

crisis (march 4th, 2024 draft)  
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CLARENCE — Mid twenties. Transmasc. Impulsive. Magnetic. Dyed blonde hair. Punky. Crucifix necklace or tat. He/they. Ronnie is one of the few women he's ever been interested in. Tougher than he looks — he can take a hell of a beating. Regular NA attendee. Petty criminal. Softness behind his eyes. Wants to be something different than what he was. A brother figure to Floyd— his protector. Raised catholic. Narcotics addict. Not sober.

FLOYD — Late twenties. Large. Kind. Cautious. Reserved. Messy hair. Sweatshirt. Not fashionable. Not ambitious. Not in touch. He/him. Has gone through serious dark patches but is content now. Tough childhood. Cares about Clarence more than anything in the world. Undiagnosed ADHD and autism. Though he often behaves in ways that read as childlike, he is not stupid.

VERONICA “RONNIE” — Early twenties. Impulsive. Bold. Funny. Trans. She/her. From protestant stock, but a mischievous streak, addiction issues, and a break from the Ivy League path has caused her family to disown her. Lots of tattoos — mainly small linework tattoos — but enough to really cover her arms. A lot of hair. Knew Clarence at his worst. Has a sort of sisterly affection despite her anger and attraction. Alcoholic and pill addict. Three months sober.

RAT — Late Twenties. Transmasc. Buzzcut. Works on cars. Always dressed for function. They/them. Chronic pain that hasn't broken them, but dignified them — given them an air of being an elder, wise beyond their years. Work and care has driven most sense of inwardness out of them. Disaffected anarchist activist who enlisted in the army for a discipline they felt was lacking. Came back a jaded, hurt, efficient, veteran. Recovering narcotics addict — three years sober.

GABE — Mid twenties Latino. Cis man. Busboy in the day and works on entrepreneurial endeavors at night. Lots of solid color t-shirts, sneakers, and skinny jeans — because that's what was cool when he was a teenager and why should that change in his twenties? Came from a rough background but does a lot to hide it — doesn't like to present himself as working class, lower class, or any form of “tough”. Never used drugs or alcohol and prides himself on it.

## NOTES

This is a poem in the form of a thriller. It should be tense, fun, pot-boiling, exciting... until at moments it slips off entropically, centrifugally... like a thriller that can't hold up under its own mythic weight.

This play should—somehow, somehow—feel like an old-school, epic, emotional, scrappy, indie rock album. Overindulgent at times. Heartbreakingly subtle at others. A bunch of kids grasping at something impossibly high... and almost reaching.

**SCENE ONE**

*A studio apartment in Brownsville. Messy but not dirty. Dim lights. Floyd sits surrounded by clothes and snacks on a worn-down but comfy looking couch. A laptop sits in front of him. He watches what's on it — an old action movie. The blue light illuminates his face. Every once in a while Floyd moves a chip to his face and eats it.*

*A rumbling from off.*

*Then a sound that grows and grows. Floyd sits up a bit.*

*Clarence bursts through the front door.*

FLOYD  
Clarence... shit.

*Clarence shuts the door as quickly as possible. Then locks it and throws himself against it.*

CLARENCE  
I'm home Floyd.

FLOYD  
I... you came in so fast.

CLARENCE  
I did.

FLOYD  
Why?

CLARENCE  
I figured it'd be fun.

*A pause.*

FLOYD  
okay...

CLARENCE

So whatcha doing Floyd.

FLOYD

What am I doing?

CLARENCE

Yeah Floyd you whatcha got going on.

FLOYD

Uhh... watching a movie.

CLARENCE

Which movie you watching?

FLOYD

Police Story.

CLARENCE

Ah again Floyd?

FLOYD

It's really funny.

CLARENCE

It is really funny. I like the scene with the telephones.

FLOYD

Yeah. You like slapstick.

CLARENCE

I do. Physical comedy. Clowns. People falling over. Jerry Lewis. That's my thing.

FLOYD

Jerry Lewis was funny.

CLARENCE

He was, Floyd

*Clarence walks through the room and grabs a chair. He limps slightly — tries to hide it from Floyd. Floyd stares.*

CLARENCE

So what chips do you have there Floyd?

FLOYD

Uhhh.

*He checks.*

FLOYD

Munchos.

CLARENCE

Ooo see I have a problem with munchos.

FLOYD

Really?

*Clarence casually drags the chair over to the door and puts it under the doorknob.*

CLARENCE

Yeah Floyd... they're really savory... like mouth-watery savory. But then after like 10 of 'em they just start to taste like pure salt to me.

FLOYD

Yeah I guess that's true... hey Clarry.

CLARENCE

Hey Floyd.

FLOYD

Watcha doing?

CLARENCE

Putting a chair under the doorknob.

FLOYD  
... why?

CLARENCE  
Just to make sure no one gets in.

FLOYD  
Who's trying to get in?

CLARENCE  
No one. But it's like locking the door — it's just extra protection...

*Clarence goes to the kitchen, pours himself a bowl of cereal, and sits down — it's difficult to sit. He eats the cereal.*

CLARENCE  
Is this all we got Floyd? Lucky Charms?

FLOYD  
Yeah.

CLARENCE  
We gotta grow up Floyd are we out of almond milk?

FLOYD  
Yeah I finished the almond milk.

CLARENCE  
Now why did you do that?

FLOYD  
I wanted almond milk.

CLARENCE  
But I'm the lactose intolerant one Floyd. I can't do dairy. Now I'm going to be shitting just cause you wanted to go non-dairy. That's not fair is it Floyd?

FLOYD  
Sorry.

CLARENCE

It's alright Floyd— you'll get it next time Floyd.

*A pause as Clarence finishes half the cereal and puts his bowl away. Then he starts to drag the table he was eating at in front of the door. Floyd stands up during this.*

CLARENCE

So lemme guess here... you started with Total Recall... yeah... it's a Total Recall kind of night. After that you went to Big Trouble... no... then you went to Escape From New York or *something* by John Carpenter right? Hey you gotta tell me if I'm getting these right here Floyd I mean it's no fun if I'm guessing in a vacuum. And after that you did Police Story...

FLOYD

Clarence what's going on?

CLARENCE

What, this?

FLOYD

Yeah.

CLARENCE

Redecorating.

*Clarence starts digging around the apartment for something. Maybe exits into the bedroom during part of the following.*

*Floyd turns on a light. Clarence's clothes have blood on them. He has a black eye. His face is cut.*

*Floyd stares, scared. Clarence doesn't even notice a light is on.*

CLARENCE

...and if I were to hazard a guess — the next movie on the list would be... hm... maybe something a little more contemporary like Ong Bak? You ever see Ong Bak? Perfect

action movie. Tony Ja... that's the one where he fights fifty guys in this dark room and breaks all their bones... oh wait no that's The Protector! You ever see The Protector Floyd? You gotta see The Protector. The Protector and Ong Bak. Two perfect action movies.

*Clarence finds two bags.*

FLOYD

Clarence... Clarence what the... what's happening.

CLARENCE

I'm just recommending movies.

FLOYD

What's on your/

*Clarence looks down.*

CLARENCE (*genuine surprise*)

Ahhh oh man.

*He smells it.*

CLARENCE

Oh God. Uh... this is disgusting. Thanks Floyd.

*He takes his shirt off and tosses it. Finds another one.*

CLARENCE

That's one of my favorite shirts too goddamn.

FLOYD

What happened?

CLARENCE

...Ah some crazy guy on the train. He was going around grabbing people — I guess he was bleeding.

FLOYD

Are you okay?



CLARENCE

Yeah I'm okay it's just gross... thank God I'm on PReP right?

FLOYD

Prep?

CLARENCE

Just a joke.

FLOYD

Why are you limping?

CLARENCE

Fell down on the stairs up here.

*Clarence tosses a bag to Floyd, starts packing his.*

CLARENCE

Alright Floyd pack some clothes and things you like.

FLOYD

Are we leaving?

CLARENCE

Yeah we're leaving. Gotta leave. Just for a couple of days. But make sure you pack everything you like and need. Just in case we don't come back. That doesn't mean we're not coming back. But just in case.

*Floyd reluctantly starts packing.*

CLARENCE

Oh Floyd I saw the guy at Food Bazaar. He says you can come in and start helping out next week. Just stocking things — low stress. I think it could be a really cool gig.

FLOYD

Uh... yeah okay.

CLARENCE

I mean look I know it's hard, but you know... it's been really tough for me. And you pitching in would make things so much more easy.

FLOYD

I'll try Clary.

CLARENCE

That's all I'm asking Floyd.

*They pack.*

FLOYD

Clarence.

CLARENCE

Yeah?

FLOYD

Where are we going?

CLARENCE

We are going to Rat's.

FLOYD

Do you still talk to Rat?

CLARENCE

Yeah.

FLOYD

You sure?

CLARENCE

No but we're going there.

FLOYD

But that's not/

CLARENCE

They're cool Floyd. Rat's cool. Rat will get it.

FLOYD

Did you date Rat?

CLARENCE

Floyd no! Jesus.

FLOYD

Sorry it's just. Sometimes I don't know who you dated. I didn't know you were dating Bradley.

CLARENCE

Yeah well that... that one was my fault. But you knew with Veronica.

FLOYD

Who's Veronica?

CLARENCE

That's Ronnie's full name.

FLOYD

I liked Ronnie.

CLARENCE

I liked Ronnie too.

FLOYD

Really nice.

CLARENCE

Yeah. She could be nice.

*They finish packing.*

*Clarence moves over to the window leading to the fire escape, opens it, and prepares to climb out.*

FLOYD

We're going out there?

CLARENCE

Yeah we're going down the fire escape.

FLOYD

Why?

CLARENCE

Look at the door, it's all blocked up.

FLOYD

I can't move that good Clary.

CLARENCE

I know. I'll help you Floyd. Remember when we went to the waterfall? I helped you over the rocks.

FLOYD

I got really wet.

CLARENCE

Yeah but I didn't let you fall, did I?

FLOYD

A little.

CLARENCE

Yeah but not *down* the waterfall.

FLOYD

Why do we have to go out this way?

CLARENCE

Because we can't go out front.

FLOYD

Why not?

CLARENCE

... because someone might try to come in that way...

*A pause.*

FLOYD

You said no one was trying to come get in here.

CLARENCE

I didn't want you to panic.

FLOYD

Someone's coming up here?

CLARENCE

Yes but you don't need to worry about it — we're leaving.

FLOYD

Who's coming up here?

CLARENCE

Don't worry about it, we just gotta go out of here.

FLOYD

I'm starting to get scared Clarry.

CLARENCE

Nothing to be scared about as long as we go now.

FLOYD

Is this like the time/

CLARENCE

No...

*A pause.*

CLARENCE

It's worse.

CLARENCE

So I'm gonna step out the window okay?

FLOYD

Okay...

*Clarence takes a step out to the window.*

CLARENCE

We're gonna be good, as long as we/

*A few gunshots ring out, hitting the wall.*

CLARENCE

Oh fuck!

FLOYD

Clary! Clary!

*Clarence darts back through the window and hides himself underneath it.*

CLARENCE

Get down!

FLOYD

What's happening?

CLARENCE

*Get the fuck down!*

*Floyd drops prone.*

FLOYD

Clary what the fuck is happening!

CLARENCE

They're shooting at us, Floyd.

FLOYD  
Who are they???

CLARENCE  
Hold on... lemme...

*Clarence sneaks up to the side of the window, grabs something long and stick-esque— like a broom.*

FLOYD  
What are you doing?

CLARENCE  
Shhhh don't make too much noise Floyd.

*Floyd crawls to the couch, grabs his blanket to the floor and buries his face in it.*

*Clarence stands far from the window and uses the broomthing to close the window slowly...*

*It's not something meant to be used to close windows.*

*It's a long, agonizing, sort of slapsticky process, with a lot of small-progress and then slipping.*

*Clarence ad-libs "fucks" and "okay good good good DAMN IT'S".*

*It should be so painfully long that it feels impossible and becomes really funny.*

*He finally gets the window closed and hides down underneath it.*

CLARENCE  
There we go. Okay so we/

*Another shot rings out, exploding the window. Glass rains down on Clarence.*

CLARENCE

Ow.

FLOYD

What just happened!!

CLARENCE

Uh... glass...

FLOYD

What's going on?

CLARENCE

They're shooting at us, Floyd.

FLOYD

Who are they!

CLARENCE

Not sure Floyd.

FLOYD

What are we gonna do?

CLARENCE

We... uh... okay... okay well that window leads to the back of the building. So that means they're out in the alleyway. So uh. Okay well the — the — there's the front door... they're not there so maybe if we. Oh I know! I know. There's a door that leads from the laundry room to where the garbage is. Only the landlord has the key but the lock is shit and you can break it. I know you can I just know it. It's so rusted you'd just need to pop it.

FLOYD

There are roaches in the laundry room.

CLARENCE

Don't worry about the roaches.

FLOYD

I hate roaches Clary.



CLARENCE

I'll keep you safe okay? I promise. I promise to keep you okay. And if we get out of this Floyd? We're home free. I can't answer any questions for you right now but we're so so so on the verge of something. I heard a quote once Floyd. In Chinese, Floyd, the word Crisis has two characters. One means disaster. The other means opportunity. And if we can avoid this disaster we have a huge huge opportunity.

FLOYD

Okay... okay.

CLARENCE

Alright... let's get the barricade. They don't know which room we're in. They just know that window. And and and the third floor doesn't have windows so everyone always thinks we're on the third floor but we're on the fourth. So they're probably looking through the third floor. So we have a bit. But if they hear noise they're going to find us. So we gotta move the barricade slow. They won't know we're here. If we can move the barricade slow. And get out. And sneak down to the service elevator, we got a good shot. Okay so let's crawl over. Let's crawl over to the door.

*They crawl over to the door.*

CLARENCE

Alright now let's move this.

*They slowly stand up and lift whatever Clarence moved in front of the door. Clarence almost drops it. Floyd uses his strength to save it from falling, taking on an impressive amount of weight by himself.*

*Then they walk over and take off the chair slowly.*

*Clarence turns off the lights.*

*Clarence silently opens the door and leaves the room.*

*Floyd looks around the room one last time, and leaves it as well.*

**SCENE TWO**

*Ronnie's bedroom. One day earlier. It's a small, cramped, Crown Heights bedroom — most of the space in the room is taken up by the queen sized bed. There are clothes everywhere. A nightstand with a lamp on it. Clarence reclines on the bed, smoking a joint. Ronnie sits on a chair covered in clothes, legs up on the bed, reading. They're both in their underwear. No blood on Clarence. His face is clean.*

*A memory.*

CLARENCE

Ronnie.

RONNIE

Yeah?

CLARENCE

Do you have to read right after sex?

RONNIE

... what's wrong with reading after sex?

*A pause.*

CLARENCE

Nothing.

*A pause.*

*Clarence wordlessly offers her his joint.*

*She reaches across, takes it, and sits back, puts the book down, and smokes.*

CLARENCE

Good, right?

RONNIE  
Feels like there's glass in my lungs.

CLARENCE  
You never smoked sherm?

RONNIE  
I... *what?!*

CLARENCE  
I'm kidding, I'm kidding — it's just/

*She tosses the book at him.*

CLARENCE  
Awh Ronnie the fuck...

RONNIE  
Wouldn't put it past you.

CLARENCE  
Don't throw...

*He looks at the book.*

CLARENCE (*saying it wrong*)  
Rimbaud at me.

*Ronnie laughs.*

CLARENCE  
Oh what did I not say it right?

RONNIE  
Eat my dick.

*A pause. Ronnie looks at the ceiling.*

RONNIE  
This was fucked up.

CLARENCE

Me not/

RONNIE

Sleeping with you Clarence. I should not have done that.

CLARENCE

Yeah well there's nothing to do about it now.

*A pause.*

*She throws something else at him.*

CLARENCE

Ah what the —

*She throws another thing.*

CLARENCE

The fuck was that for?

RONNIE

First one was for fucking up my life second was for coming back into it.

CLARENCE

You told me to come over.

*She picks up another thing.*

CLARENCE

Don't!

*He grabs the book again.*

CLARENCE

I'll destroy Rimbaud!

RONNIE

Do it.

*He tries to tear it but fails. She tosses whatever she has and clocks him right in the face.*

CLARENCE  
Ah fuCK!

RONNIE  
GOTCHA!

*He picks up a pillow to defend himself and she grabs another thing to throw. They square off — Mexican standoff style.*

*She starts chasing him around and throwing things with every line — the whole thing is sort of a joke, but not enough...*

RONNIE  
This is for taking my virginity five years ago.

*Throw — deflect.*

RONNIE  
And this is for calling my mom lazy.

*Throw — deflect.*

RONNIE  
This is for *ever* convincing me to move in with you.

*Throw — hit.*

CLARENCE  
Ow.

RONNIE  
And this is for falling off the wagon.

*Throw — hit.*

RONNIE  
And getting kicked out of NA.

*Throw — deflect.*

RONNIE  
For fucking your sponsor.

*Throw — hit. He drops the pillow and jumps up on the bed and starts trying to catch them.*

RONNIE  
And losing your stupid little easy job.

*Throw — hit. She jumps on the bed too.*

RONNIE  
And making me break my knees working 12 hour shifts.

*Throw, catch.*

RONNIE  
And getting us evicted anyway cause you couldn't keep your mouth shu/

*Clarence throws one back. It clocks her. She stumbles back.*

RONNIE  
Ow!

*Clarence picks up the pillow and swings it. She ducks it.*

RONNIE  
What is this a slumber party?

*Clarence rushes her. She grabs him. They roll around on the bed and almost kiss.*

*She pulls away and slaps him across the face.*

RONNIE  
Fuck off.

*She gets up and moves across the room. Finds a bottle of liquor and a glass in some secret place and pours herself a shot.*

CLARENCE  
You sure you should be doing that?

*A pause.*

CLARENCE  
It... alright...

*She downs the shot, puts down the glass, and comes back to the bed, as far away from Clarence as she can.*

*Clarence smokes.*

*Ronnie non-verbally asks for the joint. Clarence gives it to her.*

*Ronnie smokes.*

*A long pause.*

RONNIE  
Clary.

CLARENCE  
Yeah?

*Clarence softens. He knows she only uses his nickname when she needs support...*

RONNIE  
What would you do if you were rich?

CLARENCE  
Shit, Ronnie

RONNIE

No really, what would you do if you were rich?

CLARENCE

Who's asking?

RONNIE

I'm asking...

CLARENCE

Aren't you rich?

RONNIE

Shut up.

CLARENCE

Don't you have a trust fund/?

RONNIE

No. I don't.

CLARENCE

I know I know but your Dad/

RONNIE

I'm out of the will.

*A pause.*

CLARENCE

You... shit Ronnie...

RONNIE

S'my own fault.

CLARENCE

Yeah but that's/

*A pause. She smokes.*



RONNIE  
I owe him 5,000 dollars.

*A pause.*

RONNIE  
Creditordad.

*A pause.*

CLARENCE  
Sausage egg and cheese.

RONNIE  
What?

CLARENCE  
Sausage egg and cheese. Every day.

RONNIE  
Sausag/

CLARENCE  
Mmhm — from the local deli.

RONNIE  
I don't/

CLARENCE  
That's what I'd do every day. If I was rich.

RONNIE  
I mean *rich* rich.

CLARENCE  
I know what I said.

RONNIE  
Like a *lot* of money.

CLARENCE

Get a sandwich every day. From my local guys. Not have to make it myself. Oo and to not have to be at work and miss the chance to enjoy breakfast. Just first thing in the morning. Every day. Get up whenever you want. Go to the bodega. Get coffee. Get sausage egg and cheese. Come home. Eat it. Smoke one of these.

*He gestures to give him the joint again. She does.*

RONNIE

You're seriously lacking in imagination.

CLARENCE

Nah that's not it.

RONNIE

You don't have any big dreams?

CLARENCE

Nope. Just hungry.

RONNIE

Come on.

CLARENCE

You get angry when you're hungry. Irritable.

RONNIE

Clarence.

CLARENCE

It's true. Then you start ruining things. Work. Relationships. Not good to be hungry.

RONNIE

Is this your form of apologizing? Saying you're hungry?

*A pause.*

CLARENCE

An apartment. One of those big old-school Woody Allen apartments. Lot of space. Manhattan. People everywhere. Able to walk to everything. Not have to ever get on a train or get in a car. Just live my whole existence in a couple blocks. Walk to a coffee shop. Maybe get into art. Yeah. I think that's what I'd want.

RONNIE

I want diamonds.

CLARENCE

Yeah?

RONNIE

Jewels... trinkets. I don't give a shit. Things... to put *around*. I want a lot of fancy clothes and fake bullshit thrift clothes that look cheap but are really 100 dollars. And tattoos. So alternative and so expensive. I'd have so many cool shirts. And diamonds.

CLARENCE

Yeah you know what fuck it I want diamonds.

RONNIE

Yeah right? Like quit being fake say what you actually want.

CLARENCE

I want a big ass car.

RONNIE

That's right.

CLARENCE

Drive it around Brooklyn.

RONNIE

Uh huh.

CLARENCE

Take a cab when I wanna get around Manhattan.

RONNIE

And a nice camera.

CLARENCE

Or how about some kind of big stupid coat made up of something that was once living.

RONNIE

A cow.

CLARENCE

Cows are simple. I mean like a goat... an ermine...

RONNIE

A penguin.

CLARENCE

A fuckin penguin.

RONNIE

Are penguins endangered?

CLARENCE

Don't think so.

RONNIE

A panda.

CLARENCE

A panda. Perfect.

RONNIE

That white and black fur?

CLARENCE

Get some panda shoes.

RONNIE

Panda jacket.

CLARENCE

Panda shirt.

RONNIE  
Panda perfume.

CLARENCE  
Panda steak.

RONNIE  
Mmm panda meat.

CLARENCE  
Panda burger.

RONNIE  
Fuck me in my panda underwear.

CLARENCE  
With my panda strap.

RONNIE  
I want the pandas to go extinct on my pussy.

*They laugh. Ad lib until it dies down. Then a long pause.*

RONNIE  
You still seeing that guy?

CLARENCE  
“That guy?”

RONNIE  
Sorry I—

CLARENCE  
didn't work out...

RONNIE  
... sorry.

CLARENCE

It's alright. My fault. Starting to think that two twinks... I dunno... like two positive ions we just reject each other.

RONNIE

Would you consider Bradley a twink?

CLARENCE

I don't wanna talk about Bradley right now.

*A pause.*

CLARENCE

What about you? Seeing anybody?

*Ronnie exhales.*

RONNIE

Yeah. I am, yeah.

CLARENCE

Not exclusive right?

RONNIE

No, pretty exclusive.

CLARENCE

Oh fuck.

*Clarence tries to stop himself from smiling.*

RONNIE

Asshole, don't smile.

CLARENCE

Can't help it

*Ronnie pushes him.*

CLARENCE

Makes me feel sexy.

RONNIE

You are.

CLARENCE

Thank you.

RONNIE

It isn't a compliment.

CLARENCE

No?

RONNIE

You're viral. You're corrosive. You're only sexy because of your vast emptiness. The black spinning void at the center of your conscience. Corrosive. Like a sickness.

CLARENCE

All of this sounds like a compliment.

RONNIE

Someone who sticks around with you regularly — who needs you — is an addict. There's something deeply deeply wrong with them. You will make them have a great time and then you will hurt them. When I left you I thought I might die; I needed support, therapy — told myself never again but you're magnetic.

CLARENCE

And you're made of metal.

RONNIE

Sooo *cringey*.

*They kiss. Deep. It escalates.*

RONNIE

Let me pee first, okay?

CLARENCE  
alright.

*She gets up and goes to the bathroom and starts peeing.*

RONNIE *(from off)*  
And I wanna be on top this time.

CLARENCE  
Awhh.

RONNIE  
Be a good boy.

CLARENCE  
Alrightt.

*Clarence looks around himself.*

CLARENCE  
Where's the box?

RONNIE  
The box?

CLARENCE  
Your toys.

RONNIE  
Look under the bed.

*Clarence tries reaching under the bed from where he is  
— no good. He gets off the bed laboriously and lays down  
to reach under.*

RONNIE  
I'm thinking about taking a fashion class at NYU.

CLARENCE  
That's good. You're good with fashion.



*Clarence pulls out a piece of underwear. Throws it over his shoulder.*

RONNIE

Figured I could teach you a thing or two.

CLARENCE

You can afford that?

RONNIE

I got good grades from my goodgirl years so I might be able to get a scholarship.

*Clarence pulls out another book. Throws it over his shoulder.*

CLARENCE

Just to take one class?

RONNIE

Yeah... that happens right?

*Toilet flush.*

CLARENCE

Well I/

*Clarence pulls out a box. He opens it up absentmindedly and finds a thick wad of money.*

RONNIE

You what?

*He's surprised. Almost drops it. Starts counting it... it's all hundreds...*

CLARENCE

Holy shit.

RONNIE

What?

CLARENCE

Nothing just like — I don't think it's something you need to go to school for.... Or even... one class... I don't...

*Sink turns on. Clarence is still counting. He's amazed.*

*It has to be at least 10K.*

*Sink stops. Clarence panics. He tosses the money under and stands up fast just as the door opens.*

RONNIE

Yeah sure but like...

CLARENCE

Yeah no but go it's a good thing.

RONNIE

Alright...

*She moves towards him.*

CLARENCE

Heyy Ronnie uh.

RONNIE

Yeah?

*A pause.*

CLARENCE

What uh... do you... you're sure you'd have a tough time affording... classes? Like that would be a hard thing?

RONNIE

Uh yeah have you seen my place?

CLARENCE  
Yeah but like...

RONNIE  
What?

CLARENCE  
I mean...

RONNIE  
Don't talk to me about my background again.

CLARENCE  
I know I'm not/

RONNIE  
I told you I'm out of the will.

CLARENCE  
Yeah but like...

RONNIE  
And I don't need your rant on protestants again.

CLARENCE  
I know I know.

RONNIE  
And wasps and yuppies.

CLARENCE  
Ronnie.

RONNIE  
I'm not a yuppie!

CLARENCE  
You don't have anything like... saved?

RONNIE  
I said I'm not a yuppie.

CLARENCE  
No no no like...

RONNIE  
What's wrong dude?

CLARENCE  
Nothing, nothing.

RONNIE  
Cause I'm not sleeping with you again if you're gonna be weird.

CLARENCE  
No I know. I know. Nothing. It's nothing.

*They kiss again. It starts to escalate.*

*A phone buzz.*

*Ronnie ignores it for a second, but then sort of makes an apologetic moment and goes to check it.*

CLARENCE  
Seriously?

RONNIE  
Look I might have to take this.

CLARENCE  
Yeah but.

RONNIE  
Don't cross me Clarence I know you know what it's like to get in a bind.

*She looks at the phone.*

RONNIE  
Shit...

*She picks it up.*

RONNIE (*into phone*)  
Hello?... yeah... yeah I'm sorry man... alright, alright.

*She walks to the bathroom giving Clarence a "one second" hand gesture.*

*Clarence throws up his hands like "What the fuck?!?!"*

RONNIE (*O.S.*)  
No I have work tomorrow ... no I'm busy now.

*Then Clarence stops... his face goes mischievous.*

RONNIE (*O.S.*)  
Because I need time for myself... because... no you're not listening.

*Clarence looks towards the bottom of the bed... then back to the bathroom door.*

RONNIE (*O.S.*)  
Yeah well work... no... seven until late... I know that's not a time... listen... it's an industry term...

*Clarence stares at the bathroom door for a while. Then, unsure, he gets on his hands and knees and crawls under the bed.*

RONNIE (*O.S.*)  
It means I don't know when I'm getting out. I don't know if people say it in real life. No I can't find out. I can't find out because we don't know it's just until people leave.

*Clarence pulls out the wad of money again and stands up. He looks at it. He looks at the door. Back at the money. Back at the door.*

RONNIE (O.S.)

Yeah well I can see you if there's time after I get off. I'd like that a lot.

*Clarence turns and looks at the window on one side of the room. Then back at the bathroom door.*

RONNIE (O.S.)

I'm having a good night... watching a movie... Terminator 2... that's the best one.

*Clarence creeps to the window... opens it slowly... this is something he does well.*

RONNIE (O.S.)

Yeah I love you too... I.

*Clarence looks at the door with genuine, sincere regret. Then puts his foot to the window and is gone.*

RONNIE (O.S.)

Alright... no i love you... bye.

*The door opens up again. Ronnie doing her sexy half-joking thing.*

RONNIE

Alright Clarence let's...

*A pause.*

RONNIE

Clarence.

*She looks under the covers. In the closet if there is one. Looks at the window. Sees that it's open.*

*She laughs. Ironic. Mean. Angry. Heartbroken.*

*Then she runs over to the window and puts her hands on either side of the window and gives a full-throat howl, as*

*tropey, archetypal, melodramatic and free of irony as you want. She's hurting and she wants everyone to know.*

RONNIE

**CLARENCEEEEEEEEE!!!!!!**

**SCENE THREE**

*Rat's deep Bushwick-almost-Brownsville apartment. Clarence sits, wired, drinking coffee from a mug, wearing bloodless clothes but his black eye still visible. The money sits in front of him on the table. The apartment is small, but a lot more put together than Clarence and Floyd's. RAT enters, quietly but efficiently, cleans some things up, and pours herself some coffee, softly seething. It's awkward.*

*A pause.*

RAT

Can you tell me something?

*A pause.*

RAT

Do you like fucking up?

*A pause.*

RAT

I'm seriously asking. Like is that something you enjoy doing?

CLARENCE

Jesus Christ, Rat.

RAT

Answer my question.

CLARENCE

It seems rhetorical.

RAT

It is. Do you just — is it not enough to be an addict? Huh man? Is it not enough to have made enemies of most NA groups in the city until I'm the only dumb fuck who would sponsor you? Is that it? Do you also need to be a piece of shit fuckwit playboy who can't keep his hands to himself? Do you have to go opening up old wounds? I legitimately want to know like...which movie did you watch that made you think it was okay to be like this. You're twenty five years old. It's not cool to get in trouble anymore.

CLARENCE

Times are tough for teenagers in our mid twenties.

RAT

Oh fuck you. Fuck you buddy.

*A pause.*

CLARENCE (*pointing off*)

He's asleep?

RAT

Resting. He'll knock out soon enough.

CLARENCE

Good.

RAT

You're good to him I'll give you that.

*A pause. Rat finishes what they're doing and sits across the table from Clarence.*

CLARENCE

So how you doing, Rat?

RAT

What do you mean how am I doing?

CLARENCE

Like is your job good are you okay how's the group/



RAT

No. No no no. You don't get to ask me that.

CLARENCE

I just.

RAT

You burst into my apartment at 3 in the morning. You get blood on my floor. You have Floyd sleep in my bed — so I'm going to have to sleep on the couch which is gonna fuck up my back and I have *work* in the morning... you know I have a routine here Clarence. I was a fuckup like you. Well no. Not like you. But I was a fuckup. And you know what got me out of it? A routine. A fucking... regular bed time. Organization. Cleanliness. I didn't get here by having my junkie friends crash through my door at 3 in the morning. That's the shit that kept me addicted.

CLARENCE

Alright I'm just/

RAT

No you don't get to *just*. You don't get to *just* anything, friend. You've done enough damage. Do you know how many times I fought in the group for them to let you come back. "He's a good kid. He's had it tough. His heart is in the right place." And what do you do? You fuck your third sponsor. You laugh at other people's stories. You steal the food.

CLARENCE

The food is free.

RAT

As — like — a snack. You can't be fucking loading up shopping bags full of the free NA donuts you psycho it's... look... you can come here. You can always come here. You know that. But if you're going to do this. You don't get to ask about me. I ask you how *you* are doing. You come in here at 3 am and you get coffee and a fucking bed. That's all you get. And maybe you get lucky I don't punch you in the face.

*A pause.*

RAT

How much does Floyd know?

CLARENCE

Very little. Just that some people are after us.

RAT

Does he know how dangerous it is?

CLARENCE

They shot at us. So yes.

RAT

Jesus Christ Clarence.

*A pause.*

RAT

And how much do you know?

*A pause.*

CLARENCE

Also very little.

*A pause.*

RAT

So you don't even know how deep the shit you're in is.

CLARENCE

I mean I have some ideas.

RAT

Yeah I bet.

CLARENCE

Gonna have to leave tonight... soon... let Floyd sleep a little. But... I'm not sure... you know I'm not 100 percent on what's going on.

RAT

You think her parents sent somebody?

CLARENCE

No.

RAT

You sure?

CLARENCE

They're assholes but they aren't criminals.

RAT

Could she have hired somebody?

CLARENCE

Not with the way she's doing.

RAT

She told her parents and they hired somebody.

*A pause.*

CLARENCE

I said no... maybe... I don't know.

RAT

Any chance it was just meant to scare you. Fire off some blanks.

CLARENCE

It blew out my windows.

RAT

God damn it...

*A pause.*

CLARENCE

I might wanna get out... move to the suburbs.

RAT

Go into hiding?

CLARENCE

Yeah. Lay low for a bit.

RAT

Your parents would take you?

CLARENCE

No. Was thinking I could live in the woods.

RAT

The suburban woods.

CLARENCE

Mhm.

RAT

Those exist?

CLARENCE

Yeah. When I was a kid. I remember playing on a softball team. I was good at softball — I ever tell you that? Kicked ass as a second baseman. And one time we were practicing — I must have been like ten... eleven... and the ball got clobbered off down the foul line and went out onto this hill. And I'd played on that baseball diamond and in that park but it seemed like that was the first time I'd ever really noticed it. Think I always took it in as like background. Out-of-bounds zone in a video game that you couldn't explore really Practice was over and I asked coach if I could get the ball and he said yeah if you wanna. So I went to go up the hill and it was tough. There was this steep drop. All this dirt that would slide out from under you. And everyone left and went home but my Dad was late so I decided to play a bit — trying to get up this hill. I found out that if if you built up enough speed you avoid it crumbling right under you and if you stepped on the right roots... the right rocks... hugged the right tree branches — you could work your way up. Fell down a few times but you know kids — bones are made of rubber. I never broke a bone did I tell you that? I don't know how I avoided that with all the sports and mischief. I've been kicked, spat on, overdosed, bruised — internal bleeding, teeth knocked out. But nothing's ever been broken. But anyway eventually I got up there I got up that hill it was this little patch of woods but to me it seemed infinite. And I explored it like I was some kind of knight exploring an enchanted forest — fantasy and medieval shit seemed so

beautiful and amazing to me. Like this secret to who I was gonna be. And I was standing there and this log was a dragon I could ride to a new realm and I picked up this large stick and it was my sword... and I swatted away at these branches until they broke. You ever notice it's so easy to use your imagination when there's something physical to attach it to? And the whole time there were these dirty clothes lying around. And I didn't even notice it as anything weird. They just kinda sat there as I played — inanimate. Meaning nothing. And my Dad came and I went down and went home. And before the next weekend's practice I told my Dad to come late again and he did and I went up there and explored again. The hill was just as tough to climb. I couldn't hack it — just had to hit it with brute force. And I was thankful, because if it got easy to get up there the magic would have been ruined. But the second time I went there was a man there. Sleepy. Dirty. And then the clothes made sense. And after that on the ride home my Dad told me that people had heard about a homeless man who drifted in from the city in the town so I couldn't go up there and do stuff like that anymore. And you know before I knew it there was this panic about this guy... like oh what's he gonna do to our kids, why is he here. And next time I went up there he was gone. And so maybe I was thinking I could do that. Go back to the burbs with no possessions. 'Cause every time I think about that guy and how he looked, only one word comes to my head. Peace.

*A pause.*

RAT

Clarence this is...

CLARENCE

I know... just a dream.

*A pause.*

RAT

How's Ronnie...?

CLARENCE

She's... fine... struggling. Not at her worst... rooms a mess but it's not the skinniest I've ever seen her. Seems like she's eating.

RAT

That's good.

CLARENCE

No new scars.

RAT

On her arms at least.

CLARENCE

Hips too.

*A pause.*

RAT

No.

CLARENCE

what?

RAT

You...

CLARENCE

I mean yeah.

RAT (*genuinely disappointed*)

...Clarence, she's seeing someone.

CLARENCE

She hit *me* up.

RAT

You could have said no.

CLARENCE

I wanted to. And it was her idea.

RAT

Yeah and she's an addict.

CLARENCE

I'm an addict.

RAT

*I'm* an addict! We're all addicts. We've got poor impulse control but you gotta help her out you can't just help her slip up.

CLARENCE

I didn't give her pills or anything.

RAT

did she drink?

*a pause.*

RAT

did she drink?

*A pause.*

CLARENCE

Ronnie's an adult/

RAT

Sure but/

CLARENCE

Sleeping with me was her choice. What if it empowered her to do it? What if it's what she wanted?

RAT

Clarence man... it didn't empower her to sleep with you.

CLARENCE

You don't know that.

RAT

No, I *do* know that.

CLARENCE

Fuck you Rat, seriously.

RAT

I'm just/

CLARENCE

No fuck you. What, you're superior 'cause you've got more chips than me? 'Cause you used the U.S. Army to get yourself clean? Cause you've got a fucking clean house? Bootlicking piece of shit. You know you used to be something Rat — you still got your anarchy tattoo — so what you cleaned up and now you have a boring job and you live a boring life that the straights would want you to live. You're the funny friendly lesbian mechanic. I mean how fucking... What that makes you above me and Ronnie — like we're children who have to be watched? I mean like let the girl do what she wants — I don't think treating her like a kid's gonna help her get through anything.

RAT

She doesn't hit you up when things are going well. When she's empowered.

CLARENCE

Fuck you you don't know that.

RAT

No I do know that. Clarence. I know her. I know her heart. I know your heart.

CLARENCE

Cut the spiritual shit.

RAT

I know your heart! And I know your heart isn't so cold to think you did the right thing.

CLARENCE

I don't think I did the right thing.

RAT

Well there you go.

CLARENCE

But I don't think I did the wrong thing either — I just did a thing. We had sex. It was just a thing. Why does everything/



RAT

But it's not just a thing — she was cheating. And she had fidelity problems when she was using.

CLARENCE

“Fidelity problems” listen to yourself.

RAT

She cheated a lot.

CLARENCE

You sound like a fucking therapist.

RAT

Listen to what I'm saying don't/ pick me apart semantically.

CLARENCE

I am listening to what you're saying you're saying I'm fucking responsible if she relapses.

RAT

Look man — I'm not gonna blame you for anything. I'm not crue./

CLARENCE

/Could have fooled me./

RAT

/I'm just saying imagine the circumstances of her reaching out to you. Her live-in ex who tore her heart to shreds. Who took her a full year to rip herself away from. I mean to her you're like an addiction. Right? She calls you up to eat her out when she's not feeling good. Cause you're fun. Entertaining.

CLARENCE

So what, I'm some vibrator?

RAT

You're something she blows up her life with. Something she uses because she's not using.

CLARENCE

Yeah and you eat candy.

RAT

Candy isn't cheating on your partner.

CLARENCE

It was her choice. She would have done it either way.

RAT

I don't think she would, Clarence. I think you're a special case. You have special access to her heart and so stopping that shit is your responsibility. Step six.

CLARENCE

Oh cut it with the big book bullshit.

RAT

Look where you are, dude. And look where I am. Look who's at who's apartment at midnight drinking their coffee and asking them for help. You know what did that?

RAT

The big book

THE CLARENCE

The army.

RAT

Bullshit the book did that  
I was a lost kid and needed discipline  
you know what shut the fuck up or get  
out of my house.

CLARENCE

come on it's the army. You  
don't really think a book by  
some asshole.

*A pause.*

RAT

Step six. *Were entirely ready to have God remove all defects of character.* You ain't sober if you're still using something to fuck your life up. For you.

*They grab the wad of money.*

RAT

It might be stealing.

*Throws it at Clarence's chest.*

RAT

For her it might be fucking around with you, alright? Stop. No excuses. No becoming a shit human to stop being an addict. That's not what this is about. That's called being a dry drunk.

CLARENCE

I didn't drink.

RAT

You know what I mean. You think Ronnie is somehow bettering herself by fucking you? No buddy. That's not how it fucking works.

CLARENCE

I just... I...

RAT

What. What is it?

CLARENCE

I still love her Rat. I love her so much.

*He collapses into Rat's arm and cries. Rat holds him.*

CLARENCE

And I know she doesn't love me.

*A pause.*

RAT

Look Clarence I love you man, right? But... fuck... I can't... this is... got me fucked up... I can't watch another one of my friends die... okay? After Bradley it... this is too Unstable... this is... listen... just...

*A pause. Rat breaks from Clarence's arms and goes under the sink. Pulls out something heavy and small... wrapped in a towel. Walks over and presses it into Clarence's hand.*

RAT  
Do you know what this is?

*A pause.*

CLARENCE  
I...

*A pause.*

RAT  
Yes or no.

*A pause.*

CLARENCE  
Yes...

*A long pause.*

RAT  
Don't die okay?

#### **SCENE FOUR**

*Ronnie in her room a day after we last saw her — vaguely hollow. She's drinking. A ringing. She goes over and buzzes someone up. Hides the bottle under the bed. A knock at the door. Goes and lets Gabe in.*

*Gabe has his hands full of bags.*

GABE  
Hello hello how are you Veronica?

RONNIE  
Fine.

GABE  
I got you something.

RONNIE  
What?

*He holds up the food. She brightens.*

RONNIE  
Oh God that smells amazing. Thank you babe.

*She pulls it out and places it on the table.*

RONNIE  
What is that fried chicken?

GABE  
Mmmhm.

*Sets herself up and starts organizing the contents.*

RONNIE  
There's a fried chicken place around here?

GABE  
Yeah there's like two. This is the good one though

*She starts eating.*

GABE  
I'm glad you like it baby.

*She really rips into the meat.*

GABE  
You eat today?

RONNIE  
Maybe.

GABE  
Eat up then babe. Oh also look in there I got you a mac and cheese.

RONNIE

You're so good to me... you're so sweet.

GABE

You've gotta eat.

RONNIE

I know.

GABE

That's alright baby.

*They eat in silence.*

GABE

How're your parents?

RONNIE

Still not speaking to me.

GABE

That's alright they just need time.

RONNIE

How was your shift?

GABE

Long. But alright. Got paid. Think the boss really likes me.

RONNIE

Good things. Good good things.

*A pause.*

RONNIE

I don't deserve this.

GABE

What?

RONNIE

This food. The chicken... the fries... I don't deserve all this.

GABE

Of course you do baby.

RONNIE

No. I don't. You're too good to me.

GABE

You deserve good things.

RONNIE

No. I don't. You don't know how bad I am.

GABE

Hey hey hey hey hey hey. I love you. *You*. I'm not ashamed of some of the shit in your past that you're ashamed of. And even the stuff that you're right to move on from ... that doesn't embarrass me. You're growing you're young you're you you're a work in progress. I love you babe. Of course you deserve this. You deserve everything.

*A pause. They eat.*

RONNIE

Okay...

*A pause.*

RONNIE

I think fried chicken is good for you basically.

*A pause.*

GABE

Yeah?

RONNIE

Yeah. I think the crusade against fried food is a lie. I think they want us to eat expensive slop that doesn't taste good to make us miserable. But people have eaten fried food for

years. Decades. Centuries. Eons. The reaction to fried food is a visceral feeling and we should be able to live all the visceral feelings. Like Jesus Christ, let's be alive.

GABE

That can get you in trouble though.

RONNIE

I miss the danger sometimes...

*A pause.*

RONNIE

Everything slips away so easily...

*A pause.*

GABE

Hey. I know what'll cheer you up.

RONNIE

What?

*Gabe produces a black and white cookie.*

GABE

I also got you a big cookie.

RONNIE

Oh man...

GABE

I know it's just a food gift on top of a food gift.

RONNIE

No. Food is one of the top three things you can give to people. It's so real. Literal sustenance.

*She eats her cookie. She starts to cry.*



RONNIE

This is amazing.

GABE

Baby...

RONNIE

I love and hate things like this... beautiful small things. Reminds me of being a child. Which is so warm and comforting and so devastating to me. It's gorgeous and pure and it levels me. It's too pure. It's too pure for me.

*She gets up and goes to the bathroom.*

RONNIE

I'm sorry I'm gonna get a tissue.

GABE

okay...

RONNIE

I'm sorry.

*Gabe looks around the room.*

GABE

Just breathe alright babe?

RONNIE (O.S.)

okay...

GABE

I promise you're going to be okay. I didn't know you were doing this bad.

RONNIE (O.S.)

Okay... okay...

*Gabe looks under the bed.*

GABE

Maybe you can call Dianna?

RONNIE (O.S.)

No I don't think I need to call Dianna...

GABE

Good, that's...

*Gabe finds the money box. He takes it out. And opens it. Empty, of course. A look of disbelief and fear crosses his face.*

GABE

... I... uh...

*Sound of the sink. Ronnie washes her face.*

GABE

Yeah no let's just cuddle in a second.

*He starts pacing... has no idea what to do.*

GABE

We'll be okay.

*The sink turns off.*

*Gabe panics and throws the box back under the bed.*

*Ronnie walks out of the bathroom. Gabe spins around.*

RONNIE

I just feel like... are you okay?

GABE

Me?

RONNIE

Yeah.

GABE

Yeah I'm okay... why would... yeah I'm okay...

RONNIE  
You just look... shaken...

GABE  
I uh... yeah I'm...

RONNIE  
What?

GABE  
I... did you... okay...

RONNIE  
What...

*A pause.*

RONNIE  
Gabe... what...

GABE  
Nothing. It's nothing.

*Ronnie returns to the table. Keeps eating.*

GABE  
Are you using?

RONNIE  
What?

GABE  
You know like...

RONNIE  
Gabe that's...

GABE  
Look I know but it's.. .

RONNIE

No. No. I've worked so fucking hard/

GABE

I know baby I know/

RONNIE

So then how could you/

GABE

Well I mean it just seems like you might've taken some money...

RONNIE

You mean you think I stole from you.

GABE

No... no.

RONNIE

In order to start using?

GABE

Okay I'm not trying to accuse you of anything.

RONNIE

You're failing.

GABE

But I left some money... in a box... under your bed...

RONNIE

... Gabe?

GABE

And I just looked and it's not there.

RONNIE

Okay why did you/

GABE

I can't get into/

RONNIE

No but like why di/

GABE

It doesn't matter/

RONNIE

Gabe. You left money in a box in my house and didn't tell me and then you... what... snuck to check on it when I was in the bathroom crying?

GABE

Okay I see how it's bad.

RONNIE

No it's really bad.

GABE

Okay it's really bad but I also really need that money.

RONNIE

How much?

GABE

I...

RONNIE

*Gabe.*

GABE

Ten K.

*A physical/audible reaction from Ronnie.*

RONNIE

10 K...???

GABE  
Yeah...

RONNIE  
You have 10/

GABE  
No I/

RONNIE  
Well clearly you/

GABE  
Well no it's... not mine...

RONNIE  
How is it not yours... whose money is/

GABE  
Look just... did you take it?

RONNIE  
I didn't take your money. I didn't steal your money. Wh/

GABE  
Then who took it?

*A pause.*

GABE  
Look just... I'm not saying anything just I saw you two nights ago and you told me you were spending last night in. And alone. Who took it?

*A pause.*

GABE  
Who came over?

RONNIE  
Jenna came over last night.

GABE

Jenna came over.

RONNIE

Yes I wouldn't lie/

GABE

Jenna would steal?

RONNIE

... I mean I guess who else.

GABE

That's what I'm saying, who else.

RONNIE

Don't you do this to me Gabe.

GABE

She's rich — her boyfriend is like/

RONNIE

So you're not going to believe me because that's/

GABE

Okay nevermind — call her.

*A pause.*

GABE

Right now.

*A pause.*

GABE

Or I can do it, you can call someone on insta.

RONNIE

Why, to prove I'm not lying?

GABE

No...

RONNIE

Cause that's toxic and evil — you should trust/

GABE

I don't think you're lying. But she's in serious danger... so call her... right now...

RONNIE

...I.... whose money is this?

GABE

Look, we can talk about that later. Just call her and tell her you forgive her but she needs to give back the money right away. Someone could be looking for her. Very soon. And they will find her if she does not.

RONNIE (*quiet, intense*)

I think you better tell me what's going on

GABE

That's Miguel's money.

*A long pause.*

GABE

He called me up. Late one night. Crying. He told me he did something bad. That he was scared. That he was scared but that he had to be a man and he wanted to be a man so he did something and he got some money but he needed me to look after the money. He said it wasn't his money and that he needed to get back but some people might go searching him for it so he needed a place to hide it that was safe.

RONNIE

So you hid dirty money in my apartment.

GABE

Look I know it was a bad idea.



RONNIE

What about your apartment Gabe?

GABE

I mean I'm up in Inwood. You basically live in another city.

RONNIE

That means you carried it all the way down here.

GABE

Yeah and I was like really really nervous.

RONNIE

Is that why you got me the chicken then. And the cookie. 'Cause you wanted to butter me up so you could go check on your precious cash.

GABE

The cookie was from the heart.

RONNIE

What if I found it? Were you just counting on your dumb fuck girlfriend to not find the 10,000 dollars you found under the bed?

GABE

I mean you say you didn't/

RONNIE

I know but what if I did. At some point. I don't know. Or what if he came here and you weren't here and it was just me and him and the money.

GABE

That wouldn't happen.

RONNIE

Why not?

GABE

I wouldn't let it!

RONNIE

Physically? Like you'd stand up to him? You'd stop him? Or just like on some theoretical emotional level you'd never let something happen to your woman 'cause she's your woman you have to keep her/ protected and perfect and safe

*Gabe grabs the phone*

RONNIE

Wait don't... look it's... I'll text her.

GABE

Don't text her are you kidding me don't put that in writing.

RONNIE

People can record phone calls.

GABE

Only if they know about it during the moment. No one can pull up an unrecorded phone call later.

*A pause.*

GABE

Was he here?

RONNIE

Who?

GABE

You know who. Who in your past is... has fucked you over time and again... who in your past is a cheater... a poison... a thief.

RONNIE

... I ... I can't believe you'd accuse me of that.

GABE

Okay I'm sorry.

RONNIE

Didn't you hear me say I'm trying... I'm working on myself... I'm... I'm...

*A pause.*

GABE

Look I'm gonna call her. Right now okay? I mean I know you met him at a family function but Miguel... he's crazy. And he's been using again and when he's using he gets crazy. In high school I had this best friend Carl. Carl was always getting into trouble. Good kid but stupid. And Carl borrowed some money from him Miguel to buy some weed and start his own little selling business but you know he got his shit robbed from him by the other kid Victor the guy was like "lemme see that weed" and he gave it to him like a fucking idiot and the guy just run. So Carl didn't have the money he thought he was gonna make and so you know he spent the next few weeks just dodging Miguel. And you know I talked to Miguel and I thought it was cool I was like hey man he's my friend maybe you can cut him some slack and he was like alright. And then he called me up and asked me for some pencils and a pencil sharpener 'cause you know he knew I was in high school. And I figured shit I'll give him some pencils and a pencil sharpener you know I don't know maybe he's trying to go back to school. And I gave them to him and we caught up and the whole time he was sharpening his pencils like he would get them so so sharp but then it would be like too sharp and it'd break so he'd started again you know like he wanted to get them perfect or something. And after we caught up and stuff and his girlfriend fed me I said like bye man and I went home and ate dinner and checked my phone and there was a picture of my friend Carl with pencils shoved under all of his fingernails. And you know what the worst part is is Miguel made him smile for the picture.

*A pause.*

RONNIE

Just give it to me please I'll call her outside.

GABE

Why does it need to be so secretive can you just let me do it here?

RONNIE

Because... alright... Gabe... Gabe I'm not good enough for you. I'm a bad person okay?

GABE

Did you/

RONNIE

I... I... look... for months I've... sex is... it's not... easy... I can't choose... I can't decide on... and I try and try to be... to do things differently... then I did when... when I.....I saw Clarence. And yeah he took the money. Right? I mean it has to have been him that's so... And I don't wanna hear it I know it's bad and I know it sucks and I suck I didn't think I could get away with it and I knew it was going to happen eventually. I just... he just... he comes back into my life... somehow... he drops in from above. Or like under... it doesn't make any sense. Sometimes it's not even him literally. It's just this spiritual disturbance. He's like a genie poof and then he's there. In my mind. And it's just a quick text — that's all. It's not I see you out dancing and we're swept up in lights and the mood and expression and we're pulled along by this cosmic primal force and it isn't this romantic tryst in a hotel room all hot and gorgeous and sweaty and primal it's boredom it's boredom and a dull agonizing horniness picking at you throughout the day and then a quick “wanna hang” text and a cold fuck and suddenly you're a betrayer. It's too easy. They don't tell you how easy it is. You grow up thinking infidelity is this big giant thing but it's not it's... Makes it seem like it could never happen to you. But no it's like... when someone's that deep in you... deep in your bones. Who's just... who took your virginity and left his stamp on you and formed who you are... who opened you up who made you realize who you are who who formed your taste in music... and like... politics and made you feel so... made you understand that there's a place for you in this..... and who abused you... let's call it what it is who abused you and and and said some... did some of the worst things that... who took you to the darkest place you've ever been in your life but who's trying — so hard —who wants to change so bad who's influence is fucking inseparable from the best parts —the worst — of who you you... are... I mean how do you escape that? How do you get away?

*A long pause.*

*Gabe rushes to the bathroom.*

RONNIE

Gabe... wh...*Gabe!*

GABE (O.S.)

Miguel? Miguel.

RONNIE

Gabe no!

GABE (O.S.)

Look someone took the money okay? Hey I know but someone took the money! Look I can't — do you want it or not?

RONNIE (*overlapping*)

Gabe what the fuck.

*She bangs the door.*

GABE (O.S.)

It's this dude Clarence — dude kinda looks like a short ass faggy little twink punk rock kid.

RONNIE

Oh my God you're fucking disgusting.

*Knocks the chicken all over the floor.*

GABE (O.S.)

He lives by the Broadway Junction stop takes the A to work everyday Imma send you his picture.

RONNIE

FUCK OFF you're a fucking asshole!

*She takes out the bottle from the hiding spot and drinks from it.*

GABE (O.S.)

Cook his ass I'm sorry/

RONNIE

I *hate you* I've always fucking hated you .

*She takes another drink and smashes the bottle on the floor.*

GABE (O.S.)

/Miguel do whatever

RONNIE

WE'RE DONE. WE'RE OVER. Little kid he /FUCKS BETTER THAN YOU EVER DID WHY THE FUCK DO YOU THINK I EVEN DID THIS.

*Over the following she looks at the window, she grabs a few important things and packs them into a bag and goes to the window.*

GABE (O.S.)

you need to but this guy can go. You know he's got work tonight you can probably catch him coming back late tonight you got it I promise I'll pay this back to you. Okay? We'll be okay. You'll be okay. We'll get it back and you'll be alright. I'll make it up to you okay?

*She opens the window. She looks back at the door. She steps out.*

*By the time Gabe returns she's gone.*

## SCENE FIVE

*A dingy motel. Clarence paces, ices his black eye. Floyd unpacks stuff into a dresser.*

CLARENCE

Now don't unpack too much Floyd, don't unpack too much. We're going to need to get going pretty soon.

FLOYD

But we just got here.

CLARENCE

I know Floyd but we've gotta keep moving. Gotta keep moving Floyd. Gotta keep going.

FLOYD

I didn't get to sleep much at Rat's.

CLARENCE

I know Floyd but we can't stay too long in one place.

FLOYD

Can we stay here until morning?

CLARENCE

I paid by the hour... but maybe Floyd... maybe.

FLOYD

I really want to unpack Clary.

CLARENCE

...you... alright Floyd if it makes you feel good to unpack, unpack. But you've gotta get ready to take it and go okay? You might not get a chance to pack it back up so just make sure you're ready to get out of here. You know it's not doing us any favors to have you unpack your clothes Floyd but if that's what you do then that's what you do and I wanna respect that.

FLOYD

Thank you Clary.

CLARENCE

Don't mention it Floyd...

*Floyd unpacks.*

CLARENCE

Hey Floyd... whenever you're ready buddy, I have something to show you.

FLOYD

What is it?

CLARENCE

It's nothing just... whenever you're done packing...

FLOYD

Okay...

*A pause.*

*Clarence can't contain his excitement.*

CLARENCE

Alright Floyd come over I wanna show ya.

FLOYD

But I'm still unpacking.

CLARENCE

Just real quick I wanna show ya.

FLOYD

Okay.

CLARENCE

It's just over here in my bag.

*Clarence goes over to his bag. He opens it up. All of this is done with a flare.*

FLOYD

What is it?

CLARENCE

Hold on Floyd. Hold on.

*Out from the bag he takes the towel that Rat gave him. He lays it out on the bed and slowly unwraps it.*

*Inside is a mythical looking, gorgeous, perfect revolver.*

*Floyd is stunned.*

CLARENCE

Uh huh right? Look at that shit.

FLOYD

Oh my God.

CLARENCE

Like something from Terminator or something.



FLOYD  
Oh my God.

*A pause.*

CLARENCE  
Well say something Floyd, do you like it?

FLOYD  
Yeah

CLARENCE  
Do you fucking like it?

FLOYD  
Yeah.

CLARENCE  
DO YOU LIKE IT?!

FLOYD  
Yes.

CLARENCE  
Fuck yeah you do.

FLOYD  
... that's your gun Clary?

CLARENCE  
Uh huh Floyd. It is now. All mine. My very own action hero. And you know what you are Floyd? You're my sidekick.

*Clarence takes the gun and points it at the wall, then the door.*

CLARENCE  
And if anyone walks in and tries to fuck with us—you know what's gonna happen Floyd? BANG. They're done. Huh Floyd? BANG. Brain all over the wall. You know

why? Cause I'm not gonna let anything happen to us buddy. This gun says I'm not gonna let anything happen to us. Not gonna let anything happen to us.

FLOYD

How long have you had a gun for Clarence?

CLARENCE

Since the beginning of time, Floyd. Since I was formed as a beacon of light in the mind of the almighty creator. Since I was fashioned out of the rib of a man and the hate of a woman. Since my Dad fucked my Mom and pulled my genes from the cosmic gutbucket of time there was me and there was this sick haircut and there was this gun. Stamped into Eternity. It's called The Redeemer. That's the gun's name. And it is shot through with cosmic light. You know about the redeemer? Some churches are called that shit. I believe in redemption Floyd. Isn't that funny Floyd? Like a kid believing in Santa Claus Floyd I still believe that we can be healed. And it's gonna be glorious when we are — I was born stupid but I will be made beautiful. That's just how I gotta do God. It's you and me and far above us the sun and somewhere in between all of that there's something up there that likes me. And it's been looking out for me—as shitty as things can sometimes be. It's gotta like me. Otherwise I couldn't have made it this far.

FLOYD

Did Rat give you that gun?

CLARENCE

Rat gave me the gun Floyd. They got it cause they were afraid to not have a gun after their time in the military. Got them so fucked up to be out there they have to get a gun. Isn't that crazy?

FLOYD

It's sad.

CLARENCE

It is sad. That's exactly what it is Floyd. You didn't know Rat before the army Floyd but they were different man I'm telling you. I mean I didn't start calling them Rat for nothing. Rat's real straight-laced and strict now and that's good but man they used to be fun. And the three of us — me Rat and Bradley — would stay out all night and just walk and just yell at people. And then I'd come home to Ronnie. And I liked it that way Floyd but everyone grows up and you can't do the same thing forever. But you know I'm not gonna be straight-laced. Fuck that. No. You know what straight-laced means? Laced with straightness. I'm never gonna be a fucking breeder. And I know people look at me. And

they don't know what to make of me. And I like that. Uh huh. I want them to be scared their kids might end up a faggy little shit like me. You know what I mean? Sometimes I don't even think I want to be liked by people. Not anybody. You ever get that feeling? Sometimes I just wish people will hate me with every fiber of their being.

FLOYD

I don't think I get that Clarence.

CLARENCE

Well that's alright Floyd. We're different people Floyd. You don't have to get everything about me I mean that's the best part about having friends you know that's the good thing about this country.

FLOYD

I guess so Clary.

CLARENCE

Now look I gotta meet up with someone soon Floyd. I'm gonna leave you alone for a bit. You think you can handle yourself?

FLOYD

How long are you gonna be gone?

CLARENCE

Not long. Like an hour. Like thirty minutes.

FLOYD

An hour or thirty minutes?

CLARENCE

It's alright Floyd. Just buy a movie on the TV. I can pay for it now... Or... shit that's hotels... can't pay for a movie at a motel goddamn. Just find a good show or movie or something and I'll come back with you and catch the end of it okay.

FLOYD

I have my phone.

CLARENCE

Right! Good. Watch something on your phone then perfect.

FLOYD

Aren't you gonna need the gun Clary?

CLARENCE

No that's okay... I'm just gonna be a few doors down.

*Clarence places it on the nightstand.*

CLARENCE

Yeah you just. Curl up in bed and put this beside you. And point it right at the door if anyone comes in. You know you'll be in the dark with the light turned out and the tv on so you'll have the advantage. Your eyes will be used to dark but it's light out there there's that fluorescent light. So he won't be able to see you but you can see him and BAM. That's all it takes. And I know you're a good shot Floyd.

FLOYD

Yeah I'm a pretty good shot Clarence.

CLARENCE

See? Exactly.

FLOYD

Are you going to see Ronnie?

*A pause.*

CLARENCE

Now why would you guess that Floyd?

FLOYD

I dunno... just have a way about you when you're going to see Ronnie. Like the other day...

CLARENCE

So you know I saw Ronnie the other day.

FLOYD

yeah... sorry...

CLARENCE

Man... guess I'm more obvious than I realized huh Floyd? I gotta get more nimble.

FLOYD

I guess so Clarence.

CLARENCE

Yeah gotta work on my poker face... I'm too... I'm an open book.

FLOYD

Nah I don't think it's that. I just know you well Clary.

*A pause.*

FLOYD

I know we're in trouble because you saw Ronnie.

*A pause.*

FLOYD

And I know that you're scared.

CLARENCE

Aw come on now Floyd.

FLOYD

No I mean it.

CLARENCE

I'm not scared.

FLOYD

You can admit it when you're scared.

CLARENCE

I know you can admit it when you're scared I'm just...

FLOYD

I can tell when you're scared Clarence so you might as well say when you're scared.

CLARENCE

I'm not scared I just... I need to figure this one out...

FLOYD

Okay so let's figure it out.

*A pause. Clarence starts laughing.*

FLOYD

What?

CLARENCE

It's just... you don't need to worry about it Floyd.

FLOYD

I'm being serious! When were you going to tell me what's happening Clarence? I'm not a kid you know I can tell when things are happening.

CLARENCE

Floyd... can we have this conversation another time? Ronnie is gonna be here any second I don't wanna leave her waiting.

FLOYD

Yeah well I've been waiting for you right here Clarence. I've been waiting for you right here to treat me... to treat me... to care what I think or something... and look I know... I'm aware of... I know that I need help...but I'm not a baby. I'm not an idiot. I know what life is. I mean why do you try to keep these things from me Clarence? Why when maybe... I dunno... I know you really well. And maybe... maybe I can help you.

CLARENCE

There's just a lot in my life that's too... adult... that's too New York and and and too *city*... too *grimy* it's... gross... I'm a fundamentally gross person...

FLOYD

I thought you liked grossness.

CLARENCE

Well...

FLOYD  
Straight-laced means/

CLARENCE  
Okay I just/

FLOYD  
There are two characters to the word Crisis/

CLARENCE  
Okay OKAY I don't know what I mean. I don't know what I mean I contradict myself I contain multitudes but I know is that there's a big part of me — most of me — that wants to be like that. But there's another part that wants a home... and a family and....No way I'm talking to my fucking bitch mother or my fuckup father or my stupid cop fucking cousins I rather put a bullet between my eyes... but... I want hat warmness... and the... the stillness... and I can't... any friend group I fall into I detonate like an atom fucking bomb. So I need something.... Someone. In my life. That's warm. And pure. And sweet.

FLOYD  
But I'm not pure Clarence.

CLARENCE  
You're sweet.

FLOYD  
Yeah but I'm not pure. I'm a human being.

CLARENCE  
I know but/

FLOYD  
But what?

*A pause.*

FLOYD  
What could you say following that that wouldn't seriously hurt my feelings?

*A pause.*

FLOYD

I appreciate all you do for me. Thank you for helping me out. Thanks for taking me in after my Grandma... but... you don't have to keep me hidden. I wanna hit the town with you... know the city I live in. I won't be corrupted. I'm a human being. I wanna meet your friends. Why don't you let me hang with your friends? I want to be a person. Not just some... sentimental accessory.

*A pause.*

CLARENCE

Well... I... I'm sorry...I... I'm sorry I kept you from that Floyd I didn't know it's something you wanted... It's too late for New York butthe next city. We'll go to whatever city you want. And it'll be the two of us...like... like... like...

FLOYD

Simon Pegg and Nick Frost.

CLARENCE

Yes.

FLOYD

Laurel and Hardy.

CLARENCE

YEAHH!!

FLOYD

Jules and Vincent

CLARENCE

Uhm?

FLOYD

right..

CLARENCE

Alright I've gotta go — with Ronnie. I need to go for 20 minutes... just 20 minutes to see Ronnie.



FLOYD  
That's alright Clarence.

*Floyd heads for the door.*

FLOYD  
Oh Clarence.

*Clarence stops.*

FLOYD  
Maybe go out the window... instead of the door... you know... just in case.

### SCENE SIX

*Clarence in a slightly different motel room.*

*He paces.*

*A knock.*

*Clarence opens it. Ronnie enters.*

RONNIE  
You asshole... you asshole you... piece of shit.

*She hugs him hard.*

CLARENCE  
Alright alright come in the door I don't want to get shot in the face.

*He pulls her inside the room a bit. Shuts it. Locks it, buries her face in his arms.*

CLARENCE  
I'm sorry... I'm sorry... I'm sorry... I'm bad I... I can't not be bad...

RONNIE  
Does this get you off? Not just a little shit you have to be a criminal?

CLARENCE

Doesn't it look good on me? You should see me with a gun.

RONNIE

I don't ever want to see you with a gun.

CLARENCE

I know, you'd cum.

RONNIE

Shut up.

CLARENCE

You're acting weirdly sympathetic for someone I just robbed.

RONNIE

You called me bleeding on the subway and I agreed to meet up with you, what were you looking for a fight?

CLARENCE

I dunno... it's a lot of money... not like... rest-of-your-life money but... game changer for sure.

RONNIE

Maybe I wanted you to take it.

CLARENCE

Yeah?

RONNIE

Yeah. Maybe I left it there for you. You know. As a trap. Just to fuck you up.

CLARENCE

What would you get out of that?

RONNIE

An excuse to get rid of you. To send someone after you. I meant it when I said you were stamped into me Clarence, how am I ever gonna get you out unless you die?

CLARENCE

Ronnie... why do you/

RONNIE

What?

CLARENCE

... you always... talk like I stained you... tainted you... and so you can't stop seeing me or seeking affection from me/ or fucking me

RONNIE

I don't see anything wrong with/

CLARENCE

But what if it's not trauma? What if it's just love? What if you just love me? What if it's not all so fucking complicated you know?

RONNIE

i/

CLARENCE

No because I... when I... when I was coming out I/

RONNIE

Clarence if you're trying to use your transition to explain why I should date you again/

CLARENCE

I just mean what if it isn't like "I feel this way for Clarence because Clarence wounded me. I feel this way for Clarence because he did something to me to stain me to feel this way forever..." What if it isn't because Clarence fucked you up but because you fucking love him! Because you fucking love me! And I just mean I would have come out so much earlier if I just trusted my first instinct instead of going to all these therapists/

RONNIE

You think you're my first instinct?

*A pause.*

CLARENCE

The word Crisis has two characters. One means disaster. The other mean opportunity and/

RONNIE

Yeah that's a JFK quote. Or I dunno he said it but I think it goes back further. It's not true you know that right? It got famous after JFK used it to like... justify the Cuban missile crisis and putting us all in peril for the sake of capitalism in this country...

*A pause.*

CLARENCE

Huh... damn that's like one of my favorite quotes...

*A long pause.*

RONNIE

It wasn't my money.

*A pause.*

RONNIE

Alright? So... cool it with the whole penitent lover thing...

CLARENCE

It... okay...

RONNIE

So you didn't steal from me. Congrats. Are you proud? You only fucked me over indirectly.

CLARENCE

Who's was it?

RONNIE

My boyfriend's cousin. Sorry. Ex boyfriend's cousin. A member of the Latin Kings.  
***What's wrong with you?***

CLARENCE

Okay that's a lot to/

RONNIE

A gang member after you? Yes. It's a lot.

*A pause. Clarence smiles.*

CLARENCE

Did you say ex boyfriend?

RONNIE

Dick.

CLARENCE

I can't help it.

RONNIE

Don't smile about it.

CLARENCE

Feel like I'm in a Tarantino movie.

RONNIE

I just told you I got dumped.

CLARENCE

Well all the more reason that maybe we could/

RONNIE

Oh stop.

CLARENCE

No really.

RONNIE

You can't even conceive of how manipulative you're being.

CLARENCE

I'm not being manipulative! Manipulative is like cold. And calculating. I'm... I'm laying it all out for you... I'm... living in the moment. I'm expressing how I feel you... you're the one who told me that I need to learn how to do that. I'm... pouring my heart out for you how is that... how could that be manipulative? Because if that's manipulative maybe I don't have the capacity to not be manipulative.

RONNIE

I'm not going to date you Clarence!

*A pause*

RONNIE

Ever! Okay? Ever. Ever. Ever. Ever again.

CLARENCE

You're on his side then?

*A pause.*

CLARENCE

You want him to catch me? Kill me? Torture me, that's it?

RONNIE

No... baby...

*A pause.*

CLARENCE

'Cause I'm... I... trying so hard Ronnie... and I'm growing so much.

*A pause.*

RONNIE

Are you gonna ask why we broke up?? Or are you just a fundamentally incurious person.

CLARENCE

No I'm curious.

RONNIE

Are you?

CLARENCE

Yes.

RONNIE

It's not 'cause I cheated on him. Over. And over. With you. It's not because I relapsed. Not because the moment I told him the light left his eyes and his soul was crushed. Not 'cause the next moment he went from the sweetest boy I knew to someone who thought he was capable of hurting me.

CLARENCE

If he hits you. I will destroy him.

RONNIE

Curious of you to say.

*A pause.*

CLARENCE

Ronnie...

*A pause.*

CLARENCE

You know I/

RONNIE

I'm sorry... that was..... I'm sorry...

*A pause. A deep breath.*

RONNIE

It wasn't 'cause of any of that. It's because somewhere in the story of you and me a comet hit like a trainwreck of fate and I haven't gotten better since. It's 'cause I'm a fuckup, Clarence. A cosmic fuckup. I'm a fundamentally fucked person on the scope of the universe. I'm a disease. I sink into things and they die. And I die. And everything rots around me. And the world hates people like us. And at this point I like it. I find comfort in it. I love it this way.

*Ronnie goes over by the window.*

RONNIE

And you know he comes from a harder situation than me. He had no money. He had no head start the way I did. Everything in his background is bleak but he isn't like you or

me. He's bright... and... hopeful. He wakes up and you know what he does first thing in the morning? One armed pushups. We sit down for a movie night and you know what we watch? Forest Gump. I mean he doesn't see any of the... he can look at things just on their face and enjoy them. The world is just a ball of sunshine to him. It's... devastating.

*A pause.*

RONNIE

'Cause even if the world is a ball of sunshine I'd burn up in it.

*He holds her deep.*

*A long, long pause.*

RONNIE

But I hope you win...

*A pause.*

RONNIE

That's the most fucked up part about it.

*A pause.*

RONNIE

And I feel like I'm rooting for the villain in the movie... the person who burned me more than anything else in this world. But you have my blessing. I want you to win. I want you to keep going. And to kill the bastard. And to disappear and only be heard from intermittently. I want you and Floyd happy... and I want you to keep dropping by to fuck my life up every once in a while. Just often enough for it to hurt every time.

*He kisses her deep.*

CLARENCE

I love you Ronnie.

RONNIE

Oh... baby...

*A long pause.*



*Will she say it?*

*His eyes search hers for it...*

*She searches inside herself for it...*

*One last try...*

CLARENCE

i love you ronnie...

*She searches her heart for it... the deepest deepest part of her heart.*

*It does not come.*

*A long pause. She puts on her lipstick and kisses him on the neck. It stays for the rest of the play.*

*A gunshot in the distance. They both look at the door. Back at each other.*

RONNIE

Win this one for me, okay?

## SCENE SEVEN

*Clarence's motel room.*

*Dark.*

*It's quiet.*

*So*

*So*

*So*

*Quiet.*

*Clarence enters... wary... he hesitates...*

*Turns on the light...*

*A sheet on the floor with a lump under it. Blood pooling up from the lump and spilling onto the floor, into the carpet.*

*Clarence freezes. His heart stops.*

CLARENCE

Floyd... FLOYD... shit...

*He rushes over to the lump.*

*Gets down on his knees.*

*Stifles a cry.*

*Goes to lift up the blanket.*

*Grabs the edge...*

*Start to lift...*

*Then he hears something from the bathroom.*

*He freezes.*

*Pauses for a long time.*

*He runs to the nightstand. Grabs for the gun. He can't find it.*

FLOYD (O.S.)

Clarence! Hold on Clarence!

CLARENCE

Floyd... oh my God.

*He collapses on the bed.*

CLARENCE

You scared the shit out of me oh my/

FLOYD (O.S.)

Clarence! Hold on a second.

CLARENCE

Jesus Christ Floyd... jesus christ I could have/

*Floyd runs on the stage holding Rat's gun.*

CLARENCE

/sworn to god that you/

FLOYD

/I got him!/  
/

CLARENCE

/were dead I mean I thought... you what?

FLOYD

You said I was a good shot!

CLARENCE

You got.

*Pointing to the lump under the blanket.*

FLOYD

Look at that! I got him!

*A pause. Clarence looks at the blanket.*

CLARENCE

ohmygod

*Clarence stands.*

CLARENCE

Oh my *God!*

FLOYD

Clarence I got him Clarence!

CLARENCE

Oh my...

*Clarence goes over to the lump on the ground. He pulls up the edge of the blanket and looks under.*

CLARENCE (*disgusted*)

*Gross*

FLOYD

I got him!

*He looks again. He smiles.*

CLARENCE

Cool...

*A pause.*

CLARENCE

***YOU GOT HIM BUDDY!***

*He runs over and hugs Floyd. Throws his head back and laughs wildly.*

FLOYD

Yeah! I did didn't I.

CLARENCE

You fucking did it!

FLOYD

I did it.

CLARENCE

Why'd you cover him with the blanket?

FLOYD

I dunno I saw it in movies... seems respectful.

CLARENCE

I am so proud of you.

FLOYD

We're safe now.

CLARENCE

Oh my God we are... we are safe. We're fr/

*Three shots ring out. Clarence falls to the ground.*

CLARENCE

Ahh fuck!

FLOYD

Clarence what happened!

CLARENCE

Get DOWN Floyd!

*Clarence jumps back up to his feet and knocks Floyd over the bed and dives down as three more shots fire off.*

FLOYD

What's happening?!

CLARENCE

I dunno Floyd I guess there's another one.

FLOYD

You said there was only one!

CLARENCE

There was but I guess...shit...

FLOYD  
What?

*Clarence smiles.*

CLARENCE (*excited*).  
Shit, oh shit.

FLOYD  
What??

CLARENCE  
Nah I just know who it is. Give me the gun Floyd I need to talk to him.

*Floyd hands Clarence the gun.*

CLARENCE  
Hey... hey FUCKFACE.

*Silence.*

CLARENCE  
HEY FUCKFACE I know it's not a fucking gangster out there alright? I know it's not a fucking lunatic vicious psychopath I know it's...

*A pause.*

CLARENCE  
I know it's just a pussy ass straightboi that Ronnie dumped the fuck out of...

*A pause.*

CLARENCE  
And I know you're not man enough to get out of this alive 'cause why else would you shoot someone from behind you fucking retard.

*A pause.*

CLARENCE

So why don't you throw your gun down and come and collect your cousin and maybe you can walk out of this with your life.

*A pause.*

CLARENCE

No?

*A pause.*

CLARENCE

You wanna go to war?

*A pause.*

CLARENCE

Alright tough guy.

*A pause.*

CLARENCE

Okay faggot.

*A pause.*

CLARENCE

Let's go to war.

*A pause.*

CLARENCE

Let's go to war.

*Clarence stands up, he holds his gun out towards the door where the shots came through. He approaches the door with the gun and then looks at the bed, shifts the gun to one hand and grabs a pillow with his other hand.*

*He walks over and kicks the door closed, throwing himself*

*flush against the wall. More shots ring out BANG BANG BANG BANG into the door sending bits of wood flying through the room.*

*He pauses... looks towards the window...*

*Tosses the pillow up past the window...*

*More shots ring out BANG BANG BANG BANG tearing the pillow apart.*

*GABE runs up to the window and sticks his gun through.*

*CLICK.*

CLARENCE  
HAH!

*Clarence grabs Gabe by his arm and pulls him through the window.*

*They both fall to the ground. Gabe lands awkwardly and drops his gun.*

GABE  
Awh fuck!

*Clarence sweeps Gabe's gun away and is back on his feet in an instant.*

CLARENCE  
You thought you could walk up on me?

*Clarence raises his fist and smashes it into Gabe's face as he tries to stand up. His nose breaks and gushes blood as once again they both tumble to the ground.*

GABE  
Ahh!



*Clarence gets back on his feet again. This time slowly.  
Moving like a viper.*

CLARENCE

You thought you could shoot me in the back?

*Clarence takes the gun and smashes it into Gabe's side.*

GABE

Please no. I'm sorry! I'm sorry!!

CLARENCE

No no no no no no no no don't beg.

*Clarence laughs.*

CLARENCE

Motherfucker don't beg come on.

*Clarence throws his gun aside.*

CLARENCE

Come on, fight me like a man come on.

*Clarence pulls Gabe to his feet and hits a boxer pose.*

CLARENCE

Come on COME ON.

*Gabe just hides his face and cries.*

CLARENCE

COME ON you've got like half a foot on me pussy you just wanna shoot me in the back?  
Come the FUCK ON!!!

*Gabe pisses his pants.*

CLARENCE

Come on buddy where's that testosterone??? Come ONN!!

GABE  
Don't hurt me.

CLARENCE  
Don't hurt you? Don't *hurt* you?

*Clarence pulls his shirt off.*

CLARENCE  
***YOU TOOK HER FROM ME. YOU TOOK...***

*Clarence punches a wall.*

CLARENCE  
Everything...

GABE  
She said you hurt her. That she was scared of you... that the last time she saw you you/

*Clarence tackles Gabe to the wall.*

CLARENCE  
You don't get to talk about her!

*He punches Gabe.*

CLARENCE  
You don't get to tell me how she felt about me!

*He hits him again. And again. Gabe tries to sink into the wall to hide. Clarence grabs him by his hair.*

CLARENCE  
***YOU DON'T GET TO TOUCH HER.***

*He slams Gabe's head into the wall. He bounces and hits the ground and doesn't get up.*

*Clarence pants.*

*Gabe's down but he can't get rid of his anger...*

*He puts the gun down and pounces on Gabe and rains a flurry of blows down on his unconscious face.*

*After the last punch it's clear he spent a lot of energy... that maybe he got injured beating up Gabe too.*

*He gets off of Gabe and looks down on him, covered in Gabe's blood and his...*

*He reaches down into Gabe's pocket and grabs his car keys.*

*He pauses for a moment.*

CLARENCE

Alr...

*A pause.*

CLARENCE

Alright Floyd. You can get up now.

FLOYD

Did you get him?

CLARENCE

Yeah Floyd I... I got him...

*Floyd gets up... looks at Clarence.*

FLOYD

Did he get you?

CLARENCE

Nah he shot but it just grazed me Floyd. Just took some skin off the side.

*Clarence picks up Rat's gun from the floor.*

FLOYD  
Good...

CLARENCE  
We gotta get out of here Floyd.... Jesus Floyd we... we gotta get out of here.

*Gabe groans and goes to get up.*

*Clarence panics. Aims his gun and fires.*

*Gabe collapses on top of his cousin... blood pooling out of him.*

*Clarence's face goes white.*

*It wasn't supposed to happen like that.*

CLARENCE  
Alright let's...

*A hollow pause.*

CLARENCE  
Let's get out of here Floyd. Let's get out of here before the cops come.

## **SCENE EIGHT**

*The moon in the sky...*

*The car... driving... a highway... the edge of the world... a haze...*

*Some long emotional indie rock song or metal song on the radio... Dream House or Duk Koo Kim. Something that rambles on and on and epitomizes a sort of boyish whimsical masculinity.*

*Clarence in the driver's seat, wired. Floyd in the passenger seat, asleep.*

CLARENCE

I love driving.

I do. Love driving, I love it, Floyd.

You asleep? Good. Keep sleeping Floyd.

You gotta rest up because we've got new lives ahead of us...

All in a dream... all in a dream...

.

.

.

We're set now man. We're set. We can just run... We're so close to free.

if we can get out of this shit and start over...

you wouldn't even need to work.

Not for a while.

.

... I know there's something so beautiful in masculinity. And it's not... it's not the ugly parts... it's not about making something nice out of the ugly parts. There's brotherhood and and and destruction... but destruction can be good maybe...

.

But there's also that little prince... boyish... puckish... edge-of-the-world...

We want to be the little prince...

We want to stomp around...

And...

Place our hands on our hips...

And...

Wear a paper crown...

We don't wanna be hugh jackman we wanna be...

We wanna be...

I just...

I think there's a good masculinity Floyd...

To balance out the sweetness...

No that doesn't sound... there's good masculinity...

.

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I tried to give him a fair fight.

.

.

but I love driving. God I love driving. Look at us. We might get out of this... we might get out alive and did you know the end of thelma and louise and the end of grease are the same? did you know that? did you know thelma and louise has the same ending as grease the movie? fast car by tracy chapman has it too... kinda thelma and louise is the same as the end of grease fuck because in grease the car flies away and that's the only moment of magic but it's beautiful and cheesy and poetic the car flies away 'cause of their love and thelma and louise are caught they're surrounded by a cliff and they drive off they commit suicide except they don't they hold hands and fly off the cliff and the shot pauses they say they're gonna keep going and they fly off the cliff and it's the same shot the same ending as grease the screen freezes and it's the end of grease beautiful humble they escape they fly free they're forever suspended in a moment and I-ee-I they're beautiful they're amazing they I-ee-I they get away do you know much it means for people to drive away do you understand why we need carchases and carcrash movies and crash by david croneneberg and paradise by the dashboard light and getting fucked in the back of cars on prom night ripping dresses smelling wet sweaty gorgeous vegetal stink prime raw feeling do you know we need roadtrips to go across the country and get our faces fucking pumpled in it's important we need it fists always hurt from the punching all all of us we're all blood and beauty and glory and hatred all wrapped up into one thing and we keep hurting people but we don't want to anymore and maybe we just need a little more money a little more time for therapy or reading or just being by ourself or maybe we need to just go to a farm and beat the shit out of something and our fists always hurting knuckles aching broken from all of the things we've hurt people we've destroyed people we care about the most that we've ruined destroyed broken why sports are beautiful boxers are perfect wanna live like jesus no wanna live like prince no wanna live like dimebag darrel shot in the head on fucking stage duk koo kim punched to the death at the age of 27 in the ring gorgeous and magic going out in focus and heat it's regressive but the dignity the dignity and the beauty the beauty you blast a song and drive away and it doesn't matter if you escape because you are escaping and it doesn't matter if you live because you're running this moment will suspend forever stretch out infinite spinning eternal scary and beautiful and even when I'm dying I'll close my eyes and slink back to this moment slip through a crack of time and feel free and warm and beautiful we're going to live forever Floyd we're going to be young forever I want to be a warrior young wild out on the highway glorious and beautiful strong and sweet innocent irreplaceable irreducible unharmable benevolent glorious soft swift sweet riding out on the highway with the blood and the pulse the needle the cotton young and wild and free want to be kissed on the cheek and called sweet warrior sweet prince sweet magic matador sweet sweet boy after fighting and being shot being stabbed and bleeding out red covering cut open like saint sebastian tied up and beautiful sweet boy held by her her kisses asking me

to stay stay stay but it's too late stay sweet boy stay stay but it's too late. it's too late. it's too late.

.

.

I miss the friend group Floyd.

.

.

.

I miss Rat and Ronnie and Bradley and I miss us all seeing each other together I don't like Rat not speaking to me and Ronnie and I don't like Ronnie not loving me and Bradley... I just wish... I did more... I could've done more than I did... I was... I was...

*Clarence feels a sudden pain and a flash of heat. The adrenaline is starting to wear off.*

*He unbuttons his shirt and we see through his tanktop an improvised bandage soaked in blood...*

*...the shot didn't glance him at all...*

he got me Floyd

.

.

.

he got me pretty good. He got me pretty good.

.

.

.

maybe *you'll* have to take care of *me* for a little while buddy...

.

.

.

Wouldn't that be funny?

.

.

*His eyes glance over to Floyd.*

.

Hey do you think you could do that Floyd?

.

.  
.  
'cause i'm scared...

.  
.  
.  
Cause

.  
No you could do that Floyd. I know you could do that. Cause when you're ready Floyd and you put your mind to it...

*Clarence slows a little*

When you put your mind to it you can do...

*Clarence's eyes start to close.*

Anything...

*He snaps awake*

No

No.

I'm staying alive. I'm getting better. It didn't hit anything important. Small caliber... And my body will fucking absorb it and use it as fuel. Use it as raw fucking power. Or maybe it passed through me... and I'm something like the Son of Man. I'm gonna get better. Yeah. And when I'm better I'll try...

.  
.  
i'll try to...

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.  
I'll try... Again... I'll try again. You can always try again

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you can always...

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