

THE BICOASTALS

A Screenplay



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FADE IN:

INT.JOSH'S OFFICE.DAY.

JOSH RUBENS, 31, Chief-of-Staff, stands over a small desk PUNCHING the keys of his laptop. He's a lanky, dark-haired chap with mannerisms that could pass for gay. He wears a tie with a print of the California condor.

Josh's office is tiny and there's no window. The office is a receptacle for unwanted furniture, broken equipment, and dead plants. There are chairs without arms, a picture with a cracked frame, and a stained couch standing up on its side. A copy machine missing its hood sits next to a potted, leafless ficus. Josh's nameplate with title is wedged between two bare branches of the ficus.

Josh continues PUNCHING the keys.

CLOSE-UP OF COMPUTER SCREEN shows the heading "Pet Sitting Services."

JOSH

SOS, Lani Girl!

LANI KAIMIKAUA, 44, the Hawaiian office manager, HUSTLES into the office carrying a stack of paperwork. She's wearing a power suit and a shark-tooth necklace.

LANI

If it's Kona coffee you're after, Josh, get it yourself.

Lani PLOPS the paperwork down on the broken copy machine.

Josh continues PUNCHING keys.

JOSH

How's Prop 10 shaping up?

LANI

(sarcastic)

Updated and on your desk, Mister Chief-of-Staff.

JOSH

Endorsements?

LANI

Letters of support from the Sierra Club, EPA, Department of the Interior. Audubon Society's bailing.

(pause)

The Big Kahuna wants you. He's with that page from La Jolla.

JOSH

Bridgette Montgomery.

LANI

Bet they're baking brownies.

JOSH

Get real, Lani. Brian's a married man.

LANI

So?

JOSH

So, so, suck your toe.

LANI

All the way to Tokyo.

Josh and Lani love to kid around. Despite their different nationalities, they're more like younger brother and older sister than co-workers.

JOSH

What's the name of that service?

LANI

Something finicky. Fancy Felines Are Finicky.

JOSH

That sounds like Fancy Feast.

LANI

I know it was an 'F.'

Lani exits the office.

JOSH

Pearly shells from the ocean.

LANI (OS)

Tiny bubbles in the wine.

JOSH

Know-it-all Hawaiian.

LANI (OS)

Stupid haole. Bet you lunch it was an 'F.'

JOSH

Mexican or Italian?

LANI (OS)

Fish and poi.

Josh rolls his eyes as he PUNCHES away at the keyboard. He checks his watch.

Josh darts out the door into...

EXT.HALLWAY.DAY.

...a long, narrow hallway. He bumps into Lani next to the espresso machine.

JOSH

Voice mail that service.

LANI

You got it, haole boy.

Josh jogs to the end of the hallway and enters...

INT.BRIAN'S OFFICE.DAY.

...a huge third floor office. There's a sunny bay window with a great view of the Capitol Building.

BRIAN WILCOX, 45, a freshman Congressman from San Diego, sits behind a maple desk wearing an Italian suit. Brian's tan, fit, and has a million dollar smile. But you can tell he'd be a real prick if he doesn't get what he wants.

Seated at the desk across from Brian is BRIDGETTE MONTGOMERY, 15. She's a precocious blonde with dread locks and nice hooters for her age. She's wearing the standard uniform for girl pages in Congress--a blue plaid skirt and a white blouse.

The U.S. and California flags flank Brian's desk. The walls are decorated with pictures of The Coronado Bay Bridge, the Hotel Del, and Sea World. There are blowups of Brian shaking hands with the President.

Josh approaches Brian's desk.

BRIAN

I'm amazed, Josh. The Vice President's daughter?

JOSH

Rumors and innuendoes.

BRIAN

Good. Democrats are bad for the blood. Sit.

Josh sits next to Bridgette. She winks at him.

BRIDGETTE

Hi, hotty.

There are two colored jugs of water on Brian's desk--a blue one and a yellow one.

JOSH

Do these jugs have anything to do with the Purification Project?

BRIDGETTE

Duh.

Brian POURS water from the blue jug into a glass and SLIDES the glass across the table to Josh. The water is crystal clear.

BRIAN

Drink up.

Josh looks over at Bridgette for a clue.

BRIDGETTE

Don't look at me.

Josh takes the glass and SIPS the water half-heartedly.

BRIDGETTE

Josh's only sipping.

BRIAN

Drink. Get a true sense of its bouquet.

Josh finishes the water and PLACES the empty glass back on the table.

JOSH

Tasted fine to me.

BRIDGETTE

(clutches her throat)

Poison.

Brian POURS water from the yellow jug into a second glass. He SLIDES the glass across the table. The water is crystal clear.

BRIAN

Now try this.

Josh grabs the glass and SMELLS the water. He eyes the water suspiciously.

BRIAN

Down the hatch.

Josh starts DRINKING. He tilts the glass and his Adam's apple bobs as he DRINKS.

BRIDGETTE

Sewer water, bright boy.

Josh SPEWS the water up, soaking Brian as well as all the important papers on his desk.

BRIAN

Jesus H. Christ!

JOSH

Sorry.

Bridgette GIGGLES.

BRIAN

(standing)

Bridgette, for your information, it's not sewer water. It's reclaimed water from your father's plant in Chula Vista. This water's perfectly safe for drinking.

Brian JABS a finger at his intercom.

BRIAN

Lani, get in here pronto and bring Brawny.

INT.KITTY KORNER/PREPPY PETS.DAY.

SALLY HOFF, 29, squats beneath a mural of cats and the sign "Kitty Korner." She's changing the litter box in a room full of kittens. Her brown hair's cut short and she has a rosy complexion. She wears a green "Preppy Pets" apron over a dress with a collie print. Although not a sexpot by any stretch of the imagination, Sally has an unassuming quality that's endearing.

Kittens brush up against her legs and MEOW.

Sally MEOWS back.

SALLY

(to kittens)

Hello, Princess and Oreo and Suzy. And good morning to you too Kookoo, Baby, Daisy, and Freds. Oh, and let's not forget little Snoozen and, meow to you too, dear Abigail.

MONICA, 24, the store manager, JOGS over to the Kitty Korner with a cell pressed to her ear. She's dressed like a Gothic princess, with a bone-white pallor and black mascara. The only thing that seems somewhat normal is her paisley skirt. She's scribbling notes on a piece of paper.

SALLY

Morning, Monica.

Monica slips the phone into a holster on her hip and smiles.

MONICA

Got voice mail from this dude on Capitol Hill. My psychic says he's a free agent.

SALLY

What about Tall, Dark, and Handsome from Persia?

MONICA

That camel jockey?

(pause)

Scrub the cages?

SALLY

First thing this morning.

MONICA

I'm sending you on this mission, Sally. I can't trust Tiff or Wanda after they let Senator Shima's constrictor squirm down his toilet. I want you to scout out his condo, check for signs of a life besides that cat. He wants you in Georgetown 8 sharp.

SALLY

(scoops in new litter)

You're the one who started Finicky Felines to meet men.

MONICA

I've got that wedding up in New Haven, remember? Here's where he lives.

Monica hands Sally the piece of paper.

MONICA

Check the closet for panties, pushups, and pumps. Search the fridge for feminine things--champagne, Brie, perfume bottles.

SALLY

What if he doesn't like women?

MONICA

Then the dude's all yours.

INT.BRIAN'S OFFICE.DAY.

Lani's MOPPING up the desk with paper towels while Brian PACES back and forth in front of the bay window with his jacket off; he's wearing gold suspenders. Josh and Bridgette haven't moved an inch.

BRIAN

Here's the situation. San Diego imports 90 percent of its water. San Diegans depend on that water to maintain their quality of life. But our leases on Colorado River water are expiring while reclaimed water is needlessly dumped into the ocean.

JOSH

Let's renew the leases.

BRIDGETTE

Daddy would be mad.

BRIAN

Don't you get it, Josh? San Diego has a chance with Prop 10 to be self-reliant.

JOSH

But Brian, that water's reclaimed.

BRIDGETTE

Sewer sludge.

LANI

Opalapala.

BRIAN

You're all forgetting about Montgomery's state-of-the-art treatment plant. Reclaimed water passes through thousands of filters and then gets mixed with regular water in a five billion gallon reservoir.

Brian picks up the yellow jug.

BRIAN

The water in this jug meets and exceeds all state and federal drinking standards.

BRIDGETTE

Daddy says if Prop 10 passes, he'll make a monster contribution.

Brian POURS water from the jug into a third glass.

BRIAN

I want you all to remember one thing--water is water, no matter how you slice it.

Brian picks up the glass and brings it to his lips.

JOSH

You don't need to convince us, Brian. We believe you.

Brian GULPS down the water.

BRIDGETTE

Brian looks like a guppy.

LANI

Bet he sprouts fins.

JOSH

And gills on his neck.

Brian SPEWS the water up, soaking Josh.

EXT.GATE/DOLPHIN ESTATES.NIGHT.

Sally stands at a lighted gate with a blue dolphin welded to the wrought iron. She wears a baggy, wrinkled dress with a cat print.

She SWINGS the gate open.

EXT.WALKWAY.NIGHT.

Sally enters the fenced grounds of Josh's condo complex. She's carrying a big canvas bag that swings at her side.

She WALKS the perimeter of a pool shaped like a dolphin and up a set of stairs.

EXT.FRONT DOOR/CONDO.NIGHT.

Sally runs her hands over her dress and smooths out the wrinkles. She RINGS the doorbell.

Josh OPENS up and gives Sally the once over.

JOSH

Finicky Felines?

SALLY

Am I late?

JOSH

No, not at all. I'm glad you could come on such short notice.

It's apparent Josh isn't attracted. But the opposite is true of Sally.

JOSH

(extends hand)

I'm Josh Rubens.

SALLY

(shaking hands)

Sally Hoff.

JOSH

Swedish?

SALLY
(still shaking)
Norwegian.

JOSH
Republican?

SALLY
(still shaking)
Libertarian.

JOSH
(pulls hand away)
Oh, boy.

Josh steps aside and OPENS the door wide.

JOSH
Come in.

Sally steps up and...

INT.LIVINGROOM/CONDO.NIGHT.

...enters.

Josh SHUTS the door.

The walls are filled with action shots of America's Cup yachts racing on the high seas. There are also blowups of MEN playing volleyball on the beach.

CLOSE-UP OF VOLLEYBALL PICTURE shows one of the Men is Josh--he's hitting the ball underhand to a blond HUNK leaping to spike. There's a blonde WOMAN in a green bikini watching from the sidelines.

The pictures seem out of place next to an art deco mirror, a marble fireplace, and black torch lamps.

JOSH
Follow me to the kitchen.

Sally follows Josh past a white couch and matching love seat to...

INT.KITCHEN.NIGHT.

...a kitchen neat as a pin.

On the counter, there's a baggy of catnip, stacks of canned cat food, and plastic lids for the cans. A flat of grass rests in the sink. Pages of instructions are posted under cat magnets on the fridge.

JOSH

(pointing to pages)

Here are specific instructions for the next seventy-two hours. I've got main courses thawing, kibbles in Ziploc bags, it's all self-explanatory. Put the flat of grass down five minutes each day and let her gnaw away. Then a pinch of catnip, just a pinch, mind you. I have extra bags of Fresh Step in the closet, should there be a need.

(grabs tube on counter)

Oh, and in case of fur balls, here's tuna-flavored Petromalt.

Sally puts her canvas bag down on the counter.

SALLY

Butter works faster.

JOSH

Butter's fast, I'll grant you that. But it only stops the coughing. You want to grease that fur ball good, so it comes up nice and easy.

Josh spots a small creature in Sally's hand.

JOSH

Good God, what's that you're fondling?

SALLY

Iggy. He's a baby iguana.

Sally holds Iggy up and Josh recoils.

JOSH

Cheesus. You're a candidate for warts.

SALLY

That's an old wives' tale. Non-aquatic reptiles are probably the cleanest of all pets. Their scales work like hot plates to burn off all the bacteria.

JOSH

But why carry him around?

SALLY

Why not?

JOSH

It's not, natural.

Sally puts her hands together and makes finger bridges. Iggy climbs back and forth.

SALLY

I felt bad seeing Iggy all alone in his terrarium at Preppy Pets, night after night, with only the sound of crickets to keep him company. Sometimes there's no sound at all, except for the gurgle, gurgle, gurgle of aquarium bubbles or the muffled 'caw caw' of Miguel having a dream in the Bird Room. I don't know if Iggy can hear that.

JOSH

Iggy's probably deaf.

SALLY

Oh, no, I know he can hear. His throat bobs whenever I call his name, that is, if I use my lizard voice.

(shrill)

Ig-gy, Ig-gy I-guana! This is Sally Salamander cal-ling!

CLOSE-UP OF IGGY'S throat bobbing.

SALLY

See? Sometimes he blinks and cocks his head to one side.

JOSH

I think he'd prefer being alone in his tank.

SALLY

Terrarium.

JOSH

Right.

SALLY

Nobody prefers being alone, humans or animals, or even plants for that matter.

FIONA, a white Persian female with big blue eyes, enters the kitchen. She rubs against Sally's leg.

JOSH

Well, one thing's a given--Fiona certainly approves of you.

Sally kneels and strokes Fiona.

SALLY

You're a sweet girl, aren't you, Fiona? Well, you're going to spend some quality time with your Aunty Sally.

Josh seems uneasy with the intimate talk but is nonetheless pleased by the attention.

Fiona MEOWS and Sally gets down on all fours and MEOWS back.

JOSH

You and Fiona are really bonding.

Fiona rubs up against Sally and Sally rubs her face against Fiona's side.

Fiona SNIFFS at Sally's hand.

Sally shows Fiona Iggy.

CLOSE-UP OF FIONA AND IGGY TOUCHING NOSES.

JOSH

Don't!

Josh lunges for Sally and grabs her hand.

Iggy gets away and leaps onto the carpet.

Iggy wriggles across the carpet with Fiona in hot pursuit.

JOSH

Stop!

Iggy darts up the floor-to-ceiling curtain and Fiona follows. Iggy squirms along the curtain rod. Fiona gets her claws stuck in the fabric and hangs halfway up.

JOSH

That's pure linen!

Sally STANDS on a chair, unhooks Fiona's claws, and hands her down to Josh.

SALLY

I need something long and narrow.

Josh, still holding Fiona, hands Sally a broom.

Sally uses the handle to corner Iggy on the rod.

Iggy hops onto the handle and Sally brings him down.

Fiona MEOWS in Josh's arms.

JOSH

Lizards and cats should never mix.

Sally hops off the chair, pulls a flat piece of cardboard out of her canvas bag, folds it into a box, and drops Iggy in.

She puts the box back in her bag.

SALLY

Sorry about that.

(handing broom back)

How old's Fiona?

JOSH

Eight months.

SALLY

Mine too!

Sally scratches Fiona's chin.

JOSH

Iggy's eight months?

SALLY

I have an orange tabby named 'Laulau.' I found him last Christmas Eve, in a trash dumpster outside the Dupont Circle Building.

Josh puts Fiona down.

JOSH

So, Laulau has no papers.

SALLY
Only the ones I put under his litter box.

Fiona rubs up against Sally's legs.

JOSH
Fiona sure seems to like you. I wonder if it's that dress.

SALLY
(to Fiona)
Meow.

JOSH
What's a good number to reach you?

Sally reaches into her purse, PULLS out a business card, and hands it to Josh.

JOSH
I want a personal number too, in case of emergency.

SALLY
Sure.

Josh PLUCKS a ballpoint out of a coffee cup.

JOSH
Use this.

Sally takes the pen and writes her name and number on the back of the card and hands it back.

SALLY
I don't see any reason for an emergency.

JOSH
(studies card)
Things happen, Sally. It's good to be prepared.

SALLY
Then you'd better give me your number too.
(holds up arm)
Write it on my arm. I won't lose it that way.

JOSH
Very well.
(writing on her forearm)
Oh, and by the way.

SALLY
Yes?

Josh finishes and CLICKS the ballpoint shut. He fishes in his pocket, pulls out a key, and hands it to Sally.

JOSH
Reptiles are forbidden in my condo.

INT.GYM/DOLPHIN ESTATES.NIGHT.

Josh, wearing tight shorts and a tank top, studies a poster of Arnold Schwarzenegger on the wall.

He places weights on the bar, lies down on the bench, and squirms under the bar. He grabs the bar and PUMPS the weight frantically.

He has a look of pain and determination that says he's working out not for the joy of it but to impress somebody.

He returns the bar to the arms of the bench, sits up, and stares at the poster.

INT.FRONT DOOR/OFFICE.DAY.

The black lettering on the smoked glass door reads, "Kaleidoscope Magazine, Ms. Afton Hornblower, Editor-in-Chief."

INT.AFTON'S OFFICE.DAY.

AFTON HORNBLOWER, 28, a striking blonde with chiseled features, edits copy at her desk. Her eyes are cold and calculating. There's an "Afton Hornblower" nameplate on her desk and a framed picture of her between Josh and HUNT, her blond lifeguard husband.

A phalanx of framed "Kaleidoscope Magazine" covers are on the wall as well as a bevy of awards. There are also pictures of Afton posing with movie stars, directors, and famous writers.

	INTERN (OS)
Yo, Afton!	
	AFTON
Yo.	
	INTERN (OS)
You off to San Diego?	
	AFTON
Remember that deadline?	
	INTERN (OS)
Slave driver. One for the bulletin board.	
	AFTON
Another ee-diot?	
	INTERN (OS)
Pseudo Kerouac.	
	AFTON
How so?	
	INTERN (OS)
'I'm-a-bum-discovering-America,' with a dash of Lawrence.	
	AFTON
D.H.?	

INTERN (OS)

T.E.

Josh pops his head in.

JOSH

P.S. I love you.

AFTON

Chubs!

Josh meanders in and Afton holds out her hand. There's a huge rock on her wedding finger.

Josh takes her hand and KISSES it.

AFTON

Sir Lancelot.

JOSH

Guinevere.

Josh takes a seat across from her.

Afton holds up a manuscript.

AFTON

I've discovered the next O. Henry.

JOSH

Is that a cartoon?

AFTON

You are so narrow.

JOSH

(puts up arm and flexes)

I know, Afton. But I'm working on it. Hunt's my role model.

AFTON

For body only, I hope.

Afton puts down the manuscript and SWIVELS in her leather chair.

AFTON

Any heiresses on your dance list?

JOSH

I only have eyes for you.

AFTON

You porked the VP's daughter in the rotunda.

JOSH

State your sources.

AFTON

Gossip Magazine.

JOSH
I'll sue that proletariat rag.

AFTON
Bourgeois pig.

JOSH
Bleeding heart liberal.

Josh and Afton have a tease thing going, one based on their differing political allegiances.

AFTON
I found a surprise for Hunt.

JOSH
What?

AFTON
A gift for his gluteus maximus.

JOSH
I don't know how you two manage.

AFTON
Easy. My career is here and his is there.

JOSH
And east is east and west is west and never the twain shall meet.
Hey, isn't that Samuel Clemens?

AFTON
Shakespeare, you moron.
(pause)
I'd meet Hunt halfway, somewhere in the middle, say Kansas City,
but there's no beach for him and no magazine for me. All they read
in the west is Reader's Digest and The Farmer's Almanac.

JOSH
So why go west for college?

AFTON
Every east coast girl knows all the hunks live in Southern California.

EXT.FRONT DOOR/JOSH'S CONDO.NIGHT.

Sally, wearing mismatched sweats, FUMBLES with the keys. She's lugging a pet carrier and a gym bag.
She puts the carrier down and finds the keyhole. She turns the knob and...

INT.LIVINGROOM.NIGHT.

...enters.

Fiona greets her with a MEOW.

SALLY

Fiona-kins!

Sally picks up the carrier, carries it in, and SHUTS the door.

She lets Fiona SNIFF the carrier.

SALLY

Brought you a playmate.

INT.PASSION FRUIT GROTTTO.NIGHT.

Josh sits next to Afton in a booth. She's wearing a sleeveless black dress, diamond earrings, and a string of pearls.

The leaves of passion fruit trees fan out around them. It's as if they're dining in the Garden of Eden. Josh's cell rests on the table.

AFTON

After the champagne and the caviar, there's always the physical, I've give him that.

JOSH

No cerebral?

AFTON

Guess his favorite book.

JOSH

Something by Hemingway.

AFTON

Old Yeller, with The Yearling a close second.

JOSH

What's wrong with that?

AFTON

Hunt never reads.

JOSH

I wouldn't complain, Afton. You've got what most women would kill for. You've got The American Dream.

AFTON

From the outside, yes, Hunt is The American Dream. But inside, where it really counts, he's a wasteland.

JOSH

Maybe he thinks you want a wasteland.

AFTON

That implies I'm shallow.

JOSH

I worship your shallowness, Queen Guinevere.

Afton flashes Josh the evil eye.

INT.LIVINGROOM.NIGHT.

Sally OPENS the gate to her pet carrier and Laulau, her orange tabby, sticks his head out.

Fiona stands her distance.

SALLY

Fiona, I would like to introduce you to Laulau. Laulau, this is Fiona.

Fiona HISSES.

SALLY

Give him a chance, sweet girl.

Laulau makes his way across the carpet and sniffs noses with Fiona.

Laulau flips on his back and paws at Fiona, enticing her to play.

Fiona begins batting at Laulau.

SALLY

Now that the introductions are over, let the snooping begin!

Sally heads over to...

INT.KITCHEN.NIGHT.

...the fridge.

Laulau and Fiona trail after her.

Sally OPENS the fridge while Fiona and Laulau rub against her legs.

SALLY

What's he got in here, huh, Fiona?

Fiona MEOWS.

Sally makes her way through a selection of Fancy Feasts, an assortment of gourmet cat treats, a tin of catnip, and, finally, a bag of cherry-flavored underwear.

SALLY

(examining package)

What in the world?

CLOSE-UP OF BAG instructs, "Devour When Horny."

INT.PASSION FRUIT GROTTO.NIGHT.

The WAITER, wearing a pink tux with a turquoise cummerbund, serves Afton and Josh poached salmon in passion sauce over a bed of bow-tie pasta.

WAITER

Anything else, senorita?

Afton studies the menu.

AFTON

A plate of Brie and a carafe of your Tuscan Beaujolais.

(pause)

Chubs?

JOSH

I'm fine.

WAITER

(bowing)

Gracias.

The Waiter exits the frame.

JOSH

Maybe Hunt thinks you want what's missing, and he's holding back his creative side to please you.

AFTON

All Hunt does is sit in bed, without an original thought in his head. It's like being married to a blue-eyed, blond haired, fully functional mannequin.

(sips drink)

He's doing "Lifeguards of San Diego" again. The babes swarm him like blood flies.

Josh's cell RINGS at the table.

AFTON

Tres gauche.

JOSH

Could be an emergency.

AFTON

Congress needs pate.

JOSH

Hush.

AFTON

(whispering)

Re-pub-li-can.

JOSH

(whispering back)

De-mo-crat.

(into phone)

Sally, you were supposed to follow my instructions. Cheesus, not on my Berber carpet. Before or after the mahi-mahi? I see. I'll bet it wasn't flash frozen like the fishman claimed. Well, give her Petromalt after the video and put her to bed early. Bye, bye, now.

Josh puts the cell back on the table.

AFTON
They still name girls 'Sally?'

Josh pulls a card out of his shirt pocket.

JOSH
(reads)
Fastidious Feline Service, for Finicky Cats.

AFTON
Diarrhea at the OK Corral?

JOSH
A little gastric juice vomit, with grass.
(whispering)
She's pre fur ball.

AFTON
That cat's got you wrapped around her little paw, Chubs. I don't even know how you can keep her indoors. Litter boxes make me nauseous.

JOSH
One gets acclimated. Besides, Fiona's good company.

AFTON
Wish I got half her attention.

JOSH
You should visit more.

INT.LIVINGROOM.NIGHT.

CLOSE-UP OF FIONA LICKING Petromalt off Sally's finger.

SALLY
(singing)
Just a finger full of Petromalt helps the fur ball come up, in the most delightful way.

Sally takes a video off Josh's bookshelf, PULLS it out of its box, and POPS it in the DVD player.

A tree of CHIRPING finches appears on the big screen TV.

Fiona and Laulau ignore the finches--they're more interested in one another.

Sally FAST FORWARDS to a tank of fat goldfish.

Fiona bats at Laulau and this time Laulau HISSES.

SALLY
Cool it, Laulau.

Sally opens her gym bag and PULLS out a video. She EJECTS the old one and POPS hers in.

CAT GAL, a redhead wearing leopard leotards, appears on screen holding a yellow cat with wild eyes.

CAT GAL (on TV)

Okay, let's pick up our cute kitties and move our big fat tushies!

The dvd PLAYS "That's the Way I Like It" by KC & the Sunshine Band and Cat Gal thrusts the yellow cat up and down over her head.

Sally grabs Laulau and copies the moves.

SALLY

(rapping)

That's the way, uh, huh, I like it, uh, huh, uh, huh.

CLOSE-UP OF LAULAU looking disgruntled as he goes up and down.

INT.FRONT DOOR/AFTON'S PENTHOUSE.NIGHT.

Afton and Josh stand in the hallway.

Afton opens her little black purse and PULLS out a gold key.

There's a moment of awkward silence.

AFTON

Nightcap?

JOSH

Had enough at that grotto.

Afton OPENS the door.

AFTON

There's something funny I want you to see.

JOSH

Ha-ha funny or WALKING DEAD funny?

AFTON

You be the judge, Chubs.

Josh follows Afton inside.

INT.LIVINGROOM.NIGHT.

Sally's on her back lifting Laulau up and down over her chest, in time to Cat Gal's COMMANDS.

CAT GAL (on TV)

One, two, one, two. Shake your pork an' beans, my friend, shake your pork an' beans. Okay, that's a wrap!

Sally puts Laulau down and stretches.

Laulau jumps up on the white love seat and MEOWS at Fiona.

Fiona studies him coyly.

INT.PLAYROOM/PENTHOUSE.NIGHT.

Afton sits on a black couch. Behind her is a panoramic view of the city from the 50th floor. She OPENS boxes from Macy's and Bloomingdale's.

Josh walks over to the windows and admires the view.

JOSH

You don't realize how lucky you are, Afton.

AFTON

Favor?

JOSH

Your wish is my command.

AFTON

Slip these on.

(tosses Josh a package)

I want to see if they're right for Hunt.

JOSH

Oh, but I'm not built like the Huntster.

AFTON

You're getting there, Chubs.

Josh examines the package.

JOSH

Why, this is a thong. I'm not modeling any thong.

AFTON

Chicken.

JOSH

I've still got that edible underwear you sent last Christmas.

AFTON

You should have worn them up--I would have eaten them off.

JOSH

Promises, promises.

INT.LIVINGROOM.NIGHT.

Sally sits on the carpet in front of the TV. She has Laulau propped on her lap and she's moving his paws up and down like furry drumsticks in time to "Macho, Macho Man."

Laulau looks like he wants to scam.

CAT GAL (OS)

One, two, one, two. That's it, work those cat paws, work 'em good.

Sally releases Laulau, stands, and EJECTS the disc.

She roots through her gym bag and PULLS out a new video and a plastic microphone. She POPS the video in and a BAND appears on the screen.

The Band PLAYS the intro to "Do-Re-Mi" and Sally holds the mike up to her lips.

SALLY

(singing to cats)

Doe, a deer, a female deer, Ray, a drop of golden sun. Me, a name I call myself, Fa, a long long way to run. Sew, a needle pulling thread, La, a note to follow Sew...

Sally closes her eyes and lets loose with a hip version of the Julie Andrews' hit.

CLOSE-UP OF FIONA making a beeline out of the living room with Laulau hot on her heels into...

INT.HALLWAY.NIGHT.

...the hallway.

SALLY (OS)

(singing)

Tea, a drink with jam and bread...

With Laulau hot in pursuit, Fiona turns a corner into...

INT.BEDROOM.NIGHT.

...the bedroom.

Fiona slips on the rug, then leaps up on Josh's futon.

SALLY (OS)

(singing)

...which will bring us back to Doe. Doe, a deer, a female deer, Ray, a drop of golden sun, Me, a name I call myself, Fa, a long long way to run...

Laulau stands on his haunches and peeks at Fiona.

Fiona bats at his whiskers.

INT.BEDROOM/PENTHOUSE.NIGHT.

Josh wears an aqua thong. He flexes his smallish biceps and struts in front of the mirror.

AFTON (OS)

Hurry, Chubs!

Josh gyrates his bony hips. He looks ridiculous.

JOSH

Bridgette was right. I am a hotty.

INT.PLAYROOM.NIGHT.

Afton's on the couch sipping merlot out of a crystal goblet.

Music! JOSH (OS)

Rap, swing, hip-hop? AFTON

Disco! JOSH (OS)

Afton presses a remote and fast-beat disco PLAYS.

Josh appears in the thong strumming an air guitar.

Afton gulps merlot.

Strut your stuff, Chubs! AFTON

Josh gyrates like a male stripper but his moves are more comic than sexy. He flexes his ass cheeks and pretends he's humping doggie-style.

Is that you in the rotunda? AFTON

Yes. JOSH

Faster. AFTON

Josh humps faster and Afton LAUGHS.

Make those ass cheeks sweat, homeboy! AFTON

Josh humps even faster.

To oblivion! AFTON

Josh humps faster still.

The song ends and "Kissing Me Softly" PLAYS.

Josh collapses next to Afton on the couch.

This thong makes me feel sexy. JOSH

Oh, my god. AFTON

What? JOSH

Mortality. AFTON

Huh? JOSH

Gray. AFTON

Where? JOSH

Afton runs her fingers through his chest hairs.

Here. Mind if I pluck you? AFTON

No. Go ahead. JOSH

Afton plucks the offensive hair and leans over to show it to Josh.

Unbelievable. JOSH

Gather ye rosebuds. AFTON

F. Scott Fitzgerald? JOSH

She stares at Josh and KISSES him flush on the lips.

Josh looks confused but Afton keeps on KISSING and pretty soon they're making out like a couple of school kids.

INT.LIVINGROOM.NIGHT.

Sally HUMS the last notes of "Do-Re-Mi" with her eyes closed. When the TV band quits, she opens her eyes and looks down--Laulau and Fiona are gone.

Laulau? Oh, Laulau. Fiona!
(pause)
Holy cow. Please, oh, no. SALLY

Sally DROPS the mike and darts for...

INT.HALLWAY.NIGHT.

...the hallway.

She RUNS down the hallway to...

INT.DOORWAY/BEDROOM.NIGHT.

...a doorway.

She pauses at the doorway and, before looking in, blesses herself.

She looks into the bedroom.

SALLY

Uh, oh, Spaghetti-Os.

EXT.CENTRAL PARK.DAY.

Afton and Josh walk side-by-side through the park. Afton wears a yellow sundress and Josh wears shorts and a tank top. Afton's holding a Frisbee and beating it against her thigh like a tambourine.

JOSH

I thought what you did on the east coast was your business.

AFTON

Sleeping with my husband's best friend isn't exactly running a magazine.

JOSH

You think Hunt's faithful on the west coast?

AFTON

I said, 'Mums the word.'

JOSH

Lock my mouth and throw away the key.

AFTON

Can you keep a poker face?

JOSH

I am in politics, you know, Afton.

AFTON

Republicans aren't any good at it. Remember Nixon? He had guilt carved in his face.

JOSH

Did you enjoy my performance?

AFTON

Guys always want a report card.

(pause)

Look, I'll give you a 'B+' for effort. Now go for a pass.

Josh runs out and Afton tosses the Frisbee.

Josh looks back and...

EXT.SAN DIEGO BEACH.DAY.

...catches a football.

He throws the football back.

HUNT TANNER, 31, a blond wearing red trunks, catches it.

After a few tosses, they return to...

EXT.TOWER.DAY.

...a blue lifeguard tower overlooking the Pacific.

Josh's not a bad-looking guy, but standing next to Hunt he's strictly meat-and-potatoes.

HUNT
Hey, Chubs, do opposites attract?

JOSH
Sure.

HUNT
Maybe for a while. Then being opposite sorta wears off, like cheap deodorant. You start sniffin' all the differences between you, like two strange dogs.

Josh keeps his eyes on the ocean.

Hunt pulls out a tube of Bullfrog sunblock from the back pocket of his trunks. He squeezes out a white glob.

HUNT
Whenever I'm with Afton, it's like we're fighting. She's squeezing me like a grapefruit and I'm squeezing back, until my traps start cramping.

JOSH
No details.

Hunt applies Bullfrog to his nose.

HUNT
You used to beg for details. Now she's harpin' about some new writer and how she's gettin' the hots for his protagonist.

JOSH
Maybe she wants you to write.

HUNT
She thinks I'm a Cretin.
(checks diver's watch)
Hey, it's about time.

JOSH
For what?

Hunt CLIMBS the metal ladder and disappears inside the lifeguard tower. He returns to the sand with a portable TV. He leans against the tower while balancing the TV on his lap.

The TV PLAYS the intro to "Baywatch."

JOSH

How can you be checking out 'Buttwatch' with all these bikinis running around?

HUNT

(points to tube)

That's me.

JOSH

The surfer?

HUNT

(nodding)

Shot at Wind 'n Sea ages ago, but I look almost the same.

EXT.BEACH.DAY.

KRISTI, 16, a hot blonde wearing a teal one-piece, leads a pack of BIKINI GIRLS across the sand. The Bikini Girls are taking turns ogling a hunk calendar.

CLOSE-UP OF HUNT IN CALENDAR--he's posing next to the lifeguard tower wearing skimpy orange trunks and squeezing an orange rescue float.

BIKINI GIRL #1

(holding calendar)

Yummy, yummy, yummy.

BIKINI GIRL #2

I got love in my tummy.

KRISTI

(snatching calendar away)

Buy your own!

BIKINI GIRL #3

Kristi's totally buggin'!

Kristi leads them to...

EXT.TOWER.DAY.

...Hunt.

Kristi and the Bikini Girls surround him.

Josh leans against the tower.

KRISTI

How 'bout those lessons, Hunt?

HUNT
Chubs'll give you some pointers.

KRISTI
I don't like Chubs.

HUNT
I gotta work. Josh, take Kristi for green wave.

JOSH
(to Kristi)
Shall we?

KRISTI
Gotta tan first.
(hands Hunt tube of lotion)
Do me, Hunt.

Hunt passes the TV to Josh.

The Bikini Girls GIGGLE as Hunt squeezes out the lotion on his palm and then works his bronze hand over Kristi's skin, going deep tissue on her back and shoulders.

KRISTI
Mmmm.

BIKINI GIRL #1
Kristi's getting hot.

BIKINI GIRL #2
Kristi's lovin' life.

BIKINI GIRL #3
Kristi's blushing!

KRISTI
Am not!

Hunt takes the TV back and hands Josh the lotion.

HUNT
Do her, Chubs.

Josh squirts lotion on his hands. He rubs Kristi.

BIKINI GIRL #3
(singsong)
Chubs is catching a chubby.

Josh keeps rubbing.

KRISTI
That feels, kinda.

BIKINI GIRL #1
Kinda what?

KRISTI

(cringing)

Squidly Diddly.

BIKINI GIRLS

(chanting)

Squid, squid, squid, squid.

HUNT

Beat it, ya teases!

Kristi grabs the lotion and runs off with the Bikini Girls.

Hunt puts the TV down on the sand and stretches.

HUNT

The Future Foxes of America. They'll break mega hearts.

JOSH

Yeah. They already broke mine.

Hunt coats his nose with sunblock.

HUNT

Think Afton's hot?

JOSH

Sure. If you dig east coast women.

HUNT

You dug her first.

JOSH

We were just friends.

HUNT

That's not what Afton said.

JOSH

Wha'd Afton say?

HUNT

Junior year in TJ, you gave her a ring.

CLOSE-UP OF JOSH'S FACE as he remembers...

INT.THE LONG BAR/TIJUANA.NIGHT.

...a younger Josh, wearing a Mexican pullover, sitting in a booth beside a younger Afton. They're drinking shots of tequila with Corona chasers. MARIACHIS stand around their booth PLAYING "Guantanamera."

Josh reaches into his pocket and slides a bracelet across the table to Afton.

CLOSE-UP OF AFTON'S HAND clutching the bracelet.

EXT.TOWER.DAY.

Josh shakes his head--"no way."

JOSH

It was a friendship bracelet.

HUNT

Wonder why she said ring?

JOSH

She forgot.

HUNT

You know, Afton can ruin a couple's day, if she passes them in the street. Her looks make women uneasy. And the men they're with wish they were with Afton instead. Women hate her and men lust after her.

JOSH

What if you're a single guy?

HUNT

Single guys suffer 'cause they always think they've gotta fighting chance. She's hollowed out so many single guys that they should open Mr. Lonely Hearts Clubs all through the east and west. Afton's the second coming of Circe.

JOSH

Is Circe that topless dancer?

HUNT

She's this foxy witch in Greek legend who turns men into pigs.

INT.AFTON'S OFFICE.DAY.

Afton sits at her desk with her legs crossed. She's wearing a white mini and reading a manuscript.

The frame shows a SILHOUETTE with long dark hair sitting in the seat across from her. The Silhouette smokes.

Afton looks up from the manuscript.

AFTON

You penned "Passion on the Peninsula?"

The Silhouette nods.

AFTON

Free tonight?

The Silhouette BLOWS out a puff of smoke.

EXT.HOTEL DEL CORONADO.NIGHT.

The red roof of the hotel glows.

There's a "Welcome, San Diego Republicans!" banner draped over the hotel entrance.

Rotating spotlights ignite the night sky.

INT.BALLROOM/HOTEL DEL.NIGHT.

It's the "Yes-On-10" Fund-raiser sponsored by the San Diego Republicans. "Yes-On-10" banners, cardboard elephants, and red, white, and blue balloons decorate the ballroom. State Flags are everywhere.

REPUBLICANS are seated at big circular tables with toy elephant centerpieces.

INT.BALLROOM DOORS.NIGHT.

CLOSE-UP OF HUNT standing outside the ballroom with his arms crossed. He's wearing an Aloha shirt, shorts, and boat shoes. He looks disgusted by all the fanfare.

INT.BALLROOM STAGE.NIGHT.

Brian sits on stage behind a long table. He's wearing a gray tux and waving at fellow Republicans.

Josh, also wearing a gray tux, sits to the right of the Congressman. FAITH WILCOX, 36, a voluptuous redhead, sits to the left of her husband. There's a ten-piece band on the opposite side of the stage.

Between the Congressman and the band is a podium sporting the U.S. Congressional seal.

BRIAN

(to Josh)

Remember, when it's your turn, be spontaneous. My strategy is to change how San Diego thinks. That damn Councilman is stirring up the pot.

JOSH

Sanchez?

BRIAN

Who the Hell else.

JOSH

What about taste tests, media briefings, tours of the plant?

BRIAN

Keep it simple, stupid. And keep the simple stuff coming.

The band PLAYS "For He's a Jolly Good Fellow" and Brian pops up. He makes his way to the podium with his million-dollar smile. He stands behind the podium to a round of thunderous APPLAUSE.

INT.BALLROOM.DAY.

Bridgette waves from her table up front. She sits between her fat cat Republican parents, MR. & MRS. MONTGOMERY. Mr. Montgomery looks like the type who would pull gold out of his dead mother's teeth.

INT.STAGE.DAY.

Brian waves to the Republicans.

The band quits.

BRIAN

Thank-you, thank-you, San Diego Republicans! We're here today to launch our Yes-On-Ten campaign. Now let's put on our thinking caps for a moment and gaze into the future. Do we really want our children and our children's children to be completely dependent on imported water?

REPUBLICANS

No!

BRIAN

Do we want to pass on a legacy of dependency to future San Diegans, generations upon generations who would be forced to pay exorbitant prices, while our own reclaimed water, water that exceeds safety standards anywhere on Earth, is dumped needlessly into the ocean?

REPUBLICANS

No!

BRIAN

Do we want to be self-sufficient?

REPUBLICANS

Yes!

BRIAN

Now I want you all to meet my right hand man in Washington. Josh Rubens is not only the youngest Chief-of-Staff on Capitol Hill, he's also the hardest working. We've been together since I ran for Mayor of Del Mar back in 20-10. And Josh, more than anyone, wants Proposition Ten, the reclaimed water initiative, to succeed. Come on up here, Josh, and let all these nice Republicans get a look at you.

The Republicans APPLAUD.

Josh pops up and makes his way to the podium.

BRIAN

Josh is a native San Diegan!

The Republicans APPLAUD louder and a few WHISTLE.

Brian greets Josh with a handshake.

Brian returns to his seat as Josh takes the podium.

JOSH

I don't know if I'm the hardest working. I don't know if I'm the youngest. But I do know we must win at all costs, for our good and the good of our children. We want to win, right?

REPUBLICANS

Yes!

JOSH

I want you all to know I'm at your service, day and night, weekdays and weekends, workdays and holidays. Just pick up your phones and dial 1-800-Yes-On-10. If we stick together, really give this our best shot, we can win in November. Thank-you.

The Republicans APPLAUD.

The band PLAYS, "Happy Days Are Here Again."

Brian and Faith sandwich Josh between them at the podium. They all wave at the Republicans.

The Republicans give them a standing OVATION.

INT.LIVINGROOM/HUNT'S CONDO.NIGHT.

Hunt CLEARS beer bottles off the counter of the wet bar.

Josh takes his off coat and unhooks his cummerbund.

The room has fancy tile work, skylights, an art deco mirror, and a great view of the ocean. The pictures on the wall are of America's Cup and a volleyball game--they're duplicates of the pictures back at Josh's condo. There's a leather couch and a Lazy Boy.

HUNT

Convincing rhetoric. What's your drink?

Josh pulls off his tie and sits on the couch.

JOSH

Jack Daniels on ice.

HUNT

You sound like a Congressman.

JOSH

Someday.

HUNT

Brian's taking payola.

JOSH

No way.

HUNT

I saw that punk Montgomery salivating in the front row. He's building that treatment plant in Chula Vista.

Hunt walks over to the couch with a Corona and a tumbler of Jack Daniels on ice. He hands the tumbler to Josh.

HUNT
(raising bottle)
A toast.

JOSH
(raising tumbler)
Toast.

HUNT
To a legacy of sewer water for future San Diegans.

JOSH
It'll end our dependency, Hunt.

Hunt CLINKS his beer bottle against Josh's tumbler.

HUNT
So be it.

The land line phone RINGS.

Hunt nods at Josh.

Josh picks up the receiver.

INT.PLAYROOM.NIGHT.

Afton stands beside the couch with a cordless phone to her ear. She runs her hand through the long dark hair of the seated Silhouette.

AFTON
(into phone)
Cat got your tongue?

INT.LIVINGROOM.NIGHT.

Josh looks guilty as sin.

JOSH
(into phone)
Yes.

HUNT
Afton?

Josh nods--"yes."

HUNT
Tell her I'll call at the witching hour.

AFTON (OS)
Don't spill the beans, Chubs.

I won't spill. JOSH

Won't spill what? HUNT

Nothing. JOSH

INT.PLAYROOM.NIGHT.

Afton holds the phone against her shoulder with her chin. She starts slipping off her pantyhose.

AFTON
(into phone)
Remember the 'B+'?

JOSH (OS)
I was talking to Hunt.

Afton reaches back and unhooks the clasp on her dress.

AFTON
What's the Huntster wearing?

Afton strips down to her lingerie.

JOSH (OS)
Pants.

AFTON
Tell him, "Simon says, 'Strip'."

INT.LIVINGROOM.NIGHT.

Josh takes a swig of his Jack Daniels.

JOSH
Simon says, 'Strip.'

Hunt pulls off his pants and stands in a blue thong.

AFTON (OS)
What's he got on?

Hunt thrusts his hips forward and grinds his pelvis. He could easily be a dancer for Chippendale's.

JOSH
The blue thong.

INT.PLAYROOM.NIGHT.

A pair of masculine hands rise and cup Afton's breasts.

AFTON
(into phone)
Tell him I'm a New York enchilada, just wanting to be devoured.

INT.LIVINGROOM.NIGHT.

Hunt has left the room.

JOSH
(hangs up phone)
Afton's a New York enchilada.
(pause)
Hunt?

Hunt parades out in Afton's lingerie and bustier. He wears blonde hair extensions and he's also applied a generous amount of eyeliner and blue mascara.

HUNT
Look it, I'm Afton!

JOSH
Cheesus.

Hunt checks out his reflection in the mirror. He brushes the hair extensions back.

HUNT
Know why I love her?

JOSH
Why?

HUNT
Afton's got power.

EXT.FIFTH AVENUE/NEW YORK CITY.DAY.

Afton strolls up the avenue wearing a white mini with a black bolero jacket and a wicked set of stiletto heels. Her legs are long and lean.

MEN check her out from the street, from rising and falling escalators, from behind the glass in storefronts and offices, and from cars. A city filled with Rubbernecking Men.

HUNT (VO)
She floats like an angel through New York City. Men ease up on the gas, apply brakes, put billion dollar deals on hold to stare out of skyscrapers down to the street below.

CLOSE-UP OF AFTON'S FACE

FLASH--AFTON'S CALVES flexing as she walks.

FLASH--AFTON'S THIGHS pumping against her skirt.

EXT.TIFFANY'S.DAY.

Afton stops to check out the display cases. The store is crawling with Men.

HUNT (VO)

There's a nonchalance about her.

Afton's oblivious to the Men inside checking her out.

One of the Men has a GIRLFRIEND and she glares at Afton.

HUNT (VO)

But she knows she's ripping the heart out of any man who dares look her way.

Afton leaves Tiffany's and strolls up the avenue.

The Chrysler Building looms in the background.

INT.LIVINGROOM.NIGHT.

Hunt swigs from a bottle of Corona.

HUNT

Afton's a traffic jam wherever she walks. She creates this passion that men hide deep in their souls. But they'll see Afton again, when their lives flash before their very eyes.

EXT.CHRYSLER BUILDING.DAY.

Afton strolls to the entrance and the glass doors open.

HUNT (VO)

The doors open and she...

Afton enters and the doors close behind her.

HUNT (VO)

...disappears into the Chrysler Building. And so do the hopes and dreams of a city.

Shot of Chrysler Building nestled in cityscape.

HUNT (VO)

And they'll always think of Afton whenever they see that building, now and forever, Amen.

INT.LIVINGROOM.NIGHT.

Hunt sits on the arm of the couch. He makes the Sign-of-the-Cross, finishes his Corona, and BELCHES.

Josh takes a slug of Jack Daniels.

HUNT

You know, Chubs, this'll sound strange, but the hardest thing to swallow wasn't the bicoastal. What really got me was how she didn't want my last name. Imagine not wanting to unload a name like Hornblower?

JOSH

Hornblower goes back to Plymouth Rock.

HUNT

Big deal. Afton's ancestors were the first to ravage the Indians.

JOSH

Native Americans.

HUNT

Yeah. And beggars can't be choosers. On our wedding day, her old man plunks down a mil for this condo. Let's face it, I'm a kept man.

JOSH

Fee simple.

Hunt pulls up his bustier.

HUNT

You're different, Josh.

JOSH

You should talk.

HUNT

It's like you've done something totally illegal. I'm not sure what it is, but I'll find out.

JOSH

I'm innocent.

HUNT

You stole Republican money, maybe took a bribe.

JOSH

Me?

HUNT

Even the honest stray.

JOSH

Can I ask a personal question?

HUNT

Shoot.

JOSH

How do you and Afton cope?

HUNT

We phone sex each other.

Josh shifts on the couch.

JOSH

That doesn't sound satisfying.

HUNT

You'd be surprised what the right voice can do. A voice can take you places, make you do things you'd never imagine you'd do.

Hunt pulls out his cell and DIALS.

HUNT

(tossing cell to Josh)

Dare you to ask for Candy.

JOSH

No way.

HUNT

Double dare.

JOSH

(into phone)

Candy?

CANDY (OS)

Thanks fo' callin', lova. Are we alone?

HUNT

Ask for the special.

JOSH

(to Candy)

We're all alone and I want the special.

CANDY (OS)

Wanna stroke me while I tickle my starfish, ya big hunka man? Or should I get on my knees so ya can check out my cute little ass?

JOSH

I'm not sure.

CANDY (OS)

Virgin?

JOSH

No.

CANDY (OS)

Well, now we're talkin', stud muffin. Feel my lips suck yo' throbbin' meat whistle.

Josh TAPS the cell and kills the connection. He tosses the cell back.

HUNT

What the hell happened?

JOSH

She sounded like a smoker.

HUNT

Smoke or no smoke, it's the same in the end. You can listen in when I call Afton.

JOSH

I'm not sure if...

HUNT

We're amigos, aren't we? After all, you're the main reason we're together.

CLOSE-UP OF JOSH'S FACE as he remembers...

EXT.GRASS KNOLL/UCSD.DAY.

...dancing with a younger Afton in a mass of STUDENTS. There's a grunge band PLAYING in the background and a younger Hunt is getting passed back.

JOSH

Hunt!

AFTON

How do you know him?

JOSH

Poly Sci 101.

Hunt gets passed back to Josh and he and Afton lower him feet first to terra firma.

The grunge band takes a break.

Hunt pulls a pint bottle of mescal out of his shorts and takes a swig.

HUNT

(offering bottle to Afton)

Walk on the wild side?

Afton takes the bottle and drinks like she's dying of thirst.

INT.PLAYROOM.NIGHT.

CLOSE-UP OF AFTON'S HAND running through long dark hair.

AFTON

Talent. Looks too.

MAN (OS)

Rare in my profession.

AFTON
I wouldn't say that. Wolfe's a fox.

MAN (OS)
Wolfe's a bloody fag.

INT.COUCH/PLAYROOM.NIGHT.

Afton is sitting beside GORDON LOWELL, 38, a writer with long hair and sad eyes. Gordon's baggy white shirt is unbuttoned to mid-chest and he wears leather pants and lizard skin boots.

Afton wears lingerie and kisses with her eyes open.

Gordon kisses with his eyes closed.

AFTON
You would have to enter my life with your complex characters...
(kiss)
compelling dialogue...
(kiss)
and multiple paradoxes.
(kiss)
Good writing has always been my biggest weakness.

GORDON
I love it when you...
(kiss)
talk literary.

Afton comes up for air and LIGHTS a cigarette.

AFTON
You are the creator of the ambiguous allegory. I hope you know that,
Gordon.

GORDON
I do.

AFTON
And then there's your archetypal protagonist.

GORDON
With or without didacticism?

AFTON
(pauses to PUFF)
Need you ask?

GORDON
Am I your featured writer?

Afton slips her hand through Gordon's shirt to his chest and pinches his nipples.

AFTON
Love the way your nipples stand at attention.

GORDON

Easy, Afton. Answer me--will I appear in Kaleidoscope?

AFTON

You'll be my featured writer, with excerpts on the cover, if...

She continues squeezing and Gordon pulls away.

GORDON

Stop this torture! If what?

AFTON

If, after my call, you do as I say.

GORDON

Mistress Helga?

AFTON

(nodding)

With the cat-o'-nine-tails.

Gordon's eyes bug out.

INT.LIVINGROOM.NIGHT.

Hunt is guzzling another Corona. Although he's taken off Afton's lingerie, bustier, and hair extensions, he still has on makeup. He sits in his thong on the Lazy Boy.

Josh finishes his drink.

JOSH

I'm no Peeping Tom.

HUNT

Eavesdropping Ernie.

JOSH

I couldn't.

HUNT

I call east coast midnight every night and, with all of Afton's differing moods, I get a different woman every time. I hardly call Candy anymore.

Josh looks at his wristwatch.

JOSH

Five to nine.

Hunt STRUTS over to his door.

HUNT

If you change your mind, pick up the extension. Buenos tardes, Chubs.

JOSH

Have fun with Circe.

Hunt enters his room and SHUTS the door.

Josh PLACES his empty glass on the end table. He stretches out on the couch, within striking distance of the phone. He places a pillow behind his head.

Josh stares at the land line.

He checks his watch once. He tucks a second pillow behind his head. He checks his watch again.

A MOAN comes from Hunt's room.

Josh checks his watch a third time.

A second MOAN comes from Hunt's room.

Curiosity gets the best of Josh--he picks up the receiver and presses it on his ear.

Yes, yes! HUNT (OS)

Feel the sting, bastard! AFTON (OS)

Harder! HUNT (OS)

Sound of a WHIP.

Please, Mistress, mercy! HUNT (OS)

Cheesus. JOSH

Hunt? AFTON (OS)

What? HUNT (OS)

Did you take the Lord's name in vain? AFTON (OS)

Musta been Chubs. HUNT (OS)

Josh eases the receiver back in its cradle.

INT.FLOOR OF CONGRESS.DAY.

It's early morning and CONGRESSMEN are beginning to file in. PAGES swarm their respective Congressmen with paperwork and notes.

INT.BRIAN'S CONGRESSIONAL DESK.DAY.

Brian studies a speech through reading glasses. GEORGE and GEORGETTE, speechwriters who also happen to be Irish twins, stand beside the table. George and Georgette both have loads of freckles and red Afros.

Brian turns the page and frowns.

BRIAN
That last speech was too right wing.

GEORGE
We could tone it down.

GEORGETTE
Make it more environmentally conscious.

Josh charges down an aisle swinging a suitcase. He's HUFFING by the time he reaches Brian.

Brian lowers his reading glasses.

BRIAN
(to Josh)
Ready for your big trip?

JOSH
It's only for the weekend.
(checks watch)
Flight leaves in an hour.

GEORGE
Well, Brian, if that's all.

GEORGETTE
If our work is satisfactory.

BRIAN
Go.

George and Georgette HUSTLE off.

BRIAN
I've got no problem with the Republican Party paying you to bring democracy to the Czechs. But put out that damn fire storm the second you get home.

JOSH
Prop 10?

BRIAN
We're down twelve points. That wetback's rallying the Hispanic community. The slant eyes have always been against it. I've even heard reports there's fallout from white Republicans in La Jolla. White Republicans, the god damn mother's milk of our party. I want you to coordinate nice safe tours of the purification plant in Chula Vista. Organize taste tests throughout San Diego County and alert the media. Get footage of people slurping up treated water like it was goddamn champagne.

JOSH

I'll do my best.

BRIAN

Best, nothing. I want results. If this prop crashes and burns, so do you.

JOSH

You don't mean.

BRIAN

Somebody's gotta pay the piper.

JOSH

But we can rewrite it, get it back on the ballot.

BRIAN

Montgomery's our biggest contributor since Sea World. If this prop fails, he'll have my ass in a sling.

JOSH

But I've sacrificed everything for you. Remember walking precincts in Birkenstock's back in 20-10?

Brian seems to be waxing nostalgic as he contemplates Josh's words. But he's actually looking across the floor at Bridgette. She's wearing her standard blue plaid skirt and white blouse; she's flirting with a hunky PAGE.

BRIAN

Bridgette's got hot pants for Burns.

JOSH

That fat senator from Atlanta?

Brian nods.

JOSH

Burns could be her father. Maybe even her grandfather.

BRIAN

Don't ask me how girls think. Burns' people tell me she's leaving notes on his Jag.

Bridgette leaves the Page and sashays over.

BRIAN

Well, Bridgette, what's up for lunch?

BRIDGETTE

Bullfeathers.

BRIAN

Josh, make reservations for four. Mr. and Mrs. Montgomery are in town.

BRIDGETTE

(to Josh)

I know your nickname now.

BRIAN

Okay, that's enough.

BRIDGETTE

Chief-o-Staff Chubs.

BRIAN

I said, 'Enough.'

BRIDGETTE

It's way better than 'yes man.'

BRIAN

Josh, your plane?

INT.FLOOR OF CONGRESS.DAY.

Josh RUNS down the aisle swinging his suitcase.

The elder MAJORITY WHIP walks into the aisle and blocks Josh's path. Josh dodges him, flies across a desk, and KNOCKS over a row of chairs.

EVERYONE in Congress stares at Josh.

INT.GROOMING ROOM/PREPPY PETS.NIGHT.

Sally, wearing a Preppy Pets apron, grooms Gilda the collie with a currycomb. Sally assumes the role of confidante.

A window overlooks a bustling evening street.

SALLY

(to Gilda)

You should really avoid retrievers, Gilda. Golden, orange, red, they're all the same. Happy-go-lucky, I'll give you that, but talk about commitment? Ha! And those black labs? They're your best friends as long as you give 'em what they want. Lemme see those nails.

Sally examines Gilda's nails. She plucks a clipper off the table and starts CLIPPING.

She WHISTLES to the tune of "My Favorite Things."

Monica walks in. She's abandoned Gothic for retro--she wears bellbottoms, a tie-dye top, and hush puppies.

MONICA

Any trace of 'I Am Girlfriend Hear Me Roar?'

SALLY

(grooming Gilda)

No brie, no champagne, no bonbons in the fridge.

Pictures? MONICA

Fiona. SALLY

Mother? MONICA

Persian. SALLY

MONICA
Gotcha. You know, he works for some big Congressional dude.
Josh's jetting to Eastern Europe as we speak.

SALLY
You already sound like his wife.

MONICA
I meet Fiona in half-an-hour. Any hints?

SALLY
Don't bring Iggy.

INT.AFTON'S OFFICE.DAY.

Afton SWIVELS in her chair while her assistant, CHITRA, 28, an Indian woman, sits across from her holding a manuscript. Chitra has a red dot on her forehead, a sarong, and 6-inch gold nails.

CHITRA
(reading with accent)
The room is cold. The fire is dying. Do I have a lover? I watch from bed as a blonde woman in a miniskirt strolls in. She locks the door. 'You're a shark,' the woman says. 'A baby shark?' I ask her. 'No,' she answers, 'a great big one.'

Afton stops swiveling.

CHITRA
(reading)
The woman takes off her skirt. We watch the fire die. She moves up against me. I want to resist, but can't. I feel cheap, bestial, as if I'm cheating on a lover. 'Eat,' she instructs, 'eat like a shark.'

AFTON
Who's this one?

CHITRA
William Fellows.

AFTON
Continue.

CHITRA

(reading)

The woman forces me to do things I ordinarily would not do. It is in the dark that I learn the taste of her salt.

AFTON

Fellows is mine.

CHITRA

What about Gordon?

AFTON

That hack? Call Mister Fellows.

CHITRA

(examining manuscript)

There's only a P. O. Box.

AFTON

Get information. If that doesn't work, consult Poets & Writers. William Fellows will be my new featured writer.

INT.REGISTER/PREPPY PETS.DAY.

Sally's RINGING up a blue-haired MATRON when Monica OPENS the door looking disappointed.

The Matron's holding a fat Chihuahua and a tube of paste.

Monica enters and CLOSES the door.

MATRON

(to Sally)

You're sure it helps with constipation?

SALLY

Give Prince an inch of that paste today, he'll be regular by tonight.

MATRON

I think I've tried this...

(reads tube)

"Doggie Do Good" before, and, with mixed results. Didn't Doctor Lucky come out against it?

SALLY

No. "Doggie Do Good" is brand new.

MATRON

Are you sure, young lady?

Monica walks up to the register reading a magazine.

MONICA

Sure she's sure. It's guaranteed to make your doggie dude fart and crap and shit 'til the Second Coming of Christ.

The Matron gives Monica the once-over.

MATRON

Well, I never. Let's go Prince.

The Matron OPENS the door clutching Prince and the Doggie Do Good. She exits and SLAMS the door behind her.

SALLY

Goodbye, business good will.

MONICA

Josh's a swisher.

Sally SHUTS the register.

SALLY

He is not.

MR. MCCORMACK, 55, OPENS the door. He pulls a white toy poodle in and the door CLOSES. The poodle has a rhinestone leash and a pink scarf.

MR. MCCORMACK

Michelle's here for her two o'clock.

Sally scoots around the register and takes Michelle by the leash.

SALLY

(patting Michelle)

Shampoo and perm for our little blue ribbon winner?

MR. MCCORMACK

Use henna and super duper gentle on the dryer. Split ends are a no-no Nanette.

MONICA

(holds up "Playgirl")

Look what I found in his closet.

SALLY

You stole that?

MONICA

He's still in Prague.

Monica FLIPS to the centerfold and shows Sally.

Mr. McCormack cranes his neck.

CLOSE-UP OF HUNT leaning against the lifeguard tower butt naked. Monica's hand covers Hunt's family jewels.

MR. MCCORMACK

(putting on glasses)

He's sure a looker.

SALLY

Michelle will be ready by five, Mr. McCormack.

MR. MCCORMACK

(to Monica)

What month did you say that was?

MONICA

October. He's "Mr. October."

MR. MCCORMACK

Nice pumpkins. Ta, ta.

Mr. McCormack exits the store.

MONICA

Check the personal message: "To Chubs, Keep on Pumpin'." Guess what that means.

SALLY

To keep on lifting weights?

MONICA

You are so naive, Sally. It's homo speak. A straight dude wouldn't be caught dead with 'Playgirl.'

SALLY

Maybe Josh won a subscription.

MONICA

I swear you fell off a turnip truck. Josh is your client, from now on.

Michelle BARKS.

EXT.CAFE JEJUNE/PRAGUE.NIGHT.

CLOSE-UP OF WALL plastered with overlapping flyers that read, "Vote Republican, Vote Freedom." The flyers announce the arrival of American Republicans to a conference in downtown Prague.

Josh, with a hound dog expression, sits alone at an outdoor table. He's sipping a mocha latte under a neon sign advertising "Cafe Jejune." His cell sits on the table.

A group of angst-ridden ARTISTS walk by.

CLOSE-UP OF JOSH staring at his reflection in the mocha latte.

INT.BEDROOM/JOSH'S CONDO.DAY.

Sally has Fiona on the futon. She's feeling Fiona's belly.

Fiona MEOWS.

Sally has a look that says Fiona's in the family way.

SALLY

Heavens to Mergatroid.

Fiona PURRS.

EXT.CAFE JEJUNE.NIGHT.

Josh uses his spoon to stir his reflection in the mocha latte. He picks up his phone and DIALS.

JOSH
(into phone)
Hello, lover.

AFTON (OS)
Enough.

JOSH
Get the flowers and candy?

AFTON (OS)
You're straight out of Hemingway.

JOSH
Farewell To Arms?

AFTON (OS)
You're an antagonist in an earlier work.

JOSH
I miss you.

AFTON (OS)
You want me to leave Hunt, don't you?

JOSH
I don't know. I'm perplexed in Prague.

INT.AFTON'S OFFICE.DAY.

Afton has her feet up on the table and she's PUFFING a Cubano cigar. She's got Josh on the office mike. On her desk is a bouquet of white roses and a gold box of eastern European chocolates.

JOSH (OS)
You'd really leave him?

AFTON
(BLOWS a puff of smoke)
You do worship me absolutely, don't you, Chubs?

JOSH (OS)
Absolutely.

AFTON
Let's discuss this in persona.
(flips through calendar)
I'll be in D.C. on July 4th with Hunt.

JOSH (OS)
Can we maneuver around him?

AFTON

'Maneuver.' I like that word.

Afton plucks a chocolate out of the box and GOBBLES it.

AFTON

I adore Czech chocolates.

Afton HANGS up. She takes a deep PUFF from her cigar. She looks like a gambler considering the odds.

AFTON

(to herself)

Why are men are so damn pathetic?

INTERN (OS)

Sounds like a soap in there.

AFTON

I pay you to read, plebe, not listen.

INTERN (OS)

Interns don't get paid.

AFTON

But you do hope someday to snag a cushy editorial position, say, at Esquire?

INTERN (OS)

Yes.

AFTON

Then stop yapping and find me another ee-diot.

INT.PREPPY PETS.DAY.

Monica sits at the register combing her hair with a curry comb. A golden oldie PLAYS over the store's speakers.

Sally's got the top off the terrarium and she's adjusting the vitamin light so it warms Iggy and Swiggy, his friend.

CLOSE-UP OF IGGY on a branch next to another baby iguana.

SALLY

(to Iggy)

This will help you and Swiggy metabolize.

The store speakers PLAY the news.

RADIO NEWSMAN (OS)

The DOW closed down one hundred thirty points today, losers outnumbering winners two-to-one. And, shifting from financial matters to the environment, this just in. A disaster off Virginia Beach. A tanker of unknown origin discharged two million barrels of crude into the Atlantic last night.

SALLY
Monica, can you cover?

MONICA
Need to save the world?

Sally DROPS the top back on the terrarium.

SALLY
Just our little corner of it.

Monica pulls her cell with holster off her hip and tosses it to Sally.

MONICA
Call me if you need supplies.

SALLY
Thanks.

INT.CZECH AIR.DAY.

Josh leans back in his First Class seat and checks out a STEWARDESS as he types on his laptop.

CLOSE-UP OF SCREEN shows Fiona's meal plan for the week.

The Stewardess approaches Josh.

STEWARDESS
(holding out paper)
Wall Street Journal?

JOSH
Got Cat Fancy?

STEWARDESS
No. Sorry.

The Stewardess continues down the aisle.

Josh picks up his cell and DIALS.

JOSH
(into phone)
Monica?

SALLY (OS)
Josh, is that you?

JOSH
Sally?

SALLY (OS)
Still in Prague?

JOSH
I'm over the Atlantic. Are you baby-sitting Fiona?

EXT.VIRGINIA BEACH.DAY.

Sally presses Monica's cell to her ear. She wears a yellow slicker, hip-high wading boots, and white rubber gloves. There are tables around her stacked with sterile pads, IV bags, and a blue solution in plastic squeeze bottles.

PEOPLE hustle back and forth in similar gear.

SALLY

(into phone)

Fiona's safe and sound.

JOSH (OS)

Did she like the opakapaka?

SALLY

The opakapaka was a hit.

JOSH (OS)

Did you check for bones?

INT.CZECH AIR.DAY.

Josh studies the screen on his laptop.

SALLY (OS)

With a fine tooth comb.

JOSH

(into phone)

Say, you wouldn't be interested in, no, I suppose you wouldn't.

SALLY (OS)

Interested in what?

JOSH

Seeing the Beach Boys tomorrow. I've got friends flying in and we're one girl short. Say, what's making that noise?

EXT.VIRGINIA BEACH.DAY.

There's the sound of bird CRYING.

A WOMAN wearing a white lab coat hustles to a table and grabs a pad and a bottle of blue solution.

The Woman motions for Sally's help.

SALLY

(into phone)

There's been a spill. I'm helping Wildlife Rescue.

JOSH (OS)

I didn't hear about a spill.

EXT.OCEAN.DAY.

Two Coast Guard cutters circle the oily water. The cutters are dropping containment nets around the spill while negotiating the heavy surf.

SALLY (OS)

The Coast Guard and local fishermen can't contain it.

Private fishing boats help with the nets.

SALLY (OS)

The oil's shifting north with the currents.

INT.CZECH AIR.DAY.

Josh sees PASSENGERS crowding the windows on the opposite side of First Class.

He gets up and looks out over YUPPIE MAN's shoulder.

From Josh's p.o.v., the ocean off Virginia Beach is a mass of confusion, with Coast Guard cutters and fishing vessels circling the black water. White caps buffet the boats.

JOSH

(into phone)

I see it. I see everything.

SALLY (OS)

The birds and green sea turtles will die if we don't work through the night.

JOSH

Good luck, Sally.

(pause)

My place at noon, if you can make it.

The dial tone BUZZES.

YUPPIE MAN

(nudges Josh)

Glad I'm up here.

Josh stares out the window.

JOSH

Yeah. Me too.

EXT.BEACH.NIGHT.

Sally works frantically under a pod of portable lights--she pours blue solution onto a pelican and rubs its feathers with sterile pads.

SALLY

(to pelican)

You're going to be alright, Peter Pelican. I'll have you up and flying in no time.

EXT.OCEAN.NIGHT.

Helicopters circle overhead and light up the spill.

Coast Guard cutters bob like toys.

The containment buoys are threatening to break loose in the heavy surf.

EXT.BEACH.NIGHT.

VOLUNTEERS hustle by with birds.

The Woman with the white lab coat checks the eyes of Peter Pelican with a Maglite.

Hydration. WOMAN

I'll get an IV going. SALLY

Four Volunteers carry a green sea turtle covered in oil to the tables and the Woman runs over to the turtle.

Sally looks out to sea.

Please, God. Help us. SALLY

EXT.STREET/DOLPHIN ESTATES.DAY.

Sally pulls up in a '73 VW Bug and parks. She gets out wearing the yellow slicker and hip boots. Her face has splotches of oil and her hair is a mess. She checks out her reflection in the passenger window and shakes her head.

EXT.WALKWAY.DAY.

Sally proceeds up the walkway and a set of stairs to...

EXT.DOOR.DAY.

...Josh's front door. She RINGS the bell.

Afton answers the door wearing a pink baby doll dress and munching on a pair of edible underpants.

If that's Sally, invite her in! JOSH (OS)

Are you that cat sitter? AFTON

Yes. SALLY

Afton gives Sally the once-over.

AFTON
You look like a fireman.

JOSH (OS)
Fiona misses you, Sally!

Afton breaks off a piece of the underpants and offers it to Sally.

AFTON
Hungry?

SALLY
I'm exhausted. I can't make The Beach Boys.

AFTON
Are you a carpet muncher?

SALLY
No.

AFTON
Lemonade, lemonade, made in the shade.

SALLY
Huh?

AFTON
Good enough for any old maid.

Sally retreats from door and heads down the stairs.

Hunt, wearing swim trunks with a shark print, strides into the frame. He hugs Afton and does a little dance.

HUNT
I'm here to party hearty!

Josh enters the frame wearing identical trunks.

JOSH
Where's Sally?

AFTON
Sprinting through the ice plant, like a terrified Bambi.

EXT.CONCERT.DAY.

THE BEACH BOYS SING "Help Me, Rhonda" to a July 4th CROWD gathered at the Monument.

Giant beach balls bounce through the Crowd.

EXT.FRONT ROW.DAY.

Afton is perched on Hunt's bare shoulders. She's wearing her baby doll dress with white knee highs. She blows kisses at The Beach Boys.

Josh stands behind Hunt. He reaches up and massages Afton's lower back.

On stage directly above them, MIKE LOVE takes off his red carnation lei and falls to his knees. He drops the lei over Afton's head and kisses her flush on the lips.

The Crowd CHEERS.

Afton leans back on Hunt's shoulders and Josh supports her back. Other hands rise up to support her.

The hands lift her off Hunt's shoulders.

The hands pass Afton back.

Afton floats above the Crowd like a goddess.

EXT.BOARDWALK/REHOBOTH BEACH.DAY.

CLOSE-UP OF "Welcome to Rehoboth Beach" sign.

EXT.BEACH.DAY.

Hunt, Afton, and Josh sit on beach chairs under a rainbow umbrella. Two surfboards are planted nose down in the sand. There's a black-and-pink wetsuit hanging off the fin of one of the boards.

Hunt studies the waves while Josh makes goo-goo eyes at Afton.

HUNT

East coast surf sucks.

Afton applies Bain de Soleil to her long legs. She's wearing a silver one-piece and her hair's up in a French braid.

Josh watches her massage the lotion in.

AFTON

I adore the Beach Boys.

JOSH

It must have felt good with all those hands touching you.

Hunt gets up and grabs the surfboard without the wetsuit.

HUNT

Afton of York, the woman who launched a thousand boners.

AFTON

Jealousy becomes you, Hunt.

JOSH
We didn't come to Rehoboth to fight.
(checks wristwatch)
High tide at three.

HUNT
Waves'll blow out by then. I'm gonna take these gringos to school.

Hunt charges off with his board toward the surf.

Afton coats her arms with Bain de Soleil.

JOSH
Need any help rubbing that in?

AFTON
I can manage.

JOSH
Have you made any decisions?

AFTON
A night at the Passion Fruit Grotto, too much champagne, a little
kidding around. Anything can happen, Chubs, given the right
circumstances.

(pause)
Look, he's shooting the tube!

EXT.OCEAN.DAY.

CLOSE-UP OF HUNT ON SURFBOARD shooting a tube.

EXT.BEACH.DAY.

Josh stares at the ocean.

JOSH
You used me.

AFTON
You drove me wild wearing that thong.

JOSH
You're heartless, Afton. Absolutely heartless.

AFTON
And you're Robert Cohn.

JOSH
Who?

AFTON
In The Sun Also Rises, Cohn thinks because he seduces a married
woman that he's earned the right to sleep with her again and again, as
if adultery comes with a set of rules.

JOSH

A-dul-ter-y. It sounds so, evil.

AFTON

When you're cruising in the waters of infidelity there are no rules. And that's what men don't understand. Men are always anxious to get us on their playing field but then limit our playing time. Men are about control. Women don't want to be controlled, married or not. You and I did it to experience it, because secretly, whether or not we wanted to admit it, we were both curious. If you hadn't introduced me to Hunt things might have turned out different. But they didn't, so let's move on.

JOSH

I'm Chubs, chump of the one night stand.

Afton stands up and stretches.

AFTON

Let's get some of that world famous salt water taffy and then stroll the boardwalk.

Josh stands and pulls his wetsuit off the surfboard.

JOSH

I need to dunk my head.

Josh goes through a series of frantic contortions trying to put on his wetsuit.

Afton LAUGHS.

AFTON

The water's not cold.

JOSH

To me it is.

AFTON

Hunt never wears a wetsuit in the summer, east coast or west.

JOSH

I'm not Hunt.

Josh finally gets the wetsuit on. He turns and jogs with the board down to...

EXT.SHORELINE.DAY.

...the shoreline, DROPS his board in the water, and hops on.

He PADDLES out...

EXT.OCEAN.DAY.

...through the shore break.

He PADDLES to a pack of SURFERS. There's a macho thing going on because nobody's wearing a wetsuit.

Surfer #1, a wiry lad with a swastika tattooed on his shoulder, gives Josh the evil eye.

Surfer #2, a muscular guy with a diamond stud, puckers his lips when he sees Josh.

SURFER #2

Check out pinkie.

SURFER #1

Ten bucks says he's an ass pirate.

The Surfers LAUGH.

Josh ignores them. He PADDLES over a series of swells until he reaches Hunt in the deep water. They float side-by-side on their boards and scour the horizon for waves.

HUNT

The Atlantic's sick. Buncha dead cod floated by.

JOSH

Hunt, there's something you should know.

HUNT

Shoot.

JOSH

Remember back in San Diego, when you said I stole Republican money?

Hunt keeps his eyes on the sea.

HUNT

You stole it?

JOSH

No.

Hunt turns in the water and faces his surfboard toward shore.

JOSH

But something did happen the night before, back in New York.

Hunt starts PADDLING.

HUNT

Wave of the day!

The giant wave arrives. Josh lets it pass under him while Hunt PADDLES to catch it.

JOSH

Afton and I goofed around!

From Josh's p.o.v., Hunt stands and rides the wave shoreward. Hunt kicks out when the wave CRASHES white.

Hunt PADDLES furiously back to Josh until the tips of their surfboards practically touch.

It's like a Mexican stand-off.

Goofed? HUNT

In the penthouse. JOSH

You and Afton? HUNT

Josh nods sheepishly.

Don't sweat it. Afton already came clean. HUNT

She did? JOSH

I wanted to knock you into another time zone the second I found out. HUNT
Man, you scammed Afton behind my back. But then I figured it takes two to tango.

I wouldn't blame you if you wanted to haul off and slug me right now. JOSH

Hunt nods. He makes a fist and Josh closes his eyes. But instead of punching Josh, Hunt PUNCHES the water.

Josh opens his eyes.

The problem's not you. It's this whole bicoastal thing. Favor? HUNT

Name it. JOSH

Hands off Afton, 'til we figure things out. HUNT

You've got it. JOSH

Hey, check out that slick. HUNT
(looking out to sea)

Jesus. I'll bet that's from Virginia Beach. JOSH

Hunt holds out his arm--it's coated with tar.

We surf a dying ocean. HUNT

EXT.SHORELINE.DAY.

LIFEGUARDS BLOW whistles and motion swimmers to come out of the water.

EXT.OCEAN.DAY.

Hunt looks back at the shoreline.

JOSH

I should have helped Sally and Wildlife Rescue.

HUNT

Shoulda, woulda, coulda. You've never cared about the environment, Josh.

Hunt turns his board toward shore.

HUNT

(paddling)

Our train has arrived.

Josh turns his board and starts PADDLING next to Hunt.

They catch a huge wave and ride it shoreward. Hunt is a natural while Josh struggles just to stand.

They both go right on the wave, with Josh on the inside. Hunt rides the lip and then shoots down in front of Josh. Josh loses his balance and flies headfirst into the CRASHING white foam.

MONTAGE.SAN DIEGO COUNTY.DAY.

Josh and Bridgette conduct a series of taste tests, from ritzy La Jolla to middle class Clairemont to impoverished Chula Vista.

Bridgette videos the taste tests with her cell while Josh interviews the TESTERS. She sabotages Josh by saying, "Sewer water!" whenever the Testers are drinking.

The Testers spew water, soaking Josh.

INT.AFTON'S OFFICE.DAY.

Afton sits at her desk across from Gordon. She's wearing a tube top, designer jeans, and has her legs up on the desk. She's reading Gordon's manuscript while drumming a pencil on her bare midriff.

AFTON

The irony's overstated. And then there's third person--that cuts your angst in half. Didn't you learn anything reading Notes from the Underground at Princeton?

GORDON

I only attended one semester.

AFTON

God. I'll have to fudge your bio.

GORDON

Do it. Third person gives me the objectivity I want to make Benji believable.

AFTON

It's first person or nothing. And who cares if its objective.

Afton SNIFFS the air and wrinkles her nose.

AFTON

Are you wearing CK?

Gordon nods.

AFTON

You stink of the 20th Century. Wash it off in my sink. Go ahead, and wash well.

Gordon gets up and walks over to the bathroom door in the office. He OPENS it and exits the frame.

Gordon keeps the door open.

There's the sound of RUNNING water.

AFTON

First person is you, Gordon. And drop 'Benji.' It reeks of Disney.

Chitra enters the office.

CHITRA

No luck.

AFTON

Post office?

CHITRA

Postmaster says he's a ghost.

Gordon pops his head into the room while the water RUNS.

GORDON

Am I still Hemingway?

AFTON

(ignoring Gordon)

A writer can't disappear like that.

Gordon disappears.

CHITRA

William Fellows did.

Gordon pops his head back in the room.

GORDON

Who's William Fellows?

AFTON

(to Chitra)

I want to discover him.

Gordon disappears.

AFTON

(to Chitra)

I could be shaping his career, molding him, turning him into Fitzgerald. Find him.

Chitra exits the office.

Gordon re-enters the room. The armpits of his shirt are soaked and he looks worried.

GORDON

Am I being replaced?

AFTON

Not yet. But I'm working on it.

INT.CHEZ LOUIE'S RESTAURANT/MARYLAND.NIGHT.

Sally's having dinner with MOM and DAD HOFF at their favorite family-style restaurant.

Dad's thin. He's got poor posture and wears a polyester shirt with wool slacks.

Mom's stout. She wears a muumuu, clip-on earrings, and bright red lipstick. She's got a happy-go-lucky demeanor and a purse the size of Cleveland hanging off the arm of her chair.

The circular table has a checkered tablecloth, a vase of breadsticks, votive candles on fruit plates, and a basket of plastic violets. There are plates of spaghetti and clam linguini in the middle of the table.

Dad helps himself to more spaghetti.

DAD

That pet shop give you a raise yet?

SALLY

I make extra with Finicky Felines.

MOM

Sally baby-sits the cutest little kitties, Dear.

DAD

Haven't you done enough baby-sitting?

SALLY

Cat-sitting.

DAD

Isn't this year the big 3-0?

Sally nods.

MOM

Just think, Honey, you'll be thirty-something.

SALLY

Don't remind me.

DAD

You should think less about animals and more about starting a family. I know I'm hard on you, Sally, but it's for your own good.

MOM

You are our only child, Honey.

SALLY

What's going on at work, Dad?

DAD

The big chains are swiping all my loyal customers, that's what's going on.

SALLY

What about Mr. Bernstein and Mrs. Machado?

MOM

They stopped sending Christmas cards two years ago.

DAD

I was thinking about going to work for Home Depot.

SALLY

But the families in Silver Springs need you.

DAD

They need Al's Hardware like they need a hole in the head.

MOM

(pats Sally's arm)

Honey, have you met any nice boys on Capitol Hill?

SALLY

No. Not yet.

DAD

How could she meet nice boys cooped up in that pet shop?

SALLY

Men come in all the time to have their dogs groomed.

DAD

Yeah, and I know the type.

MOM

What type is that, Dear?

DAD

(demonstrating a limp wrist)

Swell fellas.

MOM

Dear!

The Waiter comes over.

WAITER

Finis?

MOM

Yes. Everything was delicious.

DAD

I'm stuffed.

The Waiter clears the plates.

DAD

I hope everyone saved room for flambé.

MOM

Can we please have a doggie bag?

WAITER

Absolument, Madame.

The Waiter exits with the plates.

Mom dabs the corners of her mouth with her napkin.

MOM

Should I show Sally our big surprise?

DAD

Now's as good a time as any.

Mom places her gargantuan purse on the table and roots through it. She pulls out a picture. Mom props a 8-by-10 glossy against the jar of breadsticks.

CLOSE-UP OF HEADSHOT shows a husky MAN with greasy, shoulder-length hair. He has blond streaks, a hairy chest, and pierced ears.

MOM

Alberto helps Dad every weekend. He wants to meet you sometime for lunch.

SALLY

You want me to go on a date with him?

MOM

Alberto has done some modeling in New York.

DAD

He gave us a leg of venison last week.

SALLY

Alberto's a hunter?

MOM

Honey, you're not still in your vegetarian phase, are you?

DAD

She is eating clams.

SALLY

Clams aren't vegetables, Dad.

MOM

We showed Alberto that nice picture of you at Preppy Pets. He said you looked very wholesome.

Mom reaches over and pinches Sally's cheeks.

MOM

What with my rosy cheeks and all.

Sally winces at the picture.

SALLY

He's hairy and greasy.

MOM

You love hair, Honey. Remember the cats?

DAD

Don't underestimate him, Sally. He's more than meets the eye.

MOM

Dad saw him balancing two big barley bags, one on each shoulder.

SALLY

You sell barley now?

The Waiter parks a cart next to the table.

DAD

Horse feed's the only thing Orchard Supply doesn't sell.

MOM

Dad's got the market cornered.

WAITER

Now I prepare the bananas flambé, specialty of Chez Louie's.

DAD

Very good.

The Waiter MIXES the butter, rum, and sugar in a copper pan over a sterno stove on the cart. He SLICES hunks of banana and places the hunks in the mixture. He LIGHTS the concoction and a fireball SHOOTS out of the pan.

MOM

Heavens, will you look at that.

DAD

That's from all the rum.

The Waiter serves flambé over vanilla ice cream to Sally.

Sally studies the glossy of Alberto glittering in the flames from her flambé.

MOM
Alberto can't eat flambé.

SALLY
No?

DAD
He's allergic to tropical fruit.

MOM
Poor Alberto.

DAD
That boy's got a future in hardware, believe you me.

The Waiter serves flambé to Dad and Mom.

WAITER
Enjoy.

MOM
Thank-you. We will.

The Waiter pushes the cart away.

Dad stands.

DAD
Gotta find the little boy's room.

Mom and Sally nod.

Dad WALKS gingerly away.

MOM
Your father's having a tough time, Honey. Last week he strained his back lifting cinder blocks. Sometimes I think that poor man's not long for this earth. Thank God he's got Alberto.

Sally contemplates the picture of Alberto as the flames die.

EXT.DOOR/PREPPY PETS.NIGHT.

Sally FUMBLES with her keys trying to open the front door. Finally she finds the right key, turns it in the lock, and then JAMS her shoulder against the frame.

The door SQUEAKS open.

INT.PREPPY PETS.NIGHT.

Only the green pools of vitamin light leaking out of the terrarium and fish tanks light the store.

Sally makes her way over to the terrarium. She puts her canvas bag down and takes the top OFF.

CLOSE-UP OF IGGY AND SWIGGY sharing a branch.

SALLY

How's it going, guys? Ready for a little show and tell?

Sally PULLS the headshot of Alberto out of her canvas bag and places it over her face.

SALLY

(lizard voice)

Ig-gy and Swig-gy! This is Alberto Alligator calling!

CLOSE-UP OF IGGY AND SWIGGY--they have no reaction.

Sally takes the headshot off her face.

SALLY

Don't worry. It's only me.

CLOSE-UP OF IGGY AND SWIGGY--both throats bob.

INT.JOSH'S OFFICE.DAY.

Josh has his laptop on top of the broken copy machine. He's PUNCHING away frantically at the keyboard.

CLOSE-UP OF SCREEN shows "Emergency Funding for Wildlife Rescue."

Lani hustles into the office and PLOPS down a stack of booklets and envelopes on Josh's tiny desk. She starts STUFFING the booklets into the envelopes.

LANI

Sally called, says she's available.

JOSH

Great.

Josh finishes his draft and starts PRINTING it out on a Epson perched on the seat of a busted chair.

JOSH

Think we have a chance?

LANI

Our President calls himself 'The Environmental Superman.'

(pause)

Say, who's this Sally? You never said anything about a Sally.

JOSH

She's with Finicky Felines.

LANI

Oh. She sounds nice. Real nice.

The Epson SHOOTS out the draft.

Josh grabs the draft and places it in a manila envelope.

JOSH

I'm off to The White House.

LANI

Fax it. The Big Kahuna wants you 'pronto.'

JOSH

Is that brat with him?

LANI

(nodding)

She's in her oral phase.

INT.BRIAN'S OFFICE.DAY.

Brian SWIVELS back and forth in his leather chair. He looks pissed.

Bridgette sits across from him CHEWING gum and BLOWING bubbles.

BRIAN

Quit that.

BRIDGETTE

Daddy says it's better than smoking clove cigarettes.

Josh enters the room carrying his manila envelope.

JOSH

Need me?

BRIAN

Sit.

Josh sits next to Bridgette.

BRIAN

Is this your big Hyannis Port weekend?

JOSH

Yes.

BRIDGETTE

Feeb.

JOSH

Can we talk in private?

BRIAN

Bridgette, go help Lani stuff envelopes.

BRIDGETTE

I wanna hear Chubs get reamed.

BRIAN

Go.

Bridgette leaves the room.

BRIAN

Prop 10 is a disaster. You failed to follow up on letters of support, you did a half-ass job organizing the tours, the taste test footage is a disaster, and now Montgomery's stuck in Chula Vista with an army of disgruntled Mexicans making ludicrous demands.

JOSH

Minimum wage isn't ludicrous.

BRIAN

Don't smart mouth me, Josh. The news stations are swarming and Prop 10 is sinking like a stone. My affiliation with this proposition will erode my Republican base in six districts and now Sanchez says he's running against me.

JOSH

I'm sorry. Guess I never believed in Prop 10.

BRIAN

Come again?

JOSH

The environmental impact statement looked a little shady. Who knows what wildlife that treatment plant would endanger. In my opinion, we can become as dependent on Montgomery's recycled sludge as Colorado River water, and who wants that?

BRIAN

You're not paid to have opinions.

JOSH

I'm tired of being your yes man, Brian. And I'm sick of kissing every ass who gives you a buck.

BRIAN

Why, you little prima donna, you're not fit to lick my old Birkenstock's.

JOSH

There's something else you should know.

BRIAN

And what's that, Josh?

JOSH

You've gotta cork wedged up your ass.

INT.LIVINGROOM/JOSH'S CONDO.NIGHT.

Sally and Fiona are lying on zabatons watching a video featuring DOCTOR LUCKY, a popular vet on the east coast.

DOCTOR LUCKY (on TV)

The expectant mother should get moderate exercise the first month, then cut back the second. The diet should consist primarily of protein, with a modicum of crude fat. I recommend fresh fish from island waters. Avoid canned tuna, scrod, and halibut. Pacific salmon is acceptable if from a respectable farm.

SALLY

(stroking Fiona)

See?

Fiona PURRS.

DOCTOR LUCKY (on TV)

For young mothers, I recommend extensive stroking to calm pre-birth jitters. After all, this is her first litter and we don't want her overly excited.

The phone RINGS on the table but Sally doesn't get it.

The answering machine CLICKS.

JOSH (OS)

This is Josh Rubens, Chief-of-Staff for Congressman Wilcox and Fiona the cat. Please leave a message at the beep and we'll get back to you as soon as we possibly can. Head bonks.

The answering machine BEEPS.

JOSH (OS)

Sally, are you there? Sally, can we talk?

Sally get up and picks up the phone.

SALLY

(into phone)

Hi, Josh. Are you in Hyannis Port?

JOSH (OS)

I'm watching the Hornblower moon rising over the Atlantic.

SALLY

That sounds wonderful.

JOSH (OS)

Does Fiona miss me?

SALLY

Terribly.

INT.BREAKFAST NOOK/BUNGALOW.NIGHT.

Josh paces back and forth.

Behind him, through the bay window, a full moon rises over the Atlantic.

The room is decorated with nautical antiques--an ancient sextant, a harpoon, a mermaid masthead, a wooden steering wheel, and a boom with ragged sail off a cutter ship.

In the background, the couch and tables are covered with sheets.

JOSH

(into phone)

I miss Fiona something awful.

SALLY (OS)

You're cat codependent.

JOSH

Priscilla, she's Max Hornblower's sister, well, she said it would be alright for Fiona to fly up.

SALLY (OS)

Fiona's too delicate to get on a plane. Traveling alone could traumatize her.

INT.LIVINGROOM.NIGHT.

Fiona rubs up against Sally's leg and PURRS.

Sally drops to one knee and strokes her.

JOSH (OS)

I know this sounds strange, way beyond the call of duty, but could you possibly accompany her?

SALLY

(into phone)

Fiona and me?

JOSH (OS)

I'll reserve your flight to Boston and the taxi to Hyannis Port. You could stay for the party.

Sally strokes Fiona.

INT.BREAKFAST NOOK.NIGHT.

Josh contemplates the moon through the bay window.

SALLY (OS)

Sorry, but I can't leave Laulau behind.

JOSH

(into phone)

Has he been, you know, snip-snip-snip?

SALLY (OS)

Uh, huh.

JOSH

The ocean air will do him good. You and Laulau can have the top floor.

INT.LIVINGROOM.NIGHT.

Sally checks out the blowups of Josh and Hunt playing volleyball.

SALLY

(into phone)

I'll call when we land in Boston.

Sally HANGS up.

She picks up Fiona and strokes her.

Fiona PURRS.

EXT.HORNBLOWER ESTATE.DAY.

A bird's eye view of The Hornblower Estate shows a dozen bungalows surrounding a white mansion with huge columns. The mansion is modeled after The White House.

The grounds are exquisitely manicured. There are topiaries of past Democratic Presidents--FDR, Truman, JFK, Clinton, and Obama. A maze of hedges is in the shape of the Hornblower insignia--an anchor on Plymouth Rock.

There's an Olympic-size swimming pool, a huge Jacuzzi, tennis courts, a monstrous lawn extending down to the sea, a putting green, a helicopter pad, a cabana, and a boat dock with a fleet of jet skis, sailboats, and power boats.

EXT.MAIN GATE/HORNBLOWER ESTATE.DAY.

A red sedan with "Red Herring Taxi" on its side and a big plastic fish on its roof cruises through the open gate.

EXT.CIRCULAR DRIVEWAY/MANSION.DAY.

The taxi parks and Sally climbs out of the back seat with a large cat carrier. She wears a dress with a horse pattern and a puka shell necklace. She's got a small backpack strapped on and a pouch attached to the knitted belt around her waist.

She pays the DRIVER and proceeds to...

EXT.DOOR/MANSION.DAY.

...the front door. The mahogany is engraved with the Hornblower insignia.

Sally presses the bell and it CHIMES.

PRISCILLA HORNBLOWER, 52, OPENS the door. She's wearing a Giorgio dress, white pumps, and a string of pearls.

PRISCILLA

Hi, Sally, I'm Priscilla Hornblower. Have you brought our furry friends?

Sally holds the carrier up and Priscilla spies through the breathing holes.

PRISCILLA

How went our little flighty wighty from D.C. Wee Cee? Are you hungry pity witties?

SALLY

They had smoked salmon and caviar on the plane.

PRISCILLA

Spoiled rotten, aren't they?

Laulau HISSES.

INT.PARLOR/MANSION.DAY.

Afton sits between Josh and Hunt on an overstuffed couch. The room's a conglomeration of French Provincial, Spanish Colonial, Early American, and 60s quiche. Paintings of purse-lipped Ancestors cover the walls; one bare-chested Ancestor assumes a boxer's pose.

There's a crystal chandelier with screw-in lights, a collection of Depression glass in a cherry wood hutch, and an American colonial flag with a circle of stars.

Sally and Priscilla enter the room.

Josh pops off the couch.

JOSH

Hunt, Afton, this is Sally.

HUNT

Welcome to Hyannis Port.

AFTON

I dig the chic horse print.

Josh takes the carrier, opens the door, and stares at Laulau.

JOSH

I never intended for them to bunk.

AFTON

Scared of the birds and the bumble bees, Chubs?

SALLY

Laulau's been neutered.

PRISCILLA

He should try out for soprano in the All-Cat Choir.

Josh takes Fiona out and SHUTS the carrier door. He returns to the couch and places Fiona on his lap.

JOSH
(stroking)
She's not purring.

HUNT
Jet lag.

AFTON
Pre fur ball.

PRISCILLA
Maybe a nap's in order.

JOSH
Fiona seems distant, lost in thought.

AFTON
Alert The Times.

Fiona squirms off Josh's lap and SINKS her claws into the couch.

AFTON
Quit! This divan's where the Kennedys made Josh-Josh!

Josh unhooks Fiona's claws and returns her to his lap.

He strokes her chin and she starts to PURR.

JOSH
She's finally acting herself.

Sally OPENS the carrier and pulls Laulau out. She props him on her shoulder like a baby.

SALLY
Josh, there's something important I need to say.

HUNT
You're among friends, Sally.

AFTON
Yes. Feel free to express your innermost thoughts.

SWEETIE PIE, a white gerbil, pops his head out of the pouch attached to Sally's belt.

AFTON
Watch it, she's got a rat.

SALLY
Sweetie Pie's a gerbil.

HUNT
Too cool.

Priscilla checks Sweetie Pie out.

PRISCILLA
Isn't he simply adorable?

SALLY

(to Josh)

We should talk.

Josh gets up.

PRISCILLA

You two have your chat while I entertain your children.

AFTON

Don't be tardy, Chubs. You're responsible for the chowder.

INT.BREAKFAST NOOK/BUNGALOW.DAY.

Josh PACES with his hands behind his back.

Beyond the bay window, a GARDENER #1 MOWS the lawn while GARDENER #2 CLIPS the topiary of Obama.

Sally lets Sweetie Pie explore the mantle.

JOSH

You sounded serious in the parlor.

Sally doesn't answer. She's helping Sweetie Pie negotiate a path around an antique clock.

JOSH

Can't you quit playing for one second?

Sally plucks Sweetie Pie off the mantle and pops him back in the pouch.

SALLY

Laulau hasn't always been neutered.

JOSH

What's this got to do with me?

SALLY

He was Fiona's secret playmate, if you know what I mean.

Josh stops pacing and his eyes bug out.

JOSH

Wait a second. You wouldn't introduce a horny orange mongrel to a white virgin purebred while I'm away on a fund-raiser. No, not you.

SALLY

It was Laulau's exercise night. Your kitty video, the forward lifts, and then the karaoke distracted me.

JOSH

Are you trying to tell me Laulau screwed Fiona?

Sally nods her head--"yes."

JOSH

Cheesus, that's kitty rape!

CLOSE-UP OF SWEETIE PIE sticking his head out of the pouch.

SALLY

I have never seen anything so gentle, so caring. Their babies will be beautiful.

JOSH

Well, you can have them all, every last one! I'm going back to the parlor to get Fiona and, when I get back, I want you and your mongrel and that filthy gerbil to have vacated to the top floor!

Josh storms out and SLAMS the door.

EXT. CLAM BAKE PIT. DAY.

Josh's stirring a pot of steaming chowder with a wooden ladle. He's wearing a "Hornblower Hootenanny" apron, shorts, and boat shoes.

A prep table is loaded with clams, spices, veggies, sauces, and bottled oils flavored with herb sprigs.

Afton hovers around him as the HELP constructs a tent as well as a boxing ring in the background.

JOSH

(stirring)

Is Max going to fight?

AFTON

If he can find a sparring partner. Interested?

JOSH

What about Hunt?

AFTON

He never wants to challenge my father at anything. I suppose you told Hunt I seduced you.

JOSH

He knows that whatever happened between us isn't the problem.

AFTON

I wasn't aware there was a problem.

JOSH

There's about 3,000 miles of problem, as the condor flies.

Josh scoops up broth with his ladle.

JOSH

(holding spoon out)

Sample?

AFTON

(slurping broth)

Worcestershire to the rescue. That Sally's right out of Kafka.

Josh searches the prep table.

JOSH

I'm giving the babies up for adoption.

Josh finds the Worcestershire and pours some into the chowder.

AFTON

I suspect lesbo leanings. A Gertrude Stein in-the-making.

JOSH

You're off base, Afton. Sally is as straight as an arrow.

AFTON

Bet she lusts for Ruby Rose.

EXT.DOCK.DAY.

Hunt works the rigging of a sailboat.

Sally sits on the dock. She's wearing baggy white shorts and a blouse with a lizard print. She's supervising Sweetie Pie as he ROLLS across the wooden slats inside a clear plastic exercise ball.

Hunt takes off his "Hornblower Hootenanny" crew shirt and uses it to wipe the sweat off his face and arms.

SALLY

I'm excited about the party tonight.

HUNT

Josh makes the best clam chowder east of the Rockies.

Hunt tightens the rigging.

HUNT

Careful of these east coast bluebloods, Sally. They tend to think anything west of the Charles River is crude and savage.

SALLY

Josh seems to be enjoying himself.

HUNT

He enjoys the social aspect. But the truth is, he's a loner.

SALLY

He is?

HUNT

Josh gets lots of crushes. But he can never seem to find someone special. Josh is a third wheel caught in a rut.

EXT.CLAM BAKE PIT.DAY.

Josh DROPS diced celery and potato cubes into the broth.

AFTON

Gordon's coming.

JOSH

Is he your next O. Henry?

AFTON

Not if I track down William Fellows first.

Priscilla enters the frame.

PRISCILLA

How's that chowder coming?

Josh brings up the ladle and Priscilla BLOWS on the broth.

PRISCILLA

(slurping)

My, that's quite good. But I think it needs garlic.

Josh returns to the prep table and SMASHES garlic cloves with the flat side of a big knife.

AFTON

Can we call Sally a taxi?

PRISCILLA

Why, I find that girl positively refreshing.

AFTON

She doesn't belong in Hyannis Port.

PRISCILLA

She's Josh's guest.

JOSH

(mincing cloves)

I did invite her.

AFTON

She'll ruin everything.

PRISCILLA

I've already made her an afternoon appointment at Mister Barry's.

AFTON

You're joking.

PRISCILLA

Go get some sun, Afton, you're starting to lose your little glow.

AFTON

I'm supervising Josh.

A truck with "Cape Cod Caterers" on its cargo panel CHUGS across the lawn.

PRISCILLA

No rest for the wicked.

Priscilla exits the frame.

EXT.DOCK.DAY.

CLOSE-UP OF SWEETIE PIE scampering inside his exercise ball. The ball gains momentum, ROLLS down the slats, and off the dock.

Sally and Hunt aren't paying attention to Sweetie Pie.

HUNT

What do you think of Josh?

SALLY

I like how he likes animals.

HUNT

I think Josh likes you.

SALLY

With my luck, he's probably gay.

HUNT

Sally, let me assure you, Josh's the farthest thing from that.

Sally looks up and down the dock for the exercise ball.

She jumps up and scours the dock.

SALLY

Have you seen Sweetie Pie?

HUNT

No.

Sally RUNS to the end of the dock.

EXT.OCEAN.DAY.

The exercise ball is floating away.

EXT.CLAM BAKE PIT.DAY.

A SCREAM comes from the dock.

Afton shakes her head.

AFTON

Damsel-in-Distress.

Josh runs with the ladle down to...

EXT.DOCK.DAY.

...the end of the dock where he joins Sally.

EXT.OCEAN.DAY.

Hunt's swimming for the exercise ball.

A power boat ZOOMS by and the ball gets caught in its wake.

CLOSE-UP OF SWEETIE PIE running and the ball SPINNING around as the waves push it farther out.

EXT.DOCK.DAY.

Afton joins Josh and Sally at the end of the dock.

EXT.OCEAN.DAY.

Hunt SWIMS through the waves and grabs the exercise ball.

He strokes the ball back like a water polo ball.

EXT.DOCK.DAY.

Hunt wades in with Sweetie Pie.

AFTON

Our hero returns.

Hunt hands Sally the exercise ball.

Sally extracts Sweetie Pie from his plastic prison.

SALLY

(rocking Sweetie Pie)

Thank-you, oh, thank-you.

Sally kisses Sweetie Pie on the mouth.

AFTON

Where for art thou, Romeo?

Josh pats Sweetie Pie's head with his finger.

Hunt climbs up on the dock and finishes the rigging.

HUNT

(to Josh and Sally)

You two wanna go for a sail?

JOSH

Sally?

SALLY

Sure.

Sally and Josh climb on board.

Hunt UNHITCHES the anchor line from the dock, tosses it to Josh, and the boat drifts out.

AFTON

Don't forget the chowder, Chubs.

Josh tosses her the wooden ladle.

INT.SAILBOAT.DAY.

Josh sits at the stern and steers the sailboat east.

Sally sits beside him; she stretches out her bare legs to catch the sun. Her unpretentious nature makes her beautiful.

A helicopter sporting the Hornblower insignia FLIES low over the water between them and the coast. Josh waves.

SALLY

Who's that?

JOSH

Max and Gerty Hornblower. Our hosts.

Josh and Sally sail along the coast of Hyannis Port.

EXT.HELIO PAD.DAY.

The Hornblower helicopter LANDS.

MAX HORNBLOWER, 65, a stocky gent with silver hair, opens the passenger door and climbs out. His wife GERTY, 62, follows. Hawthorne, their obese Cocker Spaniel, leaps out behind Gerty.

Max wears a sweat top, Everlast trunks, hand wraps, and boxing shoes. There's a duffel bag slung over his shoulder.

Afton greets them.

INT.SAILBOAT.DAY.

CLOSE-UP OF SALLY trailing her hand in the water.

SALLY

Jeepers, who owns that place with the big lawn?

JOSH

That's the Kennedy compound. Sometimes I pretend it's the 50s and that John and Bobby are out there tossing the football.

INT.BOXING RING.DAY.

Max has on boxing gloves and he's shadow boxing his way around the ring.

From Max's p.o.v., he sees a taxi pull up. Hawthorne waddles over to the taxi and BARKS.

MAX

Heel, Hawthorne!

Gordon, wearing a button-down shirt and tie, gets out and Afton hugs him. Gordon pays the DRIVER and the taxi leaves. Hawthorne sniffs Gordon's shoes.

MAX

Hey, you!

GORDON

Me?

MAX

Wanna beef?

EXT.RING.DAY.

Gordon and Afton make their way over to the ring; Hawthorne tags along.

Gerty's rooting through Max's duffel bag.

AFTON

Dad, we're all aware the Hornblowers introduced boxing to America.

GERTY

He's too young for you anyway, Maxy.

AFTON

Gordon's just a writer.

MAX

Hemingway was a writer and he could fight.

Gordon reaches up and pulls on the middle rope.

GORDON

I'm sorry, Mr. Hornblower. I'm not versed in the sweet science.

MAX

Versed, smershed. I own 25% of The New Yorker. Wanna be in the next issue?

GORDON

Sure.

MAX

Then lace up some gloves, Gordon ol' boy, and get your skinny ass in here.

Gerty places a New England Patriots football helmet on the apron.

GERTY
Don't forget your helmet, Maxy.

EXT.SAILBOAT.DAY.

Sally and Josh cruise the shallows offshore from a mansion with a blue-tiled roof.

INT.SAILBOAT.DAY.

Sally watches the shore.

JOSH
That's the old Jackie O compound. Jackie had Aristotle buy her that
to remind her of the good old days.

SALLY
Ever wonder who you'll end up with?

JOSH
I'm one of those guys destined to walk the earth alone.

SALLY
You aren't alone. You've got Fiona.

JOSH
And soon, a batch of kittens.

SALLY
You forgive me?

JOSH
Sorry I yelled like that. I've been on edge ever since I lost my job.

SALLY
What happened?

JOSH
For the first time in my life, I took a stand.

EXT.SAILBOAT.DAY.

The boat reaches the end of Cape Cod's calm confines and enters the open water.

Waves buffet the sides.

Dark clouds are building to the northeast and wind WHIPS the sail.

INT.RING.DAY.

CLOSE-UP OF A GLOVE striking Gordon's face.

Gordon, still wearing a tie, lurches backward and only the ropes prevent him from falling. Max has on his football helmet and he charges in throwing wild punches.

Gordon throws a punch that GRAZES Max's helmet. Max continues the assault--he HITS Gordon in the belly with a left and then HITS him in the head with a right cross.

Gordon DROPS like a lead weight. He rolls around and MOANS on the apron.

Hawthorne BARKS outside the ring--he has his paws on the apron but he's too fat to jump up.

MAX

Get up, Gordon. That didn't hurt.

GORDON

It did too.

MAX

If you don't go another round, no New Yorker.

Gordon springs back up.

EXT.RING.DAY.

Gerty and Afton stand outside the ring while, behind them, the legs of Gordon and Max DANCE in and out of clinches.

GERTY

He always goes pugilistic whenever I mention grandchildren.

AFTON

Then don't mention them.

Max's legs corner Gordon's legs in the near corner of the ring. There's the sound of BLOWS.

GORDON (OS)

Low blow!

MAX (OS)

Was not!

The legs DANCE off to far corner of the ring.

GERTY

The idea that the Hornblower line is dying out terrifies him.

AFTON

Pretend Hawthorne's your grandchild until we're ready.

The legs DANCE back to the near corner.

GORDON (OS)

Owie!

AFTON

Excuse me for a second, mother.

(pause)

Hey, Gordon, hit him with a paradox!

INT.SAILBOAT.DAY.

Josh studies the horizon.

JOSH

Looks like a Nor'easter. We'd better turn back.

SALLY

I'm not afraid.

JOSH

See those clouds?

Sally nods.

JOSH

A big storm's brewing.

SALLY

It feels like we're the last two people left on Earth.

JOSH

And I'm a Republican without a job.

SALLY

You're an intelligent man who's sensitive and loves animals. That's top drawer, and don't let anyone tell you different.

EXT.SAILBOAT.DAY.

Josh adjusts the sail.

The boat loops around and heads back.

INT.RING.DAY.

Gordon DROPS his gloves on the apron.

Max has his helmet off and he's drinking from a plastic water bottle. He's feeling his oats after dispatching Gordon.

EXT.RING.DAY.

Afton holds the ropes open for Gordon and he climbs out of the ring.

Hunt walks up with his shirt off.

MAX

Hey, son-in-law, wanna take a shot at the champ?

HUNT

No.

MAX

Scared?

HUNT
You'll take a beating, Max.

Max KICKS the gloves off the apron into Hunt's face.

MAX
Put on the gloves, wise guy.

EXT.RING.DAY.

Gerty helps Hunt slip on the gloves and Afton laces them up for him.

AFTON
Take it easy on him, okay, Hunt?

Max tosses his water bottle out of the ring and Hawthorne fetches it.

MAX
Easy, smeasy.

Hunt climbs into the ring.

INT.RING.DAY.

Max DANCES around Hunt flicking out jabs.

MAX
Show me whacha got.

Hunt stands in the middle of the ring with his guard down. Max charges him and lands BLOWS to Hunt's belly and head.

HUNT
Happy?

MAX
Got no brains, kid.

Max charges again and lands a BLOW to Hunt's temple. Hunt FLIES against the ropes.

MAX
Dead meat!

Max comes in for the kill but Hunt launches a perfect one-two COMBINATION that hits Max square in the jaw.

Max stops dead in his tracks--he stares at Hunt and then flops face first down on the apron.

AFTON
Daddy!

EXT.MISTER BARRY'S.DAY.

The sign on the gold awning says, "Mister Barry, Coiffeur to the Stars."

INT.MISTER BARRY'S.DAY.

Sally and Priscilla wait in the foyer of a gaudy salon, complete with male and female mannequins in various states of undress. The male mannequins wear neon jockstraps. The wallpaper is covered with overlapping pink and Chartreuse stars. "Memories" PLAYS over the speakers.

PRISCILLA

Mister Barry dated Barbra. It simply broke his heart when she left him.

CLOSE-UP OF PICTURE OF STREISTAND, with a personal message to Mister Barry.

SALLY

I only have plastic, and I'm at my limit.

PRISCILLA

This is my treat.

SALLY

Why?

PRISCILLA

Let's just say I feel a certain kinship.

SALLY

I can't accept.

PRISCILLA

It's not only for you, Sally. It's about time Afton got a run for her money.

SALLY

But I can't.

PRISCILLA

Won't you let a foolish old woman have a little fun?

SALLY

You're not foolish and you're certainly not old.

PRISCILLA

Bless you, my child.

(kisses Sally on forehead)

Now get ready for your transformation.

MISTER BARRY, a femme fatale with a silver pompadour, dances into the frame. He wears gold lame pants, a V-neck rugby shirt, and pink platform shoes.

MISTER BARRY

(singing)

Where do I begin, to tell the story of a love that never ends?

Priscilla extends her hand.

Mister Barry pulls Priscilla off of the chair, spins her, and then she spins him.

EXT.TENT.NIGHT.

A "Hornblower Hootenanny" banner is draped over the entrance.

INT.TENT.NIGHT.

Bostonian BLUEBLOODS hover around the bar and wait in line for clam chowder. A band PLAYS oldies. The tent is ringed with paper lanterns and there's a dance floor.

Josh and Afton serve bowls of clam chowder. Afton wears a slinky red dress and a bolero top.

INT.BAR/TENT.NIGHT.

Hunt and Gordon, both dressed preppy, serve champagne and wine. Gordon has a swollen eye.

INT.TENT.NIGHT.

Max and Gerty mingle. Max has a butterfly bandage over his nose.

Hawthorne is leashed to the leg of a chair. He WHINES for attention and Max slips him a bowl of clam chowder.

CLOSE-UP OF HAWTHORNE SLURPING CHOWDER

Sally enters the tent with Priscilla.

Sally has bangs and her hair is a lustrous shade of brown. She wears a black miniskirt, pumps, and carries a small sequin purse.

INT.BAR.NIGHT.

Gordon spots Sally.

GORDON

(nudging Hunt)

Ravishing. I was expecting so much less.

HUNT

Who filled you with such low expectations?

GORDON

Afton.

INT.TENT.NIGHT.

Josh's busy serving clam chowder.

AFTON
Here's your prom queen, Chubs.

Josh looks through the Crowd and sees Sally; his jaw drops.

AFTON
Priscilla has her trying out for the big leagues.

Priscilla leads Sally over to Max and Gerty.

PRISCILLA
Hello, big brother.

MAX
Hello, little sister.

PRISCILLA
I wanted you to meet a visitor from D.C. Max this is Sally, Sally, my big brother Max and his wife Gerty.

MAX
Glad you could join us, Sally.

GERTY
Are you a friend of Afton's?

SALLY
Josh's.

Max holds up his champagne glass.

MAX
Attention, Bostonians, attention!

The Bluebloods turn their attention to Max.

MAX
A toast.

Max turns his attention to Gerty.

MAX
To the stars that twinkle all through the night, they brought me this special woman to share my life.

CLOSE-UP OF CHAMPAGNE GLASSES converging.

AFTON
Oh, Daddy. That was positively awful.

MAX
My daughter thinks God passed me over when it came to poetry.

The Bluebloods LAUGH.

GERTY
But the sentiment's always there, Max, and that's why I love you.

MAX

Now, I've got something I've been working on. I can almost put it over without you all wearing earmuffs.

(nodding at Conductor)

Maestro?

The CONDUCTOR strikes up the band and they PLAY "If Ever I Would Leave You."

Max looks at Gerty and holds out his hand toward her.

MAX

(singing)

If ever I would leave you, it wouldn't be in springtime...

Max's voice is off-key and shaky, but his emotions are honest and true.

Gerty cries.

Max finishes SINGING and the Bluebloods APPLAUD.

MAX

Now everyone cut a rug!

The band plays "Pick Up the Pieces" by The Average White Band.

CLOSE-UP OF AFTON grabbing Josh's hand.

INT.DANCE FLOOR.NIGHT.

Bluebloods crowd in and start dancing.

Afton performs The Hustle with Josh. Josh's moves are clumsy while Afton is limber and cat-like.

Dancing Bluebloods take note of Afton's smooth moves.

INT.BAR.NIGHT.

Gordon extends his hand to Sally.

GORDON

Do me the honor?

SALLY

I don't dance.

GORDON

How could you not dance?

HUNT

You heard her, Gordito. Take a hike.

INT.DANCE FLOOR.NIGHT.

Afton vogues while Josh does a herky jerk dance around her.

Afton spots Gordon standing at the edge of the dance floor. She motions for him as the band PLAYS "Shining Star" by Earth, Wind, and Fire.

INT.BAR.NIGHT.

Sally guzzles a glass of champagne.

Dance with me? HUNT

I'm no good. SALLY

What Afton's doing, that's not dancing. That's showing off. HUNT

Hunt grabs her hand.

Sorry. SALLY

I want you to dance with Josh. HUNT

Sally puts down her glass on the bar.

INT.DANCE FLOOR.NIGHT.

Afton is between Gordon and Josh--she's bump dancing them both.

Hunt and Sally work their way through the dancing Bluebloods.

Afton slithers up and down Josh's body and then duplicates the move with Gordon.

Josh sees Sally; he performs the Disco Duck and QUACKS.

Sally GIGGLES.

Hunt bows to Sally and does a spin.

Sally tries keeping up with Hunt but her moves are awkward. Hunt grabs Sally hand and pulls her close. They do a fox trot and Hunt spins her. Sally does a-spin-and-a-half and nearly falls off her pumps.

Afton LAUGHS.

Hunt spins Sally a second time and this time she maintains her balance and does two full spins.

The band PLAYS "Stayin' Alive" by the Bee Gees.

Josh abandons Afton and cuts in on Hunt. Josh does his impression of Josh Travolta in "Saturday Night Fever" while Sally shimmies to the edge of the dance floor.

CLOSE-UP OF HAWTHORNE tugging on his leash. Hawthorne smells cat and he circles Sally BARKING.

EXT.TENT.NIGHT.

It's raining hard on the Hornblower tent.

EXT.ENTRANCE/TENT.NIGHT.

Hunt, Gordon, and Josh surround Afton just outside the entrance. They're sharing two large umbrellas and smoking cigars.

Cats and dogs. JOSH

That's original. AFTON

Gordon sips brandy from a snifter.

Give me a hit. AFTON
(to Gordon)

Gordon hands her his glass and Afton drinks like she's dying of thirst.

Damn, that's good. AFTON

In the immediate distance, Sally scurries barefooted across the lawn with a flashlight. Her hair flops down in her face and her dress is soaked.

Here's my vote for Nut of the Year. AFTON

Looks like she lost something. GORDON

Josh tosses his cigar out on the lawn.

That was a Cubano, Chubs. AFTON

Josh ventures out under an umbrella.

Bring back my umbrella. AFTON

Let him go. HUNT

EXT.LAWN.NIGHT.

Josh heads across the lawn to Sally.

He jogs to catch up.

Sally is soaked. Her make-up runs down her face, giving her a clownish appearance.

JOSH

Cheesus.

Sally joins Josh under the umbrella.

SALLY

It's my fault. I opened the door and thunder sent Fiona running.

JOSH

Let's go find her.

Sally aims the flashlight and Josh steadies the umbrella. Together they head over to...

EXT.DOCK.NIGHT.

...the dock.

There's a flash of lightning.

JOSH

There, on the sail!

There's a peal of THUNDER.

Sally shines the light--Fiona is huddled under the wet sail.

CLOSE-UP OF FIONA shivering.

JOSH

(hands Sally the umbrella)

Hold this.

Josh WALKS across the deck and hops onto the sailboat. He reaches down and picks Fiona up. He holds her against his chest and returns to the dock.

Sally holds the umbrella over them all.

Fiona MEOWS like she's in pain.

SALLY

Let me see her.

Sally gives Josh the umbrella and takes Fiona.

She holds her close.

Max and Gerty arrive at the dock under a huge umbrella. Hunt is guiding them with a gas-powered lantern.

GERTY

Thank god.

SALLY

She's close.

Fly in Doctor Lucky!

MAX

Settle down now, Maxy.

GERTY

I want Doctor Lucky!

MAX

EXT.HELIO PAD.NIGHT.

The helicopter WHIRLS into action.

The green and white landing lights are as bright as the lights on any airport runway.

The helicopter takes off in the rain. It's blades WHIRL in the night sky.

INT.BEDROOM/JOSH'S BUNGALOW.NIGHT.

Sally strokes Fiona on Josh's bed.

Josh sits on the corner of the bed looking like a worried father.

She'll need someplace dark.

SALLY

Josh gets up and OPENS the closet door.

Put down a blanket and I'll carry her over.

SALLY

EXT.HELIO PAD.NIGHT.

The helicopter LANDS.

DOCTOR LUCKY, 55, the portly vet from Sally's video, gets out in the RAIN with a black bag.

Max greets him with an umbrella and together they hustle across the lawn.

INT.BREAKFAST NOOK.NIGHT.

Sally, Gerty, and Max sit around the table.

Josh paces back and forth.

Fiona's in good hands.

GERTY

Doctor Lucky saved Hawthorne's life when he swallowed two T-bones off the hibachi.

MAX

The bedroom door OPENS--it's Doctor Lucky.

He SHUTS the door.

DOCTOR LUCKY
Fiona needs rest.

SALLY
Has she?

DOCTOR LUCKY
Not yet. But I felt them kicking.

MAX
Now what?

DOCTOR LUCKY
Nothing more I can do, Max. Let nature take its course. Goodnight,
all.

Max and Gerty escort Doctor Lucky out the front door.

JOSH
You know, Sally, I was wrong about you. I thought you were this
very ordinary pet shop girl. But you're not ordinary at all.

Sally WALKS over and presses a finger to Josh's lips.

SALLY
Hush.

INT.PARLOR/MANSION.NIGHT.

Hunt sits beside Afton on the divan.

A fire CRACKLES in the fireplace.

Afton SIPS brandy out of a snifter.

Through the picture frame window, the helicopter LIFTS OFF the pad and disappears.

AFTON
Glad I put Gordon on that chopper. He'd just mooch off us all
summer.

HUNT
Then why'd you invite him?

AFTON
I thought Hyannis Port would stimulate his writing.

HUNT
His needs were foremost in your mind.

AFTON
Sarcasm becomes you, Hunt.

HUNT

Know what you are?

AFTON

No. What am I?

HUNT

A collector. And, until you got sick of Gordito, he was a collectible. Instead of collecting things, you collect men, the same way you collect words like irony, metaphor, and deus ex machina.

AFTON

Have you swiped my Glossary of Literary Terms?

HUNT

You surround yourself with adoring men, men like Josh and Gordon, all to fill in the holes.

AFTON

Are you trying to say something profound?

HUNT

We don't know what love is, Afton. If we did, we couldn't stand being on different coasts.

AFTON

I know your agenda. You want me to give up my editorship at Kaleidoscope. You want me back in San Diego with a big swollen belly while you're out flirting with every bikini Betty in town. Thanks, but no thanks, Mr. October.

HUNT

My lifeguarding days have ended.

AFTON

And what, may I ask, do you plan on doing with the rest of your life?

Hunt grabs a folder on the table and slips out a manuscript.

HUNT

(hands her manuscript)

This.

Afton FINGERS the pages.

AFTON

This is "Target Practice" by the writer I've put out an APB on.

HUNT

William Fellows, at your service.

Afton examines the manuscript.

AFTON

You really wrote this?

HUNT

Even if I can make it as a writer, and that's a big 'if', that won't save us. We lost each other running back and forth between the coasts.

AFTON

There's no need for melodrama.

HUNT

I thought my writing might rescue us because it would force you to finally respect me. But it can't. It's too late for us, Afton. Much too late.

Afton stares at Hunt, her mouth agape.

INT.CLOSET/BUNGALOW.DAY.

The closet door is open.

A ray of light shines on Fiona. She's sitting on a blanket with the Hornblower insignia. There are 5 fluffy kittens nursing: a gray, a white, a calico, a fawn-colored, and an orange.

Fiona closes her eyes and PURRS.

EXT.MANSION.DAY.

Sally stands in the driveway wearing her backpack. She's got on the horse print dress and puka shell necklace. She's holding the pet carrier with Laulau inside.

Josh exits the open door of the mansion and stands beside her. He checks his wristwatch. Sally shifts her weight from one foot to the other and puts the carrier down.

Sally and Josh share a moment of awkward silence. It's apparent he doesn't know how he feels. He checks his watch again.

JOSH

Any minute.

SALLY

Thanks for everything, Josh.

JOSH

You didn't have a good time.

SALLY

I did too.

A Red Herring taxi pulls up.

Josh extends his hand to Sally.

JOSH

Maybe I'll see you in D.C., with Finicky Felines.

Sally hugs Josh.

SALLY

Goodbye, Josh. Take good care of Fiona and her five little angels.

JOSH

I will.

Sally picks up her carrier.

Josh OPENS the back door of the taxi and Sally slides in with her carrier.

Josh SHUTS the door.

SALLY

Tell Priscilla the black dress is in the upstairs closet.

JOSH

I think that was a gift.

SALLY

Thank her but it's just not me. Goodbye.

JOSH

Bye.

The taxi eases down the driveway.

Josh watches the taxi cruise the Hornblower estate and disappear.

INT.CHANNEL 8 NEWS HELICOPTER.DAY.

The helicopter's blades WHIRL.

The NEWSCASTER sits in the passenger seat next to the PILOT. He has a radio mike attached to his jacket.

NEWSCASTER

(into mike)

This is Mike Tuck with Channel 8 News reporting from our eye in the sky. The dioxins and PCBs in the Anacostia River have reached poisonous levels because last night Montgomery Paper has dumped thousands of gallons of toxic water upstream. D.C.'s own toxic police have arrested the billionaire industrialist Harold Montgomery in connection with this disaster. As we tour the downstream inlets of the Anacostia, there's a cobalt tint to the water. Below us, Wildlife Rescue struggles to save the surviving wildlife.

EXT.ANACOSTIA RIVER.DAY.

It's a drizzly, miserable day. The water has a neon blue tint. Birds fly haphazardly up and down the waterway.

EXT.RESCUE CENTRAL.DAY.

VOLUNTEERS in yellow slickers swarm around tents pitched on high ground.

Two Volunteers hustle a SCREAMING white egret into a tent.

A third Volunteer dabs ointment onto the eyes of map turtles in a plastic pool.

A fourth Volunteer feeds an otter out of a baby bottle.

INT.TENT.DAY.

There are cases of antibiotics, syringes, IVs, and wildlife food on long wooden tables.

A fifth Volunteer prepares an IV for a QUACKING duck.

A sixth Volunteer feeds a baby hawk liquefied food out of an eye dropper.

Volunteers hustle in and out of the tent.

EXT.INLET.DAY.

Sally, wearing hip boots and a yellow slicker, attempts to lure a white egret out of the reeds by blowing a bird WHISTLE.

RESCUE LEADER, 32, a bearded man, eases his way closer to the egret.

RESCUE LEADER

He's the other's mate.

Sally WHISTLES and the egret FLAPS its wings.

RESCUE LEADER

Cut the whistle.

NEW GUY enters the frame. He makes his way down through the reeds directly above Sally and Rescue Leader. His steps are clumsy and unsure. He wears a camouflage jacket over the standard hip boots and yellow slicker. A hat with a floppy hood hides his face.

New Guy slips, clutches at the reeds, and pulls them up by the roots. He loses his balance and SLIDES down into the inlet. The NOISE terrifies the egret, causing him to FLAP his wings.

The egret FLIES out of the inlet.

RESCUE LEADER

Hey, you, New Guy, go get that egret. Use the Audubon Technique I taught you this morning.

New Guy nods and struggles to his feet. He climbs out of the inlet.

EXT.RIVER.DAY.

The egret floats in the river.

New Guy wades out. He reaches the egret and holds out his hand. Surprisingly, the egret swims over.

CLOSE-UP OF NEW GUY'S HAND shows a hunk of bread.

NEW GUY

Sourdough.

New Guy strokes the egret as it GOBBLES down the bread. Then he grabs the egret, using the Audubon Technique to protect the bird's wings.

The egret kicks to get away but New Guy has a good grip. He holds the egret against his chest and wades way back to...

EXT.BANK.DAY.

...Sally and Rescue Leader waiting on the bank.

The egret bites New Guy's neck but he maintains his composure.

NEW GUY

Settle down. Almost there.

New Guy hands the egret over to Sally. She wraps her arms around the bird.

RESCUE LEADER

Get a blood test. Kid gloves 'cause he's endangered.

Rescue Leader walks upstream.

New Guy pulls back his hood.

SALLY

Josh?

JOSH

Hi, Sally.

The egret SCREECHES.

SALLY

How are the kittens?

JOSH

I kept them.

SALLY

All five?

JOSH

(nodding)

You should see the Berber carpet.

SALLY

Are you still in politics?

JOSH

Yes. I work for Congressman Sanchez now.

Republican? SALLY

Democrat. JOSH

Oh, boy. SALLY

The egret SCREECHES again and kicks. Sally's having trouble holding him.

Josh removes his camouflage jacket and places it around the SCREECHING egret. It settles down.

Josh holds his jacket around the bird as they make their way up the bank. Josh rests his arm on Sally's shoulder. She gives him a You-Could-Be-The-One smile.

The tents of Rescue Central rise in the distance.

The End