Everyone APPLAUDS.

OTIS

Don't clear your cards. We haven't determined if we have a winner yet.

Betty rushes in, makes her way through the room to Kingston, whispers in his ear.

He excuses himself, hurries out. Betty follows.

**EXT. POOLSIDE - MOMENTS LATER**

Alvin, along with **VIRNA FINK** (75, White), ditzy, in a matted wig and terry robe, lead a wet and bleeding Gwen to a chair.

Disoriented, frightened, Gwen's eyes dart from face to face.

ALVIN

It's okay, Gwen, you're with friends. See, it's me, Alvin. Virna's here, too.

They ease her into the chair, try to calm her, use a towel to dab the blood from the gash on her chin.

VIRNA

You really shouldn't be swimming, honey. You'll catch your death.

Betty rushes up, Kingston in tow.

BETTY

I found him.

VIRNA

How could you leave her alone?

KINGSTON

I didn't. Her son was supposed to be keeping an eye on her.

Gwen shivers. Kingston feels her forehead, wraps her in his sweater.

KINGSTON

Where was she?

ALVIN

The shallow end. I heard a splash.

KINGSTON

She's freezing. Help me get her inside.

**EXT. GWEN'S TRAILER / STREET - NIGHT**

An ambulance, lights ablaze, sits outside Gwen's trailer.

NEIGHBORS emerge from their homes, fill the street. They CHATTER, strain for a better look.

**TWO PARAMEDICS** bring Gwen out on a gurney. Kingston follows.

The paramedics slide her into the ambulance.

Puck runs up, out of breath.

PUCK  
What happened?

KINGSTON  
Where the hell were you?

PUCK  
Out for a walk. Is it my mom?

KINGSTON  
- You reek like pot. Are you high?

PUCK  
No... Maybe, a little.

KINGSTON  
You're unbelievable. All you had to do was sit with her for--

PUCK  
- She dozed off. I figured she'd be okay alone for a bit. Is she hurt?

PARAMEDIC  
We need to get moving here, fellas. Who's riding along?

Puck looks over at Kingston, who steps in front of him.

KINGSTON  
Not him.

PUCK  
You're right. Go ahead. It should be you.

KINGSTON  
I want you gone when I get back. I was an idiot to give you a second chance.

Kingston climbs in, sits next to Gwen, takes her hand.

PUCK  
I wasn't thinking. I'm sorry.



The paramedics CLOSE the DOORS, climb in, DRIVE AWAY.

Puck stands alone, teary, in the middle of the street, all eyes on him. He scans the judging faces.

He pushes past the crowd, runs up the street.

**INT. AMBULANCE - NIGHT**

Gwen, strapped to a gurney, eyes wide, peers up at Kingston.

She opens her mouth, tries to form a word.

                  GWEN  
                  (breathy)  
Paa... Paa.

                  KINGSTON  
What's that, darlin'?

Kingston places his ear next to her mouth.

                  GWEN  
                  (in a soft whisper)  
Patrick.

**EXT. TRAILER PARK / PARKING LOT - NIGHT**

Under a lavender sky, street lights emit a yellow glow.

Puck OPENS his CAR TRUNK.

He rummages around, removes a vodka bottle, unscrews the cap, drinks, tosses the cap. It CLINKS, bounces into the darkness.

He SLAMS the TRUNK,... it pops back OPEN. He walks away.

**EXT. POOLSIDE - NIGHT**

Puck makes his way to the deep end. The vodka bottle swings by his side. He kicks off his shoes. One lands in the water.

He watches the ripples make their way across the surface.

He takes a huge drink. The alcohol pours down his chin, soaks his shirt front.

He CHOKES on the alcohol, COUGHS. Tears roll down his cheeks.

He looks at Harvey's Rolex on his wrist, removes it, throws it into the pool.

**FLASHBACK****INT. CLINIC / COUNSELOR'S OFFICE - DAY**

Puck faces a somber **HEALTH COUNSELOR** (40s, White), in a pastel, broad-shouldered power suit.

She opens a blue file on the desk in front of her, glances at the contents, looks back up.

HEALTH COUNSELOR  
I'm sorry to tell you, but your  
test results came back positive.

Puck's stoic expression hides his emotions.

HEALTH COUNSELOR  
Do you have anyone you'd like to  
call? A family member? A friend?

PUCK  
If only.

**END FLASHBACK**

Puck rocks unsteadily, gazes at the water, raises his arms, bottle in one hand.

Puck releases the vodka bottle, it SMASHES on the concrete.

He peers at the shattered glass, deliberately plants his feet in the glistening shards.

He grimaces, suppresses a CRY OF PAIN.

He steps forward, his bleeding feet on the pool's edge.

Blood drips from his toes. The red streaks swirl, dissipate in the illuminated water.

Across the pool, YOUNG GWEN, in her silver bathing cap and matching suit, gradually comes into focus.

She glides through the water, beckons.

GWEN  
Jump in, silly. You'll be just  
fine. Mom's here for you.

Nearby, Zev, on a chaise, cocktail in hand, LAUGHS.

ZEV  
Momma's boy can't swim.

PUCK  
Promise you'll catch me?

Puck sways forward, PLUNGES, face first, into the pool.

**EXT. POOL - UNDERWATER**

Puck, his limbs splayed, sinks, amid rivulets of blood.

He twists, looks up. The pool's surface recedes.

He lowers his head. A glaring light blinds him. Puck raises his hands, reaches for the wavering beacon.

**BEGIN DAYDREAM**

**EXT. WIND TURBINE FIELD / DESERT SURFACE - DAY**

Puck's naked, inert, facedown body.

The immense shadow of a rotating, turbine blade SWOOPS over him, like the wings of a massive predator. WHOOSH.

A fat fly lands on his face, licks at a trail of sweat that runs down his forehead, makes its way towards his mouth.

Puck's eyes open.

He swats at the fly, raises his head, looks toward the looming turbines, squints. He lifts a dirt-crusting hand to block the blazing sun.

STATIC erupts from a nearby speaker. DEAFENING FEEDBACK.

BLARING LOUDSPEAKER (V.O.)  
You there! This area is restricted.  
Security's been alerted.

Puck struggles to his feet, thrusts a defiant middle finger at an overhead surveillance camera, emits a TERRIBLE WAIL.

**END DAYDREAM**

**POOL - UNDERWATER**

He SCREAMS, but only a MUFFLED, lung's worth of air escapes.

He tries to retrieve his breath with his cupped hands.

The oxygen fragments into thousands of bubbles that slip through his fingers.

Puck panics, his face freezes in terror. Is this it? The end?

Suddenly, from out of nowhere, an arm closes around his chest, forcefully pulls him backwards, away from the light.

Puck's face breaks the surface. He GASPS.

**EXT. POOLSIDE**

Limp, he is lifted from the water, laid on the pool's edge.

He rolls onto his side. Water spews from his mouth. He violently COUGHS, struggles for air.

Gradually, Puck's CHOKING subsides. His eyes, narrow slits, barely open.

**PUCK'S POV**

Crouched over him is a person of indeterminate gender with long, wet, blond, stringy hair.

Their wiry arms support Puck's head.

This is **HALCYON** (27, White).

Their kind, concerned face gazes down at him.

**END PUCK'S POV**

Puck tries to sit up. Halcyon pushes him back down.

HALCYON  
(in ASL, subtitled)  
No. Stay. Breathe.

Weakened, Puck reaches out, latches onto Halcyon's drenched, sagging t-shirt.

PUCK  
(sputtering)  
Did I die? Are you here to take me?

Halcyon shakes their head, smiles.

HALCYON  
(in ASL, subtitled)  
I'm not an angel.

Puck closes his eyes, wilts.

**END PILOT**